

*Centring the female: the articulation of female experience in the films
of Jane Campion.*

Lisa French

B.Ed., Grad.Dip (Ed. Tech.), MA.

A thesis submitted in total fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

School of Applied Communication

Design and Social Context

RMIT

June 2007

Declaration

I certify that except where due acknowledgement has been made, the work is that of the author alone; the work has not been submitted previously, in whole or in part, to qualify for any other academic award; the content of the thesis is the result of work which has been carried out since the official commencement date of the approved research program; and, any editorial work, paid or unpaid, carried out by a third party is acknowledged.

Lisa French
June 2007

As a woman you have a unique and different vision.

It's good that these voices are heard in the world.

Jane Campion¹

CONTENTS

Abstract	7
Acknowledgements	8
Introduction	9
- An Introduction to Jane Campion	11
- Feminism	18
- Female experience	19
- Rationale	23
- Literature	25
- Methodology	29
- Overview of this thesis	34
Chapter 1. Jane Campion and Feminist Politics	38
- Introduction	38
- Feminisms	39

¹ Nigel Andrews, 'FT Weekend Magazine—The Arts', *Financial Times*, London (UK), 18/10/03, p.26.

- Feminisms and Campion	40
- Feminism as a context for Campion's work	44
- A feminist perspective or 'voice'	46
- Female, the feminine, and feminine subjectivity	47
- Feminist, female and feminine aesthetics	50
- Essentialism	55
- Cultural and historical specificity	58
- Essentialism and subjectivity	60
- Constructions of 'Woman'	63
- 'Woman'	64
- Difference	67
- Oppositional consciousness: affinity, not identity	69
- Chapter conclusion	73
 Chapter 2. Postmodern-feminism	 74
- Postmodern-feminism: a pluralist and shifting discursive space	76
- The relationship of postmodernism to feminisms	81
- Problems inherent in postmodern-feminism	84
- A postmodern-feminist discursive space	86
- Différance	89
- Chapter conclusion	92

Chapter 3. Authorship	94
- Introduction	94
- Part 1 theories of authorship	94
- Feminism, auteurism and authorship	98
- Cultural and historical specificity: feminine and female	101
- Alternative approaches to authorship	103
- Part 2 Female authorship	105
- Women's cinema and studies of women auteurs	109
- Female vision	114
- Female authorship as an alternative to the mainstream	118
- Chapter conclusion	123
Chapter 4 Jane Campion as a female and feminist author/auteur	125
- Introduction	125
- Part 1: Jane Campion as auteur	127
- Campion's aesthetic	129
- Mise-en-scène and an obsession with detail	137
- A preoccupation with trauma	140
- Part 2: The author as a woman, and evidence of a female voice	142
- The dialogue with female audiences	144
- Campion's transformations of vision: subjectivity and intersubjectivity	148
- Female Desire	156
- Representing Femininity	163
- Part 3: Femininity as 'style	168
- Part 4: Autobiographical references	173
- Chapter conclusion	179
Chapter 5 'Girlshine': <i>Holy Smoke!</i>	180
- 'Girlshine'	182
- Jouissance	185
- Human communication: men and women in the world	190
- 'Girlshine' and Sophie Lee	201
- 'The Object'	203
- Chapter conclusion	210

Chapter 6 <i>In the Cut</i>: another social vision	211
- Introduction	211
- What it is to be a woman in the world	213
- The faultiness of human knowing, and the slippage between things	215
- Myth: love, romance, sex and femininity	221
- The director and her project	223
- Influences	228
- Fairytales, myths and desire	232
- The film's ending	236
- Chapter conclusion	238
 Thesis conclusion	 240
 Bibliography	 248
 Online biographies on Jane Campion	 260
 Jane Campion: filmography	 261
 Filmography	 267

Abstract

This thesis is a study of female authorship that examines the feature films of Jane Campion in order to determine how her preoccupation with the cinematic articulation of ‘female experience’ is expressed in her films.

The work of Jane Campion was chosen as an appropriate study to investigate whether female experience can be aestheticised, and to discover whether her gender can be discerned through the films of a woman director.

The exploration of these ideas entails a review of the body of feminist thinking, methodologies and epistemologies that are relevant to cinema, and that examine relevant theoretical positions within feminism and theories of cinematic authorship. The key lens employed here for theorising Campion’s cinema is that of postmodern-feminism. As an approach, this allows an understanding of difference rather than ‘Otherness’, and an enquiry into gender that is neither essentialist nor constructionist, but facilitates critical thinking about both positions.

This methodology emerged through an analysis of Campion’s film work, which revealed that she has been significantly influenced by, and interested in, both feminism and postmodernism. While all her films are considered here, her texts *Holy Smoke!* and *In the Cut* are the main focus.

The central argument of this thesis is that Campion’s film practice functions as an investigation into gender difference, how women and men live together in the world, how women experience that world, and how women are engendered as female through historic, psychological and cultural experiences. This thesis therefore argues that Campion’s aesthetic and perspective is not only feminist, but also, female, and feminine, and her work a cinematic articulation of female experience.

Acknowledgements

Sincere thanks must be extended to the many people who have assisted me on the long journey of this research project.

Firstly, I am especially grateful to my supervisor Dr Adrian Danks, whose ongoing support and constructive criticism was invaluable, and for which I am greatly indebted. I am also sincerely thankful, and give special thanks, to the thoughtfulness of colleagues whose feedback and time was so generously given: Linda Daley, Felicity Collins, Terrie Waddell, Hester Joyce, Gabrielle Murray, Bridget Magner, Mary Debrett, Marg Jacobs and Zena Burgess.

I am also thankful to have wonderful and supportive friends and colleagues, and appreciative of the considerable inspiration given to me by my Cinema Studies students.

Finally, but most especially, I want to thank my life partner, Mark Poole, without whose love, support, and ongoing enthusiasm was so important and sustaining. I would like to acknowledge the space, love, and endorsement given by my sons Daniel and Liam, and the assistance of my extended family, particularly Norman, Doris and Helen.

Introduction

Historically, there has been little research examining the extent to which female authorship might give a distinct inflection in a film, or body of films—of the relationship between the female author and her films. In fact discussions of female authorship in the cinema have been “surprisingly sparse”² in the literature, particularly in regard to how the female author’s sex and gender might be expressed in, or influence, her films. In addition, until relatively recently³ there have been very few explorations of women filmmakers as auteurs.⁴

In his important book on authorship, James Naremore has observed that the female author “is yet to be fully established in the public sphere and theorized”.⁵ Judith Mayne has argued that little attention has been paid to the function and position of the woman director.⁶ And along the same lines, Kaja Silverman has written that the female author often emerges

as a largely untheorized category, placed definitively ‘outside’ the text, and assumed to be the punctual source of its sounds and images. ... There is no sense in which the feminist author, like her phallic counterpart, might be constructed in and through discourse – that she might be inseparable from the desire that circulates within her texts, investing itself not only in their formal articulation, but in recurring diegetic elements.⁷

Therefore, as an analysis of the function and position of the woman director, Jane Campion, this research aims to contribute to a growing, but historically under-theorised

² Judith Mayne, *The Woman at the keyhole: Feminism & Women’s Cinema*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1990, p.90.

³ There appears to have been an increased interest female authorship and women auteurs in the last decade, see: Hill, 1993; Mayne, 1994; Smith, 1998, Tarr, 1998; Collins, 1999; Polan, 2001; Gillett, 2004; Beugnet, 2004.

⁴ An auteur is understood in this thesis as a reference to a film director who has reoccurring directorial imprints. S/he has central control of the vision and articulation of that vision in his or her films. An auteur’s films constitute what Beugnet describes as a unique and original vision that is therefore easily recognisable as the output of the same person. See Martine Beugnet, *Claire Denis*, Manchester University Press, Manchester and New York, 2004, p.15.

⁵ James Naremore, ‘Authorship’ in Toby Miller & Robert Stam (eds.), *A Companion to Film Theory*, Blackwell Publishing, Oxford, UK, 2004, p.22.

⁶ Mayne, 1990, pp.89-123.

⁷ Silverman in Mayne, 1990, p.97.

area in cinema studies, adding to the research on women in film, particularly within the Australian film milieu. To achieve these aims, this research is structured around the exploration of the following key question: *Are the films of Jane Campion centrally preoccupied with a cinematic articulation of female experience?* To explore this question, Campion's feature films are examined from the perspective of how, as a woman director, she foregrounds and conveys 'female experience' and desire in her films. With reference to Campion's authorial style, this thesis seeks to uncover whether, and how, 'female experience' is expressed in her work, and if experience can be aestheticised in film production.

In order to explore this question, it is also important to consider whether there is a female, feminine, and/or feminist approach, aesthetic, or perspective evident in Campion's films.⁸ For example do they construct identification—with character, image, and camera—as female, feminine, and/or feminist? Does she inflect or deploy her own sex and gender in the representations she constructs? Can this be observed in her films via elements such as aesthetics, language, preoccupations, and the foregrounding of women's lives, or a vision of what it is to be female? While it could be argued that Campion has a commitment to exploring female perspectives, since all five of her feature films have female central protagonists, how much can that be related to her own awareness of (or performance of this awareness), of what it is to be a woman in the world? Thus this research is interested in the question of the author's relation to her work.

While definitions of sex and gender have been confused in daily use, as if they are interchangeable⁹, in this thesis, sex is taken to denote whether someone is male or female.

⁸ Aesthetics refers to elements of a work such as expressiveness, complexity, creativity, formal or stylistic structure. Bullock et al have described the aesthetics of a given work as taking the form of perceivable formal qualities that may evoke emotional or cognitive responses in audiences. Alan Bullock, Oliver Stallybrass & Stephen Trombley (eds.) *The Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought*, Fontana Press, London, 1989, p.12. The term 'feminist aesthetic' I define as the style, language, approach and formal elements working towards articulating a feminist perspective in the filmmaking. A feminist perspective is one that is informed by a feminist politic and ideas (there is no single feminist vision); this is discussed later in the thesis.

⁹ As discussed by Moria Gatens, *Imaginary Bodies: Ethics, Power and Corporeality*, Routledge, London & New York, 1996, pp.3-20.

Gender is understood to designate the cultural, as well as other kinds of identities or attributions with which each sex has been associated, or constructed by culture. Gender is not static, but the meaning of masculinity or femininity has changed at different historical periods. In order to consider whether Campion creates any discernable approach that relates specifically to her personhood and in particular the relationship of the author's sex and gender to the author's work—it has been important to investigate further the concept of authorship itself, and specifically, the concept of female authorship.

As is obvious from the discussion above, this research is located within an exploration of gender distinctions and the nature of female experience (discussed and defined further on). An initial central investigation of this research was to locate a position from which to discuss Campion's filmmaking—and the first three chapters chart this journey.

An introduction to Jane Campion

There are a number of reasons why Jane Campion was chosen as the central figure of this research.

Born in New Zealand, Jane Campion trained as a film director in Sydney (AFTS)¹⁰ and now lives and works from an Australian base. Her filmmaking career has for some years been international in reputation and scope. Over her working life as a filmmaker, Jane Campion has created a large body of work, having been unusually prolific (for Australian filmmakers) in producing six features since 1989¹¹ (financed both in Australia and internationally); she has achieved enormous critical success (as demonstrated by numerous international awards¹²—including being the only woman director in fifty years

¹⁰ The Australian Film and Television School which is now called The Australian, Film, Television and Radio School (AFTRS).

¹¹ *Sweetie* (1989), *An Angel At My Table* (1990), *The Piano* (1993), *The Portrait Of A Lady* (1996), *Holy Smoke!* (1999), *In the Cut* (2003).

¹² This occurred early in her career, she won the Golden Palm for Best Short Film at the 1986 Cannes Film Festival for her student production, *Peel: An Exercise in Discipline*, and in 1989 won the prestigious AFI Byron Kennedy Award. Awards are listed in the filmography attached to this thesis.

whose film has won the Palme d'Or at the Cannes film festival¹³, and in 1994, she took out the Oscar Best Writing, Screenplay Written Directly for the Screen for *The Piano*). From the beginning, she has been widely recognised as an auteur with her own distinctive vision and style. In particular, Campion's films display an obvious interest in female experience, and perhaps this is why it has been claimed that they resonate so strongly with female audiences.

Many women have claimed that Campion's films 'speak' to them as women, and critics have observed that her films have divided audiences along gendered lines—"her movies are so loved by women"¹⁴. As will be discussed, Campion has herself claimed that her films particularly connect with women, and it appears to be part of her personal mythology—for example, she has said of her film *Holy Smoke!*, that "[y]oung women love the film".¹⁵ The most frequently noted example is *The Piano*, which has been described by Dana Polan as inspiring "intense and divided reaction from cinema audiences (often splitting them down gendered lines)".¹⁶ Polan has given illustrations of how "many women, in particular, attest to a profound, intense bonding with *The Piano*"¹⁷, which he says "has come to be seen as one of the supreme signposts of an art of feminine sensibility".¹⁸ Academic Laleen Jayamanne has written that she was interested in "what it is in *The Piano* that strikes a chord for young women".¹⁹ Barbara Klinger has observed that "[e]very so often a film appears that has the ability to mesmerize its spectators, taking up sustained residence in their imaginations and emotions. A dozen years ago that film, at least for some female viewers, was ... *The Piano*...".²⁰ Stephen Crofts has argued there "was a significant gender dimension to the film's [*The Piano's*] audience

¹³ In 1993 *The Piano* shared the top prize at Cannes: the Palme d'Or for Best Feature.

¹⁴ Campion described by Kennedy Fraser in Virginia Wright Wexman (ed.), *Jane Campion Interviews*, University Press of Mississippi, 1999, p.198.

¹⁵ Ruth Hessey, 2000, 'Lord ...'.

¹⁶ Dana Polan, *Jane Campion*, BFI Publishing, London, 2001, rear cover.

¹⁷ Polan, 2001, p.22.

¹⁸ Polan, 2001, p.7.

¹⁹ Laleen Jayamanne, *Toward Cinema and Its Double: Cross-Cultural Mimesis*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington and Indianapolis, 2001, p.25.

²⁰ Barbara Klinger, 'The Art Film, Affect and the Female Viewer: The Piano revisited', in *Screen*, Vol. 47, No.1, 2006, (pp. 19-41) at <http://screen.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/content/full/47/1/19> Accessed 1/5/06.

demographic. Discussions with distributors and anecdotal evidence worldwide suggests that the primary audience has been women”,²¹ something Crofts argues in his analysis that the film achieves partly because of its feminism, and also its psychoanalytic aspects²² he notes, “such strong identifications resemble the passionate response to romantic literature targeted more at female than male readers”.²³ Despite the substantial number of claims that female audiences are particularly spoken to by *The Piano* and Campion’s films generally, it must be stated that it is impossible to claim this conclusively without undertaking substantial audience studies of all Campion’s works—which has not been done.²⁴

As will be discussed, Campion has also been widely regarded as being able to articulate female desire in the cinema, and able to create a social visibility for women’s culture. Understanding, redefining and foregrounding female desire is one of Campion’s central projects. She is intensely interested in questioning issues around sexual difference in relation to her central female protagonists (and the men they encounter): who they are, what they need—and lack—and in doing so, saying something that is transferable to humanity more generally.²⁵

²¹ Stephen Crofts, ‘Foreign Tunes? Gender and Nationality in Four Countries’ Reception of *The Piano*’, in Harriet Margolis, *The Piano*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2000, p.139.

²² Crofts argues that the success of *The Piano* was substantially based on the fact that it invokes a female subjectivity (one he describes as Oedipally orientated). See Crofts, 2000 in Margolis, 2000, p.140–153.

²³ Crofts, 2000 in Margolis, 2000, p.153.

²⁴ This may be because art films tend not to be studied from a reception studies point of view. Some reception studies have been done but not on the issue of the gender division of audiences. Crofts considers aesthetic or feminist reception (Crofts 2000, in Margolis, 2000, pp.135–162); Klinger discusses the effect on audiences of captivating cinematic moments, or ‘arresting images’ – discussed later in the thesis (Klinger, 2006, pp.19–41); and Jones considers national identity/cinema in New Zealand films (Stan, M. Jones, *Projecting a nation: New Zealand film and its reception in Germany*, Studies in New Zealand Culture, No.3, Kakapo, Nottingham, 1999).

²⁵ Like Campion, feminists from the 1980s were particularly interested in exploring the way desire is structured and how the institutions of sexual relations have historically shaped desire. For further detailed discussions of this see Rosalind Coward, *Patriarchal Precedents: Sexuality and Social Relations*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1983.

Given that there are several sources that adequately outline Campion's biography²⁶, I will only attempt a brief overview of her career in this introduction, although where relevant, biographical material appears in the body of the thesis, and a filmography appears in the attachments. Clearly, there is a relationship between Campion's art and life (for example, tendencies, conflicts, intellectual concerns and contexts), but they are two separate entities.

Cook and Bernink have offered in a useful summary of Campion's preoccupations as a filmmaker:

... having directed a feature film, a mini-series, a handful of shorts, Australian based New Zealand film-maker Jane Campion was said ... to possess a distinct connotative stamp, a set of concerns about power in the everyday and the underside of life, the abject, ... nature as an environmental force beyond control ... sexuality's capacity to cut through cultural norms ... social realism is turned into quirky counter-realism ...²⁷

Of course, there are other preoccupations; however this thesis does not seek to document every preoccupation or aspect of Campion's work, but considers what is relevant in relation to the thesis question.

While Campion is an internationally recognised filmmaker, her antipodean background influences her work. When New Zealand actor and filmmaker Sam Neill called his 1995 centenary documentary on New Zealand's cinema *Cinema of Unease*, "the title summed up the dark undercurrents that he felt permeated New Zealand films".²⁸ He offers evidence that there is a bleakness of vision common to films from New Zealand, and implied that this emerges from the culture itself. One could conclude from this that these undercurrents are likely to influence those who have emerged from New Zealand's culture. Moran and Vieth have noted that when New Zealanders explored their own

²⁶ See: Wright Wexman, 1999, pp.xxx-xxvii; Polan, 2001, p.54-121; Ellen Cheshire, *Jane Campion*, Pocket Essentials, Harpenden, UK, 2000, pp.7-19.

²⁷ Pam Cook and Mieke Bernink, *The Cinema Book* (2nd ed.), British Film Institute, London, p.315.

²⁸ Brent Lewis, 'Sam Neill and the *Cinema of Unease*', *Cinema Papers*, No.106, October, 1995, p. 10. The full title of the film was *Cinema of Unease: A Personal Journey by Sam Neill*. Campion has said that as a young filmmaker, she was particularly committed to what was nasty and isn't spoken about in life. See Wright Wexman, 1999, p. 9.

stories they had elements of a “suburban surreal... [and] explored the darker sides of New Zealand culture”, that filmmakers of the late 1970s in New Zealand—a period when Campion was a teenager there²⁹—“turned their attention to the darker sources of New Zealand history”.³⁰ Given this cultural context, it is not surprising that Campion’s vision—particularly in her early films—has a bleak side. While Campion left New Zealand following her graduation (in Structural Arts-Anthropology) from Wellington’s Victoria University, in 1975, these dark undercurrents are present throughout her oeuvre (particularly the work set in New Zealand, *An Angel At My Table* and *The Piano*), although less obviously in her recent films.³¹

Campion herself has reportedly remarked “on her own ‘strange history’ as a Pakeha New Zealander descended from European settlers”.³² New Zealand is a nation of immigrants (both Pakeha³³ and Maori) and thus the notion of being an outsider has double relevance for Campion, as an expatriate New Zealander living in Australia. Jane Roscoe has observed that while the “Maori [has a] renaissance complete with a history, language and culture to be drawn on (by Maori) ... [in contrast] Pakeha New Zealanders have a less coherent heritage”.³⁴ Campion’s New Zealand origin and immigration to Australia may explain her interest in geographic and cultural isolation. As Sue Gillett observed, “most of Jane Campion's heroines are, in one way or another, displaced persons:

²⁹ Albert Moran & Errol Vieth, *The Historical Dictionary of Australian and New Zealand Cinema*, Scarecrow Press Inc., Maryland USA, 2005, pp.294-295. Experiences of teenage girls are dotted throughout her films, including *A Girls Own Story*, *Two Friends*, *An Angel At My Table*, and *The Portrait of A Lady*.

³⁰ Moran & Vieth, 2005, p. 296.

³¹ The dark undercurrents have also been linked to her own personal history in relation to her mother’s depression. This has also been seen as an explanation for her interest in madness for example in the schizophrenic Sweetie (*Sweetie*) or Janet’s experience in a mental institution (*An Angel At My Table*). The darkness also links to Campion’s interest in the gothic.

³² Campion in Eva Rueschmann, ‘Out of Place Reading (Post) Colonial Landscapes as Gothic Space in Jane Campion’s Films’, *Postscript: Essays in Film And The Humanities*, Vol. 24, Nos. 2 & 3, Winter/Spring & Summer 2005, p.19.

³³ Pakeha is the term used to refer to a (non-Maori) New Zealander (generally New Zealanders of European descent).

³⁴ Jane Roscoe, ‘National Preoccupations’ in *Continuum: The Australian Journal of Media & Culture*, (Aotearoa /New Zealand A New Mediascape), Vol.10, No.1, 1996, p.192. Note that the Maori name for New Zealand is Aotearoa.

travellers, migrants, exiles”³⁵—Sweetie, Kay, Janet and Ada are all outsiders and their journeys offer an outsider’s view. This links to gendered experience: as will be discussed, the dominant culture has often left women outside in terms of representing female desire or experience. Indeed, this exclusion has motivated many feminist articulations that variously aim to challenge the reality constructed by the dominant, normal or authorised culture.

Campion came to Australia in 1977.³⁶ The 1970s were an exciting time to arrive: the Australian film industry was experiencing a ‘renaissance’ or a ‘revival’ following the intervention of the Australian government to help fund the industry; this decade saw the emergence of feminist culture, and of filmmaking with a great flourish.³⁷ Although Campion’s practice emerged after the most intense flush of feminist filmmaking (her first short *Tissues* was made in 1980), she would have been aware of feminist film practice. As I have written elsewhere, there were a number of factors that positioned the Australian film industry as positively predisposed to women.³⁸ Firstly, when the industry experienced a ‘revival’ in the 1970s, it was a ‘new’ industry from the perspective that it was not dominated by men who had held positions in the industry for years—unlike television, which was established in Australia in 1956. Secondly, the reliance of the industry on government funding meant that film production was influenced by the equal opportunity policies of government agencies. Another likely contributor is the comparatively low budget for films (in global terms) which resulted in fewer controls imposed by big business structures—unlike those that operated elsewhere, for example in Hollywood. Thus women filmmakers in Australia took advantage of their access to the industry to increase their activity and reputation. Since the 1990s, it has been claimed

³⁵ Sue Gillett, ‘Never a Native: Deconstructing Home and Heart in *Holy Smoke*!’, *Senses of Cinema*: <http://www.sensesofcinema.com/contents/00/5/holy.html> Accessed 25/10/05.

³⁶ Initially to undertake a BA in painting at the Sydney College of Arts.

³⁷ 1975 was International Women’s Year, there was a big feminist film conference in 1974 (Womenvision); women’s film groups were emerging (such as the Sydney Women’s Film Group formed in 1972); there were a whole host of other activities including training, establishment of the Women’s Film Fund (AFC, 1976) and in the wider culture feminist initiatives, publishing, affirmative action or other events were occurring—including government bills, such as the Sex Discrimination Act (1975), which was the first discrimination act in Australia (passed by the South Australian Parliament in 1976).

that “Australia leads the world in the number and quality of its women directors”³⁹, and Australia has gained an international reputation for producing exceptional women directors. Andrew Sarris has noted:

While women directors in film industries around the world are still seen as anomalous (if mainstream) or marginalised as avant-garde, the Antipodes have been home to an impressive cadre of female film-makers who negotiate and transcend such notions. Before the promising debuts of Ann Turner (*Celia*) and Jane Campion (*Sweetie*), Gillian Armstrong blazed a trail with *My Brilliant Career*.⁴⁰

Armstrong also played a significant role in paving the way for Australian films, and particularly Australian women filmmakers, to break into the global market. Some have noted that there is a dialogue between Campion and Armstrong: “the oranges in *Peel* may be an in-joke reference to director Gillian Armstrong for whom oranges are a recurrent image”.⁴¹ Felicity Collins has noted in her monograph on Armstrong that in a survey of Australian and New Zealand features: “Jocelyn Robson and Beverley Zalcock highlight the feature films of Armstrong and Campion as exemplars of a regional cinema which is ‘arguably the most substantial contribution to women’s cinema anywhere in the world’”.⁴² If Campion is engaging in a dialogue with Armstrong, it may be related to a consciousness of an affinity between them as women trying to speak in a male dominated world (and industry)—a sisterhood of women claiming auteur status. Armstrong’s oeuvre is, like Campion’s, full of female characters, female-centred stories, and female subjectivity.

Along with Armstrong, Campion has clearly made a significant contribution to this picture of the Antipodes as a place where successful women filmmakers can emerge,

³⁸ French, 2003, pp.13-14.

³⁹ Julie James Bailey, *Reel Women: Working in Film and Television*, AFTRS, Sydney, 1999, p.199. Bailey notes progress; however, she also noted that only 17% of features between 1990-1997 were directed by women.

⁴⁰ Andrew Sarris (ed.), *The St James Film Directors Encyclopedia*, in Lynden Barber, ‘Reel Women’, *Australian (Review)*, April 25-26, 1998, p. 6.

⁴¹ Polan, 2001, p. 74. (Quoting an unnamed scholar).

particularly within Australia. Campion has “called herself an ‘Aussie directress’”⁴³ and while some of her films are more directly linked to New Zealand (*An Angel At My Table*, *The Piano*) others engage in a dialogue with Australia (*Sweetie* and *Holy Smoke!*).

Feminism

While Campion’s status as a filmmaker of international significance is indisputable, her status as a feminist filmmaker has been contested by Campion herself, who has demonstrated an ambivalence towards feminism and feminist projects, frequently refuting any centrality of feminism in her work. However, this does not necessarily mean that her work is not feminist, and indeed this research will argue that it is (and is imbued with a feminist aesthetic). Until relatively recently, she has bristled at being ‘narrowly’ defined as feminist and she has been at pains to present herself as uninterested in being feminist, or in not being feminist. Despite this, it is the argument of this thesis that her films express a feminist sensibility through reoccurring preoccupations, such as the unequal condition of women in society, growing up female, and female sexuality. The central characters struggle within the societies in which they live, and with those societies attempts to constrain women. In addition, there are a number of markers of a feminist politic in Campion’s work, including that a significant number of her closest collaborators (in key creative roles) have been women.⁴⁴ This is particularly significant in an industry where—both locally and globally—women are the minority, and therefore it is unusual for films to be dominated by women in the key creative roles.

After exploring the concepts of feminism and postmodernism in an attempt to locate an appropriate space within which to discuss Campion’s work, this thesis has employed a postmodern-feminist approach, which seems the most useful and apposite to her films. This approach has been selected for two reasons. Firstly, there is evidence that feminism

⁴² Felicity Collins, *The Films of Gillian Armstrong*, ATOM, Melbourne, 1999, p. 12. She is quoting Jocelyn Robson and Beverley Zalcock, *Girls Own Stories: Australian and New Zealand Women’s Films*, Scarlet, London, 1997, p.125.

⁴³ Rueschmann, 2005, p.9.

⁴⁴ For example the following women have worked on more than one film with Campion in key creative roles: producer Jan Chapman, editor Veronica Jenet, cinematographer Sally Bongers, costume designer Janet Patterson, writer Laura Jones, and actor Nicole Kidman (also as producer of *In the Cut*).

and postmodernism have clearly been significant and influential intellectual paradigms for Campion. Secondly, postmodern-feminism provides a way of considering the thesis question that is grounded in neither essentialism nor constructivism—that does not use these terms as oppositions but can accommodate both ideas without hierarchy—and offers another way of thinking about the plurality of gender and gendered experience. For the purposes of this research, postmodern-feminism is understood as a contemporary incarnation of feminism. Feminism and postmodernism are understood as two different and separate movements, this thesis arguing that the dialogue between them, ‘postmodern-feminism’, provides another useful *discursive space*—rather than a paradigm—one where a conversation or critique of the ideas of both in relation to each other is possible. The rationale for this approach is considered further in the methodology section of this chapter, and is also explored in detail in chapter two.

Female experience

Given that the central exploration of this thesis is the articulation of female experience in Campion’s cinema, it is essential to explain the way in which ‘experience’ is understood in this research.

In this thesis, the term ‘experience’ is used in the way it is conventionally understood, to denote something relating to knowledge. ‘Female experience’ is understood here not as homogenous, but rather from the view there are multitudes of perspectives that might be considered female, just as female social identity is complex, and affected by a whole host of experiences and perspectives. Teresa de Lauretis wrote the most insightful and plural definition I have discovered to date, and therefore it is the one I have adopted for this research. She uses the term ‘experience’ to designate “an on-going process by which subjectivity is constructed semiotically and historically”.⁴⁵ More specifically, de Lauretis offers experience as meaning effects “resulting from the semiotic interaction of ‘outer

⁴⁵ Teresa De Lauretis, *Alice Doesn’t, Feminism Semiotics Cinema*, Indian University Press, Bloomington, 1984, p.182.

world’ and ‘inner world’, the continuous engagement of self or subject in social reality”.⁴⁶ Therefore the term ‘female experience’ is characterised in this research by de Lauretis’ definition above, in relation to the female subject.

For feminists, the foregrounding of women’s experience has been an important anti-patriarchal strategy, born out of consciousness-raising. Many feminists have shared the view that research on sex and gender has, among other things, suggested that “men and women in contemporary Western societies are differently constituted as modern human subjects; that they inhabit, experience, and construct the sociopolitical world in different, often incommensurable ways⁴⁷”—and it is an argument of the thesis that Campion is exploring this through her investigation of female experience. While the writer of this thesis concurs with Di Stefano, it also has to be acknowledged that her position is problematic. Some would critique this position as essentialist; the use of the concept of ‘experience’ reflects a “mistaken belief in *experience* as the essence of feminist politics⁴⁸” when, not all women have the same experience, and even if they did, this does not, in any way, ensure any common politics. This research does not assume that women have any universal experience, or ‘natural’ characteristics derived from biology; however, it acknowledges that women have experiences that relate to that biology⁴⁹—as socially mediated, and individual, as they might be. I acknowledge that not all women have the same experiences—even in their bodies. As Diana Fuss has observed, if we think of the body as the referent, then bodies have different experiences that they are a referent of—for example, not all women menstruate or have children. In addition, “[b]odily experiences may seem self-evident and immediately perceptible but they are always socially mediated”,⁵⁰ and therefore relate to a specific context.

⁴⁶ De Lauretis, 1984, p.182.

⁴⁷ Christine Di Stefano, in Linda J. Nicholson, (ed.), *Feminism/Postmodernism*, Routledge, New York and London, 1990, p.64.

⁴⁸ Catherine Belsey and Jane Moore, *The Feminist Reader*, Blackwell Publishers, Malden, USA, p. 107.

⁴⁹ Lucy Irigaray’s work (1974, 1977, 1984) suggested that there is an essential feminine difference derived from biology, which, she saw as repressed by patriarchy. Like Irigaray, this research defines feminine as plural—not a biologically determined feminine. However, it is acknowledged that potential female experiences such as the maternal are biologically based—as discussed by theorists such as Bono and Kemp (1991), Rich (1976) and Kristeva (1980).

⁵⁰ Diana Fuss, *Essentially Speaking: Feminism, Nature & Difference*, Routledge, New York, 1989, p.25.

Experience is a problematic concept, especially for poststructuralists⁵¹, who object to “experience not as a repudiation of grounds of knowing *per se* but rather a refusal of the hypothecization of experience as *the* ground (and the most stable ground) of knowledge production”.⁵² However this research does not argue that there is something that can be regarded as ‘*the* ground,’ but rather that there are complex interactions at work in any knowledge production. Robert Scholes provided a relevant insight for this research in writing that: “what ever experience is ... it is not just a *construct* but something that *constructs*”.⁵³ Thus I am interested in Campion’s view as the author, but also in her investigation of how female experience might construct the ‘woman’ in her representations.

This research adopts the view that there is no essential woman or gender identity, but rather ‘woman’ is a process continuously being constructed—as are representations of ‘woman’. This construction is socially and historically situated. At the heart of Campion’s cinema is her representation, or articulation, of how living one’s life in a female body affects the lives of her central female protagonists—who are shown to be constituted in a particular ways in relation to social reality, and constantly negotiating their place within this social reality.

This implies that Campion is conscious of herself as a woman. An important reason Campion—or women more broadly—might be conscious of themselves as women is politics: a commitment to female points of view and to exploring what it is to be a woman in the world. This is an interesting vantage point from which to consider Campion; is she a filmmaker who takes up a position committed to female points of view, with an interest in communicating with women audiences? An idea that assisted the thinking about this in this thesis, comes from Robert Scholes:

⁵¹ If it operates as a privilege signifier of that which is ‘authentic’ or ‘real’.

⁵² Scholes in Fuss, 1989, p.27.

⁵³ Scholes in Fuss, 1989, p.25.

We are subjects constructed by our experience and truly carry traces of that experience in our minds and in our bodies. Those of us who are male cannot deny this either. With the best will in the world we shall never read as women and perhaps not even like women. For me ... the best I can do is to be conscious of the ground upon which I stand: to read not *as* but *like* a man⁵⁴ (my emphasis).

Following Scholes' line of thinking, could Campion be a filmmaker with a commitment to writing (I mean making her films as cinematic writing) from the perspective of being not just a woman, but *like* a woman.⁵⁵ If she does, then this could be understood as a political choice to follow up female experience; we could therefore arrive at the conclusion that Campion's investment is political, rather than essentialist in intention.⁵⁶ This raises the question of whether Campion speaks *like* a woman—as well as *to* women? Given that she is a woman, this is likely to affect her subjectivity, but what this thesis is more interested in is a question of identification. What is behind this identification (for example, the politics of power relations)? What authorial intent is involved—or is it intuitive?

Campion has been quoted as saying “I like to be able to project myself in to the parts and being a woman I like to therefore have heroines. We don't have many ... I feel like it's my job. Not a crusade – just a natural thing to want to do”.⁵⁷ These comments indicate that she speaks both *like*, and *as* a woman—indicating both the direction from which she constructs her films, and the inflection of her own gender.

⁵⁴ Scholes in Fuss, 1989, p.26.

⁵⁵ Writing as a female writer or *like* a woman is not a simple proposition given the many axes of difference that might be applied in individual cases; however, I am applying this to Campion in particular.

⁵⁶ I am not implying politics or essentialism are mutually exclusive or opposed, nor that Campion's films are essentialist, but that they could be understood as being in dialogue with the sign/essence 'woman'—as a way of breaking down essentialism and its political or textual effects (an issue discussed later in this thesis).

⁵⁷ Judith Lewis, 'Wholly Jane', *LA Weekly*, 21-27/1/00, p. 36.

Rationale

Inquiries into the nature of female authorship have been described by Mayne as shaped by two assumptions: that there is a connection between a writer's personhood and her texts, and that female 'traditions' can be discerned that frequently distance them from the dominant culture.⁵⁸ These are key investigations of this research. When Mayne wrote the above in 1990, she said that there was a substantial canon by women writers of literature, but this was not the case in cinema. However, since then women filmmakers have entered the industry in much larger numbers—particularly in Australia. There is now a significant canon of works by women filmmakers (although it is difficult to trace the lines of influence back to an historic trajectory of female filmic production).

Campion's body of work is of particular significance within this canon, although there are also other women filmmakers, such as Shirley Barrett and Samantha Lang, who have had the opportunity to make several feature films within Australia—the context being an industry where there are more examples of filmmakers who have been only able to make one feature than those with a continuous history of production. Australia has produced numerous women filmmakers who have also enjoyed the opportunity of working offshore, including in Hollywood (for example, Gillian Armstrong, Nadia Tass and Jocelyn Moorhouse). Women filmmakers in New Zealand have also played significant roles both at home and overseas⁵⁹, and women filmmakers have been increasing in numbers internationally. Since 1990, the body of work by women filmmakers has grown to an extent where it can now be productively considered. While this thesis only has the space to consider one filmmaker's oeuvre, it aims to make a contribution that other researchers might continue in relation to the nature of female authorship in the cinema more broadly.

In the past, feminist enquiries based on gender have been rationalized as political acts:

⁵⁸ Mayne, 1990, p.90. She was writing on the relationship between female authorship in literary and cinematic forms.

⁵⁹ For example: Niki Caro (her film *Whale Rider* was nominated for an Oscar); Gaylene Preston (e.g. *Perfect Strangers*, 2003), or Alison Maclean (e.g. *Crush*, 1992 and *Jesus' Son*, 1998 – as well as directing numerous episodes of American television dramas such as *Sex & The City* and *Homicide, Life on the Street*).

The study of a female tradition in literature, while not necessarily an attempt to create ‘a female enclave’, is surely *more* than a methodological choice: it is an urgent political necessity. If patriarchy oppresses women *as* women, defining us all as ‘feminine’ regardless of individual differences, the feminist struggle must both try to undo the patriarchal strategy that makes ‘femininity’ intrinsic to biological femaleness, and at the same time insist on defending women precisely *as* women.⁶⁰

In addition, gendered enquiries have been rationalized because it is not possible to speak of the “differences that inflect gender if gender had not first been shown to make a difference”.⁶¹ As Susan Bordo has observed: “[o]ur language, intellectual history, and social forms are ‘gendered’; there is no escape from this fact and from its consequence in our lives. ... One cannot be gender ‘neutral’ in this culture”.⁶² The implication of this is that gender is inflected or somehow ‘spoken’ (communicated) in our culture. However, pinpointing how this communication occurs and what its essence or form might be has not been satisfactorily resolved. As Carrie Tarr has observed: “[w]hile feminist film critics have become adept at deconstructing dominant male cinema, a methodology for addressing women’s texts is less developed”.⁶³

An important objective of this thesis is that it seeks to articulate the way in which Campion communicates gender, and to understand the silences or failures of communication that her work can be understood as responding to (for example female experience could be understood as not represented, or not adequately represented in cinematic representations historically). The work of Teresa de Lauretis offered both a useful way to proceed, and a rationale for the importance of this study: she observed that experience may affect the social being which we may call the ‘female subject’ through a “complex of habits, dispositions, associations and perceptions, which en-genders one as

⁶⁰ Toril Moi, *Sexual/Textual Politics*, Routledge, London, 2001, p.81.

⁶¹ Susan Bordo, ‘Feminism, Postmodernism, and Gender-Scepticism’, in Linda J. Nicholson, *Feminism/Postmodernism*, Routledge, New York and London, 1990, p.140.

⁶² Bordo, 1990, p.152.

⁶³ Carrie Tarr, *Diane Kurys*, Manchester University Press, Oxford, 1999, p.5.

female”.⁶⁴ It is *that* she says that is “what remains to be analysed, understood, articulated by feminist theory”,⁶⁵ and which is central to this thesis.

Discussions of the works of Campion—sometimes in relation to other women filmmakers—are central, but this is also one of the elements which limits this work, given that it involves a close analysis of the relationship of her films to the historical periods, circumstances, and culture in which they were made. As in Campion’s films, a western, Caucasian, middle-class, heterosexual predilection, perspective and values also inform this thesis.

Literature

At the commencement of this research in 1999, an extensive literature search revealed that there was no comprehensive, scholarly, single authored text on Campion available in English⁶⁶, nor any substantive work on Campion as an auteur. As a response to this gap, it was the initial intention of this research to produce a study of Campion’s entire oeuvre and make a major contribution to the documentation and recognition of the contribution of a key filmmaker, and the contribution she has made to cinema in Australia and internationally. However, during the period of this research several books have been published on Campion, including two significant, single authored monographs: Dana Polan’s 2001 publication *Jane Campion* (2001), and Sue Gillett’s 2004 publication *Views From Beyond the Mirror: The Films of Jane Campion*. The publication of these works meant that this research was able to shift as a result, moving away from the original aim to instead deal with selected films, although links are made between those films and others. The other books on Campion that have been published during the past few years are all collected essays, reprinted collections of essays, or press reception, rather than substantial

⁶⁴ de Lauretis, 1984, p.182.

⁶⁵ de Lauretis, 1984, p.182.

⁶⁶ There had been some publications written in Italian: Sesti, Mario, (prefazione) *Jane Campion*, Dino Audino Editore, Roma, Italy, 1993; Boni, Stefano et al (eds.), *Jane Campion*, Scriptorium, 1994.

single authored works.⁶⁷ For this reason, where they have been relevant they have been discussed within the body of the thesis, as are writings about other women filmmakers, while the two major works by Polan and Gillett are discussed briefly below, in order to situate this thesis within the already published scholarship. However the literature on Campion (including further material from Polan and Gillett) is discussed throughout the thesis, rather than in this section, and it has been selected in relation to its relevance to the thesis question. The first three chapters also function as overviews of the literature—with specific relation to feminist politics, postmodern feminism and authorship/female authorship.

Dana Polan's work covers all of Campion's films except *In the Cut*, which was released after the publication of his monograph. Polan puts a strong emphasis on the reception of Campion's films, and the way in which audiences or critics attribute meanings to the director's work—a subject that is not strongly featured in this thesis, except where female audiences express a connection with Campion's films. In Polan's monograph the film *The Piano* is used as a central text, from the viewpoint of how its critical reception has structured the way in which Campion's subsequent films have been received, and also as a marker for how her cinema changed after the critical and box-office success of *The Piano*. Polan is interested in the intense emotional investment *The Piano* inspired in audiences and describes it as a sensory and tactile 'woman's film', or romantic film of "feminine longing" that is about a woman who "gains new forms of self-expression by taking control of the erotic dimension of her life".⁶⁸ Because of Polan's book, and the voluminous writing on *The Piano*, it has not been explored individually as a central text (the rationale for choosing two other films instead appears in the later section 'Overview of the thesis').

With a particularly modern view of authorship, Polan also considers other 'authors' with whom Campion has worked. He observes the difficulty in gleaning a singular vision from

⁶⁷ I note that 'in-press' is: Kathleen McHugh, *Jane Campion*, University of Illinois, Illinois, forthcoming in 2007.

⁶⁸ Polan, 2001, p. 24.

Campion's oeuvre, suggesting that she might be more profitably considered as one author (among others such as cinematographer Sally Bongers), or that consideration of films from different phases in her career (given the contradictions or variations in the work itself) might be a better approach. While Polan claims that a Campion film signifies an author whose films "work against unity, against the career as a coherent unfolding of a vision"⁶⁹, in my view, it can be argued that what he describes as this lack of a singular vision is related to Campion's own changing perspectives, and more particularly to her notion of the fractured, contradictory nature of identity itself. This 'dispersion' or lack of unity, and an inconsistency of vision or approach, is a form of vision/consistency—in that it is something that in fact unites Campion's work and therefore could be considered as an authorial indicator of her creative approach as a filmmaker.

Polan traces the compelling lure of the author, particularly in cultural analysis. He quotes Foucault, who has influenced his approach in regard to the author, not as a fixed entity, but as fulfilling an 'author function'—where society finds it functional to treat artistic work as authored, as an organising principle for texts, but this is not specifically about the person:

[The] presence of the author's name is functional in that it serves as a means of classification ... [differentiating] them from others. A name also establishes different forms of relationships among texts ... [T]he author's name characterizes a particular manner of existence of discourse. ... its status and its manner of reception are regulated by the culture in which it circulates ... In this sense, the function of an author is to characterise the existence, circulation, and operation of certain discourses within a society.⁷⁰

Sue Gillett's book is an exploration of similar territory to that under investigation in this thesis, although Gillett does not use a postmodern-feminist paradigm. The research around Campion in this thesis attempts to build on Gillett's significant work. Gillett explores the pleasurable aspects of the visual and narrative dimensions of Campion's cinema, especially for women, and from her own perspective effectively offers a passionate

⁶⁹ Polan, 2001, p.12.

individual reception study, as she examines her own personal engagement with Campion's films and the female subjectivities they offer. Like Polan, Gillett is interested in what spectators make of Campion's films, asking what kind of role identification plays in the meaning making activities of the spectator. However, Gillett includes herself in this mix, and explores what I call in this thesis a 'shock of recognition'⁷¹; and as such, is interested in how Campion's films speak particularly to her. This shock is linked to Hans-Georg Gadamer's concept of 'transformative play'—that artworks can cause a rupture that generates transformative experience where something turns to something else that is closer to truth or one's true being.⁷² Gillett's work is discussed in more detail in the body of the thesis itself; in summary, it shares an interest with this thesis in three areas: a) the unspeakable, b) the recognition of female experience that Campion's films offer, and c) questions of how Campion's films involve looking *as* and *with* a woman. Because of these shared concerns, there is some dialogue between Gillett's work and this research. Like Gillett, this research is interested in the intangible, or unspeakable; and in how Campion offers an intervention, or a new way of understanding or visualising, that is difficult to describe. This is perhaps why an understanding of the inflection given by a female author has been so elusive (that, and the fact that in general, female film authors have not been as numerous as men). Having been on a similar journey to Gillett's, and then having taken great inspiration from her passionate work, I believe that it is that unspeakable and intangible thing that this thesis seeks to unravel. In the next section, I indicate the methodology for doing this.

There are also a small number of books about women filmmakers as authors, which offer partial models for the research in this thesis. These books are discussed in the body of the thesis when relevant. The first is Judith Mayne's book, *Directed by Dorothy Arzner*, which

⁷⁰ Foucault, 'What is an Author?', in Donald F Bouchard (ed.), *Language Counter-Memory, Practice*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY, 1977, p. 123 in Polan, 2001, p. 15.

⁷¹ This is the recognition of a female voice: it is referred to as a shock because this voice has been largely silent, or unrepresented within 'conventional cinema', a term hereafter used in this thesis to denote male-centred, patriarchal cinema. Patriarchy in this thesis refers to the situation or state of male dominance where men control social institutions and there is a masculinist ideology embedded in languages.

⁷² See Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 2nd revised ed., Crossroad, New York, 1989, p.114.

describes the way in which the female director enacts a feminine perspective by creating female worlds. Clare Johnson's book on Arzner, *The Work of Dorothy Arzner* outlines how Arzner's work articulates female desire, and can be understood as feminist countercinema.⁷³ Alison Smith's book *Agnès Varda*, discusses her work from the vantage of having an interest in a specifically feminine and feminist cinema, and investigates how Varda's films explore what it means to be a woman, and how she might represent the feminine. Useful books for understanding auteurism were Martine Beugnet's *Claire Denis*—which investigates Denis from the perspective of being an auteur, whose work has artistic references and exists in a framework of cinematic and historical traditions—and Carrie Tarr's book, *Diane Kurys*, which was also instructive for providing insights into female aesthetics. Renate Günther's book *Marguerite Duras*, provided useful ideas on gender construction, and Felicity Collins' *The Films Of Gillian Armstrong* was valuable in thinking about Australian production, and the production of contemporary stories.

Methodology

In order to achieve the above aims, this research has explored how the films themselves offer commentaries that are informed specifically by the author's gender—exploring representational, aesthetic, formal, stylistic, or thematic markers that point to a specifically female presence in film productions. Particular attention is given to evidence of Campion's vision of what it is to be female.

Key methodologies employed are a) the use of postmodern-feminism as a discursive space from which to understand Campion's oeuvre; b) close textual analysis and reflection, and c) analysis of research material in relation to the key research question.

⁷³ Kuhn has defined countercinema as cinema which is oppositional, operating against, questioning, and subverting dominant cinema. Annette Kuhn, *Women's Pictures, Feminism and Cinema*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London & Boston, 1982, p.157. Kaplan used the term 'women's countercinema' to refer to the practices aimed at subverting patriarchal constructions and countering them with female-centred representation. E. Ann Kaplan, *Women and film: Both Sides of the Camera*, Methuen, 1983, p.33.

The research journey involved finding a contemporary incarnation of feminism—‘postmodern-feminism’—and applying it as a useful paradigm from which to explore the thesis question. This is one of the unique contributions made by this work in considering both Campion’s films and the notion of female experience in the cinema. As political/cultural currents, feminism and postmodernism have significantly influenced the West in the last three decades; but, as writers have observed, “there have been remarkably few extended discussions of the relations between them”⁷⁴—something this research contributes.

Through researching feminisms, and thinking about Campion and her frequent denials of a particular allegiance to feminism, it became clear that her reluctance to represent herself as a feminist has not been just a rejection of labels⁷⁵, but also born out of being philosophically aligned with postmodernism—with a view of the world as plural, complex, or as invariably tangled with multiple perspectives, where the unified self is a fiction. For many, and this thesis argues this for Campion, the focus on gender in feminism is too limited or limiting. As writers Nancy Fraser and Linda J. Nicholson have noted, some feminisms have located understandings of “differences among women of different races, sexual orientation, and ethnic groups” as “secondary”.⁷⁶ This has caused many (including feminists) to deny an allegiance to feminism—particularly because the singularity of this perspective does not ring true. However, in response to such problems new feminist positions have evolved, including postmodern-feminism, which led this research in this direction (outlined in chapter two). For some feminists, postmodernism is regarded as involving a loss of politics, but I do not regard this as an issue for this thesis’ consideration of Campion, because what she wants to say is more about her view of women in the world; and while this sometimes involves for instance exposing the politics of power, she is not interested in any didactic message of how anything or anyone should

⁷⁴ Nancy Fraser & Linda J. Nicholson, in Linda J. Nicholson (ed.), *Feminism/Postmodernism*, Routledge, New York and London, 1990, p.19.

⁷⁵ Moi writes that French feminists in particular reject labels, names and ‘isms’ “because they see such labelling activity as betraying a phallogocentric drive to stabilized, organize and rationalize our conceptual universe”. See Moi, 1997, p.115. In addition, the resistance to being labelled is likely to be because this pigeonholes individuals in particular restraining ways.

⁷⁶ Fraser & Nicholson in Nicholson, 1990, p.31.

be, nor in prioritising politics above other concerns. Her work is also postmodern, and as such both postmodern and feminist ideas work to inform Campion's vision and aesthetic.

Also it is important in this thesis to conduct an investigation of authorship and in particular to explore the relationship of the author's gender to her work. The exploration of whether Campion creates any discernable aesthetic that relates to her gender is approached in a number of ways, including through textual analysis, consideration of her aesthetic, evidence of audience identification or communication by female audiences, and also through consideration of the cinematic pleasure found in the films. The experiential is valued in gathering material for this thesis. A part of the approach is qualitative, in using the observations made by women filmmakers themselves speaking about their work—through the lens of practice. From inside the experience, evidence is gathered to reflect on Campion's films, and where there is evidence, on women's filmmaking generally.⁷⁷

It is also pertinent to explore, through the case study of Campion, whether gender differences are significant—that is, do men and women constitute fundamentally different subjects? This exploration leads to the pursuit of a politics of difference that can speak about the way in which women's perspectives have been alienated (not been allowed space to speak) in the dominant, 'male-stream' culture. Teresa de Lauretis has written of gender and representation that it

is the product of various social technologies, such as cinema, and of institutionalised discourses, epistemologies, and critical practices, as well as practices of daily life. Like sexuality, ... gender is not a property of bodies or something originally existent in human beings, but 'the set of effects produced in bodies, behavioural, and social relations', in Foucault's words, by the deployment of a 'complex political technology'.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ Generalizations are not absolute and need to be qualified, but are still useful in thinking about the ways in which future scholarship might go.

⁷⁸ Teresa de Lauretis, *Technologies of Gender: Essays on Theory, Film and Fiction*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1987, pp.2-3.

De Lauretis offers gender as representation, a construction which has a history, and which is constructed within ideology. As Gertrud Koch indicates, the debate that has raged for decades in regard to representation is ongoing: “the issue remains whether films by women actually succeed in subverting this basic model of the camera’s construction of the gaze, whether the female look through the camera at the world, at men, at women and objects will be an essentially different one”.⁷⁹

Because of the centrality of the question of aesthetics, textual analysis is the central methodological approach taken in the thesis. Part of this approach is semiotic. The film texts as aesthetic objects are understood through a semiotic view, where meaning arises “out of the interaction between a creative artist and an active reader”. As Bertrand and Hughes have noted, where “objectivity is impossible; the value of the research lies in its descriptive power, its capacity to enlarge our horizons, without any claim to ‘truth’ or prediction; and the only way a researcher can ‘know’ the real world is through representation, through ‘realism’ rather than ‘reality’”.⁸⁰ This is arrived at both through my own reading of the films as offering coded signs within a cultural context, and through a review of the critical reviews and theoretical writings on Campion’s work. As a partly subjective interpretation, this approach is limited, and this is one reason for the adoption of a range of approaches within this thesis. In addition, film production is a complex technical, aesthetic and industrial production system; there are many authors of any given film, but only the writer/director is considered in this thesis.

The approach of this research is also hermeneutic⁸¹ given that Campion’s intentions are interrogated, not in regard to whether she conveys something that she explicitly intends to or not, but in the sense that the research explores the degree to which a presence and female sex/gender can be discerned in her films. This thesis considers how meaning in

⁷⁹ Koch in de Lauretis, 1987, p.134.

⁸⁰ Both quotes in this sentence are from Ina Bertrand and Peter Hughes, *Media Research Methods: Audience, Institutions, Texts*, Palgrave Macmillian New York, 2005, p.175.

⁸¹ I refer to what the author meant to convey through her text. Hermeneutics refers to the art/science of interpreting texts—or the theory of interpretation. Ideas that are particularly relevant to this thesis include Martin Heidegger’s insistence on the historical specificity of knowledge, and Hans-Georg Gadamer’s argument that interpretation is historical and therefore meaning is without limitation

Campion's films is historical, created from perspective, and this is a complex, potentially limitless source of possible meaning. Understanding the films requires an understanding of many parts, which in turn make understanding the whole possible. Intentionalism⁸² is one consideration among a number of approaches, but this thesis recognizes that audiences produce meanings from texts. Campion's statements about her own work can be understood as texts which in themselves require interpretation, and of course, what they say is not the work, or the same as the work itself. Valuing the experiential is an acceptable and frequently employed feminist methodology. Therefore, as well as traditional research and textual analysis, this thesis explores more qualitative material in the form of women filmmakers, including Campion, speaking about their work in regard to whether there is anything gendered about it. Thus, through the lens of practice, from inside the experience, evidence is gathered to reflect on and consider generalizations on women's filmmaking.

While Campion's statements are considered, there is also an attempt to look for visible signs of authorial presence, which are likely to be both intentional *and* intuitive. This is undertaken through analysis of the 'vision' of the world that Campion offers and a consideration of how some audiences might identify with this vision. This identification involves a "particular way of existing in and knowing the world in which the viewer must appropriate the social roles of character, along with their 'horizons of understanding'".⁸³ This idea is understood not just in relation to audience identification, but also in relation to how she constructs certain horizons of understanding for her audiences. This approach is interpretive, and therefore limited because it is impossible to conclusively know intention—the understanding of which may be coloured by retrospect or intuition.

⁸² This is the theory that the text should be read with the goal of recovering the intentions of the author.

⁸³ Wilson (1993, p.6) quoted in Bertrand & Hughes, 2005, p.188.

Overview of this thesis

With the aim of understanding the vision embodied in Campion's feature films, in particular discovering how her cinema explores and articulates 'female experience', and whether this experience can be perceived and examined in Campion's films, this thesis has several sections.

Firstly, this chapter has introduced and outlined the thesis' aims, key problems, scope, methodology and overview. *Chapters one to three* establish the background theory that contextualizes the case study of Campion in *chapters four to six*. They provide the context for this research, locate it within the theoretical paradigms and research analysed, and outline the way in which these are understood in this work. The thesis is essentially a feminist exploration (this includes postmodern-feminism) and this is why the theoretical chapters are dominant, as important theorising that is demonstrated in the chapters that follow. From *chapter four* onwards, the thesis particularly responds to the question in relation to Campion's films. *Chapter four* is the central chapter in making theoretical arguments, and *chapters four and five* use two of Campion's films (*Holy Smoke!* and *In the Cut*) to illustrate the earlier arguments.

Chapter one is an introduction to feminism and feminist theory as it relates to this thesis. A large amount of time was spent examining, questioning, and evaluating the feminist scholarship that preceded this research, and it is therefore critical to outline the way these ideas contributed to this work, and the research pathway. This chapter introduces ideas that are used to build an argument in the thesis that Campion is a feminist filmmaker, that her films offer a feminist and female aesthetic, perspective, and sensibility—and additionally, that her films embody a gender-differentiated approach, and 'feminine style'.

Chapter two describes the way in which postmodern-feminism is used in this thesis, and why it provided a useful and insightful feminist pathway for a study of Campion's feature films, particularly given that these films are infused with postmodernism and feminism.

Essentially postmodern-feminism can be understood as a critical approach that uses postmodern and feminist ideas in relation to each other. Arguing that Campion is interested in exploring difference, chapter two discusses how she constructs difference in a way that can help to rethink, or reinscribe, sex and gender in non-oppositional terms. And finally, this chapter explores the idea that individuals are understood as social and cultural productions—individual identity is a production constantly taking place—something all Campion's films demonstrate.

The third chapter deals with authorship as a methodological approach, and the questions or problems inherent in it. This was also an essential pathway for this research given that it is based around a single author, and there is a large body of theory around authorship in the cinema. As this author is also a woman, it was also necessary to consider the (largely feminist) theory around female authorship by way of understanding why a consideration of the 'female' author might be important in itself, in what ways this consideration had already been undertaken (or not undertaken)—and, how this research might relate to this thesis.

Proceeding from the research described in the earlier chapters, chapter four explores the central questions of the thesis. Campion is considered in so far as she is an auteur, and a female and feminist author. Her films are considered from the view of how, as an 'enunciator' in her films she can be understood to communicate her understandings of female experience and female subjectivity. Questions include whether there is a female authorial imprint (or voice), whether Campion shares and expresses a consciousness of being a woman, and whether she is involved in bringing a new way of seeing, or a rarely expressed vision that articulates female experience. The chapter explores the link between gender and production by considering Campion's aesthetic and whether through it, she aestheticizes female experience.

Chapters five and six extend and demonstrate the work begun in the previous chapter by taking two of Campion's films as exemplars of the central explorations discussed in

chapter four. Each film is discussed in regard to how they present distinctive articulations of female experience in the cinema. I have selected Campion's two most recent films for particular discussion because the films since (and including) *The Piano* are her most mature and accomplished, and while *The Piano* has been extensively written about, very few scholars have written about the other two. I find *In the Cut* to be particularly interesting for its confident vision and its exploration of contemporary, modern female experience. It was also important to consider a film that Campion wrote, and she co-wrote *Holy Smoke!*—a film that also has something to say about Australia, another reason for selecting it for particular focus. In addition, my research revealed that Campion has become increasingly comfortable with being branded a feminist and I wanted to see if her most recent films provide any evidence or assertions of her feminism.

Chapter five, 'Girlshine' and *Holy Smoke!* (1999) describes the short and radiant period that young women experience when they become cognizant of themselves as powerful sexual beings. 'Girlshine', a term coined in this thesis, is a unique contribution that *Holy Smoke!* offers in regard to female existence. It is argued that Campion produces feminine cinematic writing—or a "cinema of *jouissance*"⁸⁴—and that *Holy Smoke!* presents an insight into how Ruth, a luminous young woman, unsettles the patriarchal order. The film focuses on the effect she has on all those around her, the tenuousness of identity, and the complex relations between the sexes. The discussion also further analyses the postmodern-feminism evident in the work, further illustrating Campion's feminist vision, voice, and perspective—something continued in chapter six, 'Another social vision: *In the Cut*'. This chapter examines some themes and approaches present in Campion's entire oeuvre. *In the Cut* attempts to understand the mythology around love, romance, sexuality and femininity; to explore her preoccupations with love, gender relations and trauma; and to observe the particular historic situation for modern urban women. Campion offers *another* social vision of women through the feminine texture of her work, and its non-patriarchal view. The final chapter, the conclusion, outlines how the thesis question, has

⁸⁴ Claire Johnston in Kuhn, 1994, p.168.

been answered as well as outlining the significance of the research, and what conclusions can be drawn in relation to that question.

Chapter 1

Jane Campion and feminist politics

Introduction

Feminists have theorized at length on the subject of female experience. This chapter therefore explores feminist perspectives and theory, particularly in relation to cinema. The aim here is firstly, to describe Campion's relationship to feminism; secondly, to outline how feminist theories, ideas and literature have impacted on this research, and are understood, used and contextualized in this thesis; and finally, to delineate the key issues, questions, and theoretical problems in pursuing the research question from a feminist perspective. This chapter does not canvas the history of feminism, feminist film practice, and feminist theory, which have all been well documented elsewhere.⁸⁵

The sheer volume, diversity and scope of feminist theory has necessitated an extended investigation into 'feminisms' as part of this research journey, and its objective of finding a meaningful space within which to investigate the research question. This thesis has both the benefit and challenge of being written after decades of feminist theorising, which not only means that it has been written with knowledge of the many positions that feminists have occupied, but it is also written and located within a contemporary Western context. What is clear is that "the possible dimensions and permutations of interrelations between it [feminism] and cinema become enormous".⁸⁶ In addition, working out whether one is considering a feminist cultural intervention, or a viewer's feminist predilection, is complex, if not impossible to determine; as Annette Kuhn has noted, the

⁸⁵ For histories of feminism see for example: Marlene Le Gate, *In Their Time: A History of Feminism in Western Society*, Routledge, New York & London, 2001; Mary Eagleton (ed.), *Concise Companion to Feminist Theory*, Blackwell Publishing, Malden, Oxford, Carlton & Berlin, 2003; Maggie Humm (ed.), *Feminism A Reader*, Harvester Wheatsheaf, New York, London, Toronto, Sydney, Tokyo & Singapore, 1992. For examinations of women's feminist film practice see Kuhn, 1982 or Jacqueline Levitin, Judith Plessis, & Valerie Raoul, (eds.) *Women Filmmakers: Refocusing*, University of British Columbia Press, Vancouver, 2003. There is a wealth of publishing around feminism and film and many of these sources are referenced throughout this thesis.

⁸⁶ Kuhn, 1982, p. 4.

perceived feminism in any work could just as easily come from the predisposition of the reader, as it could from the attributes of its author.⁸⁷

Feminisms

The plural term ‘feminisms’ is employed within this thesis as an acknowledgement that feminism has never been a single or unified movement, and the term ‘feminisms’ recognizes the plurality and multiplicity of possible feminist points of view—although all feminisms share an opposition to patriarchy or any oppression of women.⁸⁸

As I have written elsewhere, feminism is a movement “that has always engaged in self-criticism and change”.⁸⁹ Feminist theories are organic, responsive and constantly being re-evaluated by feminists themselves. The evolution of feminism as a self-critical paradigm has enabled it to acknowledge its own limitations and rework them, and means that feminist theorising has continued to be relevant, despite a backlash against feminism continuing from the 1990s.⁹⁰ Feminism has recognized and responded to the diversity of women’s experience or material conditions: as writer Hannie Rayson has observed, “women don’t exist as a single distinctive group but are subject to individual problems due to other factors such as class, race, ethnic origin, access to employment etc”.⁹¹

Historically feminist theory has explored, questioned and analysed the cinema from a range of perspectives, including, among many other concerns, aiming to understand women’s—and men’s—relationships to representation; spectator-screen relationships and

⁸⁷ Kuhn, 1982, p. 8.

⁸⁸ Not all women are feminist, and men might be informed by feminist perspectives.

⁸⁹ French, 2003, p. 27.

⁹⁰ The anti-feminist backlash was partly driven by those who regarded feminism as passé and unnecessary. Feminism’s image problem has been a lack of understanding of what it has stood for. Gunby has argued that young women have resisted the perceived rigid binaries and moralisms of radical-feminism, and rejected a feminist identity on the grounds it would restrict them at a time they want to believe they can be anything they want. Ingrid Gunby, ‘Postmodern Identity Politics’, 1991 at: <http://www.massey.ac.nz/~nzsrda/nzssreps/journals/sites/sites24/gunby24.htm> Accessed 21/9/04.

⁹¹ Hannie Rayson, ‘Women’s Laboratory - The Sequel’, *Filmnews* Vol.24, No.3, April, 1994, p.6.

relations of looking; cinematic language; politics; aesthetics; and ideology.⁹² The methodologies used by feminist theorists have been interdisciplinary and diverse; as Elaine Showalter has argued, feminist theories “are not pieces in a single huge critical system, but a variety of positions and strategies engaged in a vigorous internal debate”.⁹³

During the 1970s there was a direct relationship to the practice of many women filmmakers, with many theorists also making films.⁹⁴ However this relationship has changed, and in the contemporary period, an explicitly consolidated feminist film practice doesn’t exist—although films are still being made that are underpinned by feminist politics. Contemporary feminist views have moved towards an understanding of ‘woman’ in terms of difference, and in so doing, acknowledge that there is no singular truth about womanhood.

Feminisms and Campion

Throughout Campion’s career reviewers, writers and theorists have explored her relationship to feminism—although she has frequently denied any particular allegiance to feminist activism, or to making feminist films, despite the markers of feminism that are evident in her films and her approach to filmmaking. While the more complex indicators of her feminism are explored in later chapters, there are clear pointers to its legacy in her work: namely that she has “explored and cultivated female voices, their silences, their

⁹² Humm succinctly offers the most important critics exemplifying the variety of contemporary feminist theory: the psychoanalytic (Mulvey), materialism (Kuhn), postmodernism (Kaplan) and Black feminism (hooks). See Maggie Humm, *Feminism and Film*, Edinburgh & Indiana University Press, Edinburgh, 1997, p.16.

⁹³ Elaine Showalter (1986, p.4) in Paola Bono & Sandra Kemp (eds.), *Italian Feminist Thought: A Reader*, Blackwell, Oxford UK & Cambridge USA, 1991, p. 3.

⁹⁴ Theorists who made films that directly linked to their feminist theorising include Laura Mulvey, Michelle Citron and Kate Millett. Citron has said that at that times she strongly felt the need to articulate “women’s experiences and saw the need for a new film language with which to do so”, but in retrospect she is less convinced of their value—she now regards them as offering intellectual rather than emotional pleasure. See Michelle Citron in Sue Thornham, ‘Feminism and Film’ in Sarah Gamble (ed.), *The Routledge Companion to Feminism and Postfeminism*, Routledge, London and New York, 2002, p.103.

delusions, their insights, and their passions through all her films".⁹⁵ All her stories have central female protagonists who are involved in a struggle with the constraints and inequalities imposed on them by society.

Campion publicly eschewed feminism in her comments in relation to her 1984 production, *After Hours*, a film that was apparently intended to be explicitly feminist, and where it would have been appropriate to highlight the film's feminist agenda.⁹⁶ However, she expressed discomfort with feminism, commenting that she does not like films that "say how one should or shouldn't behave. ... the world is more complicated than that".⁹⁷ This was a telling response, because it illustrated that she believed feminism to be prescriptive and confining.

When asked if she was a feminist director in 1991, Campion replied:

I have to admit that I no longer know what this means or expresses. I think that feminist culture arose as a reaction to stereotypical representations, to male dominated perspectives. A lot had to be clarified which, I think, has been clarified by now: my stance towards filming is not defined *just* by this challenge. This whole discussion is *too limited*. I am interested in life as a whole. Even if my representation of female characters has a feminist structure, this is nevertheless only one aspect of my approach.⁹⁸

This quotation indicates that she considered feminism as a part of her approach as an expressive artist, but problematic because she regarded it as *too limited*—suggesting both empathy and resistance. There is some evidence that Campion generally resists views that are rigid or dogmatic, and this gives some insight into her problematic relationship with feminism. For example, in 1997 it was written that "she resists anything that smacks of feminist pieties or unfriendliness to men".⁹⁹

⁹⁵ Kathleen McHugh, 'Sounds That Creep Inside You: Female Narration And The Voice Over In The Films Of Jane Campion', *Style*, Vol. 35, No. 2, 2001, pp. 193–218 at <http://www.highbeam.com/library/docfree.asp?DOCID=1G1:97074180&ctrlinfo=Round19%3AMode199a%3ADocG%3AResult&ao=> Accessed 1/5/06.

⁹⁶ It was a project about sexual abuse of women at work and was commissioned by the AFC's Women's Film Unit (which existed between 1976 and 1989).

⁹⁷ Wright Wexman, 1999, p.35.

⁹⁸ My emphasis. Wright Wexman, 1999, p.87.

⁹⁹ Campion in Wright Wexman, 1999, p.199.

However, more recent comments (2004) show her to be less concerned with deflecting feminism than she had been in the past and she has displayed a sense of humour about the issue: “I seem to be always telling stories with strong female characters and upsetting the patriarchy”.¹⁰⁰ The fact that she is embracing more overtly feminist views in recent times may be a product of Campion’s maturity, or possibly it is related to what I perceive as the increasing interest in feminism in the wider culture.¹⁰¹

Campion’s approach, when being asked about her own feminism or whether she takes up a female perspective, has been fairly typical for contemporary women filmmakers over the last two decades. As I have observed elsewhere¹⁰², they have generally resisted any categorization; opting instead to focus on how they are regarded in relation to their own merits in their craft—that is, they would rather be judged for their own vision and achievements as filmmakers, than as feminists. In general, women filmmakers have wanted to be viewed as creative people rather than a particular type of creative person. For example, in the past, Gillian Armstrong said “we will never achieve true equality until people drop the label ‘woman’ before ‘director’”.¹⁰³

There is a long history of women resolutely resisting labels, insisting on equality and on being regarded as people, rather than as women—perhaps for fear that acknowledgement of gender will prevent them from claiming a place as a creative person on their own terms. As Bordo notes this can be seen as far back as the 1920s: “[w]e’re interested in people now – not men and women” a female literary group proclaimed in 1919.¹⁰⁴ Some

¹⁰⁰ Campion in Gary Maddox, ‘For film-maker Campion, it’s a wrap – for now’, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 7/11/04, p.3. It may be that Campion is more comfortable with a feminist label now that there is less dialogue about feminism in the culture itself—or, she may have a stronger feminist sensibility now.

¹⁰¹ As evidenced by the increasing number of books on women filmmakers published in the last five years.

¹⁰² French, 2003, p. 25.

¹⁰³ Gillian Armstrong in Felicity Collins, *The Films Of Gillian Armstrong*, ATOM, Melbourne, 1999, p. 9.

¹⁰⁴ Bordo says of these women in the 1920s that they were focused on an idea of a ‘new woman’. They were motivated by desire not to be linked with a former generation who’d made themselves irritating and regarded ‘neutral’ standards of objectivity, and excellence, as a means of being accepted as

women filmmakers have claimed this focus on being human rather than on sex or other. In discussing whether or not she would like to make a feminist film, Varda said that it would

never be my only aim. I would never think that I was born to express what women suffer and what women have to change in society. I am a human being and some things can be understood as a human being. You don't have to emphasize all the time that you are a woman.... Women can be as wrong as men about women and some men can be better [e.g. Bergman]. ... Even though the identification of women has to be made by a woman ...¹⁰⁵

These comments indicate a similar ambivalence to Campion's, given she is also resisting or commenting on the category of feminism as *too limited*, as restricting an understanding of the many factors that are in play.

In the contemporary period there has been a complex interaction of factors leading to this general shirking by women filmmakers of notions of either a feminist, or a female, perspective. These have included a resistance to reductive categorization; a profound boredom arising from having this question repeatedly directed at them (as if female might somehow equal feminist—which it does not); and a desire not to be creatively limited by being regarded as only being able to express female points of view. In addition, there have been changes in the currency of feminism. The term feminism itself was used infrequently from the 1990s due to the cultural backlash against feminism (already described), and many women avoided its use—which does not necessarily mean they did not subscribe to a feminist politic, or perspective, but rather they resisted the label. In addition, through the 1990s new feminist incarnations, such as those described as 'postmodern-feminism' or 'poststructuralist feminism' and 'postfeminism'¹⁰⁶ described

humans, not women - which would have "marked them as outsiders". Bordo, in Nicholson, 1990, p.152. I believe these women could be regard the first postfeminists.

¹⁰⁵ Varda in Jacqueline Levitin, 'Mother of the New Wave: An Interview with Agnes Varda', *Women & Film*, Vol. 1, No. 5-6, 1974, p. 63.

¹⁰⁶ Postmodern-feminism, poststructural-feminism and postfeminism are understood in this thesis as contemporary incarnations of feminism. Postmodern-feminism and poststructural-feminism use postmodern and poststructural ideas for feminist purposes. Postfeminism is viewed not as anti-feminist, as it has sometimes been defined, but as Mary Douglas Varvras defines postfeminism (using ideas from Judith Stacey) as simultaneously incorporating, revising, and depoliticising many of the central goals of second-wave feminism. See, Mary Douglas Varvras, *Postfeminist News: Political Women in Media Culture*, State University of New York Press, Albany, 2002, p.22.

contemporary feminist ways of thinking. The fact that over the last decade women filmmakers have not wanted to be labelled does not mean that what many of them have to say is not feminist—and as this thesis will demonstrate, Campion's work certainly earns that description, even if she herself doesn't own the label.

Feminism as a context for Campion's work

While Campion's films range across different historical periods, and their female characters deal with the materiality of the locations surrounding them, she is a contemporary author, and this is the position from which her films speak. It is an argument of this thesis that Campion's work is influenced by the era (with its dominant ideas), and the places in which she has lived and worked. As E. Ann Kaplan has noted, what "‘feminism’ can mean in any historical period depends upon the specific constraints within which women lived and worked. Varying constraints require different strategies of resistance ...".¹⁰⁷

By the time Campion had attended the Australian Film and Television School (between 1981 and 1984), feminist film culture had been consolidated through training and access, and women's filmmaking started to embrace less explicitly feminist subject matter.¹⁰⁸ As already discussed, the 1980s were a period of consolidation of feminist culture through training and access, followed from the 1990s onwards by the great success of antipodean women filmmakers, led by Gillian Armstrong and then Campion herself. The 1990s, saw a rise of women successfully working within mainstream film production.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ E. Ann Kaplan, 'Women, Film, Resistance: Changing Paradigms', in Levitin et al, 2003, p.15.

¹⁰⁸ Arguably, it was starting to become less clear what constituted (or did not constitute) an explicitly feminist subject matter given that feminism was beginning to become more theoretically nuanced and feminist concerns more disparate.

¹⁰⁹ As I have outlined in *Womenvision*, this can be demonstrated in commercial, international contexts such as the Cannes Film Festival, where Australian women have increasingly distinguished themselves in the past two decades: Campion won the Golden Palm for Best Short Film in 1986 with *Peel: An Exercise in Discipline*, and then later the top prize: Palme d'Or for Best Feature *The Piano*. Jocelyn Moorhouse's film *Proof* (1991) was invited as part of the Official Selection for the Directors Fortnight at Cannes (1991), Shirley Barrett won the Camera d'Or for best debut feature with *Love Serenade* (1996), Samantha Lang was the only female director in the competition at Cannes with *The Well* (1997) and Emma-Kate Croghan sold her film, *Love and Other Catastrophes* (1996), to Miramax

Since the 1990s women filmmakers working from an Australian base have toiled alongside men within the mainstream structures. During this period feminist interventions into film culture have been undertaken without any overt feminist positioning, such as through filmmakers making overt feminist statements, or collective groups of women visibly working towards a feminist agenda, or countercinema. Laura Mulvey has argued that feminist filmmakers took the approach of working within the mainstream from the late 1980s, when she claimed feminist film theory had “lost touch with feminist filmmaking”.¹¹⁰ However some feminists have considered the abandoning of overt feminism as the trading of control for power, that power means

‘the opportunity to reach a larger audience, the potential of using mainstream culture to critique or subvert it, the freedom to define and test one’s own boundaries as a filmmaker’. ... a move into an engagement with ‘contradictions, paradoxes, uncertainties’ of mainstream narrative film.¹¹¹

However, as Campion’s work demonstrates, a move to the mainstream does not mean that feminist visions, stories or approaches have been lost—rather they have taken a different, or less overt form.¹¹²

Throughout the 1990s women filmmakers in Australia, New Zealand and globally, have asserted their own female voices or perspectives, and this has continued through the new millennium. While still numerically the minority as directors, there has been an

after an impressive showing there. Australian women filmmakers have increasingly taken up opportunities to make films in the mainstream Hollywood system; for example: Gillian Armstrong, Jane Campion, Nadia Tass, and Jocelyn Moorhouse.

¹¹⁰ Mulvey in Gamble, 2002, p.103.

¹¹¹ Citron in Gamble, 2002, p.103.

¹¹² Campion’s films have been firstly independent art film, but since *The Piano* she has been in the art film sector of mainstream.

increasing number of explicitly female voices or perspectives¹¹³, even though women filmmakers themselves have frequently rejected assertions that their films—or even they themselves—might be feminist, or offer particular insights from female perspectives. Maggie Humm comments that by the 1990s “critics ... were distancing themselves from the binary heterosexism of much psychoanalytic theory”¹¹⁴, and there was a broadening of thinking in this period from the “stars, stereotypes and spectatorship”, which had excited film theorists in the 1970s and 1980s, widening from the 1990s through broader pluralist approaches to film and theory, “into a heightened investigation of race, sexual orientations and culture”.¹¹⁵ These intellectual concerns also affect practitioners, and the latter ideas were prevalent in the period in which Campion came into her own as a filmmaker: she made six features between 1989 and 2003.

A feminist perspective or ‘voice’

As far as this research is concerned, a feminist perspective or voice is one where the individual has a perspective that is, or can be perceived to be, informed or shaped by feminism. This perspective might include a number of ‘markers’ in the work. One such marker might include being aware of the difference in representations of men and women in mainstream ‘patriarchal culture’—something that can be understood, in relation to cinema, as: “dominant intellectual and cinematic discourses which position women as ‘Other’, foreign and silent”.¹¹⁶

¹¹³ Created by the increasing number of women entering the industry and taking up key creative positions across it (particularly in Australia). While the number of women making films does not imply any particular kind of vision, the increasing number is likely to increase the incidence of female-centred visions. *Premiere Magazine* published an issue on ‘Women in Hollywood in 2000’ and this stated that Australian women had been able to make personal films that reached a wider audience than American women had. See Christine Spines, ‘Behind Bars: Town Without Bars’, *Premier: Special Edition: Women in Hollywood*, January 2000, pp.45-48. Further evidence of the increasing numbers of women in the industry is provided in Julie James Bailey, Affirmative Action: Getting Women Behind the Television Camera’, in French, 2003, pp. 79-91.

¹¹⁴ See Humm, 1997, p.5.

¹¹⁵ See Humm, 1997, p.16.

¹¹⁶ Kate Sands, ‘Women of the New Wave; Australian Women’s Film-making : mainstream or independent?’, *Back Of Beyond, Discovering Australian Film and Television*, AFC, 1988, pp.5-6.

The understanding of a feminist perspective or voice that was identified early in feminist writing in Australia, is still true today. For instance, writer Kate Sands described filmmaking with a feminist voice as characterized by countering patriarchal culture—so as to realize both a voice and a speaking position for women through alternative forms or structures that relate to gender in a new way: “they delineate the specificity of women's knowledge, experience and the construction of feminine identity ... The end result may be a different type of cinematic pleasure”.¹¹⁷ This characterization is still appropriate today, as the discussion of Campion's films in this thesis will show. In considering Campion's work, this thesis considers to what degree her filmmaking is imbued with this ‘voice’ or perspective—and therefore achieves this ‘different cinematic pleasure’.

Female, the feminine, and feminine subjectivity

In this research the term ‘feminist’ denotes political advocacy, ‘female’ refers to a fact of one's biological sex, and the concept ‘femininity’ refers to the way in which society has constructed notions of ‘femaleness’. It is noted that many feminists have denounced ‘femininity’ as a patriarchal concept—arguing that celebrating the feminine and matriarchy could arguably “belong more to patriarchal ideas of femininity than feminist ones”.¹¹⁸ Femininity and femaleness have tended to be incorrectly confused; as Toril Moi observes, patriarchy “wants us to believe that there is an essence of femaleness, called femininity”.¹¹⁹

Women are female but they are not necessarily ‘feminine’, and concrete or fixed definitions of ‘femininity’ are potentially essentialist and patriarchal. Although female stereotypes abound, ‘femininity’ isn't a fixed or unchanging concept; this research

¹¹⁷ Sands, 1988, p.6.

¹¹⁸ Jennifer Stott, ‘Celluloid Maidens: All teched-up and nowhere to go’, in Annette Blonski, Barbara Creed, & Freda Freiberg, *Don't Shoot Darling, Women's Independent Filmmaking in Australia*, Greenhouse Publications Pty Ltd, Richmond, Australia, 1987, p.16.

¹¹⁹ Toril Moi, ‘Feminist, Female, Feminine’, in Catherine Belsey and Jane Moore, (eds.) *The Feminist Reader: essays in gender and the politics of literary criticism*, (2nd ed) Blackwell Publishers, Malden, Great Britain, 1997, p.108.

understands ‘femininity’ as varying contextually, historically and across different cultures.¹²⁰

Femininity does not denote a feminine ‘essence,’ but a social/cultural construct, or a categorising of things conventionally agreed to be ‘feminine’—such as kindness, sensitivity to the feelings of others, or inclination towards being over-emotional. Therefore ‘femininity’ has no necessary relationship to either ‘female’ or ‘feminist’—although these terms are often incorrectly conflated.

By definition, female subjectivity is the subjective experience of someone who lives in a female body. While many filmmakers or writers have created convincing characters of the opposite sex to their own, this leads to the question—is there a difference in the subjectivity constructed by a woman, and that constructed by a man, in relation to representing female experience? I have had to acknowledge that there is no certain way of determining this. However, this study is interested in gathering research that reflects on this question, as well as surveying research that considers whether a gender can only be ‘authentically’¹²¹ represented from inside that gender.

Fiona Probyn has offered some ideas that reflect on this topic in an article on the male writer J.M. Coetzee, whose work frequently employs the use of the female narrator.¹²² While cinematic and literary authorship are different, Probyn offered some interesting ideas when she wrote that Coetzee uses metaphors of feminisation to emphasize his disempowerment, as Probyn states other male writers also do. She writes that Coetzee understands writing as bound up with power, and constructs his white women narrators as being aware of this “from a position of marginality in relation to the canon, its

¹²⁰ This thesis takes the view that femininity is an historically and culturally varying construction, and that attempts to fix the meaning of femininity contribute to essentialism and binary oppositions (for example women as the ‘Other’ to masculinity). See Moi, 1997, p.109.

¹²¹ I recognize the problem that what is authentic can be claimed as subjective and determining or defining it is difficult.

¹²² *In The Heart of the Country* (1979), *Foe* (1986) and *Age of Iron* (1990).

recognized literary forms, and its masculinist dominance”.¹²³ Interestingly, Probyn describes Coetzee’s own declaration in possessing the feminine position as a “position of weakness”.¹²⁴ Coetzee locates himself as rejecting the white man’s cultural authority, but Probyn indicates that this is problematic since Coetzee cannot be without authority (and complicity) as a celebrated, male, white, South African author. If one extends this idea to white, male authors in general, then one could also argue, as Probyn does in relation to Coetzee, that one cannot simply step outside of one’s social caste, and attempting to do this imposes a kind of ‘masculine transcendence’ which itself raises a question of enunciation, or as Grosz has observed, who speaks for whom—with what interests and positioning? Probyn quotes Elizabeth Grosz (reading Irigaray) who has written that

The masculine is able to speak of and for women because it has emptied itself of any relation to the male body, thus creating a space of reflection, of specula(aris)ation in which it claims to look at itself and at femininity from outside. This presumed ‘outsideness’ is equated with objectivity.¹²⁵

This thesis explores the proposition that it is not the same thing for a man, and a woman, to take up a feminine subject position. Kaja Silverman has argued that gendered positions of libidinal desire within the text should be read “in relation to the biological gender of the biographical author, since it is clearly not the same thing, socially or politically, for a woman to speak with a female voice as it is for a man to do so and visa versa”.¹²⁶ The position of this thesis is to concur with Silverman. However, while both men and women can cinematically represent female experience, it is a larger task than this research to prove that these representations are not the same. A comparison between the films of male and female authors is therefore not attempted here, but rather, through the case study of Campion, the thesis aims to show that gender, and gendered experience or subjectivity are visible in Campion’s films, and that this representation—or subjectivity—has been unrepresented in the majority of mainstream cinema. Campion’s films offer a

¹²³ Fiona Probyn, ‘J.M. Coetzee: Writing with/out authority’, 2002 at <http://social.chass.ncsu.edu/jouvert/v7is1/probyn.htm> Accessed 17/6/06.

¹²⁴ Probyn, 2002.

¹²⁵ Probyn, 2002, quoting Elizabeth Grosz, *Sexual Subversions: Three French Feminists*, Allen & Unwin, Cross Nest, NSW, 1989, p.128.

sensibility to that experience or subjectivity, which works to position the audience to gain female experience and perspectives—encouraging the audience to occupy a female, feminine and/or feminist perspective/s. I acknowledge that not all female film authors necessarily explore or attempt to represent female experience, and some male directors are more empathetic than others. However, it is significant and important to note that empathy is not identical to experience, and the resulting films are likely to reflect this difference. This assertion is essentialist in itself, and is both a tension, and a fundamental idea underpinning this thesis. It is something that this research seeks to provide evidence of—noting that this cannot be conclusively proven in a work of this size.

Feminist, female and feminine aesthetics

The term ‘aesthetics’ has been taken here to refer to elements of a work such as expressiveness, complexity, creativity, and formal or stylistic qualities. The aesthetic of a given work will take the form of perceivable formal elements that may evoke emotional or cognitive responses in audiences. Any given aesthetic will have a set of relevant traits, and can therefore be used to organize or understand particular patterns or qualities common to the given aesthetic; therefore there is a link to the aesthetics of a work and the artist who produced that work.

A feminist aesthetic is of interest because it might come out of ‘female experience’, and therefore it is important to consider whether Campion’s work could be described as employing a feminist aesthetic. Although not all women are feminists, and some men may be informed by a feminist perspective, one could argue that women are more likely to be feminist, and therefore feminist aesthetics might also be more often found in work by women. Themes in feminist aesthetics since the 1970s include feminists trying to break down the idea that we can encounter “art and experience neutrally¹²⁷”; and tying “feminist

¹²⁶ Silverman in Mayne, 1990, p.97.

¹²⁷ Terry Barrett, 2000, *Criticizing Art: Understanding the Contemporary*, 2nd. Ed., Mayfield Publishing Co., 2000, p.47.

aesthetics ostensibly to specific female experiences¹²⁸ (because of a need for female creative visibility, to break from patriarchy, and to place women within historical canons). Feminist aesthetics has claimed “the existence of gender differentiated approaches to artistic processes, products and aesthetic response”.¹²⁹

While a detailed overview of the history of feminist aesthetics is outside the scope of this thesis, it is noted that feminist theorising offers a long history of examining feminist aesthetics; Maggie Humm has argued that in doing so “rather than describing the visual as an intact ‘scopic field’, feminists were looking for pleasures in the gaps of visual codes”,¹³⁰ and that “feminist aesthetics focuses on women’s social subjectivity, not simply on visual imagery, and feminist art aims to transform the asocial, sexist values of traditional aesthetics.”¹³¹ This thesis argues that Campion’s films are focused on women’s social subjectivity and work against sexist views of what women are. An approach that claims the existence of female, feminist or feminine aesthetics does not aim to imply that all women fit into any singular form but rather, aspires to foreground the social construction of femininity, to re-vision representation, and in so doing, look for pleasurable identifications for female audiences, or gaps in conventional representation that when finally represented, might offer new pleasures¹³² and visions of women. This undertaking is explored in this thesis via an axis of female experience.

A major objective of this research is an exploration of whether there is a discernable female aesthetic in Campion’s films. This involves research into the degree to which a female aesthetic has already been observed by other researchers, as well as an application of these ideas to examine whether they illuminate Campion’s aesthetic, and suggest a way forward for this research. The question of a female (and also a feminine aesthetics) has been extensively theorized—for example by Silvia Bovenchen, Laura Mulvey, Claire

¹²⁸ Humm, 1997, p.9.

¹²⁹ Kristin Congdon in Barrett, 2000, p.47.

¹³⁰ Humm, 1997, p.11.

¹³¹ Humm, 1997, pp.10–11.

¹³² I use ‘new’ here in the sense that they are not or not generally represented. As de Lauretis has observed (quoting Laplanche and Pontalis), women’s images and subjectivities “until very recently, if at all – have not been ours to shape, to portray, or to create”. See de Lauretis, 1987, p.130.

Johnston, Adrienne Rich, Gisela Ecker and Teresa de Lauretis—but despite this work, it is an area of ongoing debate, and in need of further examination.

Patriarchal ideology works to naturalize and essentialise women, and to represent femininity as a female essence and something desirable for women in our culture. A woman who isn't feminine may be labelled as somehow unnatural, or a failure, and, a woman who is too masculine is likely to be equally criticized (and visa-versa).¹³³ However, there is general agreement among feminist writers that the patterns of sexuality, or behaviour, determined to be 'feminine' are neither natural to women (therefore female), nor embodied by all women. It may seem an obvious statement, but it is important that female and femininity are not confused with each other.¹³⁴

Despite its link to patriarchal thinking, the feminine has been championed for political purposes, but beyond that, it appears that it is also used to denote qualities that some women identify as specifically belonging to, or borne out of, living one's life in a female body. It is important to clarify these distinctions early on in this thesis, firstly because (as is argued later) Campion herself has blurred masculinity and femininity, representing them as traits that are not necessarily located in one sex or the other, and secondly, because of the way Campion herself appears to understand the 'feminine' as a style¹³⁵, using it to describe the characteristics, or distinctive and identifiable form of her films. For example, she has been quoted as saying

I like detail and I read things into detail and, I think that is quite a feminine quality. ... I'm satisfied with that, I don't expect to be dealing with the big explosions and the big fights and I'll see my whole world in something much smaller.¹³⁶

¹³³ For a discussion on the feminine see Moi, 1997, pp.108-109. Moi offers a case study of a women criticized for being too masculine in Toril Moi, *What is a Woman?*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1999, pp.99-112.

¹³⁴ For a discussion on this see Moi, 1999, p.37.

¹³⁵ Discussed and defined later in this thesis.

¹³⁶ Campion in Marie Mandy, *Women Film Desire: A Journey through Women's Cinema*, The Factory, Sage Film, ARTE France, RTBF (Television belge), 2000.

Among feminist critics there is no agreement on whether or not there is a female aesthetic and this is certainly problematic terrain. On this question, Teresa de Lauretis notes that Silvia Bovenschen said ‘yes’ *and* ‘no’: “[c]ertainly there is, if one is talking about aesthetic awareness and modes of sensory perception. Certainly not, if one is talking about the unusual variant of artistic production or about a painstakingly constructed theory of art”.¹³⁷ This point emphasizes that it is not something that has been locked down theoretically. De Lauretis offered an insight that has been useful in this research, that what would be gained from an investigation of what I am calling a female aesthetic is not a feminist countercinema, but rather, a cinema that effects *another* vision.¹³⁸

The work of Teresa de Lauretis, who commends theorists to investigate the highly risky business of the redefinition of aesthetic and formal knowledge through the articulation of the “conditions and forms of vision for another social subject”¹³⁹, has provided some motivation for this research. Thus, while also trying to maintain some more common methodologies in theorising around author, gaze and textual analysis, I am also interested in an investigation of cinema as a sphere of ‘social technology’, that is, its potential for the “production and counter-production of social vision”.¹⁴⁰ This is a project that has required an understanding, and a reconsidering, of the history of feminist ideas, and trajectories, and also female creative output in Campion’s work (and some work with which I have compared it).

Any imagery women might construct within their films has the potential to be as unique and diverse as they are. However, there are scores of discussions by women theorists

¹³⁷ de Lauretis, 1987, p.127.

¹³⁸ Discussed in de Lauretis, 1987, p. 134. This idea is also explored in chapter 6 of this thesis.

¹³⁹ de Lauretis, 1987, p.134.

¹⁴⁰ Discussed in de Lauretis, 1987, pp.134–135.

claiming to recognize a specific ‘female imagery’ or aesthetics, and they are too abundant not to comment on in what follows here. Linda Nochlin describes it as hard to pin down, but has said that it’s “not a specific image, iconography, or subject that has to do exclusively with women. It has more to do with process, or modalities of approaching experience, but even then I get stuck”.¹⁴¹ Fiona Probyn has described feminine symbols as “fluidity, maternity, writing the body, silence, weaving metaphors”.¹⁴² Lucy Lippard has written that she perceives a difference in male and female art making, describing it as a female sensibility and writing “I know that a certain kind of fragmentation, certain rhythms are wholly sensible to me even if I can’t analyse them”.¹⁴³ Lippard has claimed that there is “a lot of sexual imagery in women’s art – circles, domes, eggs, spheres, boxes, biomorphic shapes, maybe a certain striation or layering ... fragments ... antilogical, antilinear approach”.¹⁴⁴ She has also written that women’s art making can be distinguished as having an: “obsessive line and detail, veiled strata, tactile or sensuous surfaces and forms, associative fragmentation, autobiographical emphasis”.¹⁴⁵ Joan Snyder claims women’s work is differentiated from men’s because it has “a kind of softness, layering”.¹⁴⁶ While none of these things can absolutely belong to one sex or another, they offer evidence that there are certain aesthetic qualities that are repeatedly identified as ‘feminine’; this does not necessarily imply that male filmmakers do not adopt them, but rather that they are common in the work of women.

Despite the wealth of testimony that some women can recognize women’s work, there are others who dispute this,¹⁴⁷ and it begs the question as to whether this recognition is situated in the film itself, or whether instances of recognition of the ‘feminine’ are the result of a perception or understanding arrived at because of the viewer’s predisposition.

¹⁴¹ Nochlin in Lucy R. Lippard, *From the Center: Feminist Essays on Women’s Art*, Dutton, New York, 1976, p.81.

¹⁴² Probyn, 2002. These are drawn from difference feminists such as Irigaray and Cixous.

¹⁴³ Lippard in Terry Barrett, 2000. p. 49.

¹⁴⁴ Lippard, 1976, p.80.

¹⁴⁵ Lippard in Barrett, 2000, p.49.

¹⁴⁶ Joan Snyder in Lippard, 1976, p.80.

¹⁴⁷ For example Jenni Meaney, an experienced Australian cinematographer, claimed that she could not recognize whether a man or a woman shot a film. This appears in the student film *Readheads to Blondies*, RMIT, (Phoebe Hartley, 2003).

Teresa de Lauretis has discussed this question of whether subjectivity is limited, whether gender provides a discursive boundary, or whether feminism can influence horizons of meaning that a viewer might project onto his/her understanding of a text. De Lauretis has observed that there is

the feeling of an internal distance, a contradiction, a space of silence, which is there alongside the imaginary pull of cultural and ideological representations without denying or obliterating them. Women artists, filmmakers and writers acknowledge this ... difference by attempting to express it in their works.¹⁴⁸

This thesis argues that Campion constructs *another* vision—one that doesn't obliterate or deny the existence of representations that are oppressive to women, or which don't express 'female experience', but which exists concurrently, alongside those representations.

Essentialism

For the purposes of this research essentialism defines behaviour as entirely contingent upon sex—that there is an essential male or female nature based on biology.¹⁴⁹ It could be inferred that this research is destined to be essentialist given that a central focus of this is whether the author, as a female, could be detected in the work—whether there is a feminine 'trace'.¹⁵⁰ Therefore this issue is discussed here.

Theorising along the lines of sex and gender is arguably methodologically flawed and essentialising, because it is only one particularity of difference in a mix that includes history, race and class and is produced from an interplay of diverse elements (personal, intellectual, bureaucratic, psychological, cultural) that are sometimes overlapping, and

¹⁴⁸ de Lauretis, 1987, p.134.

¹⁴⁹ The term essentialist is often used as a derogatory label but this is not the way it is used here, although this research does not subscribe to an essentialist viewpoint.

¹⁵⁰ Derrida, Lévin and Kristeva refer to a notion of the trace. For example, for Derrida, the trace retains 'the Other'. He wrote that "difference cannot be thought of without a trace" in Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, (trans. Gayatri Chakravoty Spivak), John Hopkins University Press, Maryland, 1997, p.57. The trace is not present or absent, it is undecidable, and is present only in relation to the trace of other elements in it. For a discussion see Marie Carriere, *Writing in the Feminine in French and English Canada*, University of Toronto Press Inc., Toronto, Buffalo & London, 2002, p.101.

sometimes distinct. This is the type of objection postmodernists might construct against feminist approaches to identifying any kind of ‘femaleness’ in a text—that the interplay of elements is complex, and cannot be simply laid at the feet of sex and gender. This issue is a significant tension for feminist researchers, and this research must reconcile an interest in ‘femaleness’ and articulations of female experience, with an acceptance of the view that gender is only one factor, and women are not a singular group.

Feminist theorists have continuously discussed and debated the complex issues around female-centred, gendered enquiries, and essentialist views have opposed constructionist views for decades (Simone de Beauvoir for example was already making constructionist arguments in the 1950s). The opposition between essentialism and constructionism has been a substantial feminist debate, not just with de Beauvoir in the 1950s but also through the 1980s and 1990s.¹⁵¹ This research does not accept or argue for either an essentialist or constructionist position (the latter explaining difference as purely socially and experientially constructed). de Beauvoir’s view is helpful in that it proposes that we need to consider the individual concrete lived human experience and her particular confrontation with ‘Otherness’. The body cannot be eliminated from what constructs people, and men and women do have different biology, although one’s sex does not necessarily determine one’s biological experience. Historically this has been a significant split in feminist thinking, and an ongoing debate. Essentialism is not adopted as an approach for this research because it is prescriptive, binary, and does not accommodate other influential factors such as history or environment. This raises a question of whether there is a position that is neither essentialist, nor constructionist, but which considers elements of both and does not regard them as mutually exclusive, or oppositional. The journey of this thesis involves trying to find such a position.

Feminist theorists have constructed many different ways of productively thinking about constructivism and essentialism. Maggie Humm has observed that starting from the 1960s, through the 1970s, and moving to the 1990s, the concept of a

‘women-centred perspective’ was frequently proposed but its precise methodology remained unfocused. ... feminist thinking has fractured into a poststructuralist rejection of the essentialism inherent in such a perspective (Riley 1984), attacks on the ethnocentrism implied by its exclusions (Spelman 1988: Spivak 1987), psychoanalytic (Lacanian) attacks on a unified perspective (Mitchell and Rose 1982) and anxieties about the heterosexism of a singular perspective (Fuss 1991). Yet a desire to retain the category [‘women-centred perspective’] for feminist analysis is felt very strongly.¹⁵²

Donna Haraway alludes to the utopian desire for a woman-centred perspective as “the feminist dream of a common language ... a perfectly faithful naming of experience”.¹⁵³ Ellen Rooney writes of the desire of women to be joined, asking Gayatri Spivak about her work in regard to Spivak having said that “women today may *have* to take ‘the risk of essence’ in order to think really differently”, and asked how we might signal the difference between people to do political work without invoking an irreducible essentialism: “how can we determine when our essentialising strategies have become traps, as opposed to have strategic and necessary positive effects?”¹⁵⁴ Spivak offered the need to be able to speak from one’s own ground (defined below), rather than from any universal position, and therefore, to avoid any misfiring for those who do not share that specific position. There are a number of problems with a universalist perspective—including that it neglects the fact that the position of women in different cultures and circumstances is significant from a feminist perspective. In addition, concepts of difference have been important for some feminists—such as black or lesbian feminists. This research takes a non-universalist position in using postmodern-feminism as a central paradigm—being comparativist rather than universalising, refusing unitary notions of woman or gender in favour of plural and complex constructions of identity that embrace gender as one element among the mix of the many conditions that might contextualize women’s experience. In this thesis, ‘one’s own ground’ infers the

¹⁵¹ See Beauvoir, S., de *The Second Sex*, Bantam Books, New York, 1961 or an overview in Humm, 1995, pp.80–81.

¹⁵² See Humm, 1997, p.189.

¹⁵³ Donna Haraway, ‘A Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology and Socialist Feminism in the 1980s’, in Ellen Rooney, ‘Gayatri Spivak with Ellen Rooney; ‘In a Word’: Interview’, in Linda Nicholson (ed.) *The Second Wave: A Feminist Reader*, Routledge, London, New York, 1997, p.357.

importance of personal, cultural and historical specificity in a mix that risks essentialism for strategic purposes and because, as an inquiry into sex and gender, it must risk essentialism. Spivak appears to be thinking along the same lines as de Beauvoir, and Luce Irigaray who said that she felt the most important strategy was to

expose the exploitation common to all women and to find the struggles that are appropriate for each woman, right where she is, depending upon her nationality, her job, her social class, her sexual experience, that is, upon the form of oppression that is for her the most immediately unbearable.¹⁵⁵

Personal, cultural and historical specificity is an important strategy for discussing Campion and her work in this thesis, but this strategy also locates the limits of this investigation, given that it therefore does not allow any wider generalization; for example, in regard to women's filmmaking generally. While this research initially sought to contribute to a model of understanding women's filmmaking in general, it became increasingly evident that this was a much larger project than this thesis, and perhaps not even possible.

Cultural and historical specificity

An important way of understanding the ongoing discursive process by which female subjectivity is constructed semiotically and historically (or in other words female experience) in Campion's films, is through an understanding of their cultural and historic specificity. Campion is a contemporary, modern filmmaker, who is focused on telling stories from the perspective of her own era. Numerous feminist theorists have discussed the significance of this specificity: for example de Beauvoir wrote that "[s]urely a woman is, like a man, a human being, but such a declaration is abstract. The fact is that every concrete human being is always in a specific situation".¹⁵⁶ Feminists "drawing on ideas from deconstruction and discourse analysis... [have] argued that gender structures are

¹⁵⁴ Spivak in Nicholson, 1997, pp.357-358.

¹⁵⁵ Luce Irigaray, *This Sex Which Is Not One*, (Catherine Porter translation with Caroline Burke), Cornell University Press, New York, 1985, pp.166-167.

¹⁵⁶ de Beauvoir in Moi, 1999, p.8.

historically variable ...”.¹⁵⁷ The specific situation is an important and productive approach to understanding ‘feminine’, ‘female’ or ‘feminist’ within specific historical, social and cultural situations.

In 1990 Nicholson noted that there was “a growing interest among feminists in modes of theorising which are attentive to differences and to cultural and historical specificity”.¹⁵⁸ She argued that postmodern-feminist theory would be “inflected by temporality, with historically specific institutional categories [as opposed to] ... ahistorical, functionalist categories like reproduction and mothering”.¹⁵⁹ This would replace unitary notions of “woman and feminine gender identity with plural and complexly constructed conceptions of social identity, treating gender as one relevant strand among others, attending also to class, race, ethnicity, age and sexual orientation”.¹⁶⁰ Jane Flax expressed a similar view when she noted that the “experience of gender relations for any person and the structure of gender as a social category are shaped by the interactions of gender relations and other social relations such as class and race. Gender relations thus have no fixed essence; they vary both within and over time”.¹⁶¹ Along similar lines, Judith Butler wrote that “it becomes impossible to separate ‘gender’ from the political and cultural intersections in which it is invariably produced and maintained”.¹⁶² Following these lines of thinking, a postmodern-feminist critique of gender relations can understand them not as fixed or essential, but as fluid and responsive to cultural and historical specificity.

All production is a product of its own history, and this includes intellectual ideas and the movements that describe them, the debates, or issues of their times, and the histories of those intellectual ideas. These ideas exist within cultural and social milieus, they have status within a given type of production such as independent filmmaking or Hollywood mainstream, and they are inscribed by the technologies in which they were made, as well

¹⁵⁷ Humm, 1997, p.7.

¹⁵⁸ Nicholson, 1990, p.33.

¹⁵⁹ Nicholson, 1990, p.34.

¹⁶⁰ Nicholson, 1990, p.34-35.

¹⁶¹ Flax in Nicholson, 1990. p.40.

¹⁶² Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble*, Routledge, New York, 1999, p.6.

as the access and training of those who made them. It is a core argument of this thesis that Campion's work is inflected by a contemporary vision that is particularly influenced by the intellectual paradigms of feminism and postmodernism.

Essentialism and subjectivity

There have been many debates in regard to how gendered enquiries have been avoided or taken a less central place to other concerns. Flax for example has argued that "[m]ale academics do not worry about how being men may distort their intellectual work", saying that "in a variety of cultures and discourses, men tend to be seen as free from or as not determined by gender relations", and that, "it is still rare for scholars to search for the pervasive effects of gender relations on all aspects of a culture in the way that they feel obligated to investigate the impact of relations of power or the organization of production".¹⁶³ Thinking along the same lines, Susan Bordo noted "feminists infrequently demand the same attentiveness to difference, or the same sensitivity to issues of interpretation and textuality from the analytics of race and class that we do from the analytics of gender".¹⁶⁴ As Moi has argued, and which is developed in this thesis, if women deny their specific gendered subjectivity (as they might if they want to be considered just human beings, rather than female human beings), then therefore do they have recourse to the full range of their own experiences, something that men have not been prevented from having because of their sex?¹⁶⁵ Or put more clearly: must we as women within a patriarchy describe our experience as gendered in order to describe it at all?

Debate raged strongly in the 1970s and 1980s as to whether there was a difference between male and female artists, as did discussion concerning the politics of gender in regard to whether it was empowering or essentialist to argue that women might have different strategies, or visions to that of men.¹⁶⁶ But in the late 1980s and into the 1990s,

¹⁶³ Flax in Nicholson, 1990, p.45.

¹⁶⁴ Bordo, 1990, p.145.

¹⁶⁵ Moi, 1999, p.218. Moi observes that male social class or race may interfere in similar ways.

¹⁶⁶ As outlined in Leslie Felperin, 'Chick Flicks' (Editorial), *Sight and Sound*, Vol. 9, Issue 10, October 99, p. 3

the fear of essentialism appears to have stifled gendered inquiries, and essentialism was not only persistently maligned but also “little interrogated”.¹⁶⁷ There was a “reluctance of many feminist critics to speak, as feminist literary critics do, of a ‘female tradition’ in cinema”, something Judith Mayne has observed was most influenced by the fear of essentialism: “the fear, that is, that any discussion of ‘female texts’ presumes the uniqueness and autonomy of female representation, thus validating rather than challenging the dualism of patriarchal hierarchy”.¹⁶⁸

In 1990 Mayne argued that this fear had a restraining result, that virtually any mention of ‘women’ tended to inspire an increasingly familiar recitation of the ‘dangers’ of essentialism—“an affirmation of the difference between men and women as given”.¹⁶⁹ Feminists such as Teresa de Lauretis have offered a pragmatic way of working through this, arguing “that feminists *should* ‘risk’ essentialism since this is what distinguishes feminist from non-feminist thinking”,¹⁷⁰ and while this research acknowledges that there are clearly risks associated with essentialism, it concurs with de Lauretis’ view. This reluctance to speak of a ‘female tradition’ assumes that the only models of connection and influence are essentialist ones. A fear of being essentialist has therefore had a stifling effect—as evidenced by the fact that gendered inquiries have been avoided in some quarters until roughly the last decade, where, since the late 1990s, they appear to have been increasing (given the increasing number of publications on women filmmakers). Where gendered inquiries have been avoided, women’s subjectivity¹⁷¹ has therefore been taken out of consideration of the mix of influences. This results from, among other contextual influences, the sway of postmodernist and poststructuralist thought—which in seeking multiplicity and to assert the plurality of influences on identity, has caused a limiting effect in regard to research around sex or gender.¹⁷² This thesis does not claim

¹⁶⁷ Fuss, 1989, p. xi.

¹⁶⁸ Mayne, 1990, p.93.

¹⁶⁹ Mayne, 1990, p.90.

¹⁷⁰ Humm, 1995, p.81.

¹⁷¹ Here I am referring to subjectivity as a way of being in the world—that there can be no ‘identity’ divorced from the world the subject is experiencing.

¹⁷² I acknowledge that many feminist approaches, including those of Grosz, Spivak, and Irigaray, would not be possible without poststructural thought.

that any woman filmmaker speaks for anyone other than herself. However it is still fruitful to investigate whether (and how) the gender of a filmmaker may be influential, and in particular where this is evident in Campion's films.

This thesis values connections that interrogate sex and gender and which incorporate the experiential—as complex and contested as discussions from these vantage points might be—and acknowledges not just similarities, but individual differences found in female experience. This is a dilemma for women filmmakers, and indeed women across the arts—that acknowledging the influence of one's female subjectivity can feel like a yoke. While the use of an identity that does not directly refer to gender has been a strategic option at particular moments in time, this has lead to a situation where many women have refused the label woman—refusing to accept that their subjectivity is integrally linked to their gender.¹⁷³ In many ways this work is a plea for women not to give up their femaleness in order to claim that they are filmmakers, rather than 'women filmmakers'—the difference being a denial of one of the central elements of their subjectivity. This choice is unnecessary, given that they are not mutually exclusive. A woman does not have to choose (in the sense of denying one in favour of the other) between being a filmmaker and a woman—this position is sexist, and alienates women from their subjectivity. As Moi argues, a genuinely feminist position would not make women choose between their profession and their gender,¹⁷⁴ and the point of arguing against essentialism is to stop sexist generalizations of women as a class—not to deny that they exist.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷³ Evidence of this is a *Sight and Sound* survey conducted in the mid 1990s which asked women directors whether being a woman was important to their work, and what their favourite film directed by a woman was. The results were never published because of the meagre numerical responses, and because the small number of women who did reply, strongly dismissed the importance of being a woman. The result was that "most of the few directors who responded said ... they wanted to be seen as film-makers first and women film-makers second or not at all". Felperin, 1999.

¹⁷⁴ Moi, 1999, pp. 205-206.

¹⁷⁵ Moi, 2001, p.178.

Constructions of ‘woman’

The relationship between one’s body and one’s subjectivity was described by de Beauvoir as neither necessary nor arbitrary, but contingent.¹⁷⁶ In order to understand what ‘a woman’ is in Campion’s films, it was useful to study the represented varieties of women’s lived experience in the films, and to think about these in relation to Campion’s own idiosyncratic history or context. A number of possible approaches became visible through this research, including considering a character’s specific encounter, internalisation or rejection of dominant gender norms; a consideration of films made by women in order to find images of women and their world/s; a questioning of whether there is a politics of shared experience¹⁷⁷; and specifically whether Campion is committed to finding commonalities in female experience.

Ada’s silence in *The Piano* is an example of what Campion might understand as common to women, and what struggles her characters face in their own cultural and historic contexts. While Campion relates this to how she imagines the historic specificity of her character, saying that there isn’t any point in Ada speaking because “she would be unheard, the whole world is not interested ... particularly in a Victorian era”¹⁷⁸, it also relates to female experience more generally: “Ada not speaking ... [was] an instinctive idea ... how silenced to women we really are in our society and culture”¹⁷⁹—that is, she is identifying female repression within patriarchal society, and Ada’s passive resistance to it. Campion is involved in a feminist project in that her characters are trying to represent how they are enabled to find a voice, and articulate their difference. This is a reoccurring motif; for example, in *The Portrait of A Lady* Isabel’s husband insists she be still and quiet and Madam Merle states that a woman has no natural place anywhere. In *An Angel At My*

¹⁷⁶ Moi uses Gatens’s work on sex and gender (*Imaginary Bodies*) which argues that a psychoanalytic understanding of the body casts the relationship between the body and the psyche as contingent. What she says is important to acknowledge is the ubiquitous and complex networks of signification to what she describes as the historical, psychological and culturally variable ways of being a man or a woman. See Moi, 1999, p.82.

¹⁷⁷ I acknowledge that experience is not something everyone can share and that experiences will always be individually inflected in relation to who is experiencing them.

¹⁷⁸ Director’s commentary, *The Piano* (DVD released in 2006. All references to director’s commentary refer to the DVD released after this date as earlier versions did not have this material).

¹⁷⁹ Director’s commentary, *The Piano*.

Table, Janet Frame is silenced by her shyness and feeling of ‘Otherness’. Like Ada however, all Campion’s women find a way to have a voice and to find a place. Campion has said

The laws of men and women in Western society are carefully unwritten ... And feeling them, facing up to them, is like the pain of having a baby – no one will ever tell you about it, really, because it’s just beyond communicating. It’s so bad, so big, so enormous, that you can’t even describe it or even believe it. In a way it’s the same for women feeling the world, facing the world. I don’t even talk about it, because it sounds like whingeing. But I’m not whingeing. I’m screaming.¹⁸⁰

‘Woman’

An exploration of the concept of female experience led to an analysis of what a ‘woman’ is understood to be. This turned out to be a much more complex proposition than I had imagined but is important as part of my consideration of gender and subjectivity (and the use of this terminology in this thesis). Butler has noted that ‘woman’ or ‘women’ is no longer understood as stable or permanent, that there is “little agreement ... on what constitutes, or ought to constitute, the category of women”.¹⁸¹ In her book *What is a Woman?*, Moi starts from a deceptively simple, ordinary understanding, that a woman is “a person with a female body”¹⁸², but she, and feminist history, has revealed that the category ‘woman’ is more complex than this. There can never be one answer; as de Beauvoir observed, such a category is linked to existence and as such, specifically located.

Judith Butler has observed “we refer not only to women as a social category but also as a felt sense of self, a culturally conditioned or subjective identity”.¹⁸³ Consequently, what is meant when the term ‘woman’ is used is not as straightforward as it would seem. This ‘felt’ sense of self is despite, as Donna Haraway has argued, there being “nothing about

¹⁸⁰ Judith Lewis, 2000, p.36.

¹⁸¹ Butler, 1999, p. 4.

¹⁸² Moi, 1999, p.8.

¹⁸³ Butler, 1990, p.324.

being ‘female’ that naturally binds women ... female [is] ... a highly complex category constructed in contested sexual scientific discourse and other social practices”.¹⁸⁴

The debate around a collective sense of self that women might feel has an extensive history. On the question of this politics of shared experience (a feminist politic), Irigaray offered the observation that women’s situation was collective, and explained where she thought this originated:

A long history has put all women in the same sexual, social, and cultural condition. Whatever inequalities may exist among women, they all undergo, even without clearly realizing it, the same oppression, the same exploitation of their body, the same denial of their desire. That is why it is important for women to be able to join together ‘among themselves’ ... in order to discover a social existence other than the one that has always been imposed upon them.¹⁸⁵

This research works to exemplify Irigaray’s position through illustrating how Campion’s oeuvre represents (or her work assists an understanding of) the sexual, social, and cultural conditions of her central female protagonists—their oppression, their exploitation, and how they repress, or are forced to deny, their desire.

However, it should be noted that numerous feminist writers reject any collective notions, and indeed, reject the category ‘woman’ altogether—as it denotes a common identity. Monique Wittig, for example, “rejects unequivocally the idea of a ‘class of women’ based on shared (biological) experience and bases her feminism on the deconstructive premise that, in Derrida’s words, “‘woman has no essence of her very own’”.¹⁸⁶ Many writers regard ‘woman’ as creating a normative category that excludes multiplicity; Diana Fuss for example has claimed that “the very word ‘woman’, whether used in the singular or the plural, imposed homogeneity and erased women’s differences”.¹⁸⁷ Fuss says “[t]he plural category ‘women’, for instance, though conceptually signalling heterogeneity nonetheless

¹⁸⁴ Haraway, 1990, p.197.

¹⁸⁵ Irigaray, 1985, p.164.

¹⁸⁶ Fuss, 1989, p.26.

¹⁸⁷ Moi, 2001, p.178.

semantically marks a collectivity; constructed or not, ‘women’ still occupies the space of a linguistic unit”.¹⁸⁸ Kristeva has flatly refused to define ‘woman’, writing, “to believe that one ‘is a woman’ is almost as absurd and obscurantist as to believe that one ‘is a man’.”¹⁸⁹

Despite this, many feminists have also accepted that, although there are problems with using the term (for example because it becomes a normalising category), the class of ‘woman’ is required and necessary strategically for feminist politics: “feminists need to rely on an operational essentialism, a false ontology of women as a universal in order to advance a feminist political program”.¹⁹⁰ Along the same lines, Judith Butler offers Kristeva’s position: that the category of women should be used as a “political tool without attributing ontological integrity to the term”.¹⁹¹ These positions illustrate the tension caused by this political necessity. In addition, the category ‘woman’ is a restricted theoretical location, which leaves some women outside of it, as there is no recognition of the intersections of gender and race, sexuality, ethnicity, age, or differing material conditions which internally, fragment ‘woman’ as a category.

However, Moi has written, “there is no reason at all to lay down theoretical requirements for what the word woman must mean”.¹⁹² She points out that she believes it perfectly acceptable for “anti-essentialist feminists to use the word woman without having to blush instantly and having to mumble something about ‘strategic essentialism’. ... [there is not] anything intrinsically wrong with the word ‘woman’”¹⁹³ and, while she describes this insight as a liberating one, in my view, it also points to the kind of straightjacket the process of theorising can impose—an academic hegemony, or political correctness. As Flax has observed, “contemporary feminists join other postmodern philosophers in

¹⁸⁸ Fuss, 1989, p.4.

¹⁸⁹ Kristeva in Moi, 2001, p.162. She is referring to ‘La femme’, p. 21.

¹⁹⁰ Butler in Nicholson, 1990, p.325.

¹⁹¹ Butler paraphrases Julia Kristeva: ‘Woman can never be defined’ in Elaine Marks & Isabelle de Courtivron (ed.), *New French Feminisms*, Schocken, New York, 1984, in Nicholson, 1990, p. 325. Kristeva is also quoted here as writing that “strictly speaking woman cannot be said to exist”.

¹⁹² Moi, 1999, p.x.

¹⁹³ Moi, 1999, p.x.

raising important metatheoretical questions about the possible confused status of theorising itself”.¹⁹⁴

Moi has provided a breakthrough in working through this, having written that to “avoid essentialism and biological determinism all we need to do is to deny that biology gives rise to social norms. We don’t have to claim that there are no women, or that the category ‘woman’ in itself is ideologically suspect”.¹⁹⁵ This is the position adopted in this thesis. While the category ‘woman’ is interrogated, and an essentialist position is not accepted as adequate (because of its singularity), this work explores whether for women, gender is ‘felt’, and if there can be shared experiences relating to gender (biological and otherwise). This research seeks to find a position from which to speak which allows for a plural understanding of ‘woman’, and to recognize the multiplicity of women—and thus—of ‘woman’. At the same time, this research is mindful of the trap of embracing a liberal pluralism in order to avoid an acceptance of difference that is apolitical; as Gunby has observed, an acceptance “of all-comers makes a distinctly ‘feminist’ politics difficult to sustain”.¹⁹⁶ However, Butler has noted, “honouring the diversity of the category [woman] and insisting upon its definitional nonclosure, appears to be a necessary safeguard against substituting a reification of women’s experience for the diversity that exists”.¹⁹⁷

Difference

The concept of difference has been examined throughout contemporary feminist theory (in particular second wave feminism), but it is largely a concept that is not about sexual difference but political difference. Hester Eisenstein has observed “it is not difference itself that has been dangerous to women ... but the political uses to which the idea of

¹⁹⁴ Flax, in Nicholson, 1990. p.41.

¹⁹⁵ Moi, 2001, p.178.

¹⁹⁶ Gunby, 1991.

¹⁹⁷ Butler in Nicholson, 1990, p. 327.

difference has been put. ... ‘different’, and ... therefore ... subordinate”.¹⁹⁸ Maggie Humm has said that difference is a term that has two senses in feminism; the primary meaning is that “women have a different voice, a different psychology and a different experience of love, work and the family from men”,¹⁹⁹ but it also means “a negative category which includes the exclusion and subordination of women.”²⁰⁰ (This is also a position argued by numerous second wave feminists, such as Kate Millet²⁰¹ and Shulamith Firestone²⁰²). The currency of difference has varied over time, and in some periods difference was celebrated and gave rise to considerable ‘woman-centred’ analysis (for example see the work of Gerda Lerner or radical feminist Adrienne Rich). Feminists have been continuously interested in difference; for example, from the late sixties it was recognized that the term was used in a patriarchal sense to keep women in their proper patriarchally designed places. Theorising around difference has been rationalised on the basis that it did affect women; as described by Susan Bordo who asked, “[c]ould we now speak of the differences that inflect gender if gender had not first been shown to make a difference?”²⁰³ And as Bordo further commented: “[o]ur language, intellectual history, and social forms are ‘gendered’; there is no escape from this fact and from its consequence in our lives. ... One cannot be gender ‘neutral’ in this culture”.²⁰⁴

These arguments around difference have contextualised this exploration of gender which is interested in the question of whether women have a different voice, psychology, or experience from men; and this is explored here from the perspective of how Campion’s representation of women, as social beings, is affected by their encounters with difference—and consequently, whether Campion’s aesthetic communicates difference.²⁰⁵ These issues may be discerned via a textual analysis of her representation of the psychology of

¹⁹⁸ Hester Eisenstein in Hester Eisenstein and Alice Jardín, (eds.), *The Future of Difference*, Rutgers University Press, Boston, 1988, p.xxiii.

¹⁹⁹ See Humm, 1989, pp.64–65.

²⁰⁰ See Humm, 1989, pp.64–65.

²⁰¹ Kate Millet, *Sexual Politics*, First Illinois Paperback, USA, 2000 (first published in 1969).

²⁰² Shulamith Firestone, *The Dialectic of Sex: The Case for the Feminist Revolution*, Morrow, New York, 1970.

²⁰³ Bordo, 1990, p.140.

²⁰⁴ Bordo, 1990, p.152.

sex differences, or her interest in difference as historically found in power relations between men and women; however she unpacks these relations not in terms of oppositions, but more in terms of the specific ways in which men and women (individually and collectively) come to live in, and experience, the world.

The ideas of Irigaray are useful here; she argued against a single definition of ‘woman’ or against any single ‘truth’ of the feminine, but rather suggested that there are not just global politics, but local politics²⁰⁶, in the sense that what needs to be considered is what the individual finds the most significant—where they are (for example materially). Situating theorising within a historical and cultural framework is more likely to avoid generalizations which are overly broad or tend to universalise. This is something Campion attempts through each of her leading female protagonists, who each explore the oppression that they find the ‘most immediately unbearable’ and thus, specifically reflect on the context, or historic and cultural specificity of each character.

Oppositional consciousness: affinity, not identity

Irigaray argued that the “first issue facing liberation movements is that of making each woman ‘conscious’ of the fact that what she has felt in her personal experience is a condition shared by all women, thus *allowing that experience to be politicised*”.²⁰⁷ Irigaray’s position might be critiqued from the perspective that all women do not share the same conditions or experiences, and that her view works towards homogenisation (and so essentialism). However, it might equally be seen that she is suggesting that risking essentialist positions is necessary for political purposes. Diana Fuss has observed that women are conscious of themselves as a class because of certain shared experience, but asks what constitutes this shared experience given that there isn’t an agreement on what might constitute ‘a woman’s experience’. Fuss further notes that to make claims based upon an authority of our experiences is problematic, because experience isn’t neatly

²⁰⁵ As will be discussed in chapter two, postmodern-feminist positions assert the importance and significance of difference and are attuned to marginalized voices or championing diversity.

²⁰⁶ Fuss, 1989, p.69.

segmented; it isn't always possible to abstract experiences that are due to "being a woman" from that which is due to 'being married', 'being middle class' and so forth".²⁰⁸ However, there is a view commonly expressed, which Judith Mayne has summarized below, and which is an argument underpinning this research:

no matter how tenuous, fractured, or complicated, there is a connection between the writer's gender, her person hood, and her texts; and ... there exists a female tradition ... whether defined in terms of models of mutual influence, shared themes or common distances from the dominant culture.²⁰⁹

There are many possible reasons that women might be conscious of themselves as women. These include an understanding of themselves within the binary order (one that has been present throughout history)—as 'Other', as *without* a voice in the sense of recognising their own experiences or 'stories' as valued or even visible; as subject to sexism and patriarchy; as refused, or as having difficulty gaining access, rights or self-determination. These are all issues that have centrally concerned feminisms for decades, and have been inflected in different ways through the evolution of feminisms—issues that seem to have also deeply concerned Campion throughout her oeuvre.

Many feminist writers have noted women's difference and valued it.²¹⁰ This is a tension in Campion's work, given that she is clearly interested in difference, but not in setting up one gender as better, nor within any hierarchy. As will be discussed further in this research, and as already indicated, this is a way in which her work seems to be aligned with postmodern-feminist thinking. A postmodern position would reject this valuing of difference as essentialist, and as championing binary thinking²¹¹, and therefore this issue comes to the fore in a postmodern-feminist critique. But the feminist part of the postmodern-feminist critique offers that the female view has been historically silenced,

²⁰⁷ Irigaray, 1985, p.164.

²⁰⁸ Fuss, 1989, p.25. Fuss is quoting feminist philosopher Jean Grimshaw.

²⁰⁹ Mayne, 1990, p.90.

²¹⁰ See for example Di Stefano's discussion, in Nicholson, 1990, pp.71-72.

²¹¹ Binary thinking locates meaning as always derived from opposites: good/bad, black/white, rich/poor. Binary thinking is opposed by many thinkers (e.g. poststructuralist and postmodern thinkers) who see meaning as much more fluid, intertextual, unstable and arbitrary rather than stable.

women's voices have been excluded, and the feminine has "been constituted through its exclusion".²¹² The postmodern aims to include marginalized voices, concurring with the feminist agenda of including women's voices/visions—but the postmodern position also insists that these are *not the only* voices or visions, something feminism itself has come to understand in its own critique of second wave feminism's failure in relation to women who are not middle class, or white. This dialogue within postmodern-feminism brings problems to light, not the least of which is the difficulty of finding a voice or vision that can express something of gendered experience. As Di Stefano has written, in thinking about how one might approach difference, "[d]ifference cannot be denied, because rationalist sameness already presupposes a particular gendered version of itself, the outsider witness (the feminised Other) is not innocent. She is also a production of rationalist, masculinist discourse".²¹³

Feminists such as Irigaray have argued that in order for women to speak, indeed *when* they speak, they speak a masculinism that is embedded in thought.²¹⁴ Thus a problem posed is the question of how, or what, has to be imagined to construct a symbolic order not determined by the masculine? According to Irigaray "the question is not ... what woman is or is not, but rather how women suffer within (and might disturb) a 'universal' symbolic that can not/refuses to sex itself or know itself as sexed".²¹⁵ Her vision is for women to move from 'Other' to men: "[T]hrough the looking glass, she posits a land of wonder in which women may be able to represent themselves and the world from their perspectives... [a] critical and constructive movement to the 'other side'".²¹⁶ If the symbolic order is exposed as masculine, that it hides or represses that which is not masculine, then acknowledging that which is not masculine, disturbs the symbolic order through insisting on plurality and difference. I will argue that Campion's work moves to

²¹² Di Stefano, in Nicholson, 1990, p.71.

²¹³ Di Stefano, in Nicholson, 1990, p. 72.

²¹⁴ Irigaray, 1985, p.128.

²¹⁵ Catherine M. Peebles, *The Psyche of Feminism*, Purdue University, USA, 2004, p. 11.

²¹⁶ Irigaray in Grosz, 1989, p. xxii.

‘the other side’, and consequently threatens the patriarchal symbolic order²¹⁷ in seeking to reveal the female voice and perspective as different to, but existing alongside, the masculine. This rejection of binary oppositions and hierarchy is part of the postmodern-feminist texture of Campion’s films.

Simone de Beauvoir²¹⁸ wrote that within a patriarchal culture the masculine is positive and female/feminine is constructed as negative or ‘the Other’²¹⁹, due to both the female body (particularly its reproductive propensity) as well as historical, social constructions where women have primarily laboured bringing up children. She saw this ‘Otherness’ as something that all women, whatever their race, religion, class or sexual preference, have fundamentally in common—something that alienates women, and they internalise this alienation. This position has been highly influential, as have later positions where women’s experience of ‘Otherness’ was understood as similar to all those who are not male, white, or middle class. As bell hooks has observed, discrimination is “an interlocking system based on race, class and gender”.²²⁰ However, as I discuss below, this position has undergone development further, away from binaries and towards understanding a further complexity of ‘Otherness’.

While women’s identities are linked to the experience of being ‘Othered’, this thesis is more interested in exploring whether difference can be thought of in a new way—something this thesis argues Campion is doing. Campion has said that “women have a different way of seeing the world altogether”.²²¹ Derrida makes a clear distinction between ‘difference’ and ‘opposition,’ writing that: “opposition is two, opposition is

²¹⁷ I am referring to the language system of patriarchy that orders the world to benefit men—for example, social or linguistic structures that organize a man’s relation to a woman. In disrupting this language system, Campion disrupts this symbolic order.

²¹⁸ See Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex (Le Deuxieme Sexe)*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1953, pp. xxii.

²¹⁹ The ‘Other’ is the marginal, minority, or the group or representation that is not the dominant one. Theorists such as Hall have discussed the way in which meaning is often developed out of one group attempting to fix a preferred meaning which privileges and empowers the dominant group. Stuart Hall, *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, Sage, London, 1997, pp. 223-290.

²²⁰ hooks in Humm, 1997, p.7. She has illustrated how, when the spectator resists identification with the film’s discourse, there are moments of ‘rupture’ - or ‘Otherness’.

²²¹ Angela Doland, ‘Campion laments lack of female filmmakers’, *Age*, 22/5/07, p.15.

man/woman", whereas "difference . . . can be an indefinite number of sexes".²²² As Diana Mertz Hsieh has observed, the notion that "there could be an indefinite number of sexes implies that sexual difference would not even be based on biological differences, but rather something more fluid and possibly self-determined".²²³ Maggie Humm, quoting Mulvey (1989) wrote in a similar vein, that women oscillate between masculine and feminine identifications, and that this offers "the possibility of more fluid gender identities".²²⁴ This is a useful way to understand individual sexuality as fluid and resisting categorization, not oppositional in terms of gender, but as impossible to describe in oppositional terms.

Chapter conclusion

Campion has had an ambivalent relationship to feminism, which appears to have shifted over time. However, whatever her stated relationship to feminism, and in spite of her place within popular art film, there are clear markers of feminism evident in her filmmaking. This chapter has established the framework for the feminist analysis and (for a further argument that will be made in later chapters), that Campion is a feminist, and conveys a feminist politic in her films; she conveys a feminist aesthetic and 'voice', which explores sexual difference, offering a female perspective that—as will be further argued—is not structured by a masculine symbolic order. In addition, it will be argued that Campion structures female difference as existing alongside the male, rather than in opposition to it, and represents identity as fluid, rather than set by constraints of fixed masculine or feminine identity.

²²² Jacques Derrida, 'Women in the Beehive', in Alice Jardine and Paul Smith, *Men in Feminism*, Methuen, New York and London, 1987, p.198 (This is particularly useful in understanding Derrida's position on sexuality).

²²³ Diana Mertz Hsieh, 'Sexual Difference as Metaphysical', Washington University in St-Louis, 21 April 1995, at <http://www.dianahsieh.com/undergrad/sdam.html> Accessed 29/9/04.

²²⁴ Humm, 1997, p.25.

Chapter 2

Postmodern-feminism

This chapter outlines the way in which postmodern-feminism is understood in this thesis and why it is a useful approach for considering Campion's films.

Postmodern-feminism is part of the evolution of feminism's third wave.²²⁵ It has been described as "a recent development in feminist thinking which seeks to use post-modernist and post-structuralist theories for feminist ends"²²⁶, and from this perspective, it can be understood as a contemporary feminism. The position taken in this thesis understands feminism and postmodernism as two different and separate movements/cultural currents, but also argues that the dialogue between them provides another space, one where there is a conversation, where each current interrogates the other, a space described as 'postmodern-feminism'. By this, I am indicating that it is used in this present thesis as a critical strategy for understanding Campion's films—whose work I believe can be insightfully described through a postmodern-feminist conversation (rather than constructing postmodern-feminism as a paradigm).²²⁷

Moi has noted that feminists can (and do) use "any approach [provided it is compatible with her politics] that can be successfully appropriated to their political ends".²²⁸ A key word in Moi's observation is the idea of appropriation (which she uses in the sense of 'creative transformation'). Moi says that given "the feminist insistence on the dominant

²²⁵ The first wave describes nineteenth and early twentieth century feminists; the second marks feminist activity in the 1960s and 1970s; and the third, which celebrates difference, is the recent period from the 1990s. The third wave has postmodern-feminist, poststructuralist, or postfeminist ideas in the forefront, and is frequently involved in attempting to enlarge or confront ideas of gender and sexuality. Much of third wave feminism moves on from earlier feminist periods in taking on cultural and ethnic diversity, or diverse voices, and frequently opposed or critiqued the white, middle class perspectives of second wave feminism (often described as a 'backlash' against earlier feminism and what some regard as dictatorial ideas).

²²⁶ Bullock & Trombley, 2000. p. 673.

²²⁷ As I discuss later, there is little point replacing hierarchies, or binaries with new ones. Hekman argues that a conversation between postmodernism and feminism is likely to be productive if they are juxtaposed rather than 'married'—a position I concur with. See Susan J. Hekman, *Gender and Knowledge: Elements of A Postmodern Feminism*, Polity Press, Cambridge, UK, 1990, p.189.

²²⁸ Moi, 1997, p.105.

and all-pervasive nature of patriarchal power so far in history, feminists have to be pluralists: there is no pure feminist or female space from which we can speak”.²²⁹ For Moi, what is important is whether we can “produce a recognisable feminist impact through our specific use (appropriation) of available material”.²³⁰ Just as feminism appropriates (as described above), appropriation is particularly prevalent as a postmodern strategy.²³¹ Via a similar process, postmodern-feminism can be understood as a feminist discursive space that uses postmodernist cultural criticism for feminist purposes. Bullock and Trombley have offered an insight into these purposes, and a succinct understanding of postmodern-feminism as being about

the fragmentary nature of power, and the role of language in constructing reality, to see language, knowledge and culture both as mechanisms of social control and as arenas of feminist struggle ... [using] postmodern ideas about the impossibility of object knowledge to reinforce the feminist argument that Western philosophy has disguised partial, male perspectives as universal truths.²³²

They add that there are other ideas that reoccur in postmodern-feminist thinking, such as a critique of stable categories such as the unified self, in order to analyse the shifting and fluid nature of gender identity and the white, middle-class and Western bias of a significant body of feminism.

²²⁹ Moi, 1997, p.105.

²³⁰ Moi, 1997, p.105.

²³¹ Postmodernists appropriate through pastiche, a borrowing or stealing that defies reverence for originality and the singular heroic artist. Appropriation as an aesthetic strategy both signifies the original, and brings it back into currency; however in so doing, it facilitates a new way of thinking about the original, and the ideas it conveys or signifies (or even the ways in which it may have been read in other historical times).

²³² Bullock & Trombley, 2000, p. 673.

Postmodern-feminism:

A pluralist and shifting discursive space

The meaning of postmodernism has been endlessly theorized and according to Barrett, there is ultimately “no unified theory”²³³ or definition, but what can be observed are generalities, collections of ideas²³⁴, or common positions, and influences from a range of disparate thinkers or philosophers—including the poststructuralist, Jacques Derrida, who is discussed later in this chapter (pp.85-88), and others such as Lyotard, Rorty, Foucault and Lacan. Chris Beasley has summarized key postmodern ideas as refuting any existence of ‘truth’ and foundationalist ‘grand theories’. He also writes that postmodernists refute the idea that power is *only* negative, and any notion of a ‘true’ self. Beasley offers postmodernism as promoting pluralism and the instability of theories (including of the self and history).²³⁵ Like postmodernism—contemporary feminism, the position from which feminism is discussed in this thesis—is a “diverse and pluralist enterprise”.²³⁶ Maggie Humm has described feminist theory as “intensely interdisciplinary, ranging across customary subject divisions, including history, philosophy, anthropology, and the arts among others”.²³⁷

It follows then, that mapping out what postmodern-feminism might mean, or mapping the overall direction, or tendencies is a complex undertaking. However, I have sought in the discussion in this chapter to bring forth generalities, collections of ideas, or common approaches to describing postmodern-feminism, as well as the alliances or oppositions embodied in a postmodern-feminist position. I think that given the organic and

²³³ Barrett, 1994, p.30.

²³⁴ Although postmodernism was born out of modernism, and therefore can be understood as an evolution, or part of a continuum, some have defined it as being critical of the ideas of modernism. Postmodernism embraces pluralism (such as multiple points of entry and non-essentialist/anti-essentialist perspectives). Common visible features have been the favouring of eclecticism, irony, parody, quotation, self-referentiality, and indeterminacy. There is a frequent questioning of absolutes (e.g. totalistic explanations or grand narratives about the nature of truth or reality). Postmodernism is characterized by being fragmented, discontinuous, non-hierarchical (‘high’ and ‘low’ culture are equally valued) and embraces differences in class, gender, race, sexuality. Identity is understood as fluid.

²³⁵ Chris Beasley, *Gender and Sexuality: critical theories, critical thinkers*, Sage, London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi, 2005, p. 62.

²³⁶ Bordo, 1990, p.135.

²³⁷ Humm, 1997, p.5.

fluctuating nature of thinking and theorising that finding universal definitions is not possible, and not even desirable given that this thinking and theorising is part of an ongoing theoretical project which should be open and constantly questioning. Postmodern-feminism is thus understood in this thesis as part of an ongoing dialogue and debate, rather than an end to it.

A particular advantage of a postmodern-feminist approach includes that it is one that can use, or accommodate, multiple categories rather than requiring any single epistemology; “it recognizes that the diversity of women’s needs and experiences means that no single solution ... can be adequate for all”.²³⁸ It is a plurality that allows a theorization of differences among women, and “while some women share some common interests and face some common enemies, such commonalities are by no means universal”.²³⁹ Nicholson and Fraser describe this patchwork of overlapping alliances as plural, something implying a decentered approach to multiple differences.²⁴⁰ Alemany-Galway has written that what she calls “a postmodern feminist cinema ... forwards a multiplicity of truths and leaves the contradictions between them open”²⁴¹—a feature of Campion’s cinema (and much of art cinema²⁴²), which leaves a great deal that is not tied up, or neatly sutured. The potential of postmodern-feminism is to further the development of both movements but in combination, to displace and disrupt sexist and masculinist paradigms in favour of non-polarized, non-oppositional multiplicities of difference. This has emerged from the recognition that women, as discussed already, are not a singular group, and experience different life situations and material conditions according to many axes of difference, including race and sexuality. This is a particular concern for postmodern-feminism, which rejects essentialising and is attuned to marginalized voices or perspectives.

²³⁸ Fraser & Nicholson, in Nicholson, 1990, p.35.

²³⁹ Fraser & Nicholson, in Nicholson, 1990, p.35.

²⁴⁰ Fraser & Nicholson, in Nicholson, 1990, p.35.

²⁴¹ Alemany-Galway, ‘Postmodern Feminism in *The Piano*’, in French, 2003, p.310.

²⁴² Art cinema in this thesis is taken to denote authorially expressive cinema interested in film from an aesthetic point of view and as a serious art form, and generally produced by auteur directors. See David Bordwell, ‘The Art Cinema as a Mode of Film Practice’, in Catherine Fowler (ed.), *The European Cinema Reader*, Routledge, London & New York, 2002, pp.94-101.

The aim of postmodern-feminist writers has been described by writer Jenny Pinkus—who describes what I am naming a postmodern-feminism as a ‘postmodernist or poststructuralist’ feminism—is not to denounce the value or potency of earlier feminist writing, but to approach feminisms with a more critical approach which is “historically contextualised and able to account for cultural diversities and differences between women” and to advocate a move away from “disabling vestiges of essentialism”.²⁴³ As explained already however, while mindful of the problems produced by essentialism, this research risks essentialism in the sense that this thesis undertakes an enquiry into gender, but argues against the idea that the only models of connection and influence in the consideration of a female tradition—in this case specifically in regard to Campion’s films—are essentialist. Gender is not understood in this thesis as fixed, essential, or innate but related to experience.

A position of this thesis is that one can choose to occupy a gendered subject position but, while both men and women can do this—as argued in chapter one in relation to creating convincing female characters (pp.48-49), an exploration here is the investigation of the premise that a man can’t bring the same understanding as women, given they have not lived their lives as women, and cannot embody this subjectivity (and visa-versa). In the literature there are arguments indicating the specificity of subjectivity, including Moira Gatens’s contention that the “very same behaviours (whether they be masculine or feminine) have quite different personal and social significances when acted out by the male subject on the one hand and the female subject on the other”.²⁴⁴ Her argument is that there is a “qualitative difference between the kind of femininity ‘lived’ by women and that ‘lived’ by men”.²⁴⁵ While every filmmaker will approach a film in a unique way, what I am implying and considering, is that the ways in which a woman—in this case, Campion—might approach it will generally be to reveal something of female experience

²⁴³ Jenny Pinkus, *Feminist Poststructuralism*, at <http://www.massey.ac.nz/~alock/theory/feminism.html> Accessed 21/9/04. In the final quote she is referencing Lois McNay, *Foucault and feminism: power, gender and the self*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1992, p.120.

²⁴⁴ Gatens, 1996, p.9. Gatens argues that it is a matter of sexual difference rather than gender and that the subject is always sexed.

²⁴⁵ Gatens, 1996, p.9.

of gender. Thus essentialism again comes to the surface as an ongoing tension/problem for this research. In particular this is because postmodern perspectives reject essentialist positions, and therefore from a postmodern-feminist perspective, there is constant questioning of the validity of gendered enquiries. As Elizabeth Grosz has observed, “even if two sexes behave in identical ways, their behaviour does not have the same meaning. Recognising feminine specificity implies developing other kinds of discourse”²⁴⁶—something this thesis argues Campion moves towards, in developing a female, feminine, and feminist discourse with her cinema.

In Campion’s films the ‘lived’ body of each of her central protagonists is featured as *situated* and subject to specific society’s cultural and historic organization of sex. She fixates on the embodied sexuality of her central protagonists in a way that differs from conventional cultural representations. Her visions are of women who battle to maintain their individual selves, and her central characters won’t be constructed as types, but generally stand out as eccentric, wilful, and desiring. In *Holy Smoke!* for example, Ruth refuses to conform to PJ’s vision of what she is, women are, or what he is—this is their central battle and where they learn the most from each other. Within the journey of the film, while PJ tries to construct Ruth as a goddess, and even hallucinates that she is one, this is deconstructed by Campion’s film: the audience see she is grounded, human and fallible. In addition, the representation of desire in all Campion’s films features a strong connection between the central characters’ embodied sexuality and their imagination, or their imaginary body. For example In *The Portrait of a Lady*, Isabel’s erotic imagination is depicted in a scene that illustrates her awareness of her own sexual desirability. She imagines all her admirers, two touching and kissing her, and Ralph watching, and ravishing her with his eyes.

²⁴⁶ Elizabeth Grosz, 1989, p.126.

Campion's films can be understood as interested in how the categories, or gender identities, of men and women are constructed. They emphasize the "contingent foundations"²⁴⁷; contingent in the sense that they work to "acknowledge the importance of complex and ubiquitous networks of signification to the historically, psychologically and culturally variable ways of being a man or a woman".²⁴⁸ For this reason, the films tend to be open, and reflect a postmodern-feminist position because they are comparativist rather than universalising, replacing "unitary notions of woman and feminine gender identity with plural and complexly constructed conceptions of social identity".²⁴⁹ However, it is noted that Campion does not pay particular attention to other potential influences on identity, such as explorations of class, race, ethnicity, age and sexual orientation—all things of interest to postmodern-feminists—something that could be argued indicates that in some ways, her work is not totally in sync with postmodern-feminist concerns.

Susan Bordo has indicated that postmodern-feminism is not only multiple (a problem in that some criticize it for being a view from nowhere), but constantly shifting. Bordo has written that for some literary feminist theorists, gender has become "a 'discursive formation', inherently unstable and continually self-deconstructing. The meaning of gender is constantly 'deferred', endlessly multiple. We must 'get beyond the number two', as one writer has described it, and move towards a 'dizzying accumulation of narratives'".²⁵⁰ From this perspective, postmodern-feminism can potentially form alliances across divisions in celebrating diversity amongst women, and offer critical strategies or methods for reading this diversity. Ingrid Gunby describes it in exactly this way, writing that postmodern-feminism denotes "a definite politics – perhaps a politics based around 'feminisms which celebrate diversity amongst women and form alliances across divisions'".²⁵¹ However, she had some reservations, and wrote that while she would

²⁴⁷ See Judith Butler, 'Contingent Foundations: Feminism and the Question of Postmodernism', in Judith Butler & Joan W. Scott (eds.), *Feminists Theorize the Political*, Routledge: Chapman Hall Inc., New York & London, 1992, pp.3-21.

²⁴⁸ Gatens, 1996, p.13.

²⁴⁹ Fraser & Nicholson in Nicholson, 1990. pp. 34-35.

²⁵⁰ Bordo in Nicholson, 1990, p.134.

²⁵¹ Gunby, 1991.

like to see a “a better approach to difference”²⁵², the problem is that, for her, “a ‘postmodern feminism’ means losing one of the most crucial insights of postmodernist social criticism: namely, that all knowledge is discourse – including those diverse and more inclusive feminisms”.²⁵³ In order to avoid the pitfall of offering postmodern-feminism as better or truer for its representation of women’s diverse and contradictory subjectivities, it is necessary to avoid constructing it as a cultural current (a new paradigm), and to acknowledge the multiple discourses at work. This of course creates a tension in this research because it is difficult to use these ideas and simultaneously claim they are not being privileged or constructed as a paradigm.

Gunby has written that “if women do understand themselves as ‘women’, then this is a discursive construction, not a transparent description of women’s experience”.²⁵⁴ This is useful because it links identity to one’s sex, offers the idea that gender is produced through discourse, and that the expression of it—for example the representation of ‘woman’—is a discursive construction that does not simply translate female experience, but is an expression of it that connects with many other elements. This research takes up this idea through consideration of the discursive constructions Campion offers in regard to the representation of women, or ‘woman’. Campion’s discourses on gender reveal that gender is constructed through experiencing oneself as a sexed subject.

The relationship of postmodernism to feminisms

Postmodernism and feminism have historically had an uneasy relationship (due to a range of differing positions) and have approached each other at times with suspicion, scepticism and hostility.²⁵⁵ As Hekman has observed, the two movements “spring from different theoretical and political sources [but the] ... similarities ... are striking ... [they] are the only contemporary theories that present a truly radical critique of the Enlightenment

²⁵² Gunby, 1991.

²⁵³ Gunby, 1991.

²⁵⁴ Gunby, 1991. Quoting Chandra Talpade Mohanty, ‘Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses’, *Feminist Review*, No.30, pp.77-787.

²⁵⁵ See a discussion of this in Hekman, 1990, p.152.

legacy of modernism”.²⁵⁶ Fraser and Nicholson describe postmodern-feminism as beginning with a trading of criticisms, resulting in a learning from each other; they had high if not idealistic hopes when they wrote that: “the ultimate stake of an encounter between feminism and postmodernism is the prospect of a perspective which integrates their respective strengths while eliminating their respective weaknesses”.²⁵⁷ While this might seem problematic because it privileges postmodern-feminism, if it is understood as asking questions from each side (feminist and postmodern questions), then it is an approach to ideas which can be understood as offering the possibility of revitalising each paradigm; this could result in a change in sensibility, practices and discourse formations. It could therefore could be a position that does provide insights.

It is true that feminism and postmodernism have taken up a range of differing positions or approaches in emphasis or direction, including that feminism is political in a way that postmodernism is not; that some branches of feminism are essentialist and postmodernism is not (and strongly rejects dualisms and hierarchies embraced by some feminist positions); and while feminism’s criticism of the “modern episteme is, on the whole, still tentative, postmodernism’s critique of modernity is unambiguous”.²⁵⁸ While this latter point might be disputed from the view that postmodernism is just part of a continuum that began with modernism, and so they are integral to each other, many postmodernist positions are in opposition to some aspects of modernism (which is ironic given postmodernism champions the abandonment of oppositions). In addition, feminists have often rejected a postmodern position because of postmodernists’ indifference to the “suppression of women’s voices”.²⁵⁹ Postmodernism “attempts to subvert the hierarchy that exists within cultures, ... it deconstructs, as well as constructs, negotiates, and challenges the notion of feminism”.²⁶⁰

²⁵⁶ Hekman, 1990, p.189.

²⁵⁷ Fraser & Nicholson in Nicholson, 1990. p. 20.

²⁵⁸ Hekman, 1990, p.188.

²⁵⁹ Mary Gergen, ‘Facing Off: Postmodern/Feminism’

<http://www.taosinstitute.net/manuscripts/facingoff.html> Accessed 5/8/04.

²⁶⁰ Romy Bella, ‘Conditional Feminism in a Postmodern World’, Department of Communication Studies, California State University, 2000 at <http://hyper.vcsun.org/HyperNews/battias/get/coms633/f2002/e...> Accessed 21/9/04.

Hekman's discussion of postmodernism also applies to feminist projects:

the discourses that create knowledge create power as well, power that constitutes subjects and objects and the mechanisms by which subjects are subjugated. The postmodern conception of the subject as a process, a constituted entity, is its most fundamental challenge to Enlightenment thought.²⁶¹

In addition, a commonality and strength of both postmodern and feminist theory is the refusal of master narratives.²⁶²

However, feminism and postmodernism have also taken up a range of related positions; Fraser and Nicholson have observed that feminists, like postmodernists, have sought to develop new paradigms of social criticism which do not rely on traditional philosophical underpinnings. They have criticized modern foundationalist epistemologies and moral and political theories, exposing the contingent, partial, and historically situated character of what has passed in the mainstream for necessary, universal, and ahistorical truths. They have called into question the dominant philosophical project of seeking objectivity in the guise of 'Gods eye view', which transcends any situation or perspective.²⁶³

Thus, it can be seen that there are numerous related positions; both critique aspects of modernism (despite feminism itself being arguably a modernist movement); they have 'worked independently on a common nexus of problems ... [trying] to rethink the relation between philosophy and social criticism so as to develop paradigms of criticism without philosophy'²⁶⁴; both embody "deep and far reaching criticisms of the institution of philosophy [and its relation] ... to the larger culture"²⁶⁵; and both seek to "develop new paradigms of social criticism which do not rely on traditional philosophical underpinnings".²⁶⁶ Both paradigms, as they are understood today, allow for plurality (for

²⁶¹ Hekman, 1990, pp.188-189.

²⁶² Bono & Kemp, 1991, p.3.

²⁶³ Fraser & Nicholson, in Nicholson, 1990, p. 25. Examples they refer to are the essays in Sandra Harding and Merrill B. Hintikka (eds.), *Discovering Reality: Feminist Perspectives on Epistemology, Metaphysics, Methodology, and Philosophy of Science*, Dordrecht, Holland, Boston, Hingham, MA & D. Reidel, 1983.

²⁶⁴ Fraser & Nicholson, in Nicholson, 1990, p.19.

²⁶⁵ Fraser & Nicholson, in Nicholson, 1990, p.19.

²⁶⁶ Fraser & Nicholson, in Nicholson, 1990, p.19.

example, there is no single ‘truth’ and reality is fictional). As Hekman identifies, both approaches argue that not only is knowledge historical and contextual, but it is produced by particular discourses.

Mary Almeny-Galway has written that numerous feminists view postmodernism as important “in that it helps one to see what is theoretically problematic in much modern political and social theory and within feminism itself”.²⁶⁷ For example, feminism offers vitality to postmodernism by revealing postmodernism’s “androcentrism and political naiveté”²⁶⁸ and in so doing, points out confines or limitations in a postmodern paradigm. The way the two paradigms can work to inform each other is illustrated by the way postmodernists offer sophisticated criticism of foundationalism and essentialisms but “their conceptions of social criticism tend to be anemic. [In return] Feminists offer robust conceptions of social criticism, but they tend at times to lapse into foundationalism and essentialism”.²⁶⁹ However, the function of postmodernism in revealing the essentialism of some feminisms is only useful for those that favour essentialist positions²⁷⁰, given that some feminisms have interrogated essentialism. Where it might be seen as more useful is where it offers something new, a questioning not there from feminisms themselves.

Problems inherent in postmodern-feminism

A postmodern-feminist approach is not unproblematic. If postmodern-feminism is to be understood as a multiple, shifting paradigm, the question arises—and the problem—as Bordo asks, “how many axes can one include and still preserve analytical focus or argument?”²⁷¹ This alludes to a limitation of postmodern-feminism, which in attempting to construct heterogeneity is potentially a ‘view from nowhere’—or everywhere. However, it could be argued that this potential pitfall is avoided through the maintenance

²⁶⁷ Almeny-Galway quoting Nicholson, p. 310 in French, 2003, pp.309-310.

²⁶⁸ Fraser & Nicholson, in Nicholson, 1990, p.20.

²⁶⁹ Fraser & Nicholson, in Nicholson, 1990, p.20.

²⁷⁰ For example Separatist Feminists, Radical Feminists, Universalists, Womanists and Black or Lesbian feminist movements interested in reinstating concepts of difference.

of a perspective informed by feminism, but a feminism inflected through postmodernism (a postmodern-feminism).

Postmodern-feminism has been ‘fiercely contested’²⁷², and critics challenge it by arguing that postmodernism is problematic in seeking to deny women’s collective identity and that patriarchal power exists. I do not accept this criticism as voiding the potential of postmodern-feminism, and this is not my reading of a postmodern-feminist discursive space—which, for example, does not deny patriarchal power, given that one of the things postmodernism and feminism share, and consequently postmodern-feminism embodies, is an opposition to patriarchy. While the concern in relation to denying women’s collective identity is valid, in my view, the ‘feminism’ in postmodern-feminism constantly brings women’s collective identity back into the mix and makes it visible.

Susan Bordo argues that those using postmodern-feminism need to be cautious. Feminists must not allow themselves to be deprived of vital analytical tools (and by this, I think Bordo means feminist epistemologies—but she may also be referring to a fear of a potential loss of the support from a feminist community).²⁷³ Fraser and Nicholson also indicate that they share the same position, or are mindful of the need for caution given that postmodern-feminists shouldn’t and, they say they need not, “abandon the large theoretical tools needed to address large political problems”.²⁷⁴ They further argue that feminists should adopt a carefully constructed kind of postmodernism, and that

postmodernism need not demand the elimination of all big theory, much less theory *per se*, to avoid totalisation and essentialism. The key is to identify types of theorising which is explicitly historical, that is, which situates its categories within historical frameworks, less easily invites the dangers of false generalizations than does theorising that does not.²⁷⁵

²⁷¹ Bordo, 1990, p.139.

²⁷² See Bullock & Trombley, 2000, p.673.

²⁷³ Bordo, 1990, p.136.

²⁷⁴ Fraser & Nicholson, in Nicholson, 1990, p.34.

²⁷⁵ Nicholson, 1990. p.9.

A postmodern-feminist discursive space

As already outlined, this thesis does not infer that postmodern-feminism is a paradigm but rather, it is a critical strategy to help understanding. The rationale for this comes from Derrida who wrote of “a new logic of the ‘supplement’”,²⁷⁶ arguing that it would be a futile exercise to replace one hierarchy with another, that to simply take up a third category would establish hierarchical oppositions. Derrida theorized a new inscription, ‘the supplement’—an interval between the masculine and feminine, a position interested in multiplicity—a non-polarized view that was outside the previous binary oppositions that have dominated Western thinking: “a new ‘concept’, a concept that can no longer be, and never could be, included in the previous (binary) regime”.²⁷⁷

Derrida’s idea, that a ‘new’ paradigm should be resisted, is crucial according to Hekman because “feminism should not seek to replace one truth with another but rather, to inscribe a new structure of multiple truths, multiple voices of sexuality”.²⁷⁸ I have used postmodernism and feminism, and so privileged them, but I have tried to avoid replacing one truth with another, and to situate postmodern-feminism as a discursive, reflexively questioning space, rather than another paradigm. What I am attempting to do with my explanation of deconstruction here is to use this concept as an analogy, a way of explaining how postmodern-feminism is understood in the thesis: as a space in which to juxtapose the ideas of postmodernism and feminism.

Derrida’s deconstruction ²⁷⁹ displaces phallogocentrism (that places women as inferior). Along with Irigaray, Cixous and Kristeva, Derrida identifies “the feminine as a disruptive force that displaces the will to truth that defines the western metaphysical tradition”²⁸⁰ through a concept of innumerable genders—“choreographies”. Derrida stated

²⁷⁶ Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, (trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak) Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore & London, 1997, p.7.

²⁷⁷ Jacques Derrida, *Positions*, (trans. Alan Bass) University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1981.

²⁷⁸ Hekman, 1990, p.170.

²⁷⁹ Deconstruction is a technique attributed to Jacques Derrida. Derrida read philosophical and literary texts and showed how texts can be understood to be telling their own stories, and might be understood to have an infinite number of dialectical readings. See Derrida, 1997 for further on deconstruction.

²⁸⁰ Hekman, 1990, p.174.

I would like to believe in the multiplicity of sexually marked voices. I would like to believe in the masses, this indeterminable number of blended voices, this mobile of non-identified sexual marks whose choreography can carry, divide, multiply the body of each ‘individual,’ whether he be classified as ‘man’ or as ‘woman’ according to the criteria of usage.²⁸¹

This thesis argues that Campion’s representations offer the feminine as a disruptive force—as illustrated in chapter 5 (pp.207-208) in relation to Ruth’s *jouissance* in *Holy Smoke!* Deconstruction achieves this through a new inscription of truths and undoing the closure of logocentric²⁸² oppositions—not to erase difference but to inscribe it in non-oppositional terms and instate multiplicities of difference. For example, Campion does not represent binaries, such as good or bad, or men as the body and women as the mind—rather, she shows how they are integrally tangled or connected—not opposites, and therefore, like Derrida, works to throw the field of signification open.

Susan Bordo has written that postmodernism offers feminism a plurality (although she doesn’t note that feminisms embrace plurality anyway; as Elizabeth Grosz writes: “one of the positive strengths of feminist politics, [is] its diversity, its commitment to multiplicities and specificities, its non-unifying functioning”²⁸³). Bordo goes on to describe deconstruction as working disruptively through employing a “recognition of interpretive multiplicity, of the indeterminacy and heterogeneity of cultural meaning and meaning-production ... calling for new approaches, aimed at the adequate representation of textual ‘difference’”²⁸⁴—a line of thinking which potentially assists feminism to move from a binary structuring of reality. Although binaries are not really binaries for

²⁸¹ Jacques Derrida, *Choreographies*, an interview between Christie McDonald and Jacques Derrida in Jacques Derrida, *The Ear of the Other: Texts and Discussions with Jacques Derrida—Otobiography, Transference, Translation*, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 1985, p.184.

²⁸² Jacques Derrida used this term ‘logocentric’ to describe “the bias of Western philosophy toward a metaphysics of presence, an order of being, meaning, truth, reference, reason, or logic conceived as independent of language”. Source: <http://www.library.utoronto.ca/utel/glossary/Logocentrism.html> viewed 13/8/04. Note that it is also embedded in language.

Logocentric discourse is structured with binaries (e.g. male/female) and one pole is privileged.

²⁸³ See Grosz, in Holland, 1997, p.74. Feminists who are social constructionists have rejected essentialist projects on grounds that the homo/hetero and male/female distinctions are themselves cultural constructs subject to constant changes. See

<http://www.gayhistory.com/rev2/words/essentialism.htm> Accessed 22/7/03.

²⁸⁴ Bordo, 1990, pp.135-136.

deconstructionists such as Derrida who “insists that the supplement, that which destroys the binary oppositions of western epistemology, is not in itself a theory; nor does it constitute a new concept – a third term”.²⁸⁵

Derrida’s position can be understood as an ‘interval’ between two approaches, on the one hand, there is a common feminist approach of trying to invert the hierarchy of binary oppositions and on the other, deconstruction is the synthesis of “the two terms of the opposition”²⁸⁶—this is what he calls ‘the supplement’, he has written of the supplement that “it is urgently necessary to establish a new logic of the ‘supplement’”.²⁸⁷ Rather than fitting women into masculine moulds or emphasising gender difference, Derrida proposes another option. His new logic is ‘another inscription’ that conceptualises the sexual in a new way that does not adopt the binary logic of western thought, but rather, difference is understood not in relation to oppositions, but as plural, in terms of multiplicities and thus provides a “radically new way of talking about the feminine, the masculine and sexuality ... [revealing] that what we have defined as opposites invade and inhabit each other ... cross and recross the alleged boundary between the two”.²⁸⁸ Thus instead of oppositions, what Derrida proposes is that the masculine and feminine are instead integral to each other, they inhabit each other.

Campion’s films engage in a dialogue with ‘femininity’ (and masculinity) and unfix feminine (and masculine) stereotypes through representations of characters who simultaneously embody both masculine and feminine traits; this is true for example of the men in her films, such as the characters played by Harvey Keitel (Baines in *The Piano* and PJ Walters in drag in *Holy Smoke!*). Baines’ tattooed face has been described as marking him “as already open at the borders of identity, as touched and altered by the encounter

²⁸⁵ Hekman, 1990, p.171.

²⁸⁶ Hekman, 1990, p.171.

²⁸⁷ Derrida, 1997, p. 7. Derrida employs other terms related to his idea of the supplement: pharmakon, hymen, *différance*, writing, spacing, trace—all terms he uses to break through binary oppositions—they are not opposite but occupy each other—extending and replacing as well as what Derrida refers to as undecidable. The French word supplement means both addition and replacement.

²⁸⁸ Hekman, 1990, pp.174–175.

with identities other than that of the colonial master”.²⁸⁹ Campion says of the Baines character “[h]e’s like the beast in *The Beauty and the Beast*. He’s omnipotent but in the presence of a woman he’s vulnerable and delicate because he wants to be part of her secret. He wants to know what it is ...”.²⁹⁰ In the mise-en-scène of the film, this is exemplified as he sits in front of Ada drinking tea from a delicate and pretty china cup. As will be discussed, it is noteworthy that Campion plays with this duality of masculinity and femininity twice with roles in which she has cast Harvey Keitel.

Différance²⁹¹

Jacques Derrida coined the term ‘différance’ (intentionally only discernable when written—not spoken). He defined it as “an economic concept designating the production of differing/difference”.²⁹² Derrida’s use of ‘différance’ is not the same as the way in which difference is understood generally (as the irreducible distinctiveness of beings) nor is it the same as the way it has been theorized within feminism.²⁹³ Derrida’s use of ‘différance’ is as something that works to disrupt, for example, the idea that language equals meaning. It describes the way in which meaning is derived from difference not sameness, and that meaning cannot be not be fully present, but always deferred or postponed.

²⁸⁹ Sue Gillett, 2004, p.48.

²⁹⁰ Campion interviewed by Marli Feldvoss, ‘Jane Campion: Making Friends by Directing Films’, in Wright Wexman, 1999, p. 98. It seems to me that the central male protagonists, from *The Piano*, onwards appear to be driven by a desire to know the female secret—as Campion expresses it here. As is discussed in chapter 5, this also drives PJ in *Holy Smoke!*

²⁹¹ “In *Speech and Phenomena*, Derrida invents the term *différance*’, punning upon both spatial and temporal meanings of the verb ‘differ’—to ‘differ’ and to ‘defer’”.

Source: Benjamin Graves, ‘Deconstruction’, Brown University, 1998 at:

<http://www.scholars.nus.edu.sg/landow/post/poldiscourse/spivak/deconstruction.html>

Accessed 5/11/04. See Jacques Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena and Other Essays on Husserl's Theory of Signs*, Northwest University Press, Evanston, 1973.

²⁹² Derrida, 1997, p.23.

²⁹³ Difference and *différance* should not be confused. Difference is a polarity. Difference can be understood from two perspectives in feminism: a) women have a different voice, psychology and experience of love, work and the family from men, or b) difference also can be a negative category which includes the exclusion and subordination of women. See Humm, 1989, pp. 64–65. Difference has also been the subject of Cultural Studies scholarship; see Stuart Hall, *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, Sage, London, 1997, pp. 234–237.

Using Derrida's idea of the text, and the way he argues that gaps and supplements reveal internal self-contradiction, one can see that the text has meanings other than those that are ostensibly obvious. For example, in the opening of *The Portrait Of A Lady*, Lord Warburton has evidently proposed to Isabel, and he comes to her and says that she does not have to live in his house if she does not care for a moat, and she says that she adores a moat. Thus, the language she uses could be understood as encouraging him, but the language here does not equal her meaning, and her actual meaning isn't fully present in this exchange. It is in fact impossible for Isabel to fully convey her meaning given the historical and cultural location of this interaction. Thus, reading this scene semiotically, there is a discourse related to polite society and the role of women in it. The scene also communicates problems of communication. For Isabel, a woman in this particular historic and cultural location, the language that is possible means that interpretation is likely to be flawed—she cannot communicate her meaning. Isabel means to say that his proposal of marriage, with his properties, is perfectly acceptable, as he would be, if she had marriage in mind for herself—which she does not. She cannot explain her position and intention.

Derrida's thesis of *différance*

encourages us to think of the differences between men and women not in terms of absolute hierarchies but in terms of chains of signification expressed in language, subtleties and shadings rather than absolute oppositions. *Différance* thus offers a way of talking about sexual difference that displaces the oppositions of the metaphysics of presence without denying the difference between the sexes. It offers a way of talking about sexual difference in terms of multiplicity and plurality rather than hierarchy.²⁹⁴

Thus, Derrida uses *différance* “as a polymorphous tool for deconstructing ‘metaphysical’ discourse”.²⁹⁵ The metaphysics of presence is of importance because as Young observes²⁹⁶, “Western conceptualisation, as expressed both in philosophical writing, other

²⁹⁴ Hekman, 1990, p.110.

²⁹⁵ Holland, 1997, pp.5-6.

²⁹⁶ Iris Marion Young, ‘The Ideal of Community and the Politics of Difference’ in Nicholson, 1990, p.303. Young uses Derrida's method but parts ways with him and some other poststructuralists by posing alternative conceptualisations—which are thus always open to the possibility of deconstructive technique.

writing, and quite often everyday speech as well, exhibits what Derrida calls a logic of identity which Young describes as a desire to “think things together in a unity, to formulate a representation of a whole, a totality”.²⁹⁷ This essentially works to create binary oppositions or inside/outside distinctions (hierarchical oppositions such as culture/nature, male/female which have meaning only because of the posited difference between the oppositions), mutually exclusive binaries that Derrida described as structuring whole philosophies—he described it as metaphysical thinking, or tradition, as something dominating Western thought. Campion's films reflect an apparent fascination with a conceptually ambivalent 'in-between-ness' and work against ideas of unity, or totality, particularly in relation to identity. This idea is explored in detail in chapter 6.

Derrida and others (including many postmodernists) are critical of the metaphysics of presence from the perspective that they believe ‘unity’ is not achievable (something Campion also expresses), that it denies difference (the irreducible distinctiveness of beings that they claim must be attended to), and that “it is almost impossible to bring them into unity without a remainder”;²⁹⁸ the remainder being ‘the supplement’. The significance of this is described in the following way:

[a]ny utterance has a multiplicity of meanings and directions of interpretation and development in which it can be taken. For Derrida, the metaphysics of presence seeks to detemporalize and despatialize this signifying process, inventing the illusion of pure present meaning which eliminated the referential relation. This is idealism conceiving of beings as lying outside time and change.²⁹⁹

However, while many theorists question the adequacy of deconstruction for feminist projects and are critical of Derrida's work,³⁰⁰ others have recognized and asserted that deconstructive techniques can have feminist uses³⁰¹, and within a postmodern-feminist paradigm, his work may be useful; for example, while not denying difference, Derrida

²⁹⁷ Young in Nicholson, 1990, p.303.

²⁹⁸ Young in Nicholson, 1990, p.304.

²⁹⁹ Young in Nicholson, 1990, p.304.

³⁰⁰ Discussed in Hekman, 1990, p.172.

³⁰¹ Holland, 1997, p.2.

“rejects polarities, opens up a new discourse of women and sexuality” that speak “in a multiplicity of sexual voices; it is a discourse which has no centre, neither masculine or feminine, yet does not erase either the masculine or the feminine.”³⁰² Derrida questions any idea of a single place for women.

Chapter conclusion

In conclusion, it is the argument of this thesis that Campion’s films reflect postmodern-feminist ideas, and therefore, the ideas that have been described in this chapter are also largely ideas that imbue her work. The key strategy for postmodern-feminism is the rejection of binary oppositions, hierarchies, and universals in favour of the theorization of difference (including among women themselves). It employs postmodern and poststructural analyses of the fragmentary, shifting and fluid nature of power, knowledge and identity; and it asserts the importance of difference (for example ideologically and across all vectors of power). Knowledge, power and identity are seen as multiple and contradictory, and can be understood as specific social and cultural productions that are shifting and fluid. Postmodern-feminism engages in a critical dialogue in relation to the role of language in constructing reality and social control; it has a tendency towards openness; it is attuned to diversity and attends to marginalized voices, perspectives, or politics; it rejects essentialism.

This latter characteristic is the most problematic element, given that postmodern-feminism makes visible the supposition from which this research began—that subjectivity is related to the sexed body—a position that can be critiqued as essentialist. The argument made in this thesis is that identity is changeable, constructed by specific social and cultural conjunctures, in particular times and places³⁰³, rather than essential. This research holds as a value the exploration of this problem, and seeks to find evidence of how the categories of men and women are differently constructed and constituted in Campion’s films. This is approached through an analysis of how the films reveal female

³⁰² Hekman, 1990, p.175.

³⁰³ See Chris Barker, *Cultural Studies: Theory and Practice*, Sage, London, California & New Delhi, 2000, p.221 for a discussion on gender identity.

experience to be subject to historical and contextual discourses, as well as complex networks of signification.

Through a postmodern-feminist lens, it is evident that Campion's films are particularly attentive to some (although not all) possible axes of social identity (for example they are not generally attentive to race). As an author, she presents selected views that are drawn from her own personal and cultural/historic vantage point, and as will be argued, these views are her subjective performances/discourses about female experience—and they can productively be understood through a postmodern-feminist critique.

Chapter 3 Authorship

As a study of one film author, it was important to consider film authorship and to examine how authors have been theorized in cinema to date, and as a feminist work of scholarship dealing with a female author, it was also essential to examine the significant feminist theorising around the question of female authorship. Because this thesis uses one author as a case study, it was necessary to consider whether any of the problems inherent in auteurism as an approach were likely to be issues for this research. This chapter offers a reflexive account of the usefulness and limitations of approaches centred on the author, and provides an overview of literature and theorising on authorship, as it is relevant to this research. In what follows, authorship, or auteurisms, and female authorship in film are examined. These considerations have a number of functions. Firstly, these theories or ideas illustrate the work done by other researchers, and contextualize this research, through outlining the place and direction of this thesis in relation to other scholarship within a trajectory of thinking about authorship in the cinema. Secondly, it offers an outline of the way in which authorship and female authorship are understood in this thesis. Thirdly, it establishes some of the problems that theorising around authorship have posed for this research. Finally, it provides a rationale for the importance of considering female authorship.

Part 1: Theories of authorship

Film theory has a long history of discussing cinematic authors: the term authorship has been variously valued at different historical periods, and there have been many debates.³⁰⁴ Scholarship on authorship has occurred since the early days of cinema³⁰⁵ and has been productive, important, and continuous in cinema studies. The notion of authorship started to become most prominent in (and from) the 1950s, when the French *Cahiers du cinéma* critics and their *politique des auteurs* was used to describe the auteur as “the artist whose

³⁰⁴ For a discussion of authorship see Naremore, 2004, pp.9–24. Naremore calls it an aesthetic ideology or movement (p.10).

³⁰⁵ Notions of the auteur appeared earlier: in Germany as early as the 1913 the term *Autorenfilm* (‘author’s film’) was used, and French critics used the term ‘auteur’ in relation to silent film of the 1920s.

personality was ‘written’ in the film³⁰⁶; they understood filmmaking as an art which expressed “the emotions, experience and ‘world-view’ of an individual artist”.³⁰⁷ Enduring problems for *auteurism* have been distinguishing between industrial and personal identities—and the relationship between these identities and what appears in the films³⁰⁸; and in deciding who is an auteur and who isn’t.

Within French ‘auteurism’, a director’s work was examined to ascertain whether they imposed their style or personality on each film they made—including formal and thematic structures, particularly *mise-en-scène*. Such structures are relevant to the consideration of Campion’s work in this thesis; however my use of the term ‘auteur’ differs from the most well known of the proponents of auteurism in France, the *Cahiers du cinéma*, because historical and ideological contexts are also important to this work. My usage of an auteurist approach is undertaken from a poststructuralist stance, in taking the view that any single theory is inadequate, and a study of an auteur is just one of many approaches that might cross-fertilize an understanding of Campion’s work.

The term auteur has been commonly used in an evaluative sense (although this is not a way it is used here) to distinguish good (the auteur) from not so good (non-auteur) directors; this is something Susan Hayward writes was a result of Andrew Sarris’ misuse of the *politique* to “nationalistic and chauvinistic ends to elevate [the status of] American/Hollywood”.³⁰⁹ Sarris argued that classical Hollywood cinema had the greatest depth, and was more expressive than commonly thought. Patrick Fuery describes the notion of the auteur as “an interpretative gesture, the historical positioning of the film (within its own diachronics – such as *Citizen Kane* as technical innovation ...)”.³¹⁰ This is an approach I also use, given that Campion is very much a filmmaker of her time. This thesis argues that her innovation—in the sense of being her particular contribution or

³⁰⁶ John Caughie (ed.), *Theories of Authorship: A Reader*, Routledge & Kegan Paul in association with the BFI, London, Boston & Henley, 1981, p.9.

³⁰⁷ Caughie, 1981, p.10.

³⁰⁸ For a discussion see Cook & Bernink, 1999, p.315.

³⁰⁹ Susan Hayward, *Cinema Studies: Key Concepts*, Routledge, London & New York, 2000, p.22.

Hayward tracks the evolution of the auteur theory—see: pp.19-27.

³¹⁰ See Patrick Fuery, *New Developments in Film Theory*, Macmillan Press Ltd., London, 2000, p.149.

way in which she has advanced women's cinema—is her articulation of contemporary female experience.

Since the time of the *politique des auteurs*, auteurism has been through several phases, changing and developing as scholars work through the theoretical, artistic and other concerns that have connected with it.³¹¹ It is a critical inquiry with a long history. In the late 1960s there was a focus on structuralist modes of meaning production; from the 1970s feminism, psychoanalysis and deconstruction entered forcefully as critical practices and there was a shift to poststructural paradigms that were attentive to ideology, context and intertextuality. In the 1980s John Caughie described auteurism as “a critical position within discourses about cinema, a position which is supported institutionally and ideologically by the ‘received’ cultural aesthetic”.³¹² In more contemporary times, the field has been expanded with explorations of the female authorial voice (adding to work done in the 1970s), and other areas under-represented by scholarship, such as those identified by Wright Wexman—who has noted that contemporary studies around authorship have taken up new inquiries into the relationships between authors and institutions, the historical context of authorship, and extending thinking about authorship to avant-garde cinema and documentary filmmaking.³¹³

The relevance of an approach centring on the author has been widely debated, and the problems of using it extensively canvassed. For example it is clearly problematic that a collective undertaking such as filmmaking be described as having a single, distinguishable author. Films are collective creations, and this is therefore one of the problems for studies of film authors. The processes of distributing and marketing films often demand an assignation of an author for a film, despite the fact that large numbers of creative and technical people are involved in making it. So even though film sets are heavily peopled with crew and talent, and behind the scenes filmmaking is equally dependent on a host of professions, as far as the public is concerned, “there is always just one Sun-King who is

³¹¹ They described it as a polemic, which is why they used the word *politique*.

³¹² Caughie, 1981, p.15.

³¹³ Discussed in Wright Wexman, 2003, p.13.

sweepingly credited with the responsibility for story, style, design, dramatic tension, taste, and even weather in connection with the finished project”.³¹⁴

Martine Beugnet has broadly summed up the complex contemporary meaning of authorship by acknowledging that any focus on an author could be criticized as being overly individualistic, and that meaning has been regarded as coming not from this sole author, nor from other authors, but that “films arguably exist only when screened, and each spectator, in his or her process of viewing is arguably the actual ‘author’ of the films being screened (see Roland Barthes)”.³¹⁵ But this is not a particularly useful way of approaching authorship or film texts generally; and it should be noted that while Barthes offered meaning as being largely produced by the reader, his own position on the author fluctuated over time. Kaja Silverman has contemplated Barthes’ proclamation of the death of the author in a rereading of the meaning generally taken from his work of the same name.³¹⁶ Silverman has observed that Barthes relinquished the author, as a person and institution, but reinstated him as a figure inside the text, because Barthes confessed that he desired the author: “*I need his figure (which is neither his representation nor his projection)* ... [this] marks the return of the authorial body, grasped now not as biographical or corporeal ... but as the materiality of writing. The body of the author has become the (highly eroticised) body of the text”.³¹⁷ This ‘materiality of writing’ is of interest to this research and indicates that the author in fact, is *not* dead. The desire for, and interest in the author, is as present today as it ever was. This is not to underplay the dynamic

³¹⁴ Michael Ondaatje, *The Conversations: Walter Much and the Art of Editing Film*, Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, London, 2002, p.xi.s

³¹⁵ Beugnet, 2004, p.15.

³¹⁶ See Roland Barthes, ‘The Death of the Author’ (1968), in Richard Howard (translation), *The Rustle of Language*, Hill and Wang, New York, 1986, pp.49–55. The meaning generally taken from Barthes’ work was a rejection of the author in favour of the reader/listener/spectator. This was rationalized on the basis that situating the origin of something with the author privileged a particular set of (logocentric) meanings, and the rejection of them rejected the concept of the capitalist owner of the meanings in his/her work. This view favoured semiotics and the idea that all things in culture can signify meaning for the reader/audience—regardless of the author’s intentions. This means that any text, including a film, would, according to Barthes’ thinking here, be shifting or open to interpretation—including the author her/himself.

³¹⁷ Kaja Silverman, *The Acoustic Mirror: The Female Voice in Psychoanalysis and Cinema*, Indian University Press, Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1988, p. 190. She arrived at this reconsideration after reading his later work *The Pleasures of the Text* (written five years after *The Death of the Author*).

relationship between cinema and audiences; this thesis considers the meanings made by audiences.

The notion of auteurism in this thesis is used and understood, as Martine Beugnet has defined it, in relation to the personal and historical.³¹⁸ The personal refers to distinctive stylistic and thematic themes and approaches, as well as autobiographical elements, and the historical refers to wider cultural, political, social and economical frameworks that provide a context for elaboration in the films.

The consideration of authorship within this research is undertaken (as discussed) in the context of an increased interest in female authorship in recent times. It has been observed that there is now a “tendency to examine how particular sites and practices produce the author, a concentration on how films circulate, the contexts in which they are apprehended and the rules which govern their interpretation”.³¹⁹ Historical, cultural and artistic references (including those relating to cinematic traditions and critical milieus) are of interest to an understanding of Campion’s work. The consideration of context positions this research as something undertaken at this particular time.

Feminism, auteurism and authorship

Various feminist writers have taken up positions both for, and against the value of auteur theory,³²⁰ in relation to whether it is a valuable approach or compatible with feminist approaches.³²¹ Claire Johnston saw the auteur theory as compatible and found value in auteurism because it is a model of agency that therefore suggests the possibility of

³¹⁸ Beugnet, 2004, p.14.

³¹⁹ Cook & Bernink, 1999, p.314.

³²⁰ Humm notes that in the 1960s and 1970s the significance of a male or female signature was indispensable to feminist literary criticism, and exciting work was undertaken on authorship in film through the 1970s by persons such as Sandra Gilberts, Susan Gubar, Elaine Showalter and Nancy Miller, whose work described energies of ‘double voice’ or ‘gender crossings’. See Humm, 1997, p.37.

³²¹ Stam notes that feminist theorists critiqued the ‘boy’s club’ masculinism of auteurism while also facilitating an ‘archeological’ recovery of female authors. See Robert Stam, *Film Theory, An Introduction*, Blackwell Publishing, Oxford, 1992, p. 172. Some writers see the rejection of auteurism as related to 2nd wave feminists and their deflation of individualism in order to promote the collective;

individual expression in the cinema. She took issue with the editors of *Woman and Film* who described it as “an oppressive theory making the director a superstar ... [arguing that this response] is to miss the point”.³²² Johnston, who described it as important for feminism, has written that the auteur theory “marked an important intervention in film criticism: its polemics challenged the entrenched view of Hollywood as monolithic, and stripped of its normative aspects the classification of films by director has proved an extremely productive way of ordering our experience of the cinema”.³²³ For example, Johnston examined the myths of woman constructed in the films of John Ford and Howard Hawks and she found that the image of woman assumed different meanings in each author’s work.

In contrast to Johnston, Angela Martin has written that auteurism has nothing to do with women’s filmmaking, but that “the debate about authorship—in its proper, unabridged context—has developed into extremely important work on language, signification, and enunciation. But the work of women filmmakers remains of marginal interest to it”.³²⁴ Her discussion reflects a view that she regards auteur approaches as not able to interrogate women’s work, because the kind of work women make is, in her view, outside the auteur canon, or indescribable within it. This is a view that has been expressed by numerous feminists, including Kaja Silverman who illustrated that it might not be possible to locate a female authorial voice using the same strategies as locating the male authorial voice.³²⁵

The relationship between women’s filmmaking and a notion of auteurism, particularly in feminist contexts, is problematic. In the first place, the concept of the auteur evolved or has been largely constructed within film theory as a masculine. This masculinity of

see Ivone Margulies, *Nothing Happens: Charntel Ackerman’s Hyperrealist Everyday*, Duke University Press, USA, 1996, p.12.

³²² Claire Johnston, ‘Women’s Cinema as Counter-Cinema’, in Nichols, B., *Movies and Methods*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1976, p.212.

³²³ Johnston, 1976, p.212.

³²⁴ Martin, in Levitin et al, 2003, p.33.

³²⁵ Silverman, 1988, p.208. Silverman discusses Bellour’s arguments that ‘systematicity’ of classical cinema operates at the expense of women.

auteurism has been frequently observed; for example Pauline Kael criticized auteurism, writing that auteurs “are so enthralled with their narcissistic male fantasies” staged within “the small range of experience of their boyhood and adolescence”.³²⁶ In her book on women filmmakers, Martin has noted the uneasy relationship between theoretical notions of authorship and women’s filmmaking³²⁷, as have others, such as Carrie Tarr, who has described authorship as having a tendency towards “a ‘league table’ of ‘great genius’ (read male)”.³²⁸

The perceived masculinity of auteurism is a likely result of the fact that men have historically dominated most sections of the industry globally—and thus writing about cinema—and because of the visibility of the *Cahiers du cinéma* in the 1950s, a group largely consisting of men, and who largely admired male Hollywood filmmakers (partly because there weren’t many women directors). It may well be that the masculinity celebrated by the *Cahiers du cinéma* was a recognition of a particular masculine perspective:³²⁹ for example, on the arrival of ‘the age of the auteurs’ Jacques Rivette discussed the violence of Nicholas Ray, Richard Brooks, Anthony Mann and Robert Aldrich as

... not that easy brutality which constituted the success of a Dmytryk or Benedek, but a virile anger, which comes from the heart, and lies less in the scenario or the choice of events, than in the tone of the narrative and the very mise en scène. Violence is never an end, but a means of approach ... In short, violence is the external sign of rupture.³³⁰

This description does not imply that these filmmakers are necessarily violent—in the ordinary sense in which we understand it—but rather, that there is a reading here of the signs and the way of speaking that the men of *Cahiers du cinéma* admired, and perhaps—although the quote does not call this masculine—recognized as masculine. This is a parallel argument to the one that this thesis makes about the recognition of the ‘female’ in

³²⁶ David A Gerstner & Janet Staiger (eds.), *Authorship and Film*, Routledge, London & New York, 2003. p.38.

³²⁷ Martin, 2003, pp.29-37.

³²⁸ Martin, 2003, p.30.

³²⁹ I am not arguing that all male filmmakers might take up such a perspective, and am only speaking here of one particular group. There were filmmakers working in the same period whose films could not be described this way—for example Vincente Minnelli.

Campion's films, or the femininity that Campion refers to in relation to her own 'style' (discussed later in the thesis).

Feminist film criticism and theory has discussed female and feminist authorship as tending "to be sought in what can be identifiably linked to the filmmaker (as woman): a film's autobiographical reference, a filmmaker's actual presence in the film [and] the evidence of a female voice within the narrative (however located)".³³¹ These ways offered by Martin are considered in the next chapter—along with other approaches, including aesthetics. The view taken here is that to generalize on the basis of sex and gender, given substantial evidence, is useful and informative. There is no attempt to erase the differences between women (which exist equally among men).

Cultural and historical specificity: feminine and female

An approach that allows for sex and gender (female and feminine) to be understood from historical, cultural and social perspectives rather than a dichotomous perspective against masculinity, rejects an ahistorical female or 'feminine nature'. Many feminists (particularly 'radical feminists') have argued that women are "separate but equal"³³² and have lauded, privileged or exalted 'feminine' values (such as caring, nurturing, a perceived irrationality). However, this is both universalising and essentialising, and works to maintain a hierarchical dichotomy (for example rational/irrational; male/female). This research is seeking to move from ways of thinking that are hierarchical and oppositional; rather it sees the feminine as something that could be expressed by both men and women.

³³⁰ Rivette, 'Notes sur une re' p.41 in Martin, 2003, p.31.

³³¹ Martin, 2003, p.34.

³³² Carol McMillian, *Women Reason and Nature*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1982, in Hekman, 1990, p. 41.

However this thesis is not arguing that that men and women can express gender in the same way, but rather, arguing that there is gender difference, that both genders exist alongside each other, rather than in opposition. The argument of this thesis is that feminisms are a political choice that men³³³ and women can make, and ‘the feminine’ can also be understood as performative; that is, that we can read Campion’s films by thinking of them as discursive productions (or what Butler calls *fabrications*³³⁴) that use gestures, enactments and significations to explore ideas of female experience—partly as cultural phenomena—ideas Campion’s films contemplate from different historical perspectives, but always inflected by insights or perspectives that are contemporary.

Maggie Humm has observed that feminism has had a long term investment in cultural critiques, especially of films which are conspicuous sites of misogyny; however, Humm rightly points out that films made by women aren’t necessarily the opposite to those of men. In addition, spectatorship theory recognizes that “media stereotypes are inextricably caught up in gendered pleasures. What feminist theory argues in addition is that the masculinity or femininity of viewing pleasures are historical, rhetorical and authored”.³³⁵ From this, this thesis asks the question, what are the viewing pleasures or affects of Campion’s films (which are often unsettling rather than pleasurable), and explores not just her authorship of them but the historical context, and rhetorical strategies such as the discourses the films offer (for instance discourses on feminism, patriarchy, and power).³³⁶

³³³ This thesis does not, however, discuss this in relation to men.

³³⁴ See Butler, 1999, p.173.

I am abstracting from Butler’s ideas here in using the idea of performativity—derived from Foucault—in describing how sexual regimes are constructed around binary oppositions.

³³⁵ See Humm, 1997, p.8.

³³⁶ Of course, not all the discourses offered in her films are discussed in this thesis: postcoloniality for example, or racial discourses on which point Campion has been criticized as reproducing conventional attributions of power; see Ann Hardy, ‘p.78.’The Last Patriarch’, in Margolis, 2000, p.78.

Alternative approaches to authorship

Cinécriture (filmic writing) is another approach to the question of authorship.³³⁷ The term *cinécriture* was coined by filmmaker Agnès Varda, and used as a concept to describe her work. *Cinécriture* denotes the filmmaker's cinematic practice, the activity of spectators, and an interpretative methodology. Varda herself has described the philosophy behind it in the following way:

A well-written film is also well filmed, the actors are well chosen, so are the locations. The cutting, the movement, the points-of-view, the rhythm of filming and editing have been felt and considered in the way a writer chooses the depth and meaning of sentences, the type of words, the number of adverbs, paragraphs ... which advance the story or break its flow etc. In writing it is called style. In the cinema, style is *cinécriture*.³³⁸

Florrienne Wild has described *cinécriture* as an “imaged discourse”, not merely a vehicle for mise-en-scène, but rather “an unstable area of juxtaposed and recurring figures and configurations ... [which] encourages us to consider film in ways other than following a narrative dictated by a screenplay”.³³⁹

Cinécriture was both interesting to, and useful for this research given that firstly, it indicated an alternative descriptor to the ‘auteur’—and also a discomfort with it—perhaps because Varda was the only major woman filmmaker associated with the New Wave³⁴⁰ (although she was also a key figure of the ‘Left Bank Group’³⁴¹). Secondly, as a concept, *cinécriture* allows a discussion of the woman auteur, makes historical links to filmmakers

³³⁷ Chanakya Arya notes that *cinécriture* is a compound word made up of two French words *ciné* (cinema) and *écriture* (writing). See Chanakya Arya, *An Introduction to Film Studies*, Routledge, UK, 2003, p.445.

³³⁸ Martin, 2003, p.35.

³³⁹ Florianne Wild, ‘Colliding with history in La Bête Humaine: Reading Renoir's Cinécriture’, *Film Literature Quarterly*, 2003, at http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3768/is_200301/ai_n9212973 Accessed 9/3/06.

³⁴⁰ Arya, 2003, p.445.

³⁴¹ Critic Richard Roud drew a distinction between the Cahiers du cinéma group and others whom he dubbed the ‘Left bank’ group—principally Agnes Varda, Alain Resnais and Chris Marker (who were notable for their interest in experimental or documentary filmmaking and left wing politics). See *Harvard Film Archive*: <http://www.harvardfilmarchive.org/caendars/00mayjun/leftbank.htm> Accessed 18/5/06.

who produce eloquent filmic writing, and offers an alternative to the way in which women have been, or felt, marginalized by auteur theory. *Cinécriture* avoids

having to find the filmmaker or her female voice in the text in order to give it authorial credence [it moves away from] the legal definition of ‘authorship’ towards the definition dealing with the practice of writing which may or may not emerge from a single person but, in terms of film production, will certainly be organized around the director.³⁴²

These ideas are particularly relevant given the number of films where Campion has made cinematic versions of existing novels and therefore, must ‘write them’ filmically,³⁴³ as well as her evident interest in atmosphere, detail and texture, rather than story progression. Inherent in *cinécriture* is an interest in the construction of images from an aesthetic point-of-view. Through a careful consideration of what is essentially Campion’s *cinécriture*, this thesis contributes to the theorising around the photographic image. Silverman has noted (in her overview of perspectives on authorship³⁴⁴), that recent theory has given cinema’s visual transactions a privileged position; by that she means the visual: the gaze, the look, the speaking subject, which have all been privileged over other branches of the cinematic apparatus, such as sound.³⁴⁵ She also argues, as this thesis does, that films are “ideologically as well as cinematographically ‘spoken’”³⁴⁶ and that the “director may in certain situations constitute *one* of the speakers in his or her films”.³⁴⁷

³⁴² Varda in Martin, 2003, pp.35–36.

³⁴³ Within this concept, I take to mean writing with all cinematic elements – sound, mise-en-scène etcetera—all the elements that *cinécriture* describes.

³⁴⁴ She offers an overview of auteurism and authorship, particularly in regard to the place of the author, or the author as a discursive category (most of the selected theorising is however in relation to classic Hollywood films). It is of interest to this research that she notes that reading a film is as complexly bound up with gender, as it is with authorship. Silverman, 1988, p. 204.

³⁴⁵ Silverman, 1988, p.201. Although sound is very important to Campion’s cinema, particularly her early work, it is not considered in detail in this thesis because of space constraints.

³⁴⁶ Silverman, 1988, p.201.

³⁴⁷ Silverman, 1988, p.202.

Part 2 Female authorship

One approach to authorship has been to understand it as political, as agency and as self-representation. As has already been discussed, in responding to our gendered culture, feminists have been drawn to the study of female traditions; although many women filmmakers do not identify their work as feminist, or as having any particular ‘female-centred’ project. However, studies of female authorship are advocated not just as political commentary, but as offering one alternative viewpoint, and necessary to augment film theory, given that films made by women have largely been omitted from discussions of authorship. For example, Angela Martin has argued that feminists have defended the necessity of female authorship as politically necessary given the tendency for theories of authorship to relate to the male genius, whereas female-authored films “may be more open to representations of women reworked to feminist or women-identified ends”.³⁴⁸ This argument has been frequently made despite the fact that auteurism provides, as Carrie Tarr has argued, an “inadequate approach to understanding socially situated, textually produced meanings and pleasures”.³⁴⁹

In regard to the cinematic apparatus, there is some literature on the contribution of the female author, and discussions are starting to come from women cinematographers—an area that is still, and has historically been, male-dominated. For example, in her essay on this subject, Jane Castle explored the disjunction between the embodied reality of the woman cinematographer, and the reality that she constructs via the apparatus of the camera. Castle offers her view that the nearest one can get to what she describes as a morphic site of cinematographic perception, is behind the lens of the camera—because the cinematographer is not just a spectator, but also an active agent in the reconfiguration of the view that is seen (of course, one can also argue this of the director, and the cinematographer works with the director rather than alone). She explores what this means when that eye is located not just in the camera, but in the body of a woman:

³⁴⁸ Martin is quoting Carrie Tarr in Martin, 2003, p.30. ‘Women-identified’ women relate emotionally &/or sexually to women.

³⁴⁹ Tarr, 1999, p.4.

Whether I wanted to or not, whether I knew I was doing it or not, it was almost impossible to resist the constant cycling of phallogentric imagery whenever I worked in the mainstream. Had I refused to take part in the creation of these images there is no question that my career would have been limited and I never would have seen what it was really like at the "top-end" of production.³⁵⁰

Among her conclusions is that the “fact that women work in the film industry is no guarantee that they are no longer being silenced—or silencing themselves in order to remain in the industry”.³⁵¹ Castle ends her piece with the conclusion that it isn’t so much where women’s work is (inside or outside the system), but rather that they are able to “register an authentic presence”.³⁵² This question of authenticity is important, and connects with comments made by the producer of several of Campion’s films, Jan Chapman,³⁵³ who has said that she has been attracted to films where the female experience is “genuine”³⁵⁴, which by inference implies, given that she has produced so many of Campion’s films, that this is a quality she finds in them. This idea of authenticity is however a difficult one to quantify or generalize, and this is why it is only discussed in specific relation to stated understandings of authenticity.

Feminist theorists have debated the issue or problem that Castle raises: of women filmmakers being able to make films that are not phallogentric, and that have not been colonized by certain (patriarchal) ways of thinking. For example, numerous feminist critics have located this situation as based in the structural foundations of classical Hollywood cinema—Laura Mulvey, for instance.³⁵⁵ In an article on *Now Voyager* (Irving Rapper, 1942), Lea Jacobs has written that when a woman takes an active part in the

³⁵⁰ Jane Castle, ‘When Girls Grow Up To Be Cameramen’, in French, 2003, pp.63–64.

³⁵¹ Castle, in French, 2003, p.66.

³⁵² Castle, in French, 2003, p.67.

³⁵³ She produced *The Piano*, *Holy Smoke!* (and Campion’s television productions *Dancing Daze*, 1986 and *Two Friends*, 1986). She also script-edited *An Angel At My Table*. In addition, she also worked with numerous other notable women filmmakers, producing films for Gillian Armstrong, Shirley Barrett and Cate Shortland.

³⁵⁴ Jan Chapman, ‘Talking Pictures’ forum: ‘Somersaulting through Development’, Melbourne International Film Festival, 22/7/04.

³⁵⁵ See Laura Mulvey, ‘Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema’, *Screen*, Vol. 16, No.3, Autumn, 1975, pp. 6–18.

production of a discourse as director, spectator or character, “so as to reinforce her role outside it ... Her discourse and her desire, as represented, become that of a man. ... Her desire is figured as absence, as enigma, as a secret which is fundamentally unknowable”.³⁵⁶ Therefore, critical positions such as Jacobs’ point to a problem of silence, a line of reasoning that supports the case that representation has been limited, and has resulted in a lack of female desire in representation.

It was clear early in this research that the task of discovering or establishing female qualities or signatures in the cinema is a difficult undertaking—especially given the trajectory of feminist scholarship wrestling with female or feminist authorship, and a widely held view through the 1990s that such investigations were no longer particularly productive—as they were thought to have been in the 1970s for example. Given the diverse approaches of women filmmakers, this research has not aimed at finding or expected to find fixed evidence of any universal female signatures. As Canadian filmmaker Lea Pool has observed, although “[w]omen have a different perspective to men. It doesn’t mean you can generalize women’s cinema any more than you can men’s”.³⁵⁷ However, with all due caution I will discuss some of the anecdotal and research evidence of female perspectives and signatures.

I acknowledge that discussing some authorial signatures as female may be more of a challenge in relation to some filmmakers than others. For example, the action director Kathryn Bigelow, has sometimes virtually excluded women (for example in *Point Break*, 1991). However she also made *Blue Steel* (1990), which has been described as “an attempt to put ‘a woman at the centre of a movie predominantly occupied by men’”³⁵⁸, and from a feminist perspective, “the interest of her work has as much to do with its capacity to underline the limitations of thinking about certain kinds of genres and styles as

³⁵⁶ Lea Jacobs, *Now Voyager: Some Problems of Enunciation and Sexual Difference, Camera Obscura*, No.7, 1981, pp.90-91.

³⁵⁷ Lea Poole in Mandy, 2000.

³⁵⁸ Kathryn Bigelow in Yvonne Tasker (ed.), *Fifty Contemporary Filmmakers*, Routledge, London & New York, 2002, p.63.

‘masculine’³⁵⁹—just as *In the Cut* does with the thriller/detective genre. There are also some markers in Bigelow’s work that share something with the typologies of women’s filmmaking: for example, her visual, and often visceral films have been described by Yvonne Tasker as demonstrating a gift for the ‘uncanny’ or having a lack of narrative coherence³⁶⁰—both descriptions which have also been used to describe Campion’s work. As Angela Martin has observed, a woman filmmaker’s film may not necessarily have a female voice, but that doesn’t preclude that woman from being its author.³⁶¹

Along similar lines to Martin, French filmmaker Agnès Varda has said that to

be a woman is to be born in a woman’s body... Simone de Beauvoir’s view [that] we are nurtured into womanhood has to do with thoughts of the mind, [but] the fact remains [that] we’re born into a female body. How can that not be an essential fact whether you’re a film director, cleaner, mother, whether you have children or not? We women inhabit a female body. Women shouldn’t be defined by the way men see them—the same men who have oppressed them, fathers, lovers, husbands, brothers. They’re used to existing through men’s eyes, through mirrors. The first feminist act is to say ‘Okay, they look at me, but I can look too, it’s to decide to look, not see the world and oneself through another’s eyes.’³⁶²

Varda identifies a feminist politic of seeing, of taking responsibility for one’s own representation—and representation more generally—and the problem that one’s gaze might be colonized by patriarchy. While she might be criticized on the grounds of biological determinism, many women make exactly this point—that to live one’s life in a woman’s body is different to living it in a man’s body and, as argued throughout this thesis, women have a ‘felt’ sense of female identity and this is a process of identification rather than a fixed structure.

American artist Georgia O’Keeffe expressed this ‘felt’ sense of self when she wrote, in a letter to a female journalist:

³⁵⁹ Tasker, 2002, pp.60-61.

³⁶⁰ Tasker, 2002, pp.60-61. Tasker is quoting Pauline Kael in relation to the ‘uncanny’.

³⁶¹ See Martin, 2003, p.34.

³⁶² Varda in Mandy, 2000.

I thought you could write something about me that the men can't ... I have no definite idea of what it should be – but a woman who has lived many things and who sees lines and colours as an expression of living – might say something that a man can't – I feel there is something unexplored about woman that only a woman can explore ...³⁶³

In this letter, O'Keeffe also illustrated that this 'felt' sense of self is difficult to communicate, that it is something that is recognized but somehow unspeakable—an important idea in relation to Campion who has an interest in communicating through her films what has not been explored about women. Joan Snyder made the same point as O'Keeffe when she said that “there is a female sensibility. I know what it *isn't*. But I can't pinpoint what it is, although I've boasted I can ... pick out the women's work”.³⁶⁴ The issue that comments such as these bring to the fore is in relation to the limits of communication. On the one hand, Snyder is acknowledging that something has spoken to her, something she recognize—something referred to in this thesis as recognition, or as a 'shock of recognition'—but, on the other hand, it is something that is somehow unspeakable, or silent. It is this silence that this thesis seeks to break, or to pinpoint. As an undertaking this is difficult because it seeks to make something that is unconscious, conscious—seeking to know how it communicates, and this is difficult to make concrete in order to discuss it.

Women's cinema and studies of women auteurs

As stated, the use of the concept 'women's films' in this thesis refers to films where women filmmakers explore the cultural construct 'feminine', and what it is to be a woman in our society.³⁶⁵ There is no unanimity on what this type of film actually is, or how gender might translate into an individual's filmmaking. As I have noted in *Womenvision*,

³⁶³ Georgia O'Keeffe writing to Mabel Luhan published in an issue of *Ms Magazine* (November, 1987) in Bordo, 1990, p. 134.

³⁶⁴ Snyder in Lippard, 1976, p. 81.

³⁶⁵ 'Women's films' was used generically in the 1930s and 1940s to describe film melodrama but this is not the reference here. While these films had a woman at the centre and a female viewpoint, they differ from what this thesis discusses. For an overview see Molly Haskell, 'The Woman's Film', in Thornton, 1999, pp.20-30. It should be noted however that, as discussed a bit further on, filmmakers such as Dorothy Arzner did also explore female experience and viewpoints, and these explorations could be read as working towards a counter cinema.

women's filmmaking in Australia has spanned the whole spectrum from experimental through to narrative features, and women filmmakers have worked in a wide variety of ways and styles, with a wide array of intentions, which range from changing the gender/power balance to becoming commercially successful filmmakers. This is true of women's filmmaking internationally.³⁶⁶

Although this thesis' central discussion is of Campion's films, the work of other women film auteurs is of comparative interest. One of the relatively few women directors who have been (until recently) discussed as an auteur is Dorothy Arzner.³⁶⁷ Claire Johnson has described Arzner's *auteurist* preoccupation as 'female desire'. Arzner's films were produced "wholly within the 'patriarchal ideology' which dominated Hollywood of the time ... [they] employ certain devices of narrative organization and *mise-en-scène* which throw that ideology into sharp relief and so disrupt it".³⁶⁸ These structures not only suggest a woman's viewpoint, but also illuminate the possibilities of a feminist counter-cinema in Arzner's films (although she refuted the idea she was a feminist or intended to make feminist cinema). Francesco Casetti has observed that Arzner's feminist countercinema offered new structures and orientations: he wrote that

the only way to attack patriarchal cinema is to emphasize its linguistic nature. This was accomplished at the very heart of classic Hollywood cinema by women directors like Dorothy Arzner and Ida Lupino ... *Dance Girls Dance* [sic] relies on stereotypes of the vamp and the innocent and shows their inherent contradictions, by opposing women's desire to be liked and their desire to express themselves. The effect of this operation is to

³⁶⁶ French, 2003, pp.11-17.

³⁶⁷ Arzner worked in Hollywood in the late 1920s through to the early 1940s and is significant given that she was able to build up a coherent body of work in Hollywood—others worked in the 1920s when there were more women working in Hollywood generally but Arzner was virtually the only woman directing during the 30s and 40s. The prolific Ida Lupino began making films from 1949. Prior to this Lois Weber worked in the silent era. She made 20 films. Studies of Arzner as an auteur include: Claire Johnston (ed.), *The Work of Dorothy Arzner*, British Film Institute, London, 1975 and Judith Mayne, *Directed by Dorothy Arzner*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington & Indianapolis, 1994.

³⁶⁸ Edward Buscombe, 'Preface', Johnston, 1975. Johnson uses ideology in the Althusserian sense as a system of unconscious representations, images, myths, ideas or concepts.

create uneasiness inside the story. Both directors work on myths and show their artificiality.³⁶⁹

Johnson's work on Arzner poses several ideas of interest to this research. On the one hand, Johnson described her interest in Arzner's films in terms of the "dislocations and contradictions between the discourse which the film text comprises and that of the ideology of patriarchal culture within which the film is placed".³⁷⁰ While patriarchy is by no means easily dismantled, these dislocations may be useful in understanding 'women's cinema' or female authorship, and asking whether the dislocations are a characteristic of female authorship. In addition, Arzner was centrally preoccupied with female desire, and there is evidence that this preoccupation is common to women's cinema (it is a central feature of Campion's). For example, Judith Mayne has indicated "many women's films are motivated by the representation of female desire".³⁷¹ Campion's work has also been described as expressing female desire; for example, there are voluminous amounts of writing on her work as expressions of female desire (particularly in *The Piano*).³⁷² Despite significant theorising on the subject, it isn't clear how significant the fact of female authorship is in relation to a particular, or distinct, inflection of female desire. For this research, what this means is that individual examples of the inflection of female desire can be gathered as typologies of women's cinema. This contributes to the field, but it remains problematic to try to conclude, or prove, that female authors will offer a distinct view of female desire that male authors cannot offer.

³⁶⁹ Casetti, 1999, p.223. He gives other examples of countercinema on this page. These observations have some resonance in relation to watching Campion's films which create a sense of uneasiness for audiences. In addition, she is also interested in myth, as discussed in chapter six in relation to love and romance.

³⁷⁰ Johnston, 1975, p.2.

³⁷¹ Mayne, 1990, p.100.

³⁷² In her film, Mandy describes Campion as "the expert in filming desire"; see Mandy, 2000. See other examples such as: Richard Allen, 'Female Sexuality, Creativity, and Desire in *The Piano*', in Felicity Coombs & Suzanne Gemmell, (eds.), *Piano Lessons: Approaches to the Piano*, Sydney, 2000, pp.44-63; Deanne Bogdan, Hilary E. Davis, & Judith Bertson, 'Sweet Surrender and Trespassing Desires in Reading: Jane Campion's *The Piano* and the Struggle for Responsible Pedagogy', *Changing English*. No. 4(1), March 1997, pp.81-103; Stella Bruzzi, 'Tempestuous Petticoats: Costume and Desire in *The Piano*', *Screen* Vol. 36, No.3, Autumn, 1995, pp.257-66; Michale Davis, 'Tied to That Maternal 'Thing': Death and Desire in Jane Campion's *The Piano*', *Gothic Studies*. No.4 (1), May 2002, pp.63-78; Sue Gillett, 2004; Harriet Kimble Wrye, 'Tuning a clinical ear to the ambiguous chords of Jane Campion's *The Piano*', *Psychoanalytic Inquiry*, Vol. 18(2), 1998, pp.168-182.

There are numerous other women filmmakers whose work communicates female desire and female experience; Catherine Breillat for example, has said of her films that they are “about understanding what it is to exist in that sexuality. It’s about the nature of desire”.³⁷³ Breillat’s own inflection of female desire includes an interest in the male figure as an erotic object, an exploration that has largely been considered by male theorists theorising masculine spectacle (such as Richard Dyer and Steve Neale³⁷⁴). The difference that Breillat brings is a heterosexual view of female spectatorship, and the active desire of the female filmmaker. References to ‘female desire’ in this thesis refer to a whole range of desires—not necessarily sexual desire. As Mariana Valverde has noted, most desire in our society has a sexual basis or overtone but there are other desires. She gives the example of a description of a shopping expedition, which she says is described in “unabashedly erotic terms. They speak about ‘indulging themselves’ and about ‘loving’ particular pieces of clothing, and often the conversation will consist of one woman voicing her Puritan reluctance to give herself pleasure ...”.³⁷⁵

³⁷³ Mandy, 2000.

³⁷⁴ Richard Dyer, ‘Don’t Look Now – The Male Pin-up’, (pp.265-274) and Steve Neal, ‘Masculinity as Spectacle’ (pp.277-290) in Mandy Merck, *The Sexual Subject: A Screen Reader in Sexuality*, Routledge, London and New York, 1999.

³⁷⁵ Mariana Valverde, *Sex, Power and Pleasure*, Women’s Press, Toronto, 1995, p. 147.

Many feminists have asked the question of whether there is a place within conventional mainstream cinema for female desire and the female gaze: Jackie Stacey for example has written on precisely this when she wrote about *Desperately Seeking Susan* (directed by Susan Seidelman, 1985, and written by Leora Barish) that it is a representation of the “fascination between women”.³⁷⁶ Roberta (Rosanna Arquette) gazes at Susan (Madonna) whom she wishes to be—Roberta wants to become one with Susan. The film explores Roberta’s obsession with Susan, and so creates alternative relations of the gaze to the usual mainstream fare—and importantly, “through her desire we seek, and *see* Susan”.³⁷⁷

³⁷⁶ Stacey in Joanne Hollow, *Feminism, Femininity and Popular Culture*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 2000, p.57. de Lauretis describes this as identification rather than desire, but I regard it as the later.

³⁷⁷ My emphasis. Jackie Stacey, ‘Desperately Seeking Susan’, in John Caughie & Annette Kuhn (eds.), *The Sexual Subject: A Screen Reader in sexuality*, Routledge, London, 1992, p. 57.

Female vision

Marie Mandy describes it as a terrible thing “that no one has ever taught us how to develop our [female] vision”³⁷⁸ and her response was to make a documentary film seeking to find the differences in women’s films, and what it might be that films by women filmmakers possess that might speak to women audiences. Early on, women’s films are described in Mandy’s documentary as “a point of view radically different to that offered by the dominant patriarchal perspective”³⁷⁹, and it has useful examples of these radically different views through an enquiry that asks how women directors approach the filming of love, desire, and sexuality—and thus, it gives some insights into a number of female filmmaker’s approaches to these themes.

In her documentary Marie Mandy interviewed a large number of women filmmakers and found that there are some shared perspectives in the way that they filmed desire; such as not wanting to exploit women’s bodies, or the sense that films which men have created, of explicit representations of sex acts, tend to prescribe inadequate standards or visions that, as Varda observed, “show an image of sexuality which is very limited ... it gives no representation of what is at play in sexuality”.³⁸⁰ This is an important idea because it relates to the way in which conventional representations (that are generally constructed from a masculinist view) might set the standard of what is erotic, and thus work to homogenize or colonize erotic representation, and only present sexuality from one particular view. Mandy’s film illustrates that films made by women often look in original ways, or carve out fresh ways of looking; for example in Doris Dorrie’s film *Am I Beautiful* (*Bin ich schön?*, 1998), there is a woman giving oral sex to a man. The image is visually a traditional sex scene, but the voice-over monologue offers the woman’s internal monologue: ‘All I’ve eaten today is a banana, 90 calories, a yoghurt, 120 ... I’m proud of myself! ... I’m hungry!’ And meanwhile, her very rotund lover groans ‘Oh darling!’ and looks orgasmically blissful, but she continues to ruminate: ‘I’m hungry ...’. This scene is

³⁷⁸ Mandy, 2000.

³⁷⁹ Mandy 2000. Lesley Stern also offers this as what women’s cinema sought to do. See Lesley Stern, ‘Independent Femist Film-making in Australia’, *An Australian Film Reader*, Currency Press, Sydney, 1985, p.315.

³⁸⁰ Varda in Mandy, 2000.

particularly drawn from a female perspective, and importantly, is an illustration of how men and women do not always communicate with each other.

It is important to note here that the fact someone is female does not ensure a non-patriarchal view; women are as susceptible to having their world-view colonized by patriarchy as men are, and sex in itself does not ensure or suggest any differences of view. It is not the argument of this thesis that Campion explicitly intends to make an oppositional or feminist countercinema, although this might be the effect of her filmmaking; but rather she explores difference, and experiences that have not been visible. There are copious references in feminist writing to the way in which women filmmakers might offer a feminist countercinema,³⁸¹ and the way in which this cinema offers particular views of female experience; for example, E. Ann Kaplan has said of Chinese filmmaker Hu Mei that her film *Army Nurse* is a film which offers a view of a woman's situation, and asks us to "identify with her, to move through her situations with her, to experience what her life is like ... the film arguably offers ... resistance to dominant Chinese sexual and political codes ...".³⁸² Such accounts are useful in understanding the importance of representation, and to some degree, female experience, but as these feminist countercinemas are well documented in feminist analysis of the cinema, and outside the direction of the thesis, I have not discussed them in any detail. Rather, I have focused on the viewpoints that give insights into unrepresented female experience—something (from chapter 4 onwards), it is argued that Campion gives space to.

When asked whether as a woman, she thought she brought anything to filmmaking that her male colleagues didn't, film producer Sue Maslin (*Road to Nowhere* 1997, and *Japanese Story* 2003) replied that she thought women bring, or share a way of 'seeing' that is partly subconscious, and which she identified as coming from growing up as a woman, being

³⁸¹ For example see Claire Johnston, 'Notes on Women's Cinema', in *Women and Film*, Society for Education in Film and Television, 1973; Kuhn, 1982; Renate Gunther's, *Marguerite Duras*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 2002.

³⁸² E. Ann Kaplan, 'Melodrama/ subjectivity / ideology: Western melodrama theories and their relevance to recent Chinese cinema', in Wimal Dissanayake, William Rothman & Andrew Dudley (eds.), *Melodrama and Asian Cinema*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1993, p.24.

shaped by a male-dominated world which constructs women as outsiders, but which also gives them an ability to bring an outsider's view, or a view from a distance in relation to ideology and culture. Maslin outlined that she felt that women are "interested in different things, can offer different stories, and then by being feminist ... that gives you another perspective of looking at your film ideas".³⁸³ But she doesn't believe there is a separate aesthetic that is common to all women, or to all feminists, that can necessarily be identified or articulated.

The idea of being outside is something that many women 'authors' share. As Judith Mayne has observed, mainstream representations "may be largely the projections of patriarchal fantasies, and the 'women' who make films and who see them may have problematic relations at best with those visions".³⁸⁴ This is essentially a description of the rupture resulting from experiencing 'Otherness'³⁸⁵, or what Maslin describes as "of being outside". These experiences of being 'Othered' or feeling that representation does not adequately, or authentically, represent female experience, frequently comes up in feminist research. For example, Marie Mandy claims she began making a film, already discussed, because of her growing disappointment with conventional mainstream cinema, which is largely directed by men (something she describes as a fact rather than a negative). She stated in the voice-over that she found "less and less pleasure in watching such films. ... I couldn't relate to their characters ... leading female parts had more to do with men's fantasy of what women should look like than what I believe ...".³⁸⁶

Filmmaker Patricia Rozema has made a similar observation to Maslin saying that most films are made by men, and from their point-of-view, "the subject is male, the experience is primarily male, so the experience of sexuality is going to be an experience of male sexuality. It's kind of obvious, ... [not] something to get angry about, it is just a fact.

³⁸³ Interview with Sue Maslin in Lisa French, *Do Contemporary Australian Women Film-makers share a feminist perspective in their work?*, La Trobe University MA thesis, 1995, Appendix 1, pp.55-56.

³⁸⁴ Mayne, 1990, p.98.

³⁸⁵ Feeling marginal, as different to the main or dominant group. For further see: Hall, 1997, pp. 234-238.

³⁸⁶ Mandy, press kit for *Women Film Desire: A Journey through Women's Cinema*, Mandy, 2000. Of course, this is not implying a singular vision, and as I have stated, women are as capable of making patriarchal films as men are.

Whoever you are, that is what you bring to your piece of cinema”.³⁸⁷ Campion herself has made the same observation “... ‘men control the money, and they decide who they are going to give it to,’ ... [that is] why so few women get movies made.”³⁸⁸ This point is important firstly because, to the present day, women occupy significantly fewer key creative positions in global film industries and therefore, the dominant point-of-view from which representations are constructed is a male one—and this means that female points-of-view are likely to be in the minority.

Another important idea discussed throughout the literature, in relation to ‘female signatures’, is the question of whether it is the same thing for a man, and a woman, to take up a feminine subject position. As outlined already, masculine or feminine subject positions might be taken up by either sex. For example Tania Modleski has offered a view that it is possible that Hitchcock had a female voice as one of the constituent, although generally submerged, elements of his films. This is not a claim that his subjectivity was the same as a woman’s might be, but is part of a fascinating discussion of Hitchcock’s response to his film *Rebecca*, which was based on a novel by Daphne du Maurier. Modleski outlines how Hitchcock claimed it was not a ‘Hitchcock picture’ because of its feminine aspects, and he objected to the feminine discourse of the original novel. Modleski describes the femininity in *Rebecca* as “alien and disturbing, neither expelled or digested in the course of the film”³⁸⁹ and very interestingly, she claims that most male critics find this film “distasteful”.³⁹⁰ Apparently Hitchcock found it humourless and tried to insert some vomiting scenes, which the producer, David O. Selznick, outraged, made him remove. Selznick sent a memo that indicates that as a creative producer, he valued and recognized the feminine in the original book:

[Every] little thing that the girl does in the book, her reactions of running away from guests, and the tiny things that indicate her nervousness and her self-consciousness and her gaucherie are all so brilliant in the book that every woman who has read it has

³⁸⁷ Patricia Rozema in Mandy, 2000.

³⁸⁸ Campion quoted in Doland.

³⁸⁹ Tania Modleski, *The Woman Who Knew Too Much: Hitchcock and Feminist Theory*, Routledge, UK, 1988, p. 43.

³⁹⁰ Modleski, 1988, p. 44.

adored the girl and has understood her psychology, has cringed with embarrassment for her, yet has understood exactly what was going through her mind. ... [Your changes in the script] have removed all the subtleties and substituted big broad strokes which in outline form betray just how ordinary the plot is and just how bad a picture it would make without the little feminine things which are so recognizable and which make every woman say, “I know just how she feels ... I know just what she is going through ...”.³⁹¹

Female authorship as an alternative to the mainstream

From the 1920s Dorothy Arzner made films that focused on women’s lives, friendships, and communities. Judith Mayne has written about the creation of a female world in Arzner’s film *Working Girls*, a film she describes as portraying women in non-stereotypical ways, and where the women talk about the men quite cynically.³⁹² Mayne has described Arzner’s alternative view in relation to mainstream representation as setting up, and then collapsing, binary opposites such as home/workplace, or establishing contrasts, such as romance/work. In *The Wild Party* (1929) for instance, Mayne wrote that

dramatic opposition does not require male/female difference in the film, as one usually expects in classical Hollywood films ... and when the film does portray male/female difference, it is less a function of the typical (for Hollywood, that is) man as subject/woman as object dichotomy.³⁹³

According to Mayne, Arzner’s interest in the complex nature of women’s communities is exemplified in *Dance, Girl Dance* (1940), a “stunning exploration of women among women, particularly in so far as the pleasures of looking are concerned”.³⁹⁴ Although the film ends with a requisite happy couple, Mayne reads Arzner as underlying the fragility of the heterosexual couple³⁹⁵ given that the majority of screen time is devoted to female worlds.

³⁹¹ Modleski, 1988, p. 43.

³⁹² Mayne, 1994, p. 99.

³⁹³ Mayne, 1994, p. 134.

³⁹⁴ Mayne, 1994, p. 1.

³⁹⁵ Arzner was also a lesbian, a point not lost on Mayne. This decentring of the heterosexual couple can also be seen in films by other women filmmakers—e.g. Emma-Kate Croghan’s *Love and Other Catastrophes* (1996).

Arzner is clearly a filmmaker who is interested in the emotion of women together, bonds between women, in celebrating female friendship, in a diversity of female representation, in narratives where heterosexual relationships won't break these bonds, and an interest in challenging the assumptions of classical film. Polan has also observed this, writing that Arzner's cinema is said to embody "the deeply felt need for bonding [of women] and emotional connection".³⁹⁶ Campion's films are also deeply interested in female friendships or relationships—for example, of her film *In the Cut*, Campion has said of the relationship between Pauline (Jennifer Jason-Leigh) and Frannie (Meg Ryan): "I've always wanted to capture on film the kind of love and tenderness that for me underpins my relationships with women—what compassion we have for each other and, the sort of soul journey that we share".³⁹⁷ This is in contrast to the majority of popular American films³⁹⁸, which according to Yvonne Tasker have, across most genres, "marginalized representations of female friendship, more often favouring glamorous stars seen to exist in spectacular isolation, supportive figures who exist almost exclusively in relation to the hero, or women set in competition with each other".³⁹⁹

From the late 1960s to the early 1980s, French director Marguerite Duras produced films focused on the lives of women. Academic Renate Günther has described her brand of feminism as idiosyncratic, and characterized by ambiguity, given that on the one hand "she did share the view that women's experience is fundamentally different from that of men, which may be due to both biological and social influences"⁴⁰⁰, but on the other, modes of being such as 'silence' or 'passivity' were not, according to Günther, signifiers of natural feminine submission, but rather, "a form of passive resistance which would consist

³⁹⁶ Polan, 2001, p.11.

³⁹⁷ From the director's comments on the DVD of *In the Cut*.

³⁹⁸ It is not the argument of this thesis that female friendships are the sole domain of women filmmakers. There are numerous examples of films directed by men that focus on female friendships, for example *Steel Magnolias* (Herbert Ross, 1989). I note however that many of these had female writers, for example *Beaches* (directed by Gary Marshall, 1988 but based on a novel by Iris Dart and screenplay by Mary Agnes Donoghue), and *Thelma and Louise* (directed by Ridley Scott, 1991 and written by Callie Khouri).

³⁹⁹ Yvonne Tasker, *Working Girls: Gender and Sexuality in Popular Cinema*, Routledge, London & New York, 1998, p. 139.

⁴⁰⁰ Günther, 2002, p.67.

in women's refusal to cooperate with the demands placed on them by the patriarchal order".⁴⁰¹ This is interesting if one considers Campion's characters, who provide evidence that Campion is concerned with the physical and psychological ways in which women in various societies are confined (Isabel in *Portrait*, Janet in *Angel*, Ada in *The Piano*, Ruth in *Holy Smoke!*). Duras (like Campion) is preoccupied with sexuality and gender, and constructs women as a gender-specific group in terms of their experiences—and perhaps modes of expression—but there is also a contradiction in that both resist gender being fixed. Günther argues that Duras does this through transcending the boundaries of gender, by “deconstructing the spectator's perceptions of ‘masculinity’ and ‘femininity’”.⁴⁰² This thesis argues that Campion's practice also does this, in confusing masculine and feminine traits, problematising gender through showing how it is intertwined, and in avoiding inscribing gender in oppositional or binary terms—for example in feminising male characters such as those played by Harvey Keitel (discussed later). Duras' films (like Campion's and Arzner's) reflect an interest in portraying relationships between women and constructing female subjectivity (and the gaze).

Australian women filmmakers have made a particular contribution as female authors, interested in representing female experience, portraying relationships between women, and female subjectivity. Notably, these are also the most successful and internationally well-known Australian filmmakers: Gillian Armstrong for example, whose career has been dominated by films about female experience.⁴⁰³ Others who have made cinematic explorations of female experience include Samantha Lang (*The Well*, 1997 and *Audacious*, 1994); Davida Allen (*Feeling Sexy*, 1999); Shirley Barrett (*Love Serenade*, 1995 and *Walk The Talk*, 2000); Cate Shortland (*Somersault*, 2004); Kate Woods (*Looking for Alibrandi*, 2000); and Jocelyn Moorhouse (*How To Make An American Quilt*, 1995). These are all women's films in their exploration of difference, and in general, the central female protagonists find their identity through social relations. Women filmmakers based in

⁴⁰¹ Günther, 2002, p.67.

⁴⁰² Günther, 2002, p.67.

⁴⁰³ For example, features across her career such as *My Brilliant Career* (1979), *High Tide* (1987), *The Last Days of Chez Nous* (1992), *Little Women* (1994), *Charlotte Gray* (2001), and documentaries such as *Bingo*, *Bridesmaids & Braces* (1988).

Australia have made films that have explored the tensions and bonds of being sisters (*Little Women*, *The Last Days of Chez Nous*, *Love Serenade*, *In the Cut*); the bonds between mothers and daughters—sometimes grandmothers (*Looking for Alibrandi*, *How To Make An American Quilt*, *High Tide*, *The Piano*); the strange nature of some female friendships (*The Well*, *The Portrait of a Lady*); and the hold romantic myths have over women (*Love Serenade*, *Walk The Talk*, *An Angel At My Table*, *In the Cut*).

Davidia Allen's film *Feeling Sexy* is relevant to this research as a film centrally concerned with female experience and desire. Claire Johnston has observed that in order to "counter our objectification in the cinema, our collective fantasies must be released: a woman's cinema must embody the working through of desire".⁴⁰⁴ Desiring or longing for the object of our desire is a basic activity of the human psyche. Although sexual desire is possibly privileged over other forms of desire in Western culture, one of the most basic desires is to be happy, or to 'live happily ever after'. In many romantic stories, the heroine and hero overcome obstacles to win the ultimate prize (the couple/marriage), and the story implies that no further definition is required because the ultimate outcome has been achieved (the union). However, what Allen shows in her film is the 'happy ever after' part of the story—taking up the narrative from where most end.⁴⁰⁵ Set in Australia in 1972, it is essentially the story of Vicki (Susie Porter). Greg (Tamblyn Lord) will not have sex with Vicki without marriage and so, effectively traps her, using her desire, into marriage.

Vicki's story starts with the wedding. She lifts her bridal dress revealing to Greg red letters all over her leg: SEX, SEX, SEX. Vicki is not the demure, waiting heroine of a fairytale or a romance; she takes responsibility for what she wants and tries to reconcile what she has with what she desires. But then they have two children. Vicki soon feels caged in 'wretched domesticity' and wants more love, life—and sex. The demands of

⁴⁰⁴ Johnston, 1975, p.31.

⁴⁰⁵ Chapter five of this thesis outlines how Campion is not interested in her character, Ruth (Kate Winslet), gaining what she wants—but in exploring the aftermath: her characters effect on those around her.

motherhood are at odds with Vicki's desire to be "a thinking, feeling, creative artist".⁴⁰⁶ Allen is an artist herself, and the theme of the tension between being a mother and a creative person is a central preoccupation in all of her work—this film is no exception in exploring the tensions and synergies between reality and fantasy, between the domestic and the creative.⁴⁰⁷ In this it is nowhere more strongly expressed than in a scene of *Feeling Sexy* where Vicki is filmed through the bathroom mirror furiously cleaning her teeth and giving every appearance of being about to explode. This is at odds with many patriarchal representations of motherhood as happy and fulfilling, and has more in common with television shows like *Roseanne* or *Absolutely Fabulous* in debunking motherhood as joyous—although in general it is a serious view of the frustrations, perhaps with the exception of the scene in which she covers up her children's chickenpox and delivers them to day-care anyway.

In *Feeling Sexy* Davida Allen refuses to accept either that marriage is the end of romance and sensual bliss, or in fact the end of the story. Allen is not interested in telling the audience, as second wave feminists might, that they should forsake the fantasy as oppressive; she acknowledges and embraces it. The film offers a view of fantasy and erotica⁴⁰⁸ from the female perspective of her central protagonist. Vicki is exploring her libidinal side, and the film insists that women can have a fantasy life which is a product of—and essential to—their sexual beings (as many of Campion's films do). Vicki wants romance, and is motivated to reinvigorate the romantic into her marriage, but she is also a sexual person who discovers that her fantasy life can feed her real life (and consequently her husband's). Vicki is a character full of desire (as Campion's heroines generally are); she won't settle for waiting until the hurdle of young children is over and her sex life returns. She wants to feel herself as a sexual being—as she used to be or see herself—and not just as a mother or wife. She won't allow motherhood to negate her sexual self-image,

⁴⁰⁶ Description from the *Feeling Sexy* web site: <http://www.maverickfilms.com.au/feelingsexy.html>
Accessed 10/10/06.

⁴⁰⁷ In chapter five of this thesis argues that Campion's films describe the way in which women's art, body and sexuality are entangled and female identity is strongly linked to these things.

⁴⁰⁸ I do not mean that all audiences would find this erotic, but that Vicki is characterized as believing this to be erotic (something tending to arouse sexual desire in her character).

nor her own pleasure: Vicki says, ‘I just want to feel that butterfly feeling in my stomach again’. She keeps telling Greg that her life is not what she wants, that she wants to feel alive.

At its core, like Campion’s films, *Feeling Sexy* explores the differences in men and women, and the struggle to be together. The view of Greg, Vicki’s very straight doctor husband, is an affectionate one; the filmmaker has portrayed him as a winner. He gains insights into his wife’s sexual imagination and fantasy life, and their relationship is portrayed as the richer for it.⁴⁰⁹

Chapter conclusion

While auteur approaches and lines of thinking are relevant and useful to the research project of this thesis, they are not its only lines of thinking and are, as this chapter outlined, limited; for example, they focus on formal, stylistic and thematic elements rather than other contexts such as ideology. Authorship is only one approach within a number that are intended to cross-fertilize each other on the journey to explore the research question in this thesis. Consideration of other female film authors provides useful qualitative data that illustrates some commonalities frequently found in the work of women filmmakers—although ultimately, these typographies are generalities, given that exceptions will always be found. The next chapter argues that considering Campion’s films from an authorial position is useful, and insightful, if considered from a more contemporary position, and used to think about how Campion’s own biography, and historical, social and cultural contexts have influenced her filmmaking. A particular consideration is how these contexts, and her position as a feminist author, have influenced her to produce women-centred films that express a female point of view, female experience, and insights into women’s relationship to the social world. This thesis argues that Campion has a deserved place among the pantheon of auteurs, that her films are the

⁴⁰⁹ For further, see Lisa French, ‘Romance, Fantasy, and Female Sexuality in *Feeling Sexy*’, *Metro, Film, Television, Radio & Multimedia Journal*, No.123, January 2000, pp.13-17. (This journal is abbreviated to *Metro* in footnotes that follow).

expression of the emotions, individual experience and world-view (including her understandings of female experience) of the artist Jane Campion. This is taken up in detail in the next chapter.

Chapter 4

Jane Campion as female and feminist author

*I think I know things about women that men cannot express.*⁴¹⁰

Jane Campion

Introduction

As has been noted, within the cultural landscape individual directorial style is a prominent feature in the marketing and discussion of films; indeed, it has been argued that the ‘star’ director is more visible today than ever before.⁴¹¹

This chapter considers how Campion’s cinema, as a form for artistic self-expression, can be understood as translating or articulating her obsessions.⁴¹² It explores her aesthetic and offers arguments in relation to how Campion can be understood as a female author, how her authorship is feminist, and how she expresses female experience.

For decades, feminists have theorized about whether women might construct an essentially different world to that which men might construct in their films (or other artforms). This issue remains unresolved, despite much work illustrating the way in which women have created cinema that is different to, and sometimes in opposition to, male-centred or patriarchal cinema.⁴¹³ I believe that the only way to gain some clarity on this issue is to take an individual author such as Campion on her own terms, and through her texts, read the space they carve out in relation to the world they construct and represent.

⁴¹⁰ Wright Wexman, 1999, p.129.

⁴¹¹ This is discussed by Naremore in Toby Miller & Robert Stam, 2004, p.21.

⁴¹² Astruc discusses the idea of film being translated by an author in the same way as a contemporary essayist or novelist. See: Alexandre Astruc (1948) in Caughie, 1981, p.9.

⁴¹³ Narrative structures or other elements of conventional cinema work to establish categories of what is considered normal—for example, around gender roles, or in promoting preferred sexuality (e.g. heterosexuality rather than other sexualities). This tendency is generally associated with Hollywood, but also occurs in other commercial cinema in global film industries.

While the director is most frequently named the ‘author’ of the films s/he makes, filmmaking is a collaborative process and therefore, there are numerous key creative members whose signatures might be visible. From this perspective, any director’s signature, including Campion’s, could be understood as blending with those of other authors of their film. However, as already outlined, for the purposes of this thesis I am discussing the director, Jane Campion, as an author.⁴¹⁴ One of the approaches offered here is an analysis of how films themselves offer commentaries that are informed specifically by the author, or more specifically, the author’s gender, and how Campion is the ‘enunciator’ in her films in regard to what they tell us about her understandings of female experience. The term ‘enunciator’ is used in this thesis as defined by theorist Raymond Bellour, as the mark of the “person who possesses the right to speak within the film, and the source (instance) to which the series of representations is logically channelled back”.⁴¹⁵ This chapter examines the extent to which Campion’s (female authorship) might give a distinct inflection of the female author across a number of films.

As outlined previously, little attention has been paid to the function and position of the woman director—a contribution to the field this work aims to make. Despite a number of recent books on female auteurs, work on the author from a perspective that focuses on the female sex is still under-theorized in current literature, especially in relation to Australian women filmmakers (indeed, neither is there a body of literature on masculine authorship, despite the voluminous material on male film authors).

The cinematic vision embodied in Campion’s oeuvre⁴¹⁶ as it relates specifically to female authorship is particularly important given that, as Laleen Jayamanne has observed, “few women (even today, at the end of this century of cinema) make big films that are both critically acclaimed and marketable, capturing the popular imagination⁴¹⁷”—however,

⁴¹⁴ As outlined in the authorship chapter, my consideration of Campion from a perspective of the author is not intended to undervalue other authors who might have contributed to her films (and some have worked on a large number of them).

⁴¹⁵ Raymond Bellour, ‘Hitchcock the Enunciator’, *Camera Obscura*, No.3/4, 1977, p.94.

⁴¹⁶ While Campion has written or co-written several novels, these are not explicitly part of this research—except in instances where there is relevance to her cinematic work.

⁴¹⁷ Jayamanne, 2001, p.25.

Campion has clearly been one of these few. This research explores a number of key questions, including what figures of women and femininity are offered in Campion's films and what these representations say about her view of female experience.⁴¹⁸ How does Campion deploy 'gender' within film representation? Also examined here is whether Campion's work shares any common features with other 'women's films', features which might be understood as helping to build a picture of a 'women's cinema,' or commonalities in approach or vision that might be claimed to be more common in the work of women than of men. This is something undertaken in this research—without suggesting that this implies any rigorous defining criteria, but rather that Campion's filmmaking can be understood from the perspective that it is actively involved in a 'transformation of vision'.⁴¹⁹ The exploration, examination and analysis of this chapter is structured as follows:

- 1) Jane Campion as auteur (including her aesthetic approach)
- 2) what can be identifiably linked to the author Jane Campion as a woman—evidence of a female voice—however located
- 3) femininity as style
- 4) the autobiographical references within the films.

Part 1 Jane Campion as auteur

Campion herself has frequently been described as an auteur, and has been particularly celebrated in Europe; for example, she has a significant profile in France and has often been discussed as an auteur there.⁴²⁰ This is not just because a film's director is frequently the focus of the marketing of films, but because Campion has been seen to have a distinctive style, a 'brand' that audiences might expect to find in her works. In his study of Campion's oeuvre, Polan observed that she is one of the few women directors "who

⁴¹⁸ This is not to imply that there is anything homogenous about 'female experience'; as Polan, 2001, observes, there are contradictions, in tone and treatment, of this experience from film to film.

⁴¹⁹ A term from Lauretis, 1987, p.131.

⁴²⁰ French praise for *The Piano* frequently lauded Campion as an auteur, see for example: Yann Tobin, 'La Leçon de Piano : Maîtresse', *Positif*, No. 387, May 1993, p. 21 ; Françoise Audé, 'La Leçon de Piano : Une expérience de femme', *Positif*, No. 387, May 1993, p. 22; Frédéric Strauss, 'Abysses', *Cahiers du cinéma*, No. 467/8, May 1993, p. 15.

could be considered within the framework of auteurism”.⁴²¹ While he does not explicitly outline why this might be so—or why few women could—the discussion around this statement implies that it is related to having made one film (*The Piano*) that had achieved canonical status, as well as a range of esteemed art films. In addition, he also alluded to her gender when he wrote that

to study her is to study the cinema differently, to rethink the very terms of analysis of the film director. ... Campion's films ... have the capacity to seduce viewers, yet also to disrupt that seduction by refusing to present unambiguously positive representations of human relations, in particular those of women to the social world around them.⁴²²

I experience this rupture in viewing Campion's films. I am left feeling uneasy because the source of the discomfort is not immediately clear—certainly narrative elements are not all neatly sown up, her endings are new beginnings—and despite some optimism in relation to the human spirit, the characters face as many challenges at the end of her films as they did in the beginning. This is postmodern in the sense discussed in chapter two (in relation to deconstruction and Derrida), in that I think what Polan refers to here is the feminine as a disruptive force. It is feminist in that this ambiguity of women (in relation to the social world around them), is a refusal to fix or universalise women, or, as postmodern-feminist texts, to promote essentialism.

Whatever Campion's intentions, or preferred meanings, it is clear that giving an explanation of 'a woman author' or the 'female audience' is not straightforward, given the many possible subject positions women might occupy. It is clear that Campion is not interested in creating any homogeneity in the construction of her characters—who are represented as continually being formed, as contradictory, and multiple (a particularly postmodern-feminist feature). In addition, in trying to theorize the woman author, it is equally clear that while films are written and produced from the maker's own reference—this is not necessarily a non-contradictory point of view—and neither is the audience's own reference. As Kaplan has described, in this dynamic process a film is “produced in a context of a dialogue within which the filmmaker, the context, and the reader/spectator

⁴²¹ Polan, 2001, p. 167.

⁴²² Polan, 2001, p. 167.

all participate and from which they all produce meanings”.⁴²³ Contemporary scholars of authorship have been less likely to regard a director’s work as the expression of individual genius, but rather, as “the site of encounter of a biography, an intertext, an institutional context, and a historical moment”.⁴²⁴

This research attempts to consider all of these ‘encounters’, as well as the individual expression of Campion as the author. These ‘encounters’ are not seen as mutually exclusive but merely as ways of proceeding or thinking about the thesis question. For example, Campion’s biography is relevant to considering *Holy Smoke!* because when she made it, she was around forty-five years of age. From a place of maturity, the transient beauty of youth—something the film particularly observes—is conspicuous. One might (and she might have) admired the power and *joie de vivre* of young women; this contextualizes her consideration of not just the flowering radiance of youth, but how women feel once this flowering has passed—exemplified through the character of Yvonne (Sophie Lee). Intertextually, this film is seeped in Australianness—and references Australian film—through locations, language, representational tropes, and through the casting, which creates intertextual dialogue to Australian films (as discussed in chapter 5). But industrially, *Holy Smoke!* is both local and global—Campion uses Australian and overseas talent, Australian content and personnel, and international resources. She consistently tells stories from a modern perspective and this historically contextualizes her films.

Campion’s aesthetic

The cinema produces artefacts that among other things, express or translate the thoughts, preoccupations, and stylistic preferences of the filmmaker—much in the same way as any art form is connected in some way not just to the culture, and period, but also to the artist. One way in which Campion can be understood as a feminist author is via her ‘feminist aesthetic’, which has already been defined as meaning that the style, language,

⁴²³ Kaplan, in Levitin et al, 2003, p.35.

⁴²⁴ Robert Stam, ‘The Author’, in Robert Stam & Toby Miller (eds.), *Film and Theory: An Anthology*, Malden, Blackwell, 2000, p.6.

approach and the formal elements of her cinema work towards articulating a feminist perspective: her films focus on women's social subjectivity, and therefore, whether she intends them to or not, they actively re-vision representation, transforming any sexist values of 'traditional aesthetics'.⁴²⁵ In a discussion about contemporary women filmmakers, and their move to be a part of mainstream cinema, Sally Potter is compared with Campion; of both, Gamble has written that it would be

difficult to maintain that these films do not manifest a preoccupation [*The Piano* and *Orlando*] with concerns central to feminist theory: the relationship of women to language, and to public and private histories; sexual difference and its relationship to other forms of difference; the limits and possibilities of desire; the relationship between women ... At the same time, they engage fully—if subversively—with the conventions of popular film”.⁴²⁶

Gillett has observed of Campion that she is a director who “understands the intricate circuits of vision between a woman and the world she tries to see”.⁴²⁷ This is a significant observation because it goes to the heart of Campion's cinema, and also, the work of this thesis. It relates to Campion herself as a woman and also to her characterizations. Campion treats each central character individually, trying to see from where they are, or from their historically and culturally specific view (the importance of which has already been discussed). This idea of the world the characters are trying to see is an immediate feature of Campion's aesthetic. If one considers the way in which her films open, this is evident. The first shot of *The Piano* is Ada's view of her own hands covering her face, she moves them and gains only glimpses of the scene before her, and this positions the audience as looking out from inside Ada's head from the beginning and orientated towards her viewpoint; on other occasions in the film, we see the back of Ada's head and this, as stated, positions her as the one looking. *In the Cut* opens with shots of New York which feature shallow depth of field (controlling the seeing) and vantage points peeping behind or through things at a dirty city, and then this immediately contrasts with the softness of Pauline (Jennifer Jason Leigh) with her lace slip/skirt in the garden during a

⁴²⁵ Humm claims the focus of feminist aesthetics is to transform traditional aesthetics, which are imbued with sexism. See Humm, 1997, p.11.

⁴²⁶ Gamble, 2002, p.103.

⁴²⁷ Gillett, 2004, p.10.

petal storm, which the film allows us to see as both Pauline and Frannie see or misrecognise it (Frannie mistakes the petals for snow).

All Campion's features begin with this difficulty in seeing and/or, sensuous, tactile moments.⁴²⁸ In *An Angel At My Table* Janet as a baby looks up at her mother, as if it is her first memory of seeing, and then walks barefoot in the grass. Not long after this, Janet as a child is on a train and her mother covers her eyes so she doesn't see a drunken man on a station, but she does see him, framed by her mother's hands. In *Sweetie*, the opening shot is of Kay's feet and a bit of her skirt framed against the leaf design of the carpet; again, the character is alone and pondering the things that frighten her—in this case, trees. In *Holy Smoke!* we first see vague objects blowing in the breeze and someone touching the back of Ruth's neck in half darkness⁴²⁹, a precursor to Baba's touch—it is difficult to see where she is. These moments all have a quietness and a pensive, sensual quality.

The Portrait Of A Lady begins with sound and image dislocation. The voices and laughter of disembodied women are heard over a black screen. They discuss the best part of a kiss, and that 'love is like the clearest mirror' (when love is reflected back to the person who looks with love at their lover). This recalls a girlie chat, and it captures the experience of girls together, in particular young girls given the focus on kisses, romance and love. Then we finally 'see': young contemporary women (although we then don't hear them). They are in a park and at one point form a heart and lie down in a dreamy way, quite intertextually reminiscent of the girls falling asleep on the rock in *Picnic At Hanging Rock* (Peter Weir⁴³⁰, 1975). Then we see Isabel who suddenly bursts onto the screen, although

⁴²⁸ This subjective, more embodied form of cinema, or vision, is characteristic of much of Post-New Wave cinema and is directly linked to filmmakers such as Scorsese.

⁴²⁹ Baines' first physical contact with Ada is to touch the skin on the back of her neck.

⁴³⁰ As stated, he is a seminal influence for Campion. This is evident in other films also, in this same homage form, for example, the scene where the inmates of the mental institution have a party in *An Angel At My Table* is strongly reminiscent of *The Cars That Ate Paris* (Peter Weir, 1974). When Ruth first goes to experience Baba in *Holy Smoke!*, her friend Prue (Samantha Murray) doesn't want to go with her, but reluctantly follows—like Edith did when Miranda went up into Hanging Rock. Prue running to Ruth's parents is metonymically suggestive of Edith's run from the rock.

she is standing there facing the camera and not moving (the bursting is an effect of the sudden change from monochrome to colour; an echo from the preface scene of the modern girls to camera who are shot in both monochrome and colour). Isabel fights back tears as she stands among the trees and despite there not being a voice-over (as there is in several of her other films—for example, an internal voice-over reflects the subjectivity of the central character in the beginning of *Sweetie*, in *An Angel At My Table*, and *The Piano*⁴³¹), the audience are immediately drawn into her subjectivity and engaged by Isabel's pain. Interestingly, this is also the place the film ends. She comes back to this state of being—as signified by the frizzy heart-shaped hairdo she wears in the first and last shot of the film. Thus, whether by the voice-over or the angle of the camera, we are engaged by the central protagonists' subjectivity. Klinger notes that the voice-overs function to make the audience feel they have been taken into the character's confidence and the heroines draw their affective power from the intimacy and vulnerability conveyed through their voices.⁴³² In the case of *Portrait*, this affective power is conveyed through Isabel's emotional state. Klinger also notes the absence of music in these scenes as something that allows the voices control, creates a trance-like effect, accentuates the beauty of the images, and thus enhances intimate bonds with the viewer. Mascia-Lees and Sharpe note the way subjectivity is treated through Campion's aesthetic, writing that Campion disrupts audience expectations of the consonance of oral and visual messages, unlike much of continuity editing; so while "Hollywood film studiously synchronized voice and image, especially in the portrayal of women, Campion disrupts ... to portray the tension between how Ada appears and how she feels".⁴³³

⁴³¹ The omnipresent narrative voice structurally dominates the narrative in *Sweetie*, *Angel* and *The Piano*. Gillett observes that the voice-overs in *An Angel At My Table* signal the "first-person voice which indicates the survival of the narrated past tense character". In the other films, this survival is similarly signified. Gillett, 2004, p.34.

⁴³² (Klinger, 2006).

⁴³³ Frances E Mascia-Les & Patricia Sharpe, *Taking a Stand in a Postfeminist World: Toward an Engaged Cultural Criticism*, State University of New York Press, Albany, 2000, p.104. They posit this as more than subjectivity, describing an 'anthropological unconscious' where they say that Campion is probing the experience of turn of the century colonials as a way of understanding her own situation as a postcolonial New Zealander.

From the beginning of her career, Campion has held a position as an 'art film' director. This reputation is marked throughout the literature and reviews of her films. McFarlane and Mayer described *Sweetie* as "determinedly art-house"⁴³⁴ and, she has an "international reputation as 'art house' feminist filmmaker".⁴³⁵ Art films are often regarded as films made by auteurs, so this branding is important. Susan Dermody and Elisabeth Jacka have described art films as films which are more closely linked to a European rather than a Hollywood tradition, films that signify "a certain set of stylistic and thematic markers, ... which plunder literature, philosophy, opera, music, the visual arts in order to produce the high cultural experience characteristic of the art movie".⁴³⁶ Campion's films fit into Dermody and Jacka's definition of the art film, which they link firstly to the textual characteristics of the film and its emphasis on visual style, characterised by "suppressed action, first-person point-of-view, characterisation rather than plot development, high literary rather than popular source materials"⁴³⁷; they also state that a 'frank' treatment of sexuality is another hallmark, and offer the individual expression of the author and an authorial style or signature as a feature of the art film. Thus, some features of Campion's cinema can be attributed to it being art cinema, and therefore, this indicates that the art film is a form, at least in Campion's case, that is complementary to the woman's film.

Representations of imagination or fantasy are part of the texture of Campion's cinema and form important stylistic markers. *In the Cut* has a skating sequence, which is a representation of the way in which Frannie imagines that her parents met. It is a visual motif throughout the film, which fulfils a metaphorical function for Frannie in signifying the romance that brought her parents together, and also it signifies Frannie's inner

⁴³⁴ Brian McFarlane & Geoff Mayer, *New Australian Cinema: Sources and Parallels in British and American Film*, Cambridge, New York & Oakleigh, 1992, p.127.

⁴³⁵ Harmony H. Wu, 'Trading in Horror, Cult and Matricide: Peter Jackson's Phenomenal bad taste and New Zealand fantasies of inter/national cinematic success', in Mark Jancovich, Antonio Lazaro Reboll, Julian Stringer, Andy Willis (eds.), *Defining Cult Movies: The Cultural Politics of Oppositional Taste*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, New York & Vancouver, 2003, p.94.

⁴³⁶ Susan Dermody & Elisabeth Jacka (eds.), *The Imaginary Industry, Australian Film In The Late '80s*, Australian Film, Television And Radio School, 1988, p.73.

⁴³⁷ Susan Dermody & Elisabeth Jacka, *The Screening Of Australia; Anatomy of A Film Industry*, Vol.1, Currency Press, Sydney, 1987, p.32.

world, her unconscious.⁴³⁸ Of these sequences, Campion has said that she thought that they might end up on the cutting room floor because they were something she couldn't help herself doing, but she has said that while "these work extremely well in this particular film ... you wait, I'm not going to do it again ... I can't bear it when you have mannerisms that you have to put in your movies".⁴³⁹

Barbara Klinger's work is helpful in understanding how these mannerisms function. She has written that the signature of the art film is an 'arresting image', something that she says embodies complexity and ambiguity, and appears at moments of intense contemplation. While it can be argued that not all art films have this feature, Campion's films do, and therefore it is of interest that she claims that this is a signifier of the art film and the director's hand. She describes the 'arresting image' as occurring

when a film stops to contemplate an exquisitely composed, significantly evocative and/or uncanny image. The forward motion of the narrative slows down or temporarily halts, allowing this spectacle to capture fully our attention. The arresting image may have an additionally unusual temporal status, often appearing outside of the time in a fantasy or dream-like dimension.⁴⁴⁰

This 'arresting image' is a key feature of Campion's aesthetic; for example, in *Holy Smoke!* the images of Ruth when she is first touched by the guru or when PJ sees her as a goddess (below). For Klinger, the 'arresting image' is the final view of Ada tethered to a piano at the bottom of the sea.

⁴³⁸ Other films have romantic stories of parents. In *The Piano*, immediately prior to Ada and Stewart's wedding, Ada's daughter tells the tale of her parent's first meeting—and what happened to him. They were in a forest and a big storm is brewing but, she says that 'so passionate was their singing that they did not notice'. Flora says that her father was hit by lightning and her mother never spoke again. There is an animated sequence of a cut out man busting into flames. Animation is employed throughout Campion's films, including her shorts: for example in the sequence 'There are no woodpeckers in Australia' in *Passionless Moments*, and in early productions such as *Two Friends*.

⁴³⁹ Director's commentary, DVD, *In The Cut*.

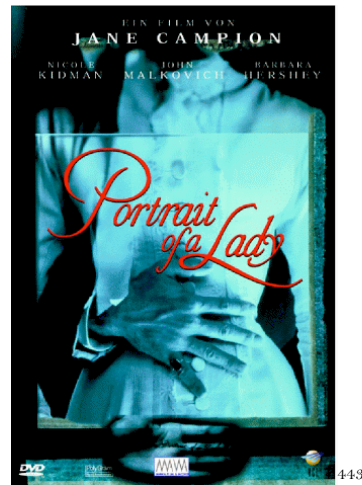
⁴⁴⁰ Klinger, 2006, p.5.



In *The Portrait Of A Lady* it is seen when Isabel takes a world trip following receiving an inheritance and meeting Osmond. This sequence, 'My Journey' is like a film from silent cinema—jerky, surrealist (even the hand on which the film's title is written is reminiscent of *Un Chien Andalou*: Luis Buñuel & Salvador Dalí, 1928), and the optically printed images of Isabel's face superimposed over the sea are reminiscent of filmmaking from the 1920s, particularly French Impressionist films. The surrealist images, such as the talking beans on a plate are also reminiscent of David Lynch's *Eraserhead* (1977). The sequence is a postmodern bricolage, a pastiche of familiar filmic references. It is interesting that many of the releases of the film have either a cover with the line that Osmond says, and which is run repeatedly in this sequence (with both Osmond and Isabel's voices): 'I am absolutely in love with you'; or alternatively, a particularly surreal image is used (see below)—an optically printed double exposure of Osmond's hand across Isabel's waist (hands and touching are prevalent throughout Campion's films⁴⁴²). As an image, it strongly signifies and works to market it as a quality, or art film.

⁴⁴¹ Source of image: http://www.pvv.ntnu.no/~madsb/home/watch/wallpapers/_thumb/kate1_r2.jpg

⁴⁴² Bussi has noted that hands are significant in connoting social activity, particularly feminine activity and, she adds, personal identity. See Elisa Bussi, 'Voyages and Border Crossings: Jane Campion's *The Piano* (1993)', in Wendy Everett (ed.), *The Seeing Century: Film, Vision and Identity*, Rodopi B.V., Amsterdam & Atlanta, 2000, p.170.



The images in the sequence described above fulfil Klinger's description of 'the arresting image': they are evocative, uncanny, and striking. Contradictions are thrust to the surface but not resolved, and the sequence slows down the forward movement of the story—in fact it is a pause or interlude. This sequence has a dream-like quality that is particularly enhanced by the surrealist imagery (or the way in which the sequence works intertextually to signify surrealism), and in particular the 'affective dimension' as the emotions of the audience are aroused towards Isabel's longing for Osmond ('I am absolutely in love with you'). While nothing is resolved, the audience is left having seen this deeply affecting imagery—which creates empathy with the deep longing Isabel feels for Osmond. This sequence signifies Campion's filmic literacy, and so fulfils a function of underlining her directorial status (for example as auteur, and as present *inside* the text). In regard to the function in relation to female experience, it underlines and connects on the level of unconsummated desire, as well as working to emphasize both the role of imagination in female romantic choices, and, more specifically, imagination as a central element in female desire. After this sequence, it is clear that Isabel is unable to rationally reject Osmond. He has captured her romantic imagination—as emphasized by the touching. Her memory of physical contact with him continues to make her gasp for breath long after the event itself (she faints after the fantasy sequence) and she is lost in the sensuousness of the memory she has created of it.

⁴⁴³ Image source: <http://www.swarthmore.edu/Humanities/kjohnso1/portraitladyMOVIE.jpg>

Mise-en-scène and an obsession with detail

In the documentary film about the making of *The Portrait Of A Lady*⁴⁴⁴, John Malkovich exclaims exasperatedly to Campion (after many takes of the one shot) that, “it is not a Picasso!” But for Campion, every detail is of enormous importance. This preoccupation can be understood via Varda’s descriptions of her concept of *Cinécriture*. Varda has said that she “constructs a film, ... as a writer constructs a text ... every aspect of the film is by definition chosen with a view to an intended effect, message and meaning”.⁴⁴⁵ As someone whose background included still photography, Varda’s style developed with an understanding of the function of all aspects of an image, and her photography “always gives central importance to the subject [through] ... the conjunction of elements and the relationships between them are carefully chosen in order to produce meaning from the interplay between them”.⁴⁴⁶

Like Varda, Campion considers her shots in great detail. She has reported, “I’m quite slow and look at every way you can shoot a scene. I always turn up with a shot list”.⁴⁴⁷ She has described her fascination with film language from the time she was a student⁴⁴⁸ (citing in particular the works of Federico Fellini and Martin Scorsese) and she has said that because the process endlessly fascinates her, she endlessly storyboards.⁴⁴⁹ She has said that she likes to think and draw at the same time, the drawing assists her to think about the theme, and then she works out the style of the most pivotal ten or twenty scenes in terms of light, mood, coverage, and what she wants to achieve in them.⁴⁵⁰ She claims “in general I don’t like to have too many prerequisites about what the actors should do. The

⁴⁴⁴ Monty Montgomery, Peter Long & Kate Ellis (authors/producer, directors) *Jane Campion and The Portrait Of A Lady*, PolyGram Film Production, 1996. (Video)

⁴⁴⁵ Varda in Allison Smith, *Agnes Varda*, Manchester University Press, Manchester and New York, 1998, p. 14.

⁴⁴⁶ Smith, 1998, p.13.

⁴⁴⁷ Campion in Mike Goodridge, *Screencraft Directing*, Rotovision, Switzerland, 2002, p.81.

⁴⁴⁸ Director’s commentary, *The Piano*, DVD.

⁴⁴⁹ Director’s commentary, *The Piano*, DVD.

⁴⁵⁰ Goodridge, 2002, p. 81.

writing is just a stage for me. When I begin directing I don't care very much for the writing ... I've got the film in my head".⁴⁵¹

Campion and Varda both had art backgrounds, are obsessive about the detail in their films, and both have had an interest in using this to make a specifically feminine cinema. Varda's work has been described as having the ability "to convey the poetic or symbolic qualities of banal objects, her experimentation with photography, composition and framing, and her work on close-up and the filming of the human body".⁴⁵² Campion's work has frequently been similarly described for the way in which it captures the banal: particularly her early work "[s]he has a cool eye for the poetry of everyday suffering, [and] the beauty and dinginess of the ordinary world".⁴⁵³ Of *Sweetie*, Sandra Hall wrote that each frame is composed so carefully "that the camera noticeably takes on the character of an extra presence, laconically commenting on everything that happens. Incidental details of behaviours and the placement of objects ... take on deadpan significance".⁴⁵⁴ It is clear that important meanings are located in these ordinary moments of Campion's films, and that they are saying something else than what they might appear. This engenders a different relationship between the film and the audience (like much of art cinema), and sets up new relations of looking—or different understandings than those required to comprehend more conventional film.

The attention to detail in Campion's work applies to all aspects of the *mise-en-scène*, including the acting. While this attention is not exclusive to female filmmakers, there are numerous claims that this is a feature of the work of other women. For example, in regard to the films of Cavani and Wertmüller, Molly Haskell has written that both directors "are extraordinarily sensitive to decor, to textures ... to tactile sensations, and to architecture,

⁴⁵¹ Goodridge, 2002, p. 81.

⁴⁵² Beugnet, 2004, p. 16. Godard and Varda worked together on *Jacquot de Nantes* (Varda, 1991). Godard also shot Claire Denis' films *Trouble Every Day* (2001) & *Beau travail* (1999)—films which also bring to the fore this sense of detail.

⁴⁵³ Evan Williams, 'Campion lengthens her stride dazzlingly', *Weekend Australian*, 23–24/9/89 in AFI *Cinedossier*, p. 65.

⁴⁵⁴ Sandra Hall, 'Star-crossed Family', *The Bulletin*, 26/9/89 in AFI *Cinedossier*, p. 66.

but as part of a total vision”.⁴⁵⁵ Filmmaker Lina Wertmüller⁴⁵⁶ wrote, directed and produced one of Campion’s favourite films, the surreal *Seven Beauties* (aka *Pasqualine Settebellezze*, 1975). Wertmüller was the first woman to ever be nominated for an Academy Award for direction (Campion and Sofia Coppola are the only other two women to have been so nominated), and Wertmüller’s films frequently offer feminist discourses, and concern the “eternal battle of the sexes”.⁴⁵⁷ Wertmüller has described her own work in the following way:

I think my greatest merit lies in my living very close to my characters and regarding them from the inside rather than from outside. Certainly a lot more detail comes out that way. And then I go on location, talk to the people, take my actors with me. Maybe a little of this actually comes out in the film. ... I don’t reproduce reality ... I choose a wavelength, a way that points out the reality but doesn’t reproduce it. A filter is fundamental; otherwise it would be the photograph that counts...⁴⁵⁸

What is of interest here is that the gendered approach in Wertmüller’s filmmaking is from the inside of a *woman* filmmaker, foregrounding her (gendered) relationships to the outside.⁴⁵⁹ Campion has said (in relation to *Sweetie*) that she wanted to make a film that created “more interior to it, because I think we all have an interior life. ... your boyfriend can leave you, you look in the mirror and you are the same. What’s happening inside is so big for you, yet on the surface you are making cups of tea”.⁴⁶⁰

⁴⁵⁵ Molly Haskell, 'Are Women Directors Different?', in Robert Allen (ed.) *Channels Of Discourse; Television And Contemporary Criticism*, Routledge, 1989, p. 430.

⁴⁵⁶ Campion has been quoted as listing Lina Wertmüller as a filmmaker she admires – particularly *Seven Beauties* (1976). Wright Wexman, 1999, p.174.

⁴⁵⁷ Christopher Lyon, *Directors/Filmmakers*, Vol.2, Papermac, St James Press, London and Basingstoke 1984, p.587.

⁴⁵⁸ Lina Wertmüller interviewed in 'An Interview with Lina Wertmüller', *Women & Film*, Vol. 1, No. 5-6, 1974, p. 10.

⁴⁵⁹ This attention to detail could also be attributed to the influence of neorealism given that she is an Italian filmmaker who also worked for Fellini (a director who had some early interaction with Neorealism, and did often focus on women and the tactile). While this may be so, primarily I am linking her to Campion, as an influence. Secondly, while this quotation is arguably not about any gendered approach, I am using it here to try to trace some commonalities of approach that Campion, and other women filmmakers might be particularly attracted to.

⁴⁶⁰ Ruth Hessey, 'Campion goes out on a limb—again', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 5/7/89, in AFI *Cinedossier*, p.55.

A preoccupation with trauma

All of Campion's features deal with the traumatic journeys of her major protagonists. Kay loses her sister Sweetie (and *Sweetie* begins with a meditation on a fear of trees, which links to the funeral at the end of the film, 'trees never seem to leave us alone'). Janet Frame loses multiple siblings, and experiences electric shock treatment and madness (shortly after the film opens, we see mental patients on a station, and one of her siblings cries out 'that's where the loonies are!'). In *The Portrait Of A Lady*, the death of Isabel's child is only once referred to but is represented in the mise-en-scène in the form of the cast of the baby's foot which Isabel caresses from time to time—silent in her grief. In *The Piano*, Ada is subjected to male violence, and in *In the Cut*, Frannie's sister is murdered, and the murderer then brutalizes Frannie who is almost murdered herself.

While in all conventional narrative films something always happens to the central protagonists (otherwise there wouldn't be any drama), Campion's vision here is clearly tied to lives full of loss and pain—of trauma. She particularly tells these stories through female narration (in voice-over). Discussing the work of Kaja Silverman, McHugh has noted that "voice-over narration is a favoured narrative strategy in films that deal with trauma".⁴⁶¹ In *An Angel At My Table*, the voice-over is used most specifically to document Janet's trauma; for example the film opens with Janet's voice-over telling us that her twin died a few weeks after their birth, and later (as an adult) tells us that she spent eight years enduring shock treatment. Of course, trauma is not simply something happening to someone that moves the drama along: it is the effect of fright, and also entails a bodily 'symptom' that speaks of the event that precipitated the trauma, such as paralysis, eyesight failure, or inhibition—for example, Ada's silence in *The Piano*. Freud characterized the memory of trauma as "a foreign body which long after its entry must continue to be regarded as an agent that is still at work".⁴⁶² Some theorists, such as Mary Ann Doane, have noted that the gothic novel is often characterized by female paralysis as

⁴⁶¹ McHugh, 2001.

⁴⁶² Sigmund Freud (1955) in Jeffrey Alexander, Ron Eyerman, Bernard Giesen, Neil J. Smelser, Piotr Sztomka, *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 2004, p.33.

the result of trauma⁴⁶³ (something that further links to Campion's interest in the gothic). Campion's films explore the catharsis, the working through the trauma of her female protagonists.

In the next section, the discussion moves to an exploration of what can be identifiably linked to the author Jane Campion, and whether there is evidence of a female voice.

⁴⁶³ See Mary Ann Doane, *The Desire to Desire: The Woman's Film of the 1940s*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1987, pp.123-154.

Part 2: The author as a woman, and evidence of a female voice

*When I went to art school, I started to understand the meaning of having a vision.*⁴⁶⁴

Jane Campion

It can be argued that Campion has a comparatively significant level of control over her films, given she is one of a handful of women who have been able to work continually in features in both Australia and internationally, including in Hollywood. She is a ‘transnational’ filmmaker who can work across a range of industrial contexts, and attract international money and talent. As such she is in a powerful position to intervene in female representation—whether she intends to or not. In what follows I investigate Campion’s vision and theorize her as a female author, something that is now possible given her significant body of work. Campion has indicated that she identifies with women as a natural inclination⁴⁶⁵, and that ‘woman filmmaker’ is a good description of her.⁴⁶⁶

This thesis also takes up the little theorized, or even discussed, way in which a female director might “inflect cinematic practice in new and challenging ways”⁴⁶⁷, and argues that Campion does this. One theorist who has also taken this journey is Kaja Silverman, arguing that authorial identification and authorial desire are “mutually referential”.⁴⁶⁸ Silverman’s view is that, given that the author might occupy a subject position that is not his/her actual gender position, then whether the author speaks with a ‘male’ or ‘female’ voice can only be ascertained by an investigation into such things as the workings of desire within a body of work. The suggestion that a film’s content might be a direct outcome of the gender of an author is the position of the present thesis—that Campion’s films speak with a female voice and are influenced by the fact that she is female. This is evident in the films, and this ‘speaking’ is related directly to either

⁴⁶⁴ Goodridge, 2002, p. 81.

⁴⁶⁵ ‘Natural inclination’ is used here to indicate a preference rather than any essentialism. Campion has been frequently asked why she makes films about women, and has indicated this is a preference born out of her own particular subjectivity, for example, she has said that it is for her like someone asking ‘why do you speak English’. See Goodridge, 2002, p.85.

⁴⁶⁶ Campion quoted in Andrews, 2003.

⁴⁶⁷ Mayne, 1990, p.97.

⁴⁶⁸ Silverman, 1988, p.217.

her own sex, or her own insights into being female. Campion promotes or constructs the conditions for female agency in several ways: her central female protagonists are ultimately able to act upon and fulfil their desires⁴⁶⁹; the narratives are constructed from the viewpoint of the central female character's subjectivity; and these are arguably also Campion's narratives about those specific instances of female subjectivity, feminism, and postmodern identity.

When Campion graduated from the Australian Film and Television School in 1984, her entry into the school yearbook read: "I want to work for Kennedy-Miller (when they start making 'girls' films)". While she may well have selected Kennedy-Miller because they were making dynamic and interesting work, and operating from her own Sydney base, the reference to 'girls' films' indicates that from the beginning she had an affinity with women, perhaps an 'oppositional consciousness'.⁴⁷⁰ This idea of a 'girls' film' is significant for this research, and it is interpreted here as a reference to the concept of a 'woman's film', that is, women's films where women explore the cultural construct of the 'feminine', and what it is to be a woman in our society.

There is other evidence that Campion is conscious of creating a different kind of film from male directors: for example in 1993, she told *Cahiers du cinéma* that "there are not a lot of films where the heroes are women ... And I think I know things about women that men cannot express".⁴⁷¹ From this one could deduce that Campion is not just aware of, but interested in these 'things' about women that men either can not, do not, or have not, expressed—and it is the argument of this thesis that she does express them.

⁴⁶⁹ The exception in Campion's features is *Sweetie* in the film *Sweetie*; however, Kay is really the central protagonist of this film, and she does successfully fulfil her desires.

⁴⁷⁰ As identified in the last chapter, oppositional consciousness (from Haraway) refers to affinity rather than identity. It does not imply a naturalization of women as a category but is a reaction by women to being outsiders, to understanding webs of power that exclude them.

⁴⁷¹ Wright Wexman, 1999, p.xv.

The dialogue with female audiences

Teresa de Lauretis has observed how difficult it is to ‘prove’ that a film addresses its spectator as female. She says that this is “brought home time and again in conversations of discussions between audiences and filmmakers”.⁴⁷² However she came up with a useful frame from which to understand this female address, when she wrote that “a film whose visual style and symbolic space ... *addresses its spectator as a woman*, regardless of the gender of the viewers, I mean that the film defines all points of identification (with character, image, camera) as female, feminine, or feminist”.⁴⁷³ De Lauretis writes of *Jeanne Dielman*’s visual and symbolic space as addressing its spectator as a woman, regardless of the gender of the viewers, and alludes to the central project of work which addresses the spectator as female, that of the breaking down of binary oppositions. While illustrating the address ‘as a woman’ may be difficult, given that it could be claimed as a function of the spectator’s subjectivity, perception or insight, rather than as a film’s address to the audience, de Lauretis offers the following useful view:

There are ‘two logics’ at work ... ‘two modes of the feminine’: character and director, image and camera, remain distinct yet interacting and mutually interdependent positions. Call them femininity and feminism; ... the spectator is led to occupy at once the two positions, to follow the two ‘logics’.⁴⁷⁴

Campion’s stories focus on the lives of central female protagonists, and the battle those protagonists have in the world to be heard. In her conception of these stories and characters, she represents the socio-historical reality of the characters and the way in which they act as social subjects. For example, as discussed in chapter one, Ada’s silence in *The Piano* was “an instinctive idea” relating to how silenced women are in our society and culture and that at that time in history, she would be unheard.⁴⁷⁵ Campion has explained that this idea is instinctive, because “we grew up in a time when women didn’t

⁴⁷² de Lauretis, 1987, p.133.

⁴⁷³ Teresa de Lauretis, *Technologies of Gender: Essays on Theory, Film and Fiction*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1987, p.133.

⁴⁷⁴ de Lauretis, 1987, pp.132- 133.

⁴⁷⁵ Director’s commentary, *The Piano*, DVD.

have many rights and I don't think that has really changed".⁴⁷⁶ Clearly, this is a strong feminist statement and reflects a distinct shift from her earlier positions that eschewed feminism. It is interesting however that in *The Piano* Stewart does say he hears Ada in his head, and in a love scene Baines lowers his head to her mouth as if to hear her—both these scenes work against the notion that Ada is actually silent. Gayleen Preston has claimed that one of Campion's achievements in *The Piano* is that, via the figure of Ada, she achieves a challenge to the "'man alone' and 'larrikin' stereotypes that have dominated New Zealand film history [that] have been predicated on the absence or marginalisation of Pakeha women, and [that] have contributed to our [New Zealand's] myths of national identity".⁴⁷⁷

Both Campion and producer Jan Chapman have reported that their film *The Piano* connected strongly with audiences, and particularly with women. Chapman has been quoted as saying that women who saw the film told them: "it felt like we'd really understood the way that the female psyche works ... as if there is a kind of secret language that women know that was finally shown in *The Piano*".⁴⁷⁸ Campion has explained that she thinks female audiences have responded this way because: "*The Piano* really explores the romantic mythology that really works for women but is not as well understood by men".⁴⁷⁹ Campion tried to explain this idea of the film not being *well* understood by men (which is a generalization rather than an absolute) by saying that what women want really from love, what they hope and dream of is "access into the male world".⁴⁸⁰ In this she is revealing her view on both a connection between the sexes, the desire to make these connections, and also female self-identity (or self value)—in that "to be loved by a man is to be approved by the world".⁴⁸¹

⁴⁷⁶ Director's commentary, *The Piano*, DVD. This illustrates a much stronger advocacy for feminism than she acknowledged early in her career and is part of the shift this thesis has already noted towards being less concerned about making feminist statements.

⁴⁷⁷ Gaylene Preston, in Margolis, 2000, p.24.

⁴⁷⁸ Jan Chapman: Producer's commentary, *The Piano*, DVD.

⁴⁷⁹ Director's commentary, *The Piano*, DVD.

⁴⁸⁰ Director's commentary, *The Piano*, DVD. Campion's films also illustrate how men want access to women, or their world. This is argued in chapter five of this thesis.

Although not substantiated, the claim that Campion's films connect more with women audiences has been widely noted and is not limited to *The Piano*. The editor of *In the Cut* (Alexandre De Franceschi), noted in a discussion of the polarization of audiences around the film, and its censorship in America, that "[t]he censorship board had many women and they loved the film".⁴⁸² Campion herself has said that young women love *Holy Smoke!* because they "feel very spoken for".⁴⁸³ It is possible that this feeling of being 'spoken for' also relates to oppositional consciousness; that the visions embodied in Campion's films speak to women in a way that they don't speak to most men (again acknowledging that this is a generality and not definitive) and Campion has indicated that some men are aware of the difference in some films by women, that they are "shocked" to discover that women have "a different way of seeing the world".⁴⁸⁴ Teresa de Lauretis made a similar point (in relation to being spoken for) when she wrote: "I think I know what it is to look at a film as a woman. I do because of certain films, by Yvonne Rainer, Chantal Akerman, Lizzie Borden, Sally Potter, and others, have shown it to me; they have somehow managed to inscribe in the film my woman's look ..."⁴⁸⁵ Moi has observed that it isn't possible to "measure the authenticity of a single female protagonist's inner turmoil. The final test must be the subjective response of the female reader, who is herself familiar with 'female reality'. Does she recognize aspects of her own experience?"⁴⁸⁶ This response of the female reader is evidenced in this recognition of the 'woman's look' and aspects of female experience—it is what those women who have claimed to feel 'spoken for' (or to) are identifying; that they feel directly addressed. This 'shock of recognition' is evidence of the authenticity of the female experience that Campion conveys, and also a postmodern-feminist feature in its emphasis of the significance of difference.

Campion's oppositional consciousness extends to her role as a director, and this is something that may also create an affinity between female directors, given that, as Leslie

⁴⁸¹ Director's commentary, *The Piano*, DVD.

⁴⁸² Anna Craney (ed.), Seminar transcript of *In The Cut* editor: Alexandre De Franceschi at: <http://www.screeneditors.com/forums/showthread.php?s=&threadid=554> Accessed 11/12/06.

⁴⁸³ Ruth Hessey, 'Lord ...', 2000.

⁴⁸⁴ Angela Doland, 'Campion laments lack of female filmmakers', *Age*, 22/5/07, p.15.

⁴⁸⁵ de Lauretis, *Technologies*, 1987, pp.113-114.

⁴⁸⁶ Moi, 2001, p.47.

Felperin has observed: “in many ways women are estranged from the discourse on film. Most of the world’s film critics are still men, and men consume film-specific journalism with much more rapacity than women”.⁴⁸⁷ This ‘women’s estrangement’ can be understood as having developed as a consequence of a range of historical factors, including the fact that men have always been the majority group, particularly as directors. As well, early movements such as 1950s auteurism celebrated male directors, largely because so few women were directing films in Hollywood at the time. Campion’s own emergence has been in an era where initially she was one of a handful of women directors, and since then, the numbers of women directors have been slowly increasing, although remaining numerically much fewer than male directors. It is worth noting that when Gillian Armstrong directed *My Brilliant Career* in 1979, she was the first woman to direct a feature in Australia in forty-six years.⁴⁸⁸

While the work of women filmmakers such as Campion and Armstrong offer evidence of women who are successful international auteur filmmakers, it may be that auteurism is a paradigm that women themselves—including Campion—feel outside of (as mentioned earlier by Varda’s construction of *cinécriture*) and this is potentially a source of ‘oppositional consciousness’. As Mayne has observed: “women have not had the same relationship to the institutions of cinema as men have”.⁴⁸⁹ In her most recent feature, *In the Cut*, Campion made her first cameo appearance in one of her films. Given that she testifies on the film’s DVD that this appearance made her totally uncomfortable, one can only deduce as to whether she put herself through this ordeal in order to help tag herself as an auteur director, following the traditions of the numerous male directors who have put in a cameo appearance in their films. From its inception, the auteur tag was used “as a kind of banner to help publicize the early work of its own adherents ... many auteurs

⁴⁸⁷ Felperin, 1999.

⁴⁸⁸ Between 1932 when Paulette McDonagh made *Two Minutes Silence* and 1979 when Gillian Armstrong made *My Brilliant Career*, there weren’t any feature films directed by women. Between the 1930 and 1970s few feature films were made in Australia anyway, but this is nonetheless a long period of time.

⁴⁸⁹ Mayne, 1990, p.97.

... were themselves directors who wanted to foreground their own creativity”,⁴⁹⁰ and in appearing in this film, Campion is overtly claiming the auteur tag.

Gerard Lee (a former partner and collaborator of Campion’s) begins his film *All Men are Liars* (1995) with a reference to *The Piano*: the husband hocks the piano and it is accidentally smashed. Lee is quoted as having said “[w]e’re great friends ...there’s nothing personal in it, but I suppose it is taking the piss out of auteur film-making”.⁴⁹¹ This ‘taking the piss’ however is at Campion’s expense, since the reference to *The Piano* seems to mock Campion rather than auteur filmmakers in general. It is conceivable that Lee’s piss-taking could be read—including by Campion—as an implied criticism of the place Campion has achieved as an auteur, and an implied rejection of her holding this status and of its significance.⁴⁹²

Campion’s transformations of vision: subjectivity and intersubjectivity

Campion mediates subjectivity and intersubjectivity between women through the way in which she constructs relations of looking. She does this through the mediation of the spaces between women; where the character looks; and what s/he looks at—as well as by refusing to privilege male over female relations of looking. Gillett has given a specific example of subjectivity and intersubjectivity between women, writing that (in *Sweetie*) the Sweetie character is used to enact and focus on the emotional and relational problems of the other characters⁴⁹³—something that I think is a common thread between Campion’s central female protagonists across her feature films. Frannie’s role (Meg Ryan) in *In the Cut* is another example of a character used to focus on the emotional and relational problems of other characters: she consoles and supports her sister through her emotional issues (such as a desire to be married with the odd love child). In the same film further

⁴⁹⁰ Naremore, 2004, p.10.

⁴⁹¹ Mary Colbert, ‘All Men are Liars: ‘A lie? ‘Tis but the truth in masquerade’: Lord Byron’, *Cinema Papers*, No.106, October, 1995, p. 6.

⁴⁹² Gerard Lee describes his invisibility (when they collaborated), in the face of Campion’s extreme visibility. Colbert, 1995.

⁴⁹³ Gillett, 2004, p.20.

examples are provided through Malloy and his problems with his marriage, and the ex-boyfriend/stalker, John Graham (Kevin Bacon) who presents as needy and dangerous.

In her monograph on Campion, Gillett explores how Campion constructs a cinema where female viewers are more directly addressed, and female subjectivity more directly elicited, describing her cinema as “emancipatory for women, [and as] a cinema of women’s subjectivity”.⁴⁹⁴ Gillett eloquently offers an example of this in describing her own experience of *Sweetie*, of how the film works to convey female subjectivity,

I recognize this suffocating destruction of space between women and to a large extent it is this recognition which conditions my responses ... I know about this ... which is not to say that I have fallen into the mirror which the female characters represent for me ... rather than merging myself with her image, I look *with* her ...⁴⁹⁵

Gillett does not say that men will be disaffected by Campion’s films, but makes an argument that they may not be able to access them in the same way, since Campion’s work provides signposts of female subjectivity that are different to those signalled by the majority of conventional or dominant (male-authored) cinema. This is a view I strongly share, and which I think explains both the specificity of an authentic female subjectivity, and the way in which responses to Campion’s films have often been described as ‘split along gendered lines’. For example, in *An Angel At My Table*, when Janet is sitting on the steps inside her school building in a conversation with her friends about Marx, she cannot hold focus because she is totally transfixed by the beautiful girls laughing and promenading on the stairs—her gaze is directing the audience to look, and women gazing at other women comes directly out of female experience.

This system of looks (such as constructing the gaze so that the spectator looks with the character) is important, and links to the idea of ‘performing’ the feminine as a way to express female experience. Gillett offers numerous examples of the mediation of subjectivity and intersubjectivity between women; for example, she offers the system of looks in *Sweetie*, where the monopoly of the gaze is not held by male characters or

⁴⁹⁴ Gillett, 2004, p.19.

⁴⁹⁵ Gillett, 2004, p.19.

spectators—nor is it a reversal, but “male relationships are established without the use of women as their intermediary objects, without women functioning as the communal as far as men are concerned, object of the gaze”.⁴⁹⁶

The transformations a woman filmmaker can bring to cinema are further described by Teresa de Lauretis in regard to *Jeanne Dielman* (by director Chantal Akerman) in the following way: “[w]hat the film constructs ... is a picture of female experience, of duration, perception, events, relationships, and silences, which feels immediately and unquestionably true. ... Akerman’s film addresses the spectator as female”.⁴⁹⁷ Akerman herself has said of the same film (as indicated earlier) that it gives a visibility to the everyday gestures of women which were previously invisible, because of what is essentially a complicity of seeing with other women, and a joy in finally seeing these gestures. What Akerman and de Lauretis reveal (and this thesis argues is also revealed in Campion’s films) is a recognition of, or knowledge of oneself as a woman—that is, the experience of female gender. The process which indicates how this comes about, de Lauretis terms ‘technologies of gender’: “the experience of gender, the meaning effects and self-representations produced in the subject by the sociocultural practices, discourses, and institutions devoted to the production of men and women”.⁴⁹⁸

A good example of the construction of a female subjectivity, and this process described above is in *An Angel At My Table* where Janet Frame and her sisters stop at a friend’s fence on the way home, and she performs a Spanish dance for them amongst the washing. The friend dances through the washing, dramatically pulling it aside with a theatrical exclamation: ‘Olay!’ This characterizes the space as domestic and ordinary. The washing might seem strangely in the way but it is important as a signifier of female space. It is also one of many scenes depicting girls together⁴⁹⁹, something which provides Campion with the opportunity to show Janet’s fascination with other girls, whom she frequently gazes at, transfixed and mesmerized. Their luminous femininity also ‘Others’ her as she is

⁴⁹⁶ Gillett, 2004, pp.19–20.

⁴⁹⁷ de Lauretis, *Technologies*, 1987, pp.131–132.

⁴⁹⁸ de Lauretis, *Technologies*, 1987, p.19.

relegated, by her shyness, to a lonely existence. For me, a key scene in *An Angel At My Table* in terms of female experience is a scene where the sisters (and one of their girl friends) gather in the bush in their bathers. They watch each other as they promenade along a fallen tree, remarking upon and gazing on each other's bodies. They are performing femininity; however this performance delivers some ambivalence given that on the one hand they feel pleasure in performing it, but on the other, it prolongs the ideology of the ideal feminine. This scene is about their awareness of their sexed bodies, and it illustrates their pleasure in doing this. It demonstrates the role women themselves play in this awareness, and communicates a female coming of age in their bodies, where a certain physicality is important, and where being a woman involves being looked at—not just by men, but by women as well. This fascination of women with other women is a part of the experience of being a woman that Campion communicates here.

In her earlier book, de Lauretis asks of Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own*: "... how does 'I' come to know herself as 'a woman', how is the speaking/writing self en-gendered as a female subject?"⁵⁰⁰ According to de Lauretis, Woolf reveals this as occurring through "certain signs, ... not only language ... but gestures, visual signs and something else which establishes their relation to the self and thus their meaning, that something, she calls 'instinct'".⁵⁰¹ De Lauretis pursues this by calling this instinct experience⁵⁰², linking the idea of female intuition with female experience; that is, a woman might know herself as a woman through her engagement with social reality, or awareness of her subjectivity being constructed from this 'semiotic interaction' of inner and outer worlds. This is something Campion articulates, in describing her engagement with female social reality and subjectivity:

Most of my films are written about women, and people often ask why I make films about women. It's as basic as that to me. I think the reason that actresses have excelled in my

⁴⁹⁹ Often these girls together are sisters and this may be an autobiographical link.

⁵⁰⁰ de Lauretis, 1984, p.182.

⁵⁰¹ de Lauretis, 1984, p.182.

⁵⁰² de Lauretis, 1984, p.182.

films is that I'm speaking in their language; I'm speaking through the body of a woman, the psyche of a woman, and that's my particular insight.⁵⁰³

Campion uses female subjectivity to function in a number of ways, including to illustrate the imposition of ideology: for example, Isabel in *The Portrait Of A Lady* initially resists marriage as giving in to a predefined role for women or as the proper or the ultimate goal; however ultimately she cannot step outside the ideology of her times. As Radway has observed in her study of the use or value of romance for readers, it has a particular value as an emotional release, and is ideologically compelling to many—particularly women.⁵⁰⁴ Ideology also functions to represent desiring female subjects in Campion's films; for example, Frannie (*In the Cut*), has a fantasy sequence of her parents meeting, which despite the reality of her mother being left broken-hearted, is imbued with a sense of heightened romance. Campion portrays romance and love as ideologically compelling, something her films emphasize in their mise-en-scène: for example, *In the Cut*, where the shots of the bride in the subway, the poems on the train walls, and the giant rose love heart someone is carrying at a station, and the person wearing a t-shirt with kisses/lips all over it all work to emphasize that romance is ideological. They do this as iconic, idealized images of love, marriage or romance; they underline that romance is a socially constructed notion, that cultural rituals celebrate it, and therefore promote particular values.

Klinger has observed that Campion's films are among those with 'messy' ideologies, something that enhances their affective impact by

Blurring clean ideological lines, they lure the viewer into an epistemological quest, a protracted attempt to clarify and resolve their contradictions. At a deeper level, though

⁵⁰³ Campion in Goodridge, 2002, p.85. Campion also says that the "actors are my voice" (p.82).

⁵⁰⁴ See Janice A Radway, *Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarch, and Popular Literature*, 2nd ed., The University of North Carolina Press, USA, 1991. Radway was interested in considering why women read romances rather than positioning romance as a genre that reinforces patriarchy. She discovered that romances function as a kind of compensation, providing emotional release for women that was different to the way in which they experienced their lives; in romance they could have guilt-free pleasure that was not ordinarily available. Other writers have also noted the compelling quality of romance for many women: see Colette Dowling, *The Cinderella Complex, Women's Hidden Fear of Independence*, Michael Joseph Ltd, London, 1982, p.28.

their troubled ideologies appeal to a certain realpolitik of the female subject: they objectify the trauma and complexity of the acquisition of identity in circumstance of domination, demonstrating that this process does not result in a linear sweep of the old by the new.⁵⁰⁵

It should be noted however that some of Campion's characters are static, rather than fluid or evolving: not her central protagonists, but those around them who appear as kinds of foils—as contrasts to the main protagonists. The two aunts in *The Piano*, Aunt Morag (Kerry Walker) and Aunt Nessie (Geneviève Lemon) are an example of this. Campion has described them as the “asexual members of the cast. ... [she] can't imagine the sex or romantic life created in people, in them”.⁵⁰⁶ This is emphasized in a conventional way by the tightness of their dresses and hairstyles, which clearly represent them as hard and angular. In contrast, Ada's hair has some flyaway bits, and after she has sex with Baines, she wears a different hairstyle, a looser and more mature arrangement. In *The Portrait Of A Lady*, Isabel's hair becomes more tightly constructed, smoother and less out of place as her oppression becomes more unbearable.



507



508

⁵⁰⁵ Klinger, 2006.

⁵⁰⁶ Director's commentary, *The Piano*, DVD.

⁵⁰⁷ <http://www.sensesofcinema.com/images/directors/02/22/portrait.jpg>

⁵⁰⁸ Image source: http://ec1.images-amazon.com/images/I/51VMK02E1EL_AA280_.jpg

Ruth's friend Prue in *Holy Smoke!* is another example of this 'foil' type of character. She is the one who rounds up Ruth's family and convinces them of Ruth's mortal danger—which is (ironically) that she is happy, feels free, empowered, and grounded. Ruth's family also act as foils. In *Sweetie* it was Kay's (Karen Colston) workmates, who scoffed at her ideas of 'serial monogamy' and generally constructed her as an object for ridicule. It appears that these characters are there not as people whose journeys Campion is interested in, they represent the forces that work on her main characters, they signify the 'proper' place patriarchal society dictates they should take up. Equally they are warnings of what one becomes if one does conform.

Thus these foils are there to illustrate the ideology that constrains women, and which Campion's heroines disregard not at their peril, but in order to achieve personal growth.⁵⁰⁹ Writer Patrice Petro has described Campion's films in relation to the way they denaturalise patriarchal ideology, effecting a disturbance in the fixed position of the spectator—she writes that the central female protagonists “do not sweep aside the existing order and found a new, female order of language. Rather, they assert their own discourse in the face of the male one by breaking it up, subverting it, and, in a sense, rewriting it”.⁵¹⁰

In the press kit for *Holy Smoke!*, Campion's sister, Anna Campion, is quoted as saying that one of the aims the film intended to address is that women themselves feel a sense of nervousness in relation to how they might behave in the world. Anna said: “we [women] have to be careful all the time because otherwise we're perceived as threatening”. Mary Russo has written that she remembers, from early childhood, matronising phrases that some women used to control other women who were making a spectacle of themselves—

⁵⁰⁹ Through her examination of ideology, Campion is examining power and its relationship to identity—this is another example of the way in which her films reflect a postmodern-feminist view. This exploration of ideology and power is found throughout her films and this is part of her view of female experience—or the vision she constructs of what women experience.

something she observed as a specifically feminine danger, a loss of boundaries. She has written that it was her “impression that these women had done something wrong, had stepped, as it were, into the limelight out of turn—too young or too old, too early or too late—and yet anyone, any *woman*, could make a spectacle out of herself if she was not careful”.⁵¹¹ Russo is discussing here the line between socially acceptable behaviour (controlled, ‘in her place’ behaviour that conforms to patriarchal ideology), and what cultural theorists have termed ‘the female grotesque’. The female grotesque is a transgressor—overstepping what is socially acceptable. She has an unruly or overpowering body (e.g. overly sexual, loud or overly adorned), and as such is a constant reminder of links to the abject. Female grotesques are subversive through breaking socially accepted rules and so illustrating the existence and repressive power of these rules, social norms/constructs.⁵¹²

However, while there is an evident link to the female grotesque and it is a repeated motif in her films⁵¹³, Campion appears less interested in setting up oppositional views, but rather, is concerned with alternative inscriptions of gender, and in exploring the way in which her female characters live in the world (although this creates a cinema that is in opposition to much cinema because it offers a female way of seeing the world). A film reviewer wrote of the scene at the outback disco in *Holy Smoke!* that “Ruth does a suggestive lesbian dance and ends up being groped by two men in the parking lot—just

⁵¹⁰ Patrice Petro, *Aftershocks of the New: Feminism and Film History*, Rutgers University Press, 2002, p.38.

⁵¹¹ Mary J. Russo, *The Female Grotesque: Risk, Excess and Modernity* Routledge, New York, 1994, p. 53.

⁵¹² For more on the female grotesque, see Russo, 1995 or see Terrie Waddell’s *Absolutely Fabulous*: ‘The Grotesque, Dionysos, Trickster and the Patsy/Edina Dyad: Archetypal Fusion and *Absolutely Fabulous*, *Practice: A Journal of Visual, Performing and Media Arts*, No.1, Summer 1996/97, pp.22-32; Kathleen Rowe, ‘Roseanne: Unruly Woman as Domestic Goddess’, in Stam, R., & Miller, T., *Film and Theory*, Blackwell Publishers, Malden, Massachusetts, 2000, pp.634-643; or Fincina Hopgood, ‘A Special Kind of Excess: The unruly woman of comedy and melodrama in Jane Campion’s *Sweetie*’, *antiTHESIS*, No 15., 2005, pp.91-113. In current and past popular culture examples of the female grotesque are many, traced from Mae West onwards and they are particularly popular on contemporary television: characters such as Fran Fine in *The Nanny*, Lucy in *I Love Lucy*, Roseanne Arnold and Patsy and Edina of *Absolutely Fabulous*.

⁵¹³ This will be discussed, but an example is the voraciously sexual Sweetie (*Sweetie*, 1989), whose life ends in a scene where naked, she turns her bottom to her father, ‘farts’ and laughs. Sweetie is a classic female grotesque.

to emphasize her incessant sexuality”.⁵¹⁴ While he reads the film this way, another way of reading it is that this scene emphasizes her contingent sexuality, that is, that it is not necessarily heterosexual, not bisexual, it is not contained but responsive—not a binary—that sexuality can have a range of incarnations, sexuality characterized by an infinite number of variations. This scene decentres monogamous heterosexuality, and the central place of the male as hero. PJ watches on and the tables are turned. His power from sexual attractiveness, or male dominance is negated.

Moi has described the female grotesque as the ‘monster woman’—that is, the woman who “rejects the submissive role patriarchy has reserved for her” in refusing to be selfless, using initiative, and having “a story to tell”.⁵¹⁵ This is a good description of Campion’s central female protagonists, who are working against patriarchy, as were some of her acknowledged influences such as Emily Bronte and Emily Dickinson. Gilbert and Gubar have observed of Bronte and Dickinson, that their writing is “palimpsestic, works whose surface designs conceal or obscure deeper, less accessible (and less socially acceptable) levels of meaning” or, put more simply by Donaldson, “a surface design created by the conventions of ‘male genre’ covers over an invisible, and often subversive, inscription of an alternative ‘female’ sensibility”.⁵¹⁶ This is part of Campion’s timbre, part of the reason that her films unsettle; it is the inscription of female sensibility at the deepest level of the work.

Female desire

Campion’s projects have frequently been described in terms of cinematically representing ‘women’s’ desires; for example, Marie Mandy has declared Campion an ‘expert’ in filming desire.⁵¹⁷ Her representations of desire illustrate how complex it is, and how many forms it might take. Campion herself has described this process as “such a wonderful tangle”,

⁵¹⁴ Stanley Kauffmann, ‘A Passion in the Desert’, *The New Republic*, 7/2/00, p.26.

⁵¹⁵ Moi, 2001, p.57.

⁵¹⁶ Laura E. Donaldson, *Decolonizing Feminisms: Race, Gender and Empire Building*, The University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill & London, 1992, p.18.

⁵¹⁷ Mandy, 2000.

saying of desire and romance that “you never really get to the bottom of it”.⁵¹⁸ The question explored here is how Campion’s female authorship distinctly inflects female desire. If western knowledge—and this includes knowledge of desire—is dominated by, if not shaped by masculinity⁵¹⁹, and women’s desires have largely not been visible⁵²⁰, then a cinematic practice that is centrally interested in articulating female experience would make female desire visible, and therefore this is an important area to investigate in this research. In order to make this desire visible, then the female author must arguably find an expression that is not shaped by masculinity. This is something the present thesis argues that Campion largely achieves.

As stated, Campion has acknowledged her own interest in, or debt to, the romantic writers such as the Bronte sisters for *Wuthering Heights* and *Jane Eyre*, and the mystical poems of Emily Dickinson who, like Campion, explored identity and inner worlds, as well as bringing a female sensibility to the worlds she explored. This is not just a case of intertextuality, but evidence of Campion’s own encounters with female voices and desires. Laleen Jayamanne has noted of *The Piano*: “what is made into a commodity and sold in this film is something that could be called (following the history of feminist theory) ‘female desire’”⁵²¹; the commodification of female desire in Campion’s work is evident in that she has said she admires “Dickinson and Bronte, the sensibility they bring to their work and to the world ... I use and put their labour into a more popular and acceptable form and sometimes I feel guilty as I think it’s a corrupted use of their pure wisdom”.⁵²²

The piano is an instrument that, in a period film, can often be understood as signifying female domestic accomplishment in a particular period. But, if it is considered from a psychoanalytic perspective in *The Piano*, it is in fact “the most effectively charged object

⁵¹⁸ Mandy, 2000.

⁵¹⁹ By this I am referring to the dominant viewpoint as coming through patriarchal culture (what Irigaray, 1974 calls the phallic order of culture), which has colonized or dominated representation in particular ways that I am labelling masculine.

⁵²⁰ Of course there are exceptions to this, such as classic Hollywood melodrama or soap opera which tended to have women audiences.

⁵²¹ Jayamanne, 2001, p.254.

⁵²² Campion quoted in Jayamanne, 2001, p.258.

in the film, both as plot mechanism and as love object”.⁵²³ Jayamanne has described the expressive representation of Ada’s desire for her piano, when gazing at it from far up above on the cliff, she looks down at it

on the beach (seen in extreme long shot). A fragile (out-of-focus) and yet insistent, jagged, febrile, Gothic line created by the fluttering ribbon of her bonnet seems to touch the piano across a vast space, creating a tactile link between her body and the object of desire, enchantment, and longing.⁵²⁴

There are countless scenes where the link between Ada’s piano and her body are articulated—for instance, she dismembers the piano and sends Baines one of the keys, following the loss of her own finger. The fantasy the piano embodies for Ada is what Baines finds irresistible. When she goes to the beach with Baines to collect it, he witnesses her complete rapture with it, visually echoed by the cartwheels of her daughter in the background. At the end of the film this link is broken when Ada chooses life over lying at the bottom of the ocean.

A recurrent feature of Campion’s heroines is that they seek a self-defined expression of desire. Gillett gives numerous examples of this in Campion’s cinema, such as when she describes in *The Piano*, how Ada gazes at herself in a hand mirror not to study her appearance, but rather “she is trying to fall through her image into a release of her passion. In kissing the mirror she uses her reflection as a means of transporting herself back to the remembrance of sexual desire (she has been forcibly separated from her lover)”.⁵²⁵ A further example is in *An Angel At My Table*. When Janet Frame is infatuated by her psychology lecturer she performs a compliment he gave her in front of the mirror, telling herself: ‘You have a real talent for writing’:

she adopts the pose of a sexually assured woman, drawing down one strap of her petticoat to reveal and stroke a glamorous neck and chest. Searching for an outward form to reflect her desired identity as a writer and confusing it with her budding sexual desire, Janet fastens upon the unlikely, inadequate and conventional image of the idealised movie star.⁵²⁶

⁵²³ Jayamanne, 2001, p.27.

⁵²⁴ Jayamanne, 2001, p.27.

⁵²⁵ Gillett, 2004, pp.2-3.

⁵²⁶ Gillett, 2004, p.3.

In seizing on the ‘idealised movie star’ the text underlines how limited ideas of beauty are, their narrow range, the way in which our society—women included—are colonized, or indoctrinated by these ideas or ideology. Campion achieves a stated aim, to “help people to learn a different idea of beauty”.⁵²⁷ From this point of view, Campion is engaged in countering idealized or stereotypical imagery that has emerged throughout the history of representation and opening up representation, to a range of options on, for example, what female beauty is—and also in leading audiences to consider that female beauty might be found outside the traditional ideals.

Gillett describes Campion’s work in a way that illustrates that she is working to release the category of women, and female stars, from a fixed referent and to underlie their humanness:

I have never seen Nicole Kidman looking as plain as she does in the first close-up [in] *The Portrait Of A Lady* ... her face is pale and slightly blotchy without its usual make-up and flattering lighting. ... She is still undoubtedly beautiful, but in an ordinary way ... Holly Hunter was presented with similar realism as Ada in *The Piano* (1993). ... her hairstyle is severe, her costume austere. In neither film does Campion provide concessions to contemporary Western images of feminine style and beauty.⁵²⁸

While one could argue that these representations are related to authenticity, designed to look like women of the time in which they are being represented, Campion’s representation of these beautiful women also illustrates how she refuses to uphold the ideal classical body. This refusal is both feminist and postmodern⁵²⁹ in its reflexivity given that these are Hollywood stars, and therefore texts in themselves (especially in regard to beauty). Effectively, what Campion does here is to refuse to offer (ideal) female perfection as spectacle. As a woman, Campion is reflecting on the patriarchal structures

⁵²⁷ Campion in the special features of the DVD of *The Piano*. This statement was made in relation to her aim for *The Piano* but it is equally applicable across her entire oeuvre.

⁵²⁸ Gillett, 2004, p. 1

⁵²⁹ For example, this could be read as a postmodern deconstruction of stars and beauty myths e.g. as superficial and constructed—or that using the idea of the supplement, there is not beauty or non-beauty, but many possible ideas of what is beautiful.

under which women live, and the beauty imagery that so colonizes our looking; Campion herself says of the old-fashioned oiled hair styles in *The Piano*: “you have to refashion your idea of beauty”.⁵³⁰ She is also reflecting on the insuppressible humanness of the body; in foregrounding it, she draws attention to the way in which the characters, who are representations of female experience, are materially and phenomenologically (in the sense of being related to human consciousness) located in history and culture.

Varda has described the way that women filmmakers and audiences have had to overcome a codification⁵³¹ of representation, saying that women’s bodies have been defined or generally described in the cinema according to codes

that have always been set by men. Women film directors came up against a portrayal of women that was already codified. So they had either to impose another code, or be angry, or, express women’s sensation more subtly—which eventually proved more successful.⁵³²

In a discussion about *The Piano*, Campion and the film’s producer Jan Chapman have discussed the way in which Baines and Ada had to “discover the power of sexual love for themselves without the aid of magazines telling them how to think about everything”.⁵³³ At the heart of this conversation is the way in which representation and action have been codified—and how far from actual desire, or imagination, this codification might actually be. In *The Piano*, Ada has been eroticised by the attention she has received from Baines, and the way he sees, or desires, her. Ada tries to transfer or enact this in her relations with her husband, Stewart. In a scene where she strokes his body and buttocks, she withdraws when he tries to participate, indicating she wants control, and that it is about her experience and desire, not his—although his desire is also framed by this scene.

⁵³⁰ Campion in the special features of the DVD of *The Piano*.

⁵³¹ While this codification will also have an affect on male audiences and filmmakers, it is particularly problematic for women because Western knowledge, and the codification of that knowledge in film, is predominantly masculine in source and orientation.

⁵³² Varda in Mandy, 2000.

⁵³³ Jan Chapman, Producer’s commentary, *The Piano*.

In her documentary *Women Film Desire: A Journey through Women's Cinema*,⁵³⁴ Marie Mandy uses interviews to explore the politics of cinematic choices. An example is Varda's description of a scene from her film *Documenteur* (aka *An Emotion Picture*, 1981) which "shows a naked woman alone for no purpose other than her aloneness and her nakedness". Varda describes the scene as in opposition to films by men, which she says show what are "technically erogenous zones"—such as bottoms and breasts—and segment women's bodies. In opposition, she believes women directors generally film women more as whole. While this is a generalization for which exceptions can be found (and Campion's films do segment bodies), she offers her film *Documenteur* as an example of what she means: describing it as a kind of 'harmonic response', she says that the naked woman, alone on the bed is

thinking of the man she lost, she pictures him on the floor, alone and naked. There is a close-up of his hand resting on his belly, of his penis, both lying there like two birds. The aim isn't to desexualise the scene but to show him whole ... Here ... there's no physical contact possible, no love scene possible. It's very important to me that the visualization of the body—one's own, someone else's, male, female, can figure in one's thoughts, memories, regrets and pain and, be of the whole body.⁵³⁵

Similarly, Marli Feldvoss has said of Baines in *The Piano* that Campion offers "the perspective of a woman toward a man that one does not ordinarily get to see. One normally does not see a naked man but a naked woman. To me, this naked man was very appealing ... he is learning something ... how to love".⁵³⁶

Campion's treatment of the sex scenes also has this 'harmonic' feature. Gillett has pinpointed these pleasures in Campion's *Sweetie*, for example, in the scene at the end of the film, after a long period in which they have been estranged, Kay and Louis

re-ignite their sexual relationship ... From a shot of entwined and exploring feet in socks we cut to a medium shot of Kay's relaxed body reclining on the bed. She is wearing a plain cotton singlet. Her soft and satisfied smile, the first we've seen, is the intimate concluding

⁵³⁴ Mandy in the press kit for the video: Mandy, 2000.

⁵³⁵ Mandy interviews a number of leading female directors including Jane Campion Sally Potter, Agnès Varda, Catherine Breillat, Doris Dörrie, Deepa Mehta, Moufida Tlatli and Safi Faye.

⁵³⁶ Feldvoss in Wright Wexman, 1999, pp. 97-98.

image we have of her. As an image of sexual fulfilment this is interesting for its gentleness, domesticity and utter lack of sexualisation. The camera asks us to see her happiness.⁵³⁷ This is an example of the way in which Campion avoids the cliché of a love scene and is arguably working deconstructively here. This image of reunion is not the cliché image that an audience would instantly recognize, it has no passionate sex scene, it is not conventionally idealized or codified. The sex scene from *Sweetie*, described above, is characteristic of Campion's cinema where, as stated, banal moments are meaningful and significant. This focus on the everyday is also more evident in art cinema generally, but the everyday things that Campion includes⁵³⁸ are influenced by her interest in female experience and offering a female view; no detail is incidental for Campion. What I think that Gillett recognizes in the scene described above is very much like that which de Lauretis recognizes in Akerman's film *Jeanne Dielman* (1975): "[i]t is a woman's actions, gestures, body, and look that define the space of our vision, the temporality and rhythms of perception, the horizon of meaning available to the spectator".⁵³⁹

The representation of desire created by women in their films is multifarious, but emotion and sexuality are often linked to imagination. Also discussing films by women about sexuality and desire, French filmmaker Catherine Breillat has said: "It's about understanding what it is to exist in that sexuality. It's about the nature of desire"⁵⁴⁰—comments that illustrate a belief that one's desire is also materially located. Canadian filmmaker Léa Pool has said "desire feeds, in large part, on imagination... filming that is a major challenge. What makes it interesting is ... to show what doesn't show, what lies behind the feeling of love ... showing what goes on inside a person who feels desire is very hard to do".⁵⁴¹ Campion makes this link between imagination and desire continuously in her films—for example, it is the imaginary Osmond that captures Isabel in *The Portrait of a Lady*, or the imaginary Malloy that captures Frannie in *In the Cut*. It is

⁵³⁷ Gillett, 2004, p.108.

⁵³⁸ For example, when Dawn (Sweetie) eats Kay's ceramic horses, she eats a signifier of Kay's childhood and girlish interest in horses. Chapter 6 further offers observations on the use of everyday objects in the mise-en-scène (jewellery, shoes, flowers) in *In the Cut*.

⁵³⁹ de Lauretis, 1987, p.131.

⁵⁴⁰ Catherine Breillat in Mandy, 2000.

⁵⁴¹ Léa Pool in Mandy, 2000.

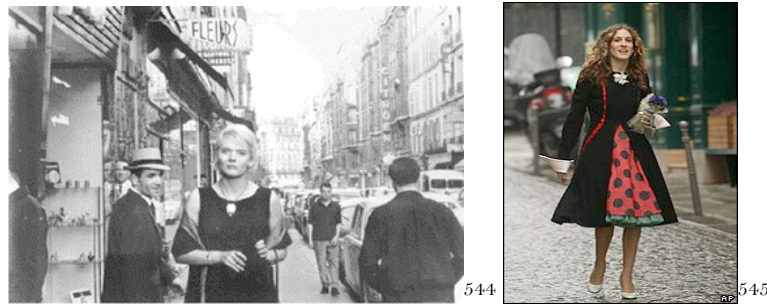
Isabel and Frannie's erotic imagination that fixes their desire. In *The Portrait of a Lady*, Campion is successfully able to show what is going on inside the character of Isabel through a series of surreal, haunting sequences (already discussed), which create an overwhelming sense of yearning.

Representing femininity

The relationship of the 'feminine' to representation has been discussed by many feminist writers documenting the dominant feminine types throughout the history of cinema: "love goddesses, mothers, martyrs, spinsters, broads, virgins, vamps, prudes, adventuresses, she-devils and sex kittens⁵⁴²" and more recently, "the public woman, the streetwalker, the window shopper, the flâneur/ flâneuse, and the prostitute".⁵⁴³ While these 'types' are not necessarily represented by contemporary women filmmakers—or by Campion—there is an inevitable dialogue with these figures for those filmmakers interested in the relationship between representation and the feminine. For example, women filmmakers such as Campion, or Varda have taken the modernist form of the flâneur and claimed a place for women (the flâneuse)—as has contemporary television, in programs such as *Sex and the City*.

⁵⁴² In researching mainstream Hollywood films up to the 1950's, filmmaker McMurphy observed these types. Megan McMurphy, 'The Women and Film Work', (reprinted from Feminist Film Workers Discussion Papers), *Refractory Girl*, No.18/19, Dec. 1979- Jan. 1980, p.43.

⁵⁴³ The 'flâneur' refers to someone who strolls about aimlessly. Charles Baudelaire called his city wanderer the flâneur in his poems on life in the urban throng. In the late 1920s Walter Benjamin collected quotations, and made notes on everything found in the street—including flâneurs. The flâneur has also been appropriated in recent queer narratives of inner city life ('gay village', 'gay mecca', 'gai Paris', 'lesbian flâneur', 'lesbian bohème') – see Dianne Chisholm, *Queer Constellations: Subcultural Space in the Wake of the City*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis and London, 2004.



The flâneur has been described as a “crucial figure of modernism”⁵⁴⁶, a hero of modern life and a character that emphasized the urban character of modernism. In what follows below, Campion’s dialogue with this ‘flâneur’ is described in relation to her film *In the Cut*.

Writers such as Benjamin or Baudelaire⁵⁴⁷ defined the flâneur as masculine: Baudelaire observed of the flâneur that the “crowd is *his* domain ... *His* passion and *his* profession is to merge with the crowd”.⁵⁴⁸ The flâneur is defined as someone who “strolls the streets observing metropolitan life but at the same time being part of the spectacle of the city himself; he (flâneurs tend to be portrayed as men) wants to be seen as well as seeing others”.⁵⁴⁹ The “public space of the modern city, and the right to look, belonged solely to men⁵⁵⁰”—evidenced because women were not able to just wander the streets, unless they were prostitutes or the like. According to Helen Richards the practice of ‘*flanerie*’ was a style of social observation that permeated nineteenth century writing. A product of capitalism, the *flâneur* “writes about what he sees, and sells the product. The *flâneur* in

⁵⁴⁴ This is a scene from Varda’s *Cléo de 5 à 7: souvenirs et anecdotes* (2005). Image source:

http://images.google.com.au/imgres?imgurl=http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/cinema_journal/v040/full/40.2mouton_fig02f.jpg&imgrefurl=http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/cinema_journal/v040/40.2mouton_fig02.html&h=653&w=1000&sz=78&hl=en&start=6&um=1&tbnid=BCait0HpGUz9NM:&tbnh=97&tbnw=149&prev=/images%3Fq%3Dagnes%2Bvarda,%2B%2527Cl%25C3%25A9o%2B%2527,%2Bmuseum%2Bof%2Bmodern%2Bart%26svnum%3D10%26um%3D1%26hl%3Den%26sa%3DG

⁵⁴⁵ Sarah Jessica Parker in *Sex and the City*. Source of image:

<http://blogs.nypost.com/fashion/photos/carrie-thumb.jpg>

⁵⁴⁶ Barker, 2000, p.135.

⁵⁴⁷ See an outline of this in Anke Gleber, ‘Women on the Screens and Streets of Modernity In Search of the Female Flâneur’, in Andrew Dudley & Sally Shafto (eds.), *The Image in Dispute: Art and Cinema in the Age of Photography*, The University of Texas Press, Austin, 1997, p.55.

⁵⁴⁸ Charles Baudelaire, ‘The Painter of Modern Life’, in *Selected Writings on Art and Literature*, trans. PE Charvet, Penguin Books, New York, 1972, p.399. My emphasis. First published in 1863.

⁵⁴⁹ Bullock and Trombley, 2000, p.325.

⁵⁵⁰ Helen Richards, ‘Sex and the City: a visible flâneuse for the postmodern era?’ in *Continuum: Journal of Media & Cultural Studies*, Vol.17, No.2, 2003, p.151.

capitalist society is a fictional type, in fact, he is a type who writes fiction. Women have been largely outside of *flanerie*. However, as the male *flâneur* evolved into a journalist as a result of society's modernization, he left a space for a female *flâneuse* to enter.⁵⁵¹ This was also made possible in contemporary times because the streets became more accessible for women through the act of shopping (see Nava, Frieberg and Wilson⁵⁵²).

The dialogue with the *flâneur* is particularly interesting in considering *In the Cut* because the *flâneur* is someone who looks, sees, and relays his subjectivity—and Frannie is the *flâneuse* who does likewise, relaying *her* subjectivity. Campion's film is all about seeing. Writer Anne Friedberg has written that the *flâneur* was “a male urban subject, endowed with a gaze at the elusive and almost unseen *flâneuse*”, and describes a meeting in Baudelaire's poem *Les Fleurs du Mal*, where he catches, in “an eye-line match, the gaze of a woman. In such a momentary *fascinum* her gaze is returned, but only momentarily, and then lost”.⁵⁵³ But in Campion's film, the power, the look, and the gaze are structured around Frannie's female view.

Only a decade ago, Meaghan Morris observed that the female *flâneur* “has not yet worked to inscribe her presence in any visible or speakable form into the texts or language of *flanerie*”.⁵⁵⁴ However, in Campion's *In the Cut*, Frannie appears to relate to the city as a *flâneuse*; she walks the streets of New York City to find subject matter for her study of the language of the New York streets—shopping for words. In fact Frannie is always walking the streets, alone or with others. This dialogue with the modernist *flâneur* is postmodern in that it is an appropriation of a motif of modernism, but it is also a feminist gesture in that it appropriates a masculinist form.

⁵⁵¹ Richards, 2003, p.151. Richards is quoting Susan Buck Morris, 'The Flâneur, the sandwich man and the whore: the politics of loitering', *New German Critique*, No.39, 1986, pp.99-140.

⁵⁵² Discussed in Richards, 2003.

⁵⁵³ Anne Friedberg, *Window Shopping: cinema and the postmodern*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1993, p.33.

⁵⁵⁴ Meaghan Morris in Anke Gleber, 'Women on the Screens and Streets of Modernity In Search of the Female Flâneur', in Andrew Dudley & Sally Shafto (eds.) *The Image in Dispute: Art and Cinema in the Age of Photography*, The University of Texas Press, Austin, 1997, p.57.



Frannie is represented as a woman who appears to feel power, in that she is apparently not afraid of things that might keep a woman in a large city confined to her own space. In her discussion about the American television series *Sex in the City*, Helen Richards describes the character of Carrie (Sarah Jessica Parker) as able to “be seen as a de Certeau Streetwalker; she walks the streets of New York City in order to find subject matter for her column, for the ‘urban text she writes’”.⁵⁵⁶ This is not unlike Frannie, who does the same thing in streets and subways in gathering slang for the book she is writing. Like Carrie, Frannie is always walking the streets, and there are reoccurring allusions to walking or the equipment needed for walking. Carrie and Frannie could both be read as anthropologists, almost as detectives (Carrie of urban myths⁵⁵⁷ and Frannie of language). Irigaray said that “the moment the look dominates, the body loses its materiality”,⁵⁵⁸ and thus in replacing the body, and making it irrelevant through the character of the flâneuse, Campion (indebted to Moore’s novel—*In The Cut*—on which the film is based), inverts the usual construction where the eye is male and the one to be looked at is female. The female is looking, and seeing—exploring the city with female eyes. There is however an

⁵⁵⁵ Image source:

<http://images.google.com.au/imgres?imgurl=http://www.shillpages.com/movies/thumbs/inthecut2003dvd.gif&imgrefurl=http://www.shillpages.com/movies/ii.shtml&h=55&w=100&sz=6&hl=en&start=302&um=1&tbid=nB4QaQIY46xuWM:&tbnh=45&tbnw=82&prev=/images%3Fq%3DCampion,%2B%2527In%2Bthe%2Bcut%2527%26start%3D300%26ndsp%3D20%26svnum%3D10%26um%3D1%26hl%3Den%26sa%3DN>

⁵⁵⁶ Richards, 2003, p.149.

⁵⁵⁷ In relation to relationships, sex and fashion, for example, in the episode ‘A Vogue Idea’, Carrie discovers a pair of shoes in the Vogue cupboard and exclaims that she thought they were ‘an urban shoe myth’ (‘Mary Jane’ Manolo Blahnik shoes).

⁵⁵⁸ Irigaray, 1978, p.50 in Friedberg, 1993, p.33.

exception to this, a scene where Frannie is looked at in a conventional, objectified, way: when Malloy watches her through his rear vision mirror. This however underscores the idea that she has dressed up in high heels and desires the gaze—his gaze—which makes him seem threatening.

Frannie mostly wears brown, flat shoes or thongs, except when she is attacked and loses her high heel shoe (interestingly, in an episode of *Sex and the City*⁵⁵⁹, Carrie wanders into an unknown part of town, and is also mugged for her favourite Manolo Blahnik sandals).⁵⁶⁰ There is a similar mise-en-scène in the two productions; for example the shot of the mural of the two-headed woman appears in both; and the city as space and location are important to both.⁵⁶¹ De Certeau “claimed that ‘the act of walking is to the urban system what the speech act is to language’... In a spatial acting-out of place, walking becomes ‘a space of enunciation’”.⁵⁶² While spaces construct where one can or cannot go, walking is also an exercise in agency given that one is in control of the stopping, starting, doubling back—while engaging in the act of looking, or “female scopophilia”.⁵⁶³

Richards has written that the city isn’t a place for all women: “the message projected by these contemporary programs is clear; to live in the city, to enjoy it completely and move around freely, you must be single”.⁵⁶⁴ Like Carrie, Frannie is single; and while enjoying this, they are both looking for love. Campion has said that she wanted to communicate Frannie’s “longing to have love and a soul connection with a man”, and producer Laurie

⁵⁵⁹ Carrie is mugged for her shoes in the episode ‘What Goes Around, Comes Around’, directed by Allen Couter, first aired in 2000.

⁵⁶⁰ Carrie mostly wears high heels and is constructed as a postfeminist character, something that differentiates her from Frannie. In this I am locating her as representative of a postfeminist ideology—which rejected earlier feminist positions as not relevant, but is also an evolution of them. Postfeminists, like postmodern-feminists are interested in promoting sexual difference and fluid identity; however postfeminism is focused on individual choices, on promoting women as liberated, and not interested in feminist politics.

⁵⁶¹ In the director’s commentary on the DVD of *In The Cut*, Campion attributes this collage of images of the city to the cinematographer, Dion Beebe.

⁵⁶² De Certeau in Nedra Reynolds, *Geographies of Writing: Inhabiting Places and Encountering Difference*, Southern Illinois University, Illinois, 2004, p.69.

⁵⁶³ De Certeau in Reynolds, 2004, p. 57. Looking at bodies and objects as erotic, fascinating or from a fetishistic position.

⁵⁶⁴ Richards, 2003, p.148. It could be argued that this message is not just one of contemporary productions: Holly walked the streets of New York in Blake Edwards’ 1961 film, *Breakfast At Tiffany’s*.

Parker describes Frannie and Pauline as “single women lifers” who when they go out become “single women voyeurs”.⁵⁶⁵ This link to singleness is interesting in the context of the serial killer in *In the Cut*, whose calling card is an engagement ring.⁵⁶⁶ Therefore, in the logic of *In the Cut*’s story, it could be argued that the city becomes unsafe once one loses one’s single status (as signified by the killer’s use of the engagement ring).

Although Frannie comes to harm, her *flanerie* is important as an act of agency, and as a signifier of bravery and feminism, given she is claiming spaces such as the city streets at night—places women have been excluded from.

Part 3: Femininity as ‘style’

*As a woman you have a unique and different vision. It’s good that these voices are heard in the world.*⁵⁶⁷

Jane Campion

The idea of a ‘feminine’ quality or a distinctly ‘feminine’ approach to filmmaking is one considered early on in this research in relation to whether, and how, female knowledge and a female perspective might be produced or represented in Campion’s films. Through considering Campion’s own comments about her work, this research discovered evidence that Campion regarded femininity as *a style*, rather than a commonality—that is, not as something essential or innate in women filmmakers. This provided an important research pathway as well as being neither essentialist nor constructionist, it gave me some insights into Campion’s methods.

In *The Piano* Campion begins the film by positioning the audience to find an internal intimacy with Ada and to take the audience into Ada’s mind. Campion achieves this by beginning the film inside Ada’s head peering out at her hands; using voice-over, employing frequent subjective shots; and at other times creeping the camera up behind Ada’s head to direct the audience. Campion herself identifies this as feminine in style,

⁵⁶⁵ *In The Cut* DVD director’s commentary.

⁵⁶⁶ The ring is an addition, it does not appear as the killer’s calling card in Moore’s novel.

⁵⁶⁷ Andrews, 2003.

stating that she knew when it was right because “I felt interested in it ... [it] created a kind of femininity to the vision, a softness, or a pause”.⁵⁶⁸ This approach that Campion uses, where we frequently see the back of Ada’s head, indicates that Ada is the person who is looking in the film; it was also used (and more extensively) in Michelangelo Antonioni’s *L’Avventura* (1960), a favourite film of Campion’s, by a director who has been described by some critics as a ‘women’s director’.⁵⁶⁹ In *L’Avventura* the audience are frequently positioned behind Claudia’s head (Monica Vitti); this use of the camera to ‘get inside the head’ of a character demonstrates that this kind of femininity of style can be found in films by men or women. However Campion’s use is different, because once she gets inside the head of characters, what the audience see is imbued with a female sensibility and perspective. Antonioni is not centrally interested in getting inside the heads of women characters.

In her book chapter entitled 'Are Women Directors Different?', feminist author Molly Haskell considered films of Wertmuller and Cavani in relation to whether she could detect signs of femininity. She concluded that "although distinctly ‘feminine’ qualities can be discovered in each of these directors, we cannot generalize from these to a ‘feminine sensibility’”, but that what they share is "a certain attitude toward, and treatment of sex that distinguishes them from their male counterparts and that—using the word with all due caution—might be characterised as *feminine*". Her justification for this is that they do not pander to men's fantasies on either the simple level of pure titillation, or on the more insidious level of woman hating. She argues that this group of women’s films don't perform ultimate acts of degradation by robbing women of their autonomy.⁵⁷⁰ This cautionary characterising of a *feminine* perspective is of particular interest to this research. Annette Kuhn has also written of a ‘feminine cinematic writing,’ which effects new forms of pleasure in cinema that she locates as coming from “a cinema of *jouissance*”⁵⁷¹; she has written that this cinematic writing sets up the possibility “of

⁵⁶⁸ Andrews, 2003.

⁵⁶⁹ For example Chatman says the Antonioni came to be seen as a champion of women, and indeed expressed pride in being, with Ingmar Berman, a ‘woman’s director.’ Seymour Chatman and Paul Duncan (eds.), *Michelangelo Antonioni*, Taschen, 2004, p.45.

⁵⁷⁰ Molly Haskell, 'Are Women Directors Different?', 1989, p.430.

sexual difference in spectator-text relations by privileging a ‘feminine voice’” through “relations of looking, narrativity, narrative discourse, subjectivity and openness against closure”. The pleasurable and open-ended contemplation Kuhn discusses, her ‘cinema of *jouissance*’, is an alternative to male-centred discourse. It is an argument of this thesis that Campion does this, representing that which has been largely excluded from representation—‘unspeakable’ states that represent greater or different pleasure. Her cinema is a ‘cinema of *jouissance*’, and as such is radical and different, in privileging female subjectivity and, female states of total (non-phallic) erotic pleasure. Campion cinematically and symbolically represents female desire.

Women filmmakers discussing their own work frequently make comments in the same vein as Campion, to infer an understanding of femininity as a style. Chantal Akerman has said that

I give space to things which were never—almost never—shown in that way, like the daily gestures of a woman. They are the lowest in the hierarchy of film images ... But more than content, it’s because of the style. If you show a woman’s gestures so precisely, it’s because you love them. In some way you recognize those gestures that have always been denied and ignored.⁵⁷²

The pleasure in the detail is an element Akerman is identifying as a feature of a feminine style. She has written that the film addresses the spectator as female, constructing a horizon of meaning that defines women’s gestures, actions, body and look: “the space of our vision, the temporality and rhythms of perception ... a picture of female experience, of duration, perception, events, relationships, and silences, which feels immediately and unquestionably true”.⁵⁷³

In regard to women’s films, Sally Potter has said that “maybe as a general rule there is more of a general interest in the realm of subtle experience, subtle feeling ... hidden life

⁵⁷¹ *Jouissance* is discussed further in chapter 5. It is a term from French feminist theory. This state has also been theorized by Kristeva, Lacan, Montrelay, and Irigaray.

⁵⁷² Akerman in de Lauretis, 1987, p.132.

⁵⁷³ de Lauretis, 1987, p.131.

of the character, the hidden life of the situation”.⁵⁷⁴ In interviewing women filmmakers myself, I have also found that they talk about bringing something to their filmmaking as women that they frequently describe as ‘feminine’. When asked whether there is anything about her work that she thinks is feminine, or anything she brings to it as a woman, filmmaker Solrun Hoaas⁵⁷⁵ responded that she felt there was, identifying an interest in human relationships, sensitivity to what goes on the inside, detail, subtexts, circular structures (as opposed to resolution-orientated linear structures), repetitions, internal echoings, and layering as bringing a common texture to women’s work.⁵⁷⁶ While these features are obviously not exclusive to women’s filmmaking, what appears to be evident is that they are *more* common; for example, French filmmaker Diane Kury’s work has been described as owing a “debt to what are often considered ‘feminine’ modes of expression ... a more ‘feminine’ inflection by their (partial) centring on a female character, their lack of strong, linear plotting and their problematic, open endings”.⁵⁷⁷ Campion’s short films have also been similarly described, and this description is also applicable to her feature films; Freiberg has written that they are “not like conventional fiction films which construct their narrative in a linear and chronological fashion ... Her endings are also unconventional: far from offering the audience an emotionally satisfying resolution or closure, they are enigmatically and disturbingly open”.⁵⁷⁸

Barbara Creed has written that historically women's films have favoured narratives which are open ended and refuse closure, "perhaps because they adopt an oppositional stance in relation not only to their subject matter but also in relation to conventional cinematic practices".⁵⁷⁹ Women’s films more often belong to the category of art or oppositional cinema. Creed says that the open-ended structure offers a different mode of pleasure and a different kind of cinema. There is a link between this open ended cinema and the

⁵⁷⁴ Mandy, 2000.

⁵⁷⁵ Hoaas is a writer, director and producer who makes both documentary and narrative fiction. Her feature film *Aya* was made in 1990 and she has made several documentaries shown on television including *Green Tea and Cherry Ripe* (1988) and *Pyongyang Diaries* (1997).

⁵⁷⁶ Solrun Hoaas interview, French, 1995, p.107.

⁵⁷⁷ Tarr, 1998, p.147.

⁵⁷⁸ Freda Freiberg, ‘The Bizarre in the Banal: Notes on the Films of Jane Campion’, in Blonski et al, 1987, p.328.

postmodern (and therefore postmodern-feminism) where, in the most general cultural sense, the postmodern refers to “the contemporary inclination toward the unstable, fluid, fragmented, indeterminate, ironic, and heterogeneous, for that which resists definition, closure, and fixity”.⁵⁸⁰

As well as open-ended narratives and a preference for art cinema, women filmmakers have frequently been described as particularly interested in character-driven films. For example, Marguerite Duras’ films have been described as having at their core the search for and “exploration of human relationships” and as “characteristically concerned more with how characters relate to each other, especially women to men, rather than with expounding a situation or developing a plot”.⁵⁸¹ There are numerous examples of other women filmmakers saying that being female gives them an interest in different stories (such as women’s world/s); for example Australian filmmakers Ana Kokkinos⁵⁸² and Fiona Eagger⁵⁸³ said that they “believe that women filmmakers can indeed create a different world to the one we have been accustomed to seeing at the movies”.⁵⁸⁴ In Kokkinos’ view, women “write different stories and therefore make different films;” they also have a different sensibility in the “way they direct, in the way they work with actors and in the way they tell a story”.⁵⁸⁵ Kokkinos has also pointed to the emphasis on inner life rather than action in films by women, although she says that: “of course women ‘action’ directors exist, as do men who have what she describes as a feminine

⁵⁷⁹ Blonski et al, 1987, p.309.

⁵⁸⁰ Susan Bordo, *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body*, (2nd edition) University of California Press, London, 2003, p.38

⁵⁸¹ Source: Ephraim Katz, ‘Marguerite Duras’, *The Film Encyclopedia*, viewed 25/12/06 at <http://www.geocities.com/paris/metro/9384/directors/duras.htm>

⁵⁸² Kokkinos’ major credits are for writing (or co-writing) and directing *Only the Brave* (1993), *Head On* (1998), and *The Book of Revelation*, (2006).

⁵⁸³ Fiona Eagger Produced *Mallboy* (2000), *Only the Brave* (1993) and was the production co-ordinator on numerous Australian features including *Romper Stomper* (1991); she has also produced for television.

⁵⁸⁴ Katherine Kizilos, ‘Giving girls a chance to act out and act up on screen’, *Age*, 27 April, 1994, p.19.

⁵⁸⁵ Kizilos, 1994. Kokkinos is not a director whom I regard as being particularly useful in regard to the central question of this thesis (with the exception of the film she is discussing here—*Only the Brave*). However, she has said that *The Book of Revelation* is about what it is to be human, and discussed the casting of Tom Long saying that he has a quality that embraces both masculine and feminine qualities, which links to an idea that there might be a blurring between the masculine and feminine. See an interview with Kokkinos on *At The Movies*, ABC TV, 6/9/06.

sensibility".⁵⁸⁶ For Kokkinos, what is important is that women be encouraged to explore their own vision.⁵⁸⁷ This latter point is important as it points to the need to be true to one's own voice, a voice that may or may not be feminist, which may or may not want to take up a women's point of view; it is a balance between individual creativity and the mix of factors that include gender as one thing but not the only aspect that might influence an individual's work.

The views of women filmmakers quoted above bring to the fore the colloquial way in which the idea of femininity has risen to the surface in numerous women filmmaker's disclosures about their practice. Campion herself appears to understand the 'feminine' as a style, using it to describe the characteristics, or distinctive and identifiable form of her films; as she says: "I like detail and I read things into detail and, I think that is quite a feminine quality".⁵⁸⁸ In 1990, when being courted by American producers, she said that "[t]o deny women directors, as I suspect is happening in the States, is to deny the feminine vision".⁵⁸⁹ Importantly, Campion is asserting here a belief in a 'feminine vision'; and also, despite the large percentage of films made in Hollywood without an auteurist vision (by both men and women), her assertion of vision here indicates a belief in the auteur director.

Part 4: Autobiographical references

Tracing an autobiographical reference within Campion's films is not a simple task. However, this section traces how the personal interacts with the film text, bringing together some dominant, or reoccurring elements within Campion's films.

Campion has declared that she is attracted to working from her own place, location or perspective, and has said that she "decided I wanted to do work about things I was

⁵⁸⁶ Kokkinos, *At The Movies*, ABC TV, 6/9/06.

⁵⁸⁷ French, 1995, p.72.

⁵⁸⁸ Campion in Mandy, 2000.

⁵⁸⁹ Interview with Campion by Carrie Rickey, 'A Director Strikes an Intimate Chord', in Wright Wexman, 1999, p. 53.

thinking about and involved in, which were generally relationships and love ... and sex!”⁵⁹⁰ Campion has also said that she “wanted to respond to these ideas of my own century”,⁵⁹¹ which implies that her films reflect and engage with cultural, political and socio-economic referents or frameworks of the contemporary period, but particularly from those periods in which she has made each work. This applies equally to her historical films, as Jan Chapman has explained in regard to *The Piano*: they were trying to make “a film that was set a long time ago, but had a modern sensibility”.⁵⁹²

In interviews, Campion has revealed many of her influences are from novels or poems by writers such as the Brontës, Emily Dickinson, George Eliot, Henry James, DH Lawrence, and Leo Tolstoy. She has been particularly interested in romantic or gothic literature and writers such as the New Zealander, Katherine Mansfield. She has acknowledged an interest in the theatre, artists⁵⁹³ and acting. Campion’s mother is an actress and her father is a theatre director. The films that she has declared a strong interest in also have strong performances (particularly from women). For example *Women in Love* won an Academy Award for best actress (Glenda Jackson) in 1971, and *Klute* (which influenced *In the Cut*) won an Academy Award for best actress (Jane Fonda) in 1972. She claims to have watched *The Godfather* once a year—a film that won an Academy Award in 1973 for best actor (Marlon Brando).⁵⁹⁴ Her films often reflect an interest in folklore—for example, there is a reference to *Bluebeard* in *The Piano*⁵⁹⁵—and she has described Baines in terms of

⁵⁹⁰ Wright Wexman, 1999, p.xiii.

⁵⁹¹ Jayamanne, 2001, p.26. A quote from Mary Colbert, ‘Jane Campion on Her Gothic Film: *The Piano*’, *Sight and Sound*, 3.10, October 1993, p.6.

⁵⁹² Producer’s commentary, DVD, *The Piano*.

⁵⁹³ For example Joseph Beuys and Freda Kahlo are mentioned as strong influences in Wright Wexman, 1999, p. xiii.

⁵⁹⁴ For evidence of these autobiographical references see Wexman Wright, 1999, p.xiv.

⁵⁹⁵ Bluebeard is the pageant that is put on in *The Piano*. The story has captured filmmakers’ imaginations throughout the history of filmmaking and there are dozens of Bluebeard films, including by significant filmmakers such as Georges Méliès (*Barbe-bleue*, 1901), Edgar G. Ulmer (1944) and Claude Chabrol (*Landru*, 1963). Jayamayne has observed that it is used in *The Piano* to play out the idea of first contact, that when the Maori man rushes to the stage to save the victim, this is much like moments of first contact with the cinema. See Jayamanne, 2001, p.41. Campion herself has discussed it as a strategy—presumably to warn or warm up audiences—building up to the scene when Ada has her finger chopped off by Stewart. The Bluebeard’s silhouetted figure with the axe is experienced before this scene, and Stewart coming home with his axe takes on particular resonance. See Maria

*The Beauty and the Beast*⁵⁹⁶; in the texture of *The Piano*, Ada's daughter, in her red cape and with her dog, visually signifies *Little Red Riding Hood*. Campion meditates, is "fascinated by Zen"⁵⁹⁷, and is attracted thematically to non-Western religion. These references enter the texture of her films from *Sweetie* (where Kay finds love through the tea leaves), through to the Buddha outside Pauline's door in *In the Cut*. She also cites numerous films and filmmakers as influential, including many that she has described as seminal. These include *Belle de Jour* (Luis Buñuel, 1967) *Performance* (Donald Cammell & Nicolas Roeg, 1970), *Women in Love* (Ken Russell, 1969)⁵⁹⁸, *Seven Beauties* (Lina Wertmüller, 1975), *The Godfather* (Francis Ford Coppola, 1972), and the films of Peter Weir, Spike Lee⁵⁹⁹, and Buñuel. Her favourite films include *Repulsion* (Roman Polanski⁶⁰⁰, 1965), *L'Avventura* (Michelangelo Antonioni, 1960) and *The Conformist* (Bernardo Bertolucci, 1970).⁶⁰¹ There is only one woman among what is essentially a list of great contemporary auteur directors and award winning films—something that indicates that she has not looked towards, or perhaps had any particular interest in women filmmakers. Alternatively, it is conceivable that this list, which is very much representative of the kind of films one would see at film school, is all she was offered in her formative years, and thus she recalls them specifically. Or equally possibly, her approach is one of trying to integrate and access the mainstream. There are however several films in this list where the filmmakers are concerned with similar preoccupations to Campion; for example, sexuality and relationships between men and women. In *Belle de Jour* and *Repulsion*—both starring Catherine Deneuve—female sexuality and sexual fantasy/imagination are explored, and

Tatar, *Secrets Beyond the Door: The Story of Bluebeard and His Wives*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 2004, pp.219–220.

⁵⁹⁶ Wright Wexman, 1999, p. 98. She says he is omnipotent, unless in the presence of a woman, where he is delicate and vulnerable.

⁵⁹⁷ Interview in Wright Wexman, 1999, p. 15.

⁵⁹⁸ These three films are named in Goodridge, 2002, p.77. Weir is a director whose 'auteur' style known in his Australian films is less interested in narrative and more interested in mood and atmosphere

⁵⁹⁹ Named in Wright Wexman, 1999 p. xiv.

⁶⁰⁰ Campion is quoted as saying that although she had never see Polanski's short film *Szwyj ludzie z szasa*, she "was struck by descriptions of ... [it] about some men carrying a wardrobe around ... I thought, 'Maybe I'll see where I can get to with this piano'". Wexman Wright, 1999, p.114. She references Polanski in her film *Holy Smoke!* in the scene where Charles Manson is referred to as a cult leader who induced young people to murder Polanski's wife, Sharon Tait.

⁶⁰¹ As quoted in Wexman Wright, 1999, p.47.

the latter also deals with madness; in *L'Avventura*, the difficulty men and women have in being together is a central focus. In *Repulsion*, Deneuve plays a young woman that men find irresistible, and they are overcome or disempowered by her beauty (even her sister's boyfriend appears suddenly overcome by her at the end of the film). They are also strongly visual films that explore what is under the surface.

Contemporary cultural currents provide significant contexts for the production and reception of Campion's work. Campion was born in 1954, and as author Kenneth Von Gunden has noted, "postmodernist 'currents' are especially strong in audience members 'born in the 1950s and 1960s'".⁶⁰² By currents I assume that he means influences, predilections or understandings. In terms of cinematic influences, the directors who were particularly influential to American and other cinemas through the 1960s and 1970s were the 'film school generation'⁶⁰³, not just from a filmmaking or entertainment perspective but, Von Gunden argues, in shaping a receptive context for postmodernism. Von Gunden has labelled Coppola, Lucas, De Palma, Spielberg and Scorsese—all men who are technically expert and knowledgeable about classic Hollywood cinema—'postmodern auteurs'.⁶⁰⁴ He notes that they were all "consumers of popular culture long before they were producers of it".⁶⁰⁵ Some, such as Scorsese and Coppola, are among Campion's seminal influences, and most of the films she has acknowledged as influencing her, including those already listed above, were made in the 1960s and 1970s; she has acknowledged particularly liking the style of films from the 1970s.⁶⁰⁶

Campion brings a postmodern sensibility to her work, pitting feminist and postmodern ideas or approaches against each other. She is not alone in this—other filmmakers such as Sally Potter and artists such as Barbara Kruger and Cindy Sherman have explored gender

⁶⁰² Quoting Todd Gitlin in Kenneth Von Gunden, *Postmodern Auteurs: Coppola, Lucas, De Palma, Spielberg and Scorsese*, McFarland & Co., Inc., Jefferson, Nth Carolina and London, 1991, p.2.

⁶⁰³ Francis Ford Coppola, Martin Scorsese, George Lucas and Steven Spielberg are described by John Belton as the most likely to succeed of the 'film school generation'. See John Belton, *American Cinema/American Culture*, McGraw-Hill Inc., New York, 1994, p.303.

⁶⁰⁴ Postmodernism is of course only one, of many possible approaches to their work.

⁶⁰⁵ Frederic Jamerson in Von Gunden, 1991, pp.2-3.

⁶⁰⁶ Director's commentary, DVD, *In The Cut*.

through postmodern practice in both style and content. Campion explores a postmodern-feminist discursive space through her characters, who are not politically correct, nor overtly feminist, but rather, are formed by thinking that is of the contemporary time—that is, postfeminist, or postmodern-feminist thinking. There is no attempt to deny that women exist with all manner of foibles and desires, including patriarchal ones. Pauline's main dream or desire in *In the Cut* is to get married, and according to Campion, Frannie longs for love and a soul connection with a man⁶⁰⁷; in *An Angel At My Table* Janet's desire is to be desired and admired by the man she is enamoured with (as if that desire will somehow make her visible); and in *The Portrait Of A Lady*, Isabel is cognizant of the traps of marriage, but lured by her desire into marrying the worst of all the men that court her. The foregoing demonstrates Campion's acceptance and valuing of human weakness, through her characters. She rejects that there is only one way to be a woman, in exposing the plurality of the human condition and an acceptance of diversity and multiple truths, roles and realities—as Campion has stated, she is interested in “multiple or fluid feminine identity”.⁶⁰⁸ She understands and reveals the subject as a process, and experience as gendered, and often unresolved or contradictory—just as she cannot always resolve her films, which often conclude ambiguously.

The ambiguity of her endings has been widely noted. For example, Klinger has described the ending of *The Piano* as ‘a reversal’: that by her choice of partner in *The Piano*, and her appearance, Ada “manages to maintain a fringe identity within society, avoiding the complete assimilation that often characterizes closure in more conventional cinematic fare”.⁶⁰⁹ McHugh has noted that *Sweetie* has two endings, the funeral and then a cut to Sweetie as a child singing ‘with every beat of my heart’: “[b]ecause this last sequence does not derive from the thoughts, dreams ... of any of the characters and does not

⁶⁰⁷ Director's commentary, DVD, *In The Cut*.

⁶⁰⁸ Campion quoted in Miro Bilbrough, ‘Different Complexions: Jane Campion, An Interview’ in Jonathon Dennis and Jan Biering (eds.) 2nd ed., *Film in Aotearoa New Zealand*, Victoria University Press, Wellington, 1992, p.102.

⁶⁰⁹ Klinger, 2006, p.4.

function in the plot ... it is clearly Campion who is showing us this moment from the past and implicitly challenging us to interpret [it]”.⁶¹⁰

While she is not always the author of the original text on which her films are based, Campion’s films take older works or genres, and refashion them for our times. It is this that differentiates her work from the original texts, and also one of the ways in which her work is postmodern. James’s novel *The Portrait Of A Lady* is full of lines that would be of interest to those interested in female experience: for instance, Madam Merle remarks to Isabel that “a woman, it seems to me, has no natural place anywhere; wherever she finds herself she has to remain on the surface and, more or less to crawl”.⁶¹¹ But as stated, Campion is interested in telling the stories with a modern sensibility, and thus she transforms this text through her reinvention.⁶¹² Another example is *In the Cut* which Campion has said (on the DVD of the film), is not new, but a modern or new way of telling the story. She does not simply appropriate the murder/mystery/thriller /romance from popular culture, but questions in her film what these genres are and can be. Although the story has the expected plot twist and use of flashbacks, *In the Cut* has none of the familiar tone, viewpoint, or archetypal representation of women, nor the thematic approach of the noir detective story. Instead, *In the Cut* takes a new approach by telling the story from a woman’s point of view; the film is imbued with female desire and a female perspective, and through this, the original is effectively undermined by being appropriated as a contemporary feminist text. Viewed in this way, Campion’s use of this genre effectively comments on the form (though it is obviously indebted to the source novel); puts women into the centre; and decentres the masculine hero through converting the form to a story from a woman’s perspective—in this way it is both postmodern and

⁶¹⁰ McHugh, 2001. I note that it could be argued, contrary to McHugh’s view, that it is the father’s memory, or the image he has created by describing Sweetie as a talented and luminous child protégé.

⁶¹¹ Henry James, *The Portrait Of A Lady*, Penguin Books, London, 2003 edition, p.248.

⁶¹² Robert Stam has argued that film adaptation demands that equal consideration be given to the literary source. However, space does not allow this to be taken further in this thesis. See Robert Stam, ‘Introduction: The Theory and Practice of Adaptation’ in Alessandra Raengo and Robert Stam (eds.), *Literature and Film: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Film Adaptation*, Blackwell Publishing, Malden, MA, 2005, pp.1-52.

feminist. Thus Campion could be understood as offering what Haywood⁶¹³ has described as an ‘oppositional postmodern aesthetic’, an aesthetic that is innovative in that it experiments with subverting the codes of the original through simulating it. *In the Cut* creates a pastiche of the genre, particularly in its intertextual references and bricolage of the original (creating unexpected associations through the old style gaining a new context); however, it is a new and different text, and a new social vision is offered, as discussed in chapter six of this thesis.

Chapter conclusion

Campion can be understood as a feminist author whose films offer a view of female experience, in the sense of what it is to be female in the world. She is centrally concerned with representing gender, and gender relations, and her own gender is inflected in her filmic articulations—which distinctly illustrate a view that gender is a significant factor in one’s experience of the world. This is undertaken through a female and feminist aesthetic, with a female ‘voice’, and via a ‘feminine style’. All of these work to offer another vision to that seen in conventional cinema—a revision of representation that is feminist in its explorations (for instance of ideology and power, in refusing to represent ‘woman’ as spectacle or stereotype, or to codify ‘woman’). Her films frequently represent the feminine as a disruptive force, foregrounding female desire, subjectivity and imaginary. They assert that identity is individual, a continuous process, and that humans are constantly constructed in relation to the social world, but always as contradictory figures endlessly in flux rather than as essential beings—they are complex and contradictory (and this is the way she represents ‘woman’). The films also express her understandings of female experience in relationship to her own biography, the wider culture, and the artefacts in it or institutions that structure it; and they are always constructed from her own historical referent. A work of this size cannot be conclusive about ‘women’s cinema’. What this research indicates is where there are commonalities in approach or vision that might be claimed to be more common in the work of women than of men; for example, apart from foregrounding women and their experience, there is

⁶¹³ Hayward, 2000, p. 277.

anecdotal evidence of women's films as being drawn commonly from autobiographical sources; of tending to focus on inner life; on detail and more circular and open-ended forms; as having a feminine style; and of being more likely to be categorized as art cinema, or as an oppositional form. These ideas are further illustrated in the next two chapters, which focus closely on two of Campion's films.

Chapter 5

‘Girlshine’ and *Holy Smoke!* (1999)



614

*Ruth Baron is full of a fascist and fundamental energy. It's elemental, beautiful, transforming, and it's only available for a short period of time. It's a kind of girlshine; as she learns more about life it will be shadowed. That is the nature of growing up. Holy Smoke! begins in joyous mystery before the shadowing.*⁶¹⁵

Jane Campion

My friend told me that her nineteen year old had confided, ‘Mum, I’m hot’. The expression ‘hot’ comes from the idea of being on heat, and denotes that she gives off, or is charged with heat in terms of her sexuality. It may also be a link to the ‘smoke’ in the film’s title. Colloquially, it refers to the arousing the interest of others, and is slang for sexual excitement, or strong sexual desire. This is a self-awareness of what Mulvey described as ‘to-be-looked-at-ness’. It flaunts the idea of woman as spectacle for male desire—however, it is inverted because it refutes the idea of the active male and passive female.⁶¹⁶ This described the realization of her desirability, that she was looked at and desired—particularly by men, and that she had become fully cognizant of her own ‘girlshine’, and the power it gave her. ‘Girlshine’ is a term derived from Campion’s

⁶¹⁴ Source of image: <http://www.cinemonkey.com/reviews/holmcampion/nouveau15.jpg>

⁶¹⁵ Campion in Kathleen Murphy, ‘Jane Campion’s Passage to India’, *Film Comment*, Vol. 36, No.1, Jan/Feb 2000, pp.30-35.
p.32.

comments (above), and coined in this thesis as a concept, rather than being an existing idea. This chapter argues that ‘girlshine’ is not just a central exploration, but the unique examination and contribution that *Holy Smoke!* offers in regard to female experience.⁶¹⁷ Therefore, *Holy Smoke!* is an example of how Campion articulates this particular kind female experience, and subjectivity, in her cinema.⁶¹⁸

This chapter also concretely illustrates numerous ideas set up in earlier parts of the thesis. Firstly, the concept of *jouissance*, discussed earlier, is elaborated in relation to *Holy Smoke!* It is argued that the film exemplifies feminine cinematic writing—or a “cinema of *jouissance*”.⁶¹⁹ In *Holy Smoke!*, Campion explores her preoccupation with how men and women interrelate, and how their interactions—filled with human foibles as they might be—have profound effects on how they are able to exist in the world. This chapter offers an insight into how Campion appears to believe that young women can disempower men. There is also further discussion as to how Campion can be understood from a postmodern-feminist perspective, particularly in relation to ideas of identity formation. This chapter also argues that Campion’s work can be understood as reflecting the historical specificity of the contemporary period. The discussion of *Holy Smoke!* illustrates the feminist vision, voice, and perspective of Campion’s cinema. In the final section, the ‘abject’ is discussed (which links to the idea of the female grotesque discussed in chapter four), and is explored as a subversive non-patriarchal feature within Campion’s work.

⁶¹⁶ For the idea of ‘to-be-looked-at-ness’—see Laura Mulvey, ‘Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema From *Screen* 16(3), 6-18 (175)’, in Joanne Hollows, Peter Hutchings, Mark Jancovich (eds.), *The Film Studies Reader*, Arnold, Oxford University Press, New York, 2000, p.243.

⁶¹⁷ There are of course other films that explore ‘girlshine’ in the sense that they feature central characters who are ‘hot’ and in this girlshine moment, for example *Suburban Mayhem* (director Paul Golman and writer Lucy Bell, 2006). In *Suburban Mayhem*, Katrina (Emily Barclay) says that men will do *anything* for a girl like her. However, although the character of Auntie Dianne (Genevieve Lemon) notes that one day she’ll get old and sag, implying that her ‘girlshine’ will pass, Katrina’s journey is unseen, we don’t explore the ‘shadowing’, nor is the film offering any cognisance of this idea—she is simply offered as morally bankrupt. Cognizant of this, Campion takes this vision of female experience further and explores the consequences and aftermath of the ‘girlshine’ experience through exploring the growth, or journey of her character Ruth.

⁶¹⁸ I am discussing the film *Holy Smoke!*, not Campion’s novel (Cheshire, 2000)—unless explicitly stated.

⁶¹⁹ As used by Claire Johnston quoted in Kuhn, 1994, p.168.

The film follows an Australian woman, Ruth, who has backpacked through India with her friend Prue. In New Delhi, she finds herself drawn to an ashram and decides not to return to Australia because she has found ‘truth’ and the meaning of life. Prue returns home to tell Ruth’s parents that a guru has indoctrinated her. The family fly into a panic and lure Ruth back to Australia to a waiting ‘cult-exiter’—the American P.J. (Harvey Keitel)—and the majority of the film centers on this latter event.

‘Girlshine’

‘Girlshine’ in this thesis refers to the age group 16—21 (or thereabouts). It denotes a time when young women experience a particular physical flowering, and have a sense of power without the caution that age and experience impose. It is a brief, transient, and liminal phase. Although women vary in their physical attributes, it is the proposition here that all women (of Campion’s particular Western, socio-economic and historical grouping⁶²⁰) go through this period/experience—whether cognizant of it or not—and as such, it is a commonality of female experience. In exploring ‘girlshine’, *Holy Smoke!* fragments the category ‘woman’ by underlining the importance of age to individual experience.

Campion also demonstrates through this film that ‘woman’ is constantly constructed in relation to experience. In particular, *Holy Smoke!* foregrounds female experiences of corporeality, and also enjoyment—or *jouissance*—a concept which is linked to sexual, spiritual, physical, or conceptual joy and ecstasy.⁶²¹ As will be outlined in this chapter, feminine *jouissance* in *Holy Smoke!* expresses female desire, and challenges patriarchy through a non-patriarchal perspective. It is however not Ruth’s emotional trajectory, but the reaction of the other characters that is significant in the film, especially (as Neroni has observed⁶²²) to her moments of *jouissance*.

⁶²⁰ While all young women would experience the flowering of youth, in non-Western cultures the experience may differ due to their different material conditions.

⁶²¹ This term is introduced earlier in this thesis. Theorists such as Irigaray stressed *jouissance* as multiple, ambiguous and fluid. See a discussion of this in Elizabeth Grosz, 1989, p. 115–116.

⁶²² Hilary Neroni, ‘Jane Campion’s *Jouissance*: Holy Smoke and Feminist Film Theory’, in McGowan, T., & Kunkle, S. (eds.), *Lacan and Contemporary Film*, Other Press, New York 2004, p.219.

In representing the ‘girlshine’ experience, Campion places female desire and subjectivity at the centre, but also looks at the effect of this desire on all those who come in contact with it/Ruth. There is also an ‘affect’—in the sense in which Kristeva used it—in relation to abjection, disgust and pleasure. Proper social order involves expelling that which is unclean, but Kristeva argued that it cannot be fully expelled, but rather, is always at the edges—threatening to disrupt.⁶²³ Ruth takes up a threatening position as a reminder that it is impossible to transcend corporeality, that our existence is always embodied; this is signified for example when she is caught by the men in her family at Emu farm, and she is then seen with the women vomiting into a bucket. She threatens the ordering of the world that advantages men—the patriarchal symbolic.

The ‘girlshine’ Campion creates through her character Ruth (Kate Winslet), is something that had been building from earlier films. For example, Janet Frame looks into a mirror at various times in *An Angel At My Table* to try and ‘see’ what I would argue is ‘girlshine’ in herself.⁶²⁴ Later in the film we see it as a vision of her, like a mermaid, when she swims naked in the Spanish sea.⁶²⁵ In *The Portrait Of A Lady*, Isabel Archer’s ‘girlshine’ is recognized by Madame Merle (Barbara Hershey), and used to trap her. These ‘girlshine’ women are to some degree innocents, living before the scepticism of life and experience has burned them. By ‘burned them’ I am referring to the fear that Campion states she acquired as she got older (quoted in the Sophie Lee section further on), and to the shift that comes with age in relation to how one might interact with the world. This shift is from the innocence of youth—there is no going back. The reason they are so luminous has to do with the clear path they see before them, and the impediments that they don’t.

⁶²³ For further see Tina Chanter & Ewa Plonowska Ziarek (eds.), *Revolt, Affect, Collectivity: The Unstable Boundaries of Kristeva’s Polis*, State University of New York Press & Suny Press, Albany, New York, 2005. Across Campion’s oeuvre she explores the effect the central characters have on others.

⁶²⁴ Early in the film Janet (Karen Fergusson) models herself on a school mate Shirley (Fiona Brown) who, gazing vaguely off into the distance is described by her teacher as ‘lost in the poetic world of her imagination’—and she play acts this role for herself in front of the mirror. Later in the film, after her professor describes her as having a real talent for writing, Janet (Kerry Fox) repeats this in the mirror to herself, imagining he is saying it and watching how she receives it.

⁶²⁵ It is interesting that Janet can only really feel her ‘girlshine’ when it is mediated through the gaze of her lover.

For a time they are ‘hot’, their luminousness attracting not just a male gaze, but the admiration of women who also recognize this transient phase—and transient power.

In the half-light, a black man’s hand strokes Ruth’s neck and she flicks him away like an insect, oblivious to the sensuousness she radiates. This is how Jane Campion introduces Ruth (Kate Winslet), the central character of *Holy Smoke!*, and how she emphasizes that Ruth is ‘hot’ from the first moment we see her. All the elements of the film’s production, work to underline that Ruth embodies pure sensual energy. For instance, on her way to, and arrival at Emu Farm, she sings and dances to Alanis Morissette’s *You Oughta Know*, and is completely blissful. Campion has said that the song “celebrates a young woman’s life force, her soul. It’s a mantra. One can be on an amazing journey, while others are oblivious even to the possibility”.⁶²⁶ Campion has explained that the song was proposed by Kate Winslet. The song itself has been described as a “pop anthem to feminine rage and power”.⁶²⁷ Although it connects with feminine power, this idea of rage doesn’t appear to be the sense in which it is used here. The chorus: “Cause the love that you gave that we made wasn't able - To make it enough for you to be open wide” strongly connects to the idea of human connection such as the one that Ruth and PJ make in *Holy Smoke!* However, it could be read as signalling the rage that is to come.

Anthropologist Piya Chatterjee has observed that it is not accidental that Campion mines a tradition (which she describes as Indian) “that from the beginning has seen spirituality and sexuality as completely entwined and has revered and, more significantly, feared the power of the female principle and female sexuality”.⁶²⁸ This idea of entwined sexuality, where a woman’s spirituality, art, body, and sexuality are entangled, can also be linked to Campion’s other films.⁶²⁹

⁶²⁶ Murphy, 2000, p.32.

⁶²⁷ Christopher E. Bush, ‘Smoke and Fire’, *Christian Century*, 1/3/00, p. 249.

⁶²⁸ Piya Chatterjee in McHugh, 2001.

⁶²⁹ For instance, the writer Janet Frame in *An Angel At My Table* or the singing Sweetie in *Sweetie*. This idea of creativity as central to the evolution of the self is also a prevalent theme in Australian cinema from the mid 1990s, particularly the successful ‘glitter cycle’ films such as *Strictly Ballroom* (Baz Luhrmann, 1992), *Muriel’s Wedding* (P.J. Holden, 1994), and *The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert* (Stephan Elliot, 1994).

Jouissance

What Campion seems to be saying about PJ is that he is seeking the unknowable, to *know* the woman, her *jouissance*. But feminine *jouissance*, which Kristeva offered as total and overwhelming ecstasy, eludes him. *Jouissance* cannot be mastered, shared, taken possession of, known, or fixed—it is in the realm of the poetic. Therefore it is arguable that *jouissance* can't be represented. However, it seems that if not representing *jouissance*, Campion is making an approach towards this. As Elizabeth Brofen has written, feminine *jouissance* brings “into play the primal enjoyment of pleasure and pain”,⁶³⁰ which is interesting in terms of the experience that Ruth and PJ have. ‘Woman’s’ *jouissance* is an enigma. Neroni has importantly noted that what

Campion has done is to allow the effects of *jouissance* to be uncovered and thus to expose the changing nature of contemporary feminist politics in a way that defies both past feminism and contemporary antifeminist ideas. Campion’s method is best understood in a new approach to feminist film theory, one based on an understanding of the radical potential of feminine *jouissance*, a feminist film theory that is political through investigation rather than prescription.⁶³¹

There are two points of interest in Neroni’s claims: firstly that there is a dialogue with feminism embodied in the idea that Campion defies ‘past feminism’—this is the postmodern interrogation of feminist ideas (postmodern-feminism). Secondly, in this articulation of female experience, Campion radically disrupts patriarchal social order.

Campion’s films do not work towards the character’s desire throughout the whole film (as many films do), instead, she stages Ruth’s *jouissance* for the audience up front. Campion is “less concerned with following the path of desire than with dwelling in a particular experience and the web of relationships that are connected to that experience. ... how it disrupts and reconfigures the surrounding social reality”.⁶³² This is in contrast to conventional narratives, which build to a resolution, that while appearing to be the ultimate satisfaction, does not have to explore the effectiveness, or ultimate

⁶³⁰ Elisabeth Brofen in Renata Saleci (ed.), *Sexuation*, Duke University Press, Durham, 2000, p.179.

⁶³¹ Neroni, 2004, p. 231.

⁶³² Neroni, 2004, p.217. Neroni notes that Campion herself has at times described her films as presenting an experience rather than a story.

strength/failure, of the conclusion. In conventional storytelling, the ‘happy ever after’ of the fairytale is never interrogated, so the ultimate satisfaction of the conclusion or the underlying ideology it masks, is left unquestioned. At the end of Campion’s films we are generally left with many questions about the future of the central protagonists, but a certain ‘happy ever after’ is rarely offered—although the characters hold out the promise of their own resourcefulness as a possibility for optimism.

Holy Smoke! begins in India with Ruth, the ecstatic central character. Baba the guru (Dhritiman Chatterjee) has shown her the light and she is bathing in it (Baba means father); as Kathleen Murphy has observed, “Ruth stands poised on the verge of experience, pure appetite and wonder”.⁶³³ What follows in the film is her family’s quest to ‘rescue’ (deprogram) her from what they believe is the undesirable influence of a cult. Ruth’s bliss is somehow a threat to her entire family. Hilary Neroni has written about this threat as a ‘trauma’⁶³⁴; Ruth’s fidelity to experiences of *jouissance*, which Neroni describes as “moments of complete symbolic uncertainty”⁶³⁵, are what profoundly disturbs her family. Neroni gives examples such as the way in which Ruth undermines her father’s (patriarchal) power, through confronting him with his adultery—when he pulls off her sari (a signifier of her new identity⁶³⁶), she in turn pulls off his toupee. In so doing, she reveals that our different social positions are constructed, and are therefore fragile—this is also about power, it reveals his lack of youth, and his pretensions. From this perspective, the family is threatened, and the social order is challenged. The importance of Neroni’s work in relation to this research is that she describes the way in which Campion’s films contain disruptive moments, or more specifically, filmic experiences that enact trauma; these traumas in the social order, such as perceptions of social reality, reveal and/or have an impact on ideology, and therefore mark its limits.⁶³⁷ It is this that

⁶³³ Murphy, 2000, p.32.

⁶³⁴ Neroni, 2004, p.225.

⁶³⁵ Neroni, 2004, p.219.

⁶³⁶ The sari works in many ways, for example, Yvonne notes that it makes her look quite ‘feminine’ for a change, as if Ruth has previously been guilty of transgressing the bounds of femininity. PJ says, ‘remove the props, upset her and provoke her—so I put the sari up the tree, no more Mr nice guy’.

⁶³⁷ Neroni uses Lacan’s idea of the *objet a*. Humans are defined by entering the register of the symbolic, but what is always left over is the cause of desire: *objet a*. For a further explanation of *objet a*, see

Neroni identifies as being at the heart of the feminism in Campion's cinema (which this thesis describes as a postmodern-feminism); it is political through competing with the symbolic power found in the world (for example revealing the limits of patriarchy).

Ruth encounters the guru in *Holy Smoke!* in a scene described earlier as an 'arresting image'. The guru's touch leaves her with a third eye and light streaming from her forehead. Neroni describes this as a moment of female eroticism, and the spectacle of Baba's touch as female *jouissance*. This offers another means of understanding what these 'arresting images' are about; she offers it as an 'experimental interruption' within the filmic form that marks and creates a

space for the eruptions of *jouissance* ... Campion's shooting, editing, and special effects clearly emphasize Ruth's surreal subjective experience of the guru rather than a desire to find a new religious belief. ... this moment of feminine *jouissance* indicates a point of disruption in the symbolic structure that informs Ruth's identity. ... she becomes completely indifferent to the world she has inhabited. ... [it is] a moment of symbolic identity unravelling or falling away.⁶³⁸

Thus, Ruth's *jouissance* takes precedence over the ideology of the family, or culture, or of the centrality of the male figure—she is unconcerned with the desire of others. This is one explanation as to why her family are unsettled; by seeking to eradicate her *jouissance*, they are seeking to bring her back into the proper social and symbolic role (and this is one way in which this film is a feminist text and challenges patriarchy). Campion makes it clear that Ruth is not indoctrinated by any cult when she stages her in front of her bedroom mirror. Ruth places her hands together in religious prayer, but this is a moment of narcissism—what Ruth is most interested in here, is in observing her own image as she does this. Moments later she has moved on, and she lights a cigarette, or perhaps a joint. Ruth's own remarks to PJ reflect that it is not a religious experience that she seeks, it is in relation to her selfhood—she admits that she had hoped Baba would 'help her grow'.

Bullock and Trombley, 2000, p. 466. Interestingly, Brennan notes that women's objet *a* (object of desire) is not men. See Teresa Brennan, *History After Lacan*, Routledge, London & New York, 1993, p.68.

⁶³⁸ Neroni, 2004, pp.220 -221.



639

There is a history of erotic religious images, for example, Lacan has argued the most striking example of the “‘holiness’ of transgressive ecstasy”⁶⁴⁰ is Bernini’s *The Ecstasy of St Teresa di Avila*, “an emblem of female eroticism” (above).⁶⁴¹ Teresa di Avila’s ecstatic encounter with an angel of god involved the plunging of a burning golden spear of divine love into her. Looking at it, Lacan claimed that you understand immediately that “she is coming, there is no doubt about it”.⁶⁴² In *Holy Smoke!* Ruth describes Baba’s touch as filling her with love—so ‘powerful and gentle’. While one could argue that di Avila is an image of male self-worship, and that patriarchal indoctrination has influenced Campion’s vision in *Holy Smoke!*—given that, in both instances, the trigger that activates ecstasy is a male figure, linked to god. However, given that Ruth’s *jouissance* is within herself and she experiences spiritual and physical joy—giving nothing back and ecstatically experiencing the moment—I am inclined to read this as an image of female *jouissance*.

⁶³⁹ Interestingly this image includes a burst of pink butterflies. In a discussion later in the film, PJ is saying that the mind is not like a brick, it is open to suggestion, so for example, saying that if he says don’t think about pink butterflies, then the temptation is to do just that. Therefore, this image could be read as a battle for the mind. It is also a strategy, like the axe in the Bluebeard pantomime (*The Piano*) foregrounding the chopped finger. Source of image: <http://www.celluloid-dreams.de/content/images/kritiken-filmbilder/holy-smoke/holy-smoke-4.jpg>

⁶⁴⁰ Lacan in Grosz, 1989, p.52.

⁶⁴¹ Irigaray said Lacan used the statue as an emblem of female eroticism in Lucy Irigaray, ‘La Mysterique: from Speculum of the Other Woman’ in Joy Morny, Kathleen O’Grady, Judith Poxon (eds.), *French Feminists on Religion: A Reader*, Routledge, London & New York, 2002, p.28.

⁶⁴² Lacan in Christina Mazzoni, *Saint Hysteria: Neurosis, Mysticism, And Gender In European Culture*, Cornell University Press, New York, 1996, p.46.

Spirituality is also something critics have particularly noted as a preoccupation of *Holy Smoke!* rather than of Campion's other films, but it is a reoccurring theme throughout her work—although it should be noted that it is a kind of everyday, rather than devout spirituality. For example, in *Sweetie*, her characters Kay and Louis dabble in meditation and the Karma Sutra, and it is the tealeaves that bring them together (Kay's cup has a man with a question mark on his head which Kay sees in Louis' curl). In *Holy Smoke!*, Ruth is searching for the spiritual and, her family, the Barrons, appear spiritually barren. This is something emphasized by their place within suburbia; Simpson has noted that only a few films in the 1970s and 80s in Australia depicted suburbia, and those that did, represented it as “a spiritual and cultural desert”,⁶⁴³ something Campion also does in this much later film. Others have noted the film as a commentary, writing that it “is about the contradictions and complications of spirituality, a timely commentary on the West's continual misappropriation of eastern mysticism”.⁶⁴⁴ While it could be argued that she misappropriates eastern mysticism herself, Campion's own comments provide insights into what she is interested in exploring here: “I'm not really fascinated by cults, but I am interested in the question of how you have a spiritual life in the '90s and in the connections of spirituality, eroticism, and love”.⁶⁴⁵ There are two noteworthy ideas in this quotation. Firstly in referring to the 1990s, Campion is focused on making a comment related to her own historical specificity (or her vantage point)—a view of spirituality in the West. Secondly, the film represents the journey from ‘girlshine’ to maturity in the coming together of the spirit, body and mind as integral to a person: not in the sense that they form a unified whole, but in the sense that the individual is a complex amalgam.

⁶⁴³ Catherine Simpson, ‘Suburban Subversions: Women's Negotiation of Suburban Space in Australian Cinema’, *Metro*, No.118, p. 24.

⁶⁴⁴ Kate Pullinger, ‘Women Directors: Soul Survivor’, *Sight and Sound*, Vol. 9, Issue 10, October 1999, p.10.

⁶⁴⁵ Taubin, 1999, p.138.

Human communication: men and women in the world

Campion has been quoted as saying that she feels for men who desire women but for whom this desire is not reciprocated. She says that men “feel completely disempowered in relationship to it [their desire]”.⁶⁴⁶ While Campion’s characterization highlights PJ as self-deluded, chauvinistic and sexually vain, and some critics (such as Phillip Adams⁶⁴⁷) see this film as man hating, it is the argument of this thesis that while men are at times humiliated, she is not trying to demean men. Given the view Campion expresses in her films of the fractured and contingent nature of identity, it is unlikely that she would view ‘men’ as a single group, any more than she would women. While always interested in relationships between men and women, Campion has turned her attention to a more detailed observation of men from *The Piano*, an interest she carried through into her subsequent films, *Holy Smoke!* and *In the Cut*.⁶⁴⁸ In more recent times Campion has acknowledged that she is “interested in what humans are able to communicate together, or how they can be together”.⁶⁴⁹ Of her move to deal intimately with men in *The Piano*, Campion has said that it was

a study of men and women. I hadn’t experienced a close co-operation with male actors before, and it’s been a great experience for me ... It’s a film about relationships. And I was burning to know what happens when a woman is directing in such situations, in a women’s film.⁶⁵⁰

Polan has observed an approach by Campion to the treatment of men: “As films of the 1990s, ... Campion’s last three films are very much of a cultural moment hovering between feminism and post-feminism and caught up in many cases in an effort to redeem men or at least to find mitigating circumstances for their inadequacies”.⁶⁵¹

⁶⁴⁶ Campion quoted in Lynden Barber, ‘Holy spirits’, *Financial Review*, 24/12/99, p.6.

⁶⁴⁷ Phillip Adams, ‘Holey smoking reputation’, *Weekend Australian ‘Review’*, 5/2/00, p. 32.

⁶⁴⁸ *Holy Smoke!* was apparently initially intended as a male-centred story and had the working title *PJ Walters* in 1996. Cheshire, 2000, p. 77. The novel has alternate chapters, first from Ruth’s view and then PJ’s.

⁶⁴⁹ Campion in Goodridge, 2002, p.85.

⁶⁵⁰ Campion interviewed in Marli Feldvoss, ‘Jane Campion: Making Friends by Directing Films’, in Wright Wexman, 1999, p. 98.

⁶⁵¹ Polan, 2001, p. 41.

In contrast to Polan's view of relations between the sexes described above, Phillip Adams wrote that he could not think of the 'versa' of misogyny but, if there were such a word, it would be called for in regard to Campion's "apparent detestation of blokes".⁶⁵² In the scene where Ruth urinates, standing like a man, Adams sees this as providing "powerful symbolism of Campion's hostility to the penis-wielding gender".⁶⁵³ Critic Stanley Kauffman also implied this when he wrote that when PJ wears



"the lipstick and red dress that she has put on him—

in ridicule of his sexuality" [he does this because he has accepted that] "he is her slave". ... "After several more twists, she pities the reduced and now-impotent man".⁶⁵⁴ According to Stuart Klawans, PJ falls "abjectly for a woman who was supposed to have been his conquest".⁶⁵⁵ These accounts reflect the fury and disgust of some critics, and most likely some viewers. This scene is singled out because of disgust—a reflection of the cultural horror of the materiality of the female body. Kristeva describes the loathing, disgust and aversion the subject feels in relation to specific matter as "an extremely strong feeling which is at once somatic and symbolic, and which is above all a revolt".⁶⁵⁶ However, these critics are distracted by the abject and they do not take into account the bond that develops between Ruth and PJ. For example, Ruth sits in the back of the ute cradling PJ towards the end of the film, and in the final scene they write to each other about their connection, and the profound effect they have had on each other.

⁶⁵² Adams, 2000, p. 32. The word Adams is looking for is misandry.

⁶⁵³ Adams, 2000, p.32.

⁶⁵⁴ Kauffmann, 2000, p.26.

⁶⁵⁵ Stuart Klawans, 'Rescuer Down Under: Holy Moke - The Edge of the World', *The Nation*, 31/1/00, p.35.

⁶⁵⁶ Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans Leon D. Roudiez, Columbia university Press, New York, 1982, p.135.

In the beginning, Ruth is intent on humiliating PJ; she is constantly cruel, or attempting to unnerve his certainty in his masculinity ('you don't think I was faking it do you?'). She foregrounds his age by saying to him that she couldn't listen to someone like him because he dyes his hair. Just before she urinates standing up, there is an exchange where a victory smile crosses Ruth's face, she sees that her desirability (her 'girlshine') has weakened him. This is partly because from the beginning, she recognises that he has the power, and is her adversary. In a frightening scene where the men in Ruth's family surround or attempt to corral her like an animal, she walks straight for PJ, knowing instinctively where the power is (she also wants her mother). But their journey unpacks all this, showing how complex power relations are.

David Stratton wrote that once PJ has sex with Ruth, "this proves to be his undoing ... [she] demolishes the vanity of her tormentor and, in the process, negates his power".⁶⁵⁷ This negation of power may be a crucial objection to the film for those wanting the myth of the male seducer to be maintained (perhaps Adams, Kauffmann and Klawans). The male subject has been primarily constructed within conventional representation as *the* subject, and therefore representation has historically focused on a masculinist conception of the female, how she might differ from him (from *his* view—containing the 'woman' through *his* imagination). PJ loses his symbolic identity, the power of that identity is dissipated, and the social order threatened. His loss of power is both as a man (in the sense he has understood his masculinity until this point), and an exit therapist (the surrogate god). This demonstrates a way in which Campion's cinema deconstructs the dominant paradigms. Much conventional cinema represents women as "a mystery for him [the man] to master and decipher within safe or unthreatening borders"⁶⁵⁸, but Campion's films do not represent or allow this journey because Campion creates a threatening representation, because it is without masculinist privilege. She does this in the sense that it does not favour the male symbolic and devalue the female symbolic—as theorists such as Kristeva have argued that society and culture traditionally has. Possibly

⁶⁵⁷ David Stratton, 'No Place like om', *Financial Review*, 24/12/99, p. 14.

⁶⁵⁸ Elizabeth Grosz, *Volatile Bodies: Towards a Corporeal Feminism*, Allen & Unwin, St Leonards, NSW, 1994, p.191.

it is this that unsettles, threatens, or enrages some (particularly male⁶⁵⁹) critics. Through the character of Ruth, the act of urinating signifies Campion's resistance to social and cultural conformity or homogeneity. Thus Campion breaks the taboo in our culture for representing such fluids—confronting the horror of fluids⁶⁶⁰—and reminds us that the idea of a sealed and 'proper' body is impossibility. PJ tries to cleanse Ruth's mind with the implication that her body will fall into line, but his failure to do so challenges the concept of the supremacy of the mind over the body. This spectacle of female will is something that Campion's central protagonists all share, and provides a particular point of identification for female audiences.⁶⁶¹

There are other (female) critics who have an alternative view to Adams, Klawans and Kauffman. Ruth Hessey has observed that Campion's investigation offers us a position demonstrating that "humiliation, though painful, can lead to enlightenment⁶⁶²". For example, PJ's wearing of a dress signifies his humiliation; it links him to Baba (the guru) given that early in the film PJ has dismissed Baba because he wears a dress. Hessey also says that "Ruth subjects P.J. to a humiliation so total it represents what every man probably fears when he lets a woman get on top".⁶⁶³ However, Campion says that "[h]umiliation is an important part of the process"... "Humiliation of the ego can be a very positive thing".⁶⁶⁴

⁶⁵⁹ This thesis is not arguing that *all* male critics react negatively to *Holy Smoke!* or Campion's work more broadly. David Stratton clearly warms to her films, as does Polan, but many of the most indignant reviews are by male critics and this is raised here to offer some discussion of the meaning these men are taking, or not taking, from the films. It is possible that these threatening representations would equally enrage female critics whose worldview is patriarchal. However, this research has not found evidence that female critics have responded in this way.

⁶⁶⁰ Using the arguments of Irigaray, Elizabeth Grosz (1994) locates the horror of the fluids as being because they are culturally unrepresentable, within prevailing philosophical ontological models. Because of the implicit association of fluids with femininity, maternity, and corporeality, all of which have been subordinated to the masculine, Campion can be understood as inserting the feminine here through her use of fluids. See Elizabeth Grosz, 1994, p.195.

⁶⁶¹ Many writers have observed this, Klinger for example has referred to extreme versions of 'female will'. Klinger, 2006., p.34; or Peter Keough, 'Piano Lessons: Jane Campion Exposes herself' Boston Phoenix, Jan/Feb, 1999 at: http://bostonphoenix.com/archive/movies/99/01/28/JANE_CAMPION_A_COMPLETE_RE.htm

⁶⁶² Hessey, 2000, 'Lord...'.

⁶⁶³ Hessey, 2000, 'Lord...'.

⁶⁶⁴ Ruth Hessey, 'Where there's Smoke ...', *Independent Filmmakers (IF)*, Dec.'99-Jan '00, p.34.

Campion is quoted as saying that she had Harvey Keitel in mind from the beginning for the role of PJ. She has said “Harvey has a lot of cred. Other men don’t laugh at him because he’s such a masculine guy⁶⁶⁵”—but she “never thought he’d agree ... [to be in the film because she] thought it would be too emasculating”.⁶⁶⁶ This treatment of masculinity is an example of the way in which Campion blurs boundaries between the masculine and feminine, which in *Holy Smoke!* in particular, are represented as entwined and contingent.⁶⁶⁷ This is a particular feature of Campion’s authorial inscription and is in contrast to conventional Hollywood, which has largely been structured—according to theorists such as Judith Mayne⁶⁶⁸—around the oppositions between men and women. Ruth’s sexuality is also contingent; she is not necessarily heterosexual, as illustrated in the scene in the outback bar when she kisses a woman on the dance floor. While she is kissing or holding the woman, there is a strong sense that both of them are experiencing their bliss individually: although Ruth is acting out her bliss to torment PJ, she also becomes lost in it. This works to emphasize a duality, making visible that she is both an object of desire, and an agent of cruelty. In considering ideas of contingent sexuality, Moi offers a way of understanding what is at work in refusing to fix the image of ‘woman’ and what she might mean. Moi writes that the

deconstructive move is not to abolish oppositions, or to deny that such signifiers exist, but rather to trace the way in which each signifier contaminates and subverts the others. Such an approach *opens* the sign up, insists that it’s meaning is always deferred, never fully present...⁶⁶⁹

In her review of *Holy Smoke!* Stella Bruzzi observed “it is essentially a film about the tenuousness of most people’s sense of self—our decentredness, our malleability, our

⁶⁶⁵ Hessey, 2000, ‘Smoke’.

⁶⁶⁶ Amy Taubin, ‘Fear and Desires: Jane and Anna Campion make a Religious-cult Classic’, *Village Voice*, November 30, 1999, p.138.

⁶⁶⁷ This is a postmodern-feminist attribute—as discussed in chapter two, postmodern-feminism rejects binaries, universals, essentialism and also, gender as a stable category.

⁶⁶⁸ Mayne, 1990, p.21.

⁶⁶⁹ Moi, 1999, pp.354–355.

vulnerability in the face of our own desires and the manipulative skills of others”.⁶⁷⁰

Campion explores this development of a sense of self, and the unequal power in human relationships, and is quoted as saying that what she was interested in developing, and what interests her, is that Ruth and PJ

fundamentally alter each other. ... even married couples, might never have such an intimate or naked experience as these two share. I admire them for the courage to stay in dialogue with each other however confronting and raw and even cruel it got. In this way, PJ shows his love. It is also why she cannot forget him. He is the first man to really love her, to risk his life for her. In fact to frighten her with her own erotic power.⁶⁷¹

Ruth is altered in that she becomes more compassionate, comes to understand her power, and makes contact with her own core values such as the importance of kindness. While Ruth finds this experience frightening, Campion is not portraying this trauma as a negative, but rather as part of the process of understanding. PJ emerges from the experience able to see himself with greater clarity, and this makes him able to negotiate the future.

Holy Smoke! has a postmodern texture particularly in regard to identity, which is never one thing or the other, but in flux or in between. In this it is another example of the postmodern-feminism of Campion's films: identity is both shifting and a social/cultural production. Stella Bruzzi's observations elude this quality: she has written that

Certainty and identity are learned, not innate. In delivering this idea, *Holy Smoke!* is ... brimming with visual trickery, sudden changes of direction, unpredictable characters. It is ultimately about reconciling imagination with reality. Just as the film marries fantasy and realism, so the characters, having undergone their own tortured and extreme awakenings, become reconciled to compromise. Across continents Ruth and P.J. become virtual lovers, a state of being, the film suggests, we're all in. *Holy Smoke!* can be read as a text of reconciliation: between realism and surrealism, earnestness and irreverence, oneself and the world.⁶⁷²

⁶⁷⁰ Stella Bruzzi, 2000, *Holy Smoke!* p.48.

⁶⁷¹ Press Kit for *Holy Smoke!*

⁶⁷² Stella Bruzzi, 2000, *Holy Smoke!* p.48.

All of Campion's heroines are involved in this journey of 'reconciling imagination with reality', and they learn that certainty is illusive.

Campion's casting appears to have been undertaken with a particular attention to how actors' bodies, or images, work intertextually, and therefore bring meanings into the text. Harvey Keitel for example has been observed to have a "mimetic vulnerability".⁶⁷³ In a discussion on *The Piano*, Laleen Jayamanne notes that Campion has referred to the final scene of *Thelma and Louise* (Ridley Scott, 1991) in relation to this film. In *Thelma and Louise*, Keitel has become unprofessionally emotional in his taking on the burden of the women's lot, and runs after their car as it heads towards the Grand Canyon. Jayamanne argues that Campion taps Keitel's mimetic vulnerability in *The Piano*.⁶⁷⁴ Using this line of thinking, it could be argued that Keitel's fluidity in his many roles works as a signifier in Campion's films, not just in his role of Baines in *The Piano*, but in other roles, such as PJ in *Holy Smoke!* Keitel's screen personas are particularly interesting in regard to a number of traits that work mimetically in *Holy Smoke!*, and in relation to how audiences might draw on the cinematic 'archive', for "memory traces of certain previous roles".⁶⁷⁵ These include the 'troubled masculinity' of both *Deathwatch* (Bertrand Tavernier, 1980) and *The Two Jakes* (Jack Nicholson, 1990); the 'troubled authority figure' in *Thelma and Louise*; his 'capacity for abjection' in *The Bad Lieutenant* (Abel Ferrara, 1992); his 'sexual and other perversity' in both *Taxi Driver* (Martin Scorsese, 1976) and *The Last Temptation of Christ* (Scorsese, 1988).⁶⁷⁶ Of course Winslet also has a mimetic quality in that her body is a text created by the many roles she has played—in particular, she has frequently played an

⁶⁷³ Jayamanne, 2001, p.43. This idea of mimesis is a central idea in Jayammane's book. It is idea from Walter Benjamin who wrote an essay 'On The Mimetic Faculty' (1978) and also influenced Adorno—both of whom she uses to discuss this to see acts of 'mimetic transformation'. In mimesis the aura of some original thing is mimicked (e.g. behaving like something else), referenced, or a similarity perceived and created by an 'exact fantasy', or the inner logic of objects/things are transformed into images. She discusses mimetic behaviour in *The Piano* in the form of mimicry (e.g. the Maori men mimic Stewart, Stewart mimics the love scene he observed), and she sees these as performances that are attempts to master 'that which is other or different' (p.40). Aristotle is also a key reference point for discussions of mimesis, see: Amélie Oksenberg Rorty (ed.), *Essays on Aristotle's Poetics*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, N.J., 1992 (especially p.51-58 & 73-96).

⁶⁷⁴ Jayamanne, 2001, p.43.

⁶⁷⁵ Jayamanne, 2001, p.44.

⁶⁷⁶ For a discussion of Keitel see: Jayamanne, 2001, p.44.

independent, free minded character⁶⁷⁷; other characters such as Sophie Lee are also mimetically important in *Holy Smoke!*⁶⁷⁸

The press kit for *Holy Smoke!* claims that “the Campion sisters were intent on dragging the – in many ways – unreconstructed seventies man, into the nineties⁶⁷⁹”—an idea that illustrates that PJ is stuck in a former time, perhaps a time when his identity solidified for him; but until his encounter with Ruth, he hasn’t changed since that point. The audience get a perspective on the way in which older people might look back and recognize youth, the way in which identities are often formed at particular key moments in time, and how to some degree, we continue to carry those identities with us long after the physical characteristics that formed them have passed (Ruth’s father’s toupee is an example of this). But more interestingly, and very importantly in terms of Campion’s vision, the film offers a profound insight into the foibles and failings of humans, and what they might become through their interactions and experience of/with each other. This is illustrated through Campion’s claim that the film demonstrates Ruth’s awareness of how she is seen and objectified (her ‘girlshine’):

Ruth has a kind of battle cry ... She acts toward P.J. out of the full force of knowing what it is to be sexually objectified: to only be seen in terms of one’s beauty – which is not to be seen at all. This is why she dresses him up in the red dress, so that when he looks at himself he is seeing a woman of his own age, someone sexually undesirable. She wants to appal him with his own double standards.⁶⁸⁰

While he is a man in drag, rather than ‘a woman’, his remark that he “was young once and handsome too”, and that she would have been ‘impressed’, indicates that he is making

⁶⁷⁷ For example from *Titanic* (James Cameron, 1997) through to *Hideous Kinky* (Gillies MacKinnon, 1998). Abrams et al (2001) have observed a number of factors that could have resulted in her lack of Hollywood prominence since *Titanic*—among them are that she plays strong willed characters and this perhaps makes her threatening to some, and less favoured for casting in Hollywood films. See Nathan Abrams, Ian Bell, Jan Urdis (eds.), *Studying Film*, Oxford University Press, London & New York, p.202. In addition, it is worth noting that Winslet also starred in a significant film from New Zealand, and thus she also references that role as Juliet—in Peter Jackson’s *Heavenly Creatures* (1994).

⁶⁷⁸ Lee is discussed further on in this chapter. She provides a link to Australian cinema and also is mimetically important for the dialogue her character sets up in relation to femininity—she mimics an ideal, adorned feminine, she emulates ideal romance through writing letters to herself, and thus reveals the ideological traps of subscribing to notions of the feminine.

⁶⁷⁹ *Holy Smoke!* press kit, p.5.

⁶⁸⁰ Campion in *Holy Smoke!* press kit, p.6.

the connection Campion describes, and that she forces him to face the fact that his own beauty has passed (perhaps that the testosterone driven days of his own ‘boyshine’ are long gone—he admits, ‘I’m a dirty old man’).

PJ’s defence has been seen by critics such as Kate Pullinger, as a mediation or attack on the ludicrous Hollywood convention of pairing old men with young women, writing that “Ruth doesn’t go for PJ because he is powerful and authoritative and fatherly; she goes for him because she has spotted his Achilles heel—he is unable to control his libido. The moment Ruth sees this, he is lost”.⁶⁸¹ While this describes what occurs, it also fails to notice that he enlightens her in regard to her own state, which she comes to see and understand through her interaction with him.

Campion has claimed of *Holy Smoke!* that “Ruth exposes everything that is thought and never said by young women about older men⁶⁸²” and claimed that “[y]oung women love the film. ... They feel spoken for”.⁶⁸³ While she doesn’t specify why this is, what is clear is that the film breaks the male, heterosexual fantasy⁶⁸⁴ that young women desire older men, and this debunking could be a further reason for the rage of some older male critics. Campion breaks down the hierarchy of the man on top, particularly through Ruth’s guidance of PJ in lovemaking, and refutes the myth of the man as sexual educator for women. Thus, one could argue that she takes a certain masculine ideal and demolishes it (although she also constructs something else from it). “Mr Testosterone⁶⁸⁵” in his gun-fighter outfit and snakeskin boots, looking “almost a parody of the Hollywood western villain, or the ‘70s lounge lizard⁶⁸⁶” doesn’t ride into town, reluctantly help the locals, and then, as hero, ride off into the sunset. In a revisioning of the hero myth, PJ emerges in humiliation rather than as a ‘hero’ in the saving the day sense, but he has undergone a

⁶⁸¹ Pullinger, 1999, p.10.

⁶⁸² Campion in Hessey, 2000, ‘Smoke’.

⁶⁸³ Campion in Hessey, 2000, ‘Lord ...’.

⁶⁸⁴ There are an abundance of examples of roles of older men with young women and this indicates that either the producers of conventional cinema think this is a prevalent fantasy—or that it may be one.

⁶⁸⁵ Stanley Kauffmann, 2000, p.26.

⁶⁸⁶ Bush, 2000, p. 249.

journey that Campion offers as a new way of understanding heroism—and relations between men and women.

Having succeeded in appalling PJ, and indeed reducing him, he lies prostate in the desert, hallucinating, and has a hazy vision of Ruth as a six-armed goddess. This is more than his view of her, or any decorative reference to the many six armed goddesses in the Hindu religion; it is a signifier of her luminous and magnificent ‘girlshine’. This is evident if one considers what these goddesses themselves signify. While there isn’t any research indicating whether Campion was referencing any particular deity, the goddess that comes to mind is Rati, the Hindu/Balinese “goddess of desire”⁶⁸⁷ (also known as Mayavati or Reva). Rati rules sexual desire, lust, love, and sexual passions but also regeneration, revenge, fear, dark magic; and she is a protector of women. The myth tells that after a battle, “the gods, led by Kama-deva’s wife, Rati implored Tripura-Sundari to restore the god of love, whom Siva had destroyed. She does so, and desire is restored to the world”⁶⁸⁸:

What have you done?" cried Rati ... Without desire, the bull will forsake the cow, the horse, the mare and the bees, the flowers. There will be no homes, no families, for men and women will not love each other. Society will collapse and life will be devoid of its very essence. Desire may be the cause of suffering; but it is also the reason behind joy. What is life without it? An existence without flavour. So there is suffering. What is so terrible about that? After suffering, joy is bound to return.⁶⁸⁹

The vision of Ruth as a goddess links to the idea of ‘girlshine’, emphasising that there is a natural order of things, that desire and sexual passion are necessary for this natural order. This goddess is about the idea of painful humiliation leading to joy and enlightenment. Gods and goddesses have shadow aspects (in the Jungian sense); like archetypes, they have multiple shades, both positive and negative. The reference

⁶⁸⁷ John Davies & John Dowson, *Classical Dictionary of Hindu Mythology and Religion, Geography, History and Literature*, Kessinger Publishing, London, 2003, p.146.

⁶⁸⁸ David R Kinsley, *Tantric Visions of the Divine Feminine: Ten Mahavidyas*, University of California Press, 1997, pp.116–117.

⁶⁸⁹ No author given, ‘Parvati, the Mother Goddess’, at: www.crystallotus.com/shiva/07.htm Accessed 25/10/06.

underlines the complexity, or duality of identity, and the epic journey of coming to know one's self and others.

When PJ is at his lowest ebb, he writes 'BE KIND' on Ruth's head and leads to her being cognizant of her own cruelty: 'I tortured you, it is all defilement'—something Kathleen Murphy harshly describes as the "savage solipsism of her youth".⁶⁹⁰ Ruth's greatest fear is that she is heartless and cannot get close to anyone; her insight into her own cruelty brings this to the surface, and is what makes her run, with books tied to her feet, with PJ chasing her through the desert: frenzied, obsessed and desperate not to lose her. The fact that she has books tied to her feet is fascinating. Books signify knowledge, they might signify Western masculine knowledge, and her standing on them imply her stomping on a patriarchal history of thought. She also uses a pile of books under each foot, making her taller. It emphasizes her ability to adapt, to make something of whatever she has. A book allows us to learn from the experiences of others and therefore it could symbolise that Ruth and PJ have learnt from each other.

Campion's examination of the escalating forces of obsession and desire in this film echoes her earlier exploration in *The Piano*: Ada (Holly Hunter) is also shown as cruel, when at a pageant, her facial expression is of victory when Baines (also played by Harvey Keitel), suddenly leaves, unable to bear her holding hands with Stewart. Ada is Baines' object of desire, and he is rendered powerless by his desire for her, his desire for her desire; he says: 'Ada, I am unhappy because I want you, because my mind has seized on you and thinks of nothing else. This is how I suffer. I am sick with longing'. While Ada's girlshine is long gone, both films are trying to understand the way that women disempower men, not just female desire (which has been a dominant focus of critical writing about *The Piano* and Campion's work more broadly). Both films also explore how the characters effect others, but in particular the women's effect on men. Just like Ruth, Ada is not focused on social expectations; she experiences *jouissance* through her piano, and this is what unravels Stewart and mesmerizes Baines.

⁶⁹⁰ Murphy, 2000, p.32.

‘Girlshine’ and Sophie Lee

Campion herself has described Ruth as “fearless in a fabulously young way” ... “I was like that between 17 and 21. I felt invincible. And then I had my first experience of pain and of not being totally in control and now I live with fear”.⁶⁹¹ This could be interpreted as an autobiographical connection between what the film portrays and what Campion might be trying to understand through it, and therefore, how the film might be a cathartic journey for Campion. Campion clearly wants to explore this idea of the ‘fearless’ woman, as evidenced not just in this film but through characters in other films, such as Ada who fears her own powerful will in *The Piano*⁶⁹², or the character of Frannie. Frannie is brave in the face of potential and actual violence—although in *Holy Smoke!* it is a fearlessness connected to youth, and *In the Cut* explores a mature character and therefore a different kind of ‘fearlessness’. Campion’s comment that she now lives with fear is intriguing (or revealing), and suggests that in maturity she can look back at a time where she felt she did have control and was fearless. While this is a function of looking back generally, it establishes her directorial viewpoint or intent, and Campion takes this up through the character of Yvonne (Sophie Lee). Yvonne functions to offer the subjectivity of the post ‘girlshine’ woman. Yvonne presents as someone cognizant of ‘girlshine’ but not having come to terms with the fact that, for her, it has passed. What Yvonne does seem to sense is fear, and this is another significant way in which Campion explores female experience through the idea of ‘girlshine’ in *Holy Smoke!*

⁶⁹¹ Taubin, 1999. Campion appears to have an interest in exploring fear. She has said that one of the things she was interested in exploring in *In The Cut* was ‘fear itself’, and this was something that attracted her to the noir genre; Campion in ‘The Conversation Hour’, in Hopgood, p.32.

⁶⁹² In *The Piano*, Ada states that she is frightened of her will, and Stewart tells Baines that he has heard Ada in his head, he points between his eyes and says he is afraid of her will. However, this will enables her to resist her victimization, but interestingly, once she is in a happy relationship, she is able to give up those things her will insists on (such as her piano, her muteness) in favour of a choice for life and love: ‘My will has chosen life!’. Gayle Ortiz (eds.), *Explorations of Theology in Film*, Blackwell, Oxford & Massachusetts, 1997, pp.56-57.

The casting of Sophie Lee in this role is important because it creates an intertextual link, or dialogue, with the typecast roles Lee has played in a number of very successful Australian films. Lee plays the same character ‘type’ in *Holy Smoke!* as she does in several Australian films that were released in the period in which *Holy Smoke!* was in development and pre-production: *Muriel’s Wedding* (P.J Hogan, 1994), *The Castle* (Rob Sitch, 1997) and the short film *Titsiana Booberini* (Robert Luketic, 1997). Lee’s character Tracy in *The Castle* is an affectionate portrayal, but in *Muriel’s Wedding* and *Titsiana Booberini*, Lee clearly plays characters who are foils: this comic ‘type’⁶⁹³ is set up for ridicule. This is in marked contrast with Campion’s representation in *Holy Smoke!* which is filled with empathy for Yvonne’s plight. Campion recognizes how Yvonne’s hopes for romance trap and disappoint her.

Yvonne retreats to her romantic/erotic imagination while copulating with her husband—she opens her bedside table drawer to see the objects of her fantasy—Tom Cruise and the like. Other Australian women filmmakers have reflected on women such as these, characters who have very ordinary aims in life such as for a family, or romance. These films offer an understanding and even affectionate portraits of women who are like this, for example the character of Vicki-Ann in Shirley Barrett’s *Love Serenade* (1996). Vicki-Ann is a hairdresser who hunts for a husband—her longing for marriage emphasised by the scenes where she inspects the contents of her glory box.⁶⁹⁴ Barrett observes her with compassion, and does not satirize her or show her with malice—nor to belittle her for not having any feminist insights or ambitions. Similarly, Campion’s representation of Yvonne, while comic to some degree—largely because she is part of the Barron family, who act as a kind of Greek chorus in the film⁶⁹⁵, and because she signifies a particular

⁶⁹³ I am referring to a particular comic type that Lee has played in Australian films—the self-obsessed, vain, highly sexual type exemplified by her role as Tania Degano in *Muriel’s Wedding* (P.J. Hogan, 1994). When not getting her way Tania says, “but I’m beautiful!”

⁶⁹⁴ See Lisa French, ‘Love Serenade: Is it a Feminist Film?’, *Metro*, No.112, 1997, pp. 78-82.

⁶⁹⁵ Campion has described them as a Greek chorus in Hessey, 2000, ‘Lord...’. They offer an ironic voice. The Greek chorus of a classical play had the function of commentary, usually by a group on what was going on in the play. Thus the fact that Campion uses this description could be that she has used them as a way of structuring the film. Choral interludes broke up the dramatic scenes of classical Greek plays. In *Holy Smoke!*, these scenes are ‘the briefing’ (of the family), the capturing of Ruth at

comic type (already described)—depicts her with empathy, understanding her pain and fear. This situates this characterization in the film as coming from a postfeminist perspective, and as reflective of a contemporary feminist view. That is, the feminism is located in the here and now—post first and second wave feminism, and as able to allow that women have a range of aspirations that include subscription to a patriarchal world-view. So while Yvonne does not have a feminist bone in her body, Campion's treatment of her is postfeminist.

Yvonne comes to the halfway hut to bring clothes for Ruth. She meets PJ at the gate and tells a story of how Robbie thinks she is having an affair because he has found love letters addressed to her. Yvonne confesses that she wrote them herself, that they are romantic and beautiful. This is a poignant moment where Campion exposes Yvonne's pain, disappointment and neediness. PJ, and then Yvonne, laugh—illustrating that PJ is uninterested in, and unable to respond to Yvonne's call for help—a plea she makes more than once in the film, and which is left unanswered. Yvonne has oral sex with PJ, and later, in an echo of this scene, Ruth accuses PJ of being interested in particular kinds of 'Barbie Doll' women and of having a hatred of women. He says that he doesn't hate 'ladies', causing Ruth to scoff at his use of 'ladies' (gender) instead of women (sex). This scene reveals his constructions of gender, and how they filter how he is able to see and interact with women. Following this exchange, PJ accuses Ruth of extracting the 'ultimate revenge'—against men—by taking her beauty off to the Ashram (as if her beauty rightfully belongs to men).

'The abject'

Just as gods and goddesses have a shadow aspect, or a duality, 'girlshine' also has an inverse. Ruth has an 'abject' side—as signified in her vomiting, or her urinating—and while this representation might appear to be at odds with the concept of 'girlshine', it is essentially a reminder that iconic beauty is only surface, and that we are all human. The urinating could also be read as beautiful, or natural, a reading that would support the idea

Emu farm, watching the cult film at the farm, Day 3 at the pub, and the rescue. The family help to

of duality given it could take up two opposite positions depending on who was looking. Campion's own explanation has been to say that:

I like to be reminded that we're animals ... Children wet their beds when they can't cope with trauma. It's a fantastic expression of distress. It's a crazy thing we have to do as human beings – to civilize ourselves and at the same time to accept our animal aspects. It's one of the places where people often muck up.⁶⁹⁶

Kaja Silverman has noted that there are 'nodal points' in any director's work— "the sound, image, scene, place, or action to which ... [the author's work] repeatedly returns⁶⁹⁷"—such as the dancing in Sally Potter and Yvonne Rainer's films. Silverman has claimed that a 'nodal point' is often a sound, image or scene that is "marked by some kind of formal 'excess', indicating a psychic condition such as rapture ..., fixation ..., [or] intoxication".⁶⁹⁸ The 'abject' is a nodal point: for example, urination is a repeated motif across many of Campion's films, and as such is an authorial marker.

In *Holy Smoke!* and other Campion films, her central protagonists explore the notion of the 'abject'; *The Piano* for example is described by Polan as a visceral film of "puke, of blood, of dog's saliva, of mud and muck".⁶⁹⁹ Campion's films refuse the sleek and proper female body and are often strongly linked to the abject. For example, women urinating are a resonant theme, beginning as the sister/aunt (Katie Pye) in her short *Peek: An Exercise in Discipline* (1982), squats in the grass and urinates by the roadside. In her first feature (*Sweetie*), the character Sweetie (Genevieve Lemon) urinates next to her father's

point to the incongruous state of things, that things are never what they seem.

⁶⁹⁶ Taubin, 1999.

⁶⁹⁷ Silverman, 1988, p.218.

⁶⁹⁸ Silverman, 1988, p.218.

⁶⁹⁹ Polan, 2001, p.30.

car. These scenes are linked to the urination scene in *Holy Smoke!* In urinating on herself, Ruth is doing something ostensibly animalistic, although many animals avoid doing this by cocking their legs or squatting; however animals seek dominance, or are proprietorial, through urinating or spraying. When female characters urinate in Campion's films, all of them are involved in power struggles that are generally with men (or their families). This is reflected in Ruth's accusation that PJ wants young women because he wants to show others what a 'beautiful post you got to piss on'. One way of reading this motif is through the lens of Campion's own comments, which strongly bring to mind that human bodies are abject—to be human is to leak and seep; as Kristeva has written, the "abject confronts us ... with the fragile states where man wanders in the territories of the *animal*".⁷⁰⁰ The motif can also be read as an exploration of the concept of the abject across Campion's films. Kristeva has written that "abjection is above all ambiguity ... abjection acknowledges it [the subject] to be in perpetual danger"... [it is that which] does not respect borders, positions, rules, that which 'disturbs identity, system, order'".⁷⁰¹

The link to the abject signifies that the grasp the subject has over his/her identity, and bodily boundaries, is precarious and social. The abject is threatening, a reminder of the fragility of the symbolic order—that which sustains patriarchy—and from this perspective, the motif of urination can be read as feminist in the way that Kristeva's work has been read. By this I am referring to the way in which culture is acquired—not in constructionist terms (environment or conditioning)—but rather in relation to symbolic subjectivity which represses the maternal or the abject.

This implies that one of the functions or results of this exploration of the abject is to work against this 'repression' through putting the 'abject', and thus women, back into representation. In addition, it could be argued that the maternal is also signified by this motif as Ruth's urinating recalls the maternal, the breaking of the waters in childbirth—that is, that signifiers work across a range of levels, and have meanings other than those

⁷⁰⁰ Julia Kristeva (*Powers of Horror*, 1982) in Lisa Bloom (ed.), *With Other Eyes: Looking at Race and Gender in Visual Culture*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1999, p.93.

that are ostensibly obvious. Kristeva has argued that changes in dominant histories and patriarchy will depend on new forms of language that revalue the maternal, and film representation could be understood as constituting a new form in the sense of finding new expressions in the medium.⁷⁰²

Early in *Holy Smoke!* Ruth's mother will not be smelt like an animal in order to enter Baba's temple. It is interesting that entering the temple requires the absence of fragrance/scent—the opposite value to that found in western culture, where fragrant methods of covering up the actual scent of bodies are pervasive—seeking control by getting rid of the abject (or the female symbolic). The use of the abject is important because the “abject attests to the impossibility of clear borders, lines of demarcation or divisions between the proper and the improper, the clean and the unclean, order and disorder, as required by the symbolic”.⁷⁰³ In other words, the abject works against binaries, and is subversive in relation to the symbolic order.

Other Campion films have this idea of the abject. In *Sweetie*, the voracious Sweetie is insatiably sexual (even propositioning her sister's boyfriend, Louis)—she is so ravenous and irrepressible that she eats Kay's ceramic horses, and her life ends in a scene that begins with Sweetie, naked, turning her bottom to her father, and farting, laughing at him from her tree house. Her sister Kay is her antithesis, thin, clean and endlessly ironing and washing. In *An Angel At My Table* Janet (Karen Fergusson) “tentatively sniffs the blood of her first menstrual period and thereafter stuffs the used ‘rags’ behind the headstones in the cemetery”.⁷⁰⁴ Even Campion's classical women, such as Isabel in *The Portrait Of A Lady* refuse a sealed demeanour: Isabel is frequently red nosed/eyed, seeping tears as she attempts to keep herself and her behaviour within the required ‘classical body’—the etiquette for a gentlewoman of her era. In *The Piano*, Aunt Morag

⁷⁰¹ Julia Kristeva from *Powers of Horror* (1982, p.4) in Barbara Creed, *The Monstrous Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis*, Routledge, London, 1993, p. 8.

⁷⁰² This is discussed in Maggie Humm, *The Dictionary of Feminist Theory*, (2nd ed.) Prentice Hall/Harvester Wheatsheaf Hertfordshire, 1995, p. 141.

⁷⁰³ Elizabeth Grosz, 1989, p.73.

⁷⁰⁴ Sue Gillett, *Views*, p.2.

“covers up the traces of her outdoor urination with a gesture reminiscent of an animal’s”.⁷⁰⁵ It is particularly interesting that as she urinates she observes that Ada does not play the piano “as we do”, but rather, that her playing is “strange”, “like a mood that passes into you”. Morag complains that Ada’s music is uncanny⁷⁰⁶: “to have a sound creep inside of you is not at all pleasant”.

There is a link from the abject, and the uncanny, to the gothic—a style Campion has a declared and documented interest in—particularly romantic gothic melodrama.⁷⁰⁷ The gothic often deals with the scatological or the abject. Gerry Turcotte has described the gothic as “a mode that explores borderland positions, which engages with the grotesque, which allows sexes to blur to the point of transformation, and which speaks the supposedly unspeakable remarkably well ...”.⁷⁰⁸ The gothic is something that has been present in Australian film from the 1970s, and which also has a place in New Zealand culture⁷⁰⁹ and therefore, can be understood as a marker of Campion’s antipodean origins. The recurring presence of the abject in Campion’s films can also be understood as underlining a slippage between things, that things are not wholly one thing or the other, that identity is fractured and not neatly unified.

⁷⁰⁵ Jayamanne, 2001, p. 43.

⁷⁰⁶ Freud wrote of the uncanny as the intense experience of strangeness, as sublime. McLintock has written that Freud’s account of the uncanny underpins modern critical literature on both the gothic and the sublime. See Sigmund Freud, *The UnCanny*, David McLintock (trans.), Penguin, New York & London, 2003, p.xliii.

⁷⁰⁷ For example, much of the writing on *The Piano* has considered the influence of the gothic, and her film *In The Cut* was screened at the Australian Centre for the Moving Image in 2005 as part of a focus on the ‘female gothic’. There are numerous publications dealing with the gothic in her films, for example, Kirsten Moana Thompson, ‘The Sickness Unto Death: Dislocated Gothic in a Minor Key’, in Coombs & Gemmell 1999, pp.64-82; Cindy Hendershot, ‘(Re)Visioning the Gothic: Jane Campion’s *The Piano*’, *Literature Film Quarterly*, Vol. 26, No.2, 1998, pp. 97-108; Michael Davis, ‘Tied to That Maternal ‘thing’: Death and Desire in Jane Campion’s *The Piano*’, *Gothic Studies*, No. 4, May 2002, pp. 63-78; Rueschmann, 2005, pp. 2-21. Polan describes *Holy Smoke!* as gothic because of its oppressive confinement of femininity in the family circling Ruth and containing her, and in the outback hut which he likens to *Rebecca*’s Manderlay. Polan, 2001, p. 149.

⁷⁰⁸ Gerry Turcotte, ‘Footnotes to an Australian Gothic Script’, *Antipodes* 7, No.2., December 1993, 132.

⁷⁰⁹ For example, New Zealand film has been described as gothic in Philippa Mein Smith, *A Concise History of New Zealand*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2005, p.241.

The urination scene in *Holy Smoke!* also signifies the historic dualism of the Cartesian mind/body split—throughout history women have been associated with nature, and men with culture.⁷¹⁰ Feminists have claimed that science, philosophy and rationality constantly re-enact “the mind/body divide in its most basic methodological moves ... to be intellectual—to think ... under patriarchy ... is to take up a position marked as masculine”.⁷¹¹ In opposition, the feminine is often marked as natural or as nature—male reason versus female emotion. It is interesting to consider how Campion deals with this as a postmodernist. On the one hand, she links women to the body, or women as ‘object’ because of their bodily functions; but this can be understood as a strategy, or as having the effect of putting women back into representation in a way that challenges patriarchy. The object is without boundaries, neither one thing nor the other, neither one gender nor the other (both men and women are subject to basic biological drives). In using this motif, the effect in Campion’s work is to reinforce not just the slippage between things such as masculinity and femininity, but also their social constructedness. In eluding binaries and locating them as integral to each other, the employed logic is deconstructive (and postmodern-feminist), because it undermines any idea of ‘female identity’ as fixed or static—or as essential, without refuting the existence of male and female signifiers. Indeed, Campion confuses signifiers, perhaps commenting on the symbolic importance of anatomy—for example, when Ruth urinates she is standing like a man here, which also could be described as signifying the idea of penis envy. As a signifier, this could be read in the sense that some feminists read the attribution of ‘penis envy’ to women, as a symptom of male fear and envy in relation to female reproductive power, rather than as a desire for a penis or need for a child as a penis-substitute. Thus it could symbolically be linked to female power. In addition, as argued in chapter two, the personal and social significance of the same behaviour varies depending on whether a man or a woman acts it out—and this urinating, standing like a man, is

⁷¹⁰ McHugh, 2001, also notes the foregrounding of the concept of the Cartesian subject through music. He has written that her use of a pop song to underline the fantasy of “a Cartesian subject whose being is coextensive with its assertion” – for example, when Campion frames the narration of PJ with the Neil Diamond song ‘I am ... I said’ (1971).

⁷¹¹ Moi, 1999, p.348.

evidence of this, and also evidence that men and women are read differently, that experience in a female body is different to that in a male body because there are different engagements with social reality. This therefore supports the argument in this thesis, that subjectivity is connected to gender—and as men have not lived their lives as women, they do not experience the same subjectivity. Campion's films recognize feminine specificity and develop an alternative discourse about that specificity—as discursive productions that explore female experience.

Among other possible significations at work through the urination scene is the sexual fetish of watching urination or being urinated on. This conjures up the idea of objectification, and the subject/object division—a particular location, or of particular relevance for the young 'girlshine' body. Through the body we see that Ruth's 'self' is vulnerable. It is also significant that Ruth is naked, an object of desire, but in urinating she signifies the thin line between the normal/acceptable and a more threatening, repressed part of human desire and activity. On the one hand the abject in Campion's films might be understood as pointing to the imposition of patriarchy on the social subject through the imposition of the clean and proper body; and also, from a postmodern-feminist point of view, the motif of the abject can be understood as an appropriation that challenges conventional representations of the feminine, in an act that can be read as a kind of 'transcoding' of the abject—refuting it as monstrous, and claiming it as an integral part of what it is to be human. Hall defines transcoding as taking an existing meaning and appropriating it for new meanings, such as 'Black is beautiful'.⁷¹²

⁷¹² Hall, 1997, p.207.

Chapter conclusion

As a postmodern-feminist, Campion enters a dialogue with past feminist ideas but does not propose antifeminist thinking. Instead she seeks to be free to develop another kind of discourse on feminine specificity that understands the variable and non-prescriptive ways in which one might experience his/her gender, and to deconstruct any set ideas of what female identity might be. Campion connects with postmodern ideas in her representation of identity as constantly in process and in flux (an idea discussed in more detail in the next chapter). Through the representation of ‘girlshine’, *Holy Smoke!* specifically articulates experience as related to one’s sex; it is also an experience that women might share across other axes of difference, and which also evidences gendered subjectivity. In her exploration of ‘girlshine’ and *jouissance*, Campion offers a new way (in terms of conventional representation) of seeing ‘woman’, and also men. She is also making a feminist statement in illustrating the feminine as a disruptive force in relation to patriarchal social order, and she comments on the unequal relations of power between men and women—relations that do not offer women as necessarily less powerful. She offers a view of how men and women learn, grow, and are disappointed by experience, she reveals human failings and foibles, but in particular, illustrates how her characters are shaped by *gendered* experience—by living in a female (or male) body.

Chapter 6

Another social vision: *In the Cut*



713

Introduction

Campion's most recent feature film, *In the Cut* (2003) deals with many of the explorations found in her entire oeuvre, but the particular explorations examined in this chapter are her interest in the slippage between things (or that things are often not one thing or the other); her portrayal of the faultiness of human knowing; her attempts to understand the mythology around love, romance, sexuality, and femininity; her view of men and women, and the way that she has, with a certainty and maturity, offered *another* social vision of women. All these examinations attempt to express what it is to be a woman in the world (in this case, particularly the contemporary modern, urban world). This film has been selected for particular attention in this thesis as one of her most mature and complete works, and also because it has had, as yet, very little academic attention.⁷¹⁴

⁷¹³ Source of image: <http://milkplus.blogspot.com/itcmeg.jpg>

In the Cut takes New York, the most vibrant of contemporary cities, as its milieu. The narrative is set in the present, and centres on Frannie Avery (Meg Ryan), a teacher of writing, who has an erotic encounter with a police detective (Mark Ruffalo). Malloy, the detective, is investigating a gruesome murder in her neighbourhood. However, the story unfolds not from Malloy's, but from Frannie's (female) perspective. Ostensibly a thriller, the film is also a mystery and a love story, and it is significant that Campion's own summary of what the film is about does not mention the detective story at all, which was evidently of secondary interest to her.⁷¹⁵ As a Campion film, it is imbued with her preoccupations with relationships, love, female desire, trauma, female bravery, gender relations, and ideology.

In the Cut has a postmodern schizophrenic quality that is explored in the film through conceptual ambiguity (in that nothing is one thing or the other, but there is an uncertainty and 'in-between-ness' throughout), and the point of view that there isn't a single truth, that knowledge is subjective. This quality is also explored through the mythology of cultural narratives (such as romance). Through the diverse and multicultural cityscape the film explores a number of individuals who appear as fractured and contradictory entities: the 'unified self' is thus represented as a fiction (something which some feminist critics have also historically argued in challenging notions of the 'whole subject'⁷¹⁶). Campion offers a view that identity is constructed out of all this fragmentation – a fragmentation she alluded to when she said that she has always been “attracted to alternative shades of reality”.⁷¹⁷

⁷¹⁴ The exception is Gillett's two articles, *Views*, 2004 and 'Engaging Medusa: Competing Myths and Fairytales in *In the Cut*', *Senses of Cinema*, Issue 31, April 2004, at www.sensesofcinema.com/contents/04/31/in_the_cut.html Accessed 20/8/04; and Fincina Hopgood's 'Inspiring Passion and Hatred: Jane Campion's 'In The Cut'', *Metro*, No.139, pp. 28-33.

⁷¹⁵ On the handbill for *In The Cut*, she is quoted as offering it as a mystery and modern love story.

⁷¹⁶ For example in her article 'Feminist Film Theory and Criticism' Judith Mayne discusses Hollywood fictions of the 'unified self' (particularly prevalent in Hollywood's version of psychoanalysis) and the idea that the "once-fragmented individual is now unified and secure in her knowledge of herself". See Judith Mayne, 'Feminist Film Theory and Criticism', *SIGNS, Journal of Women In Culture And Society*, Vol.11, No.1, Autumn 1985, p.83.

⁷¹⁷ Campion in Stephanie Bunbury, 'Cutting in on Campion', *Age – Agenda*, 16/11/03, p.18.

What it is to be a woman in the world

Throughout her work, a central exploration for Campion is an investigation of what it is to be a woman in the world—as individual and multifarious as this might be. At first glance, Frannie and Pauline (Jennifer Jason-Leigh) seem to be opposing physical stereotypes. They have different looks: Pauline is more a classic femme, wild long blonde hair, high heels, tight dresses, and sporting a “flaky girlishness”.⁷¹⁸ In contrast, Frannie is “someone modern, ironic, droll”,⁷¹⁹ a bookish city dweller, bordering on dour—unadorned, wearing brown flat shoes or thongs, her lanky bob-haircut and, her sauntering, slightly slumping posture (looking plain for Meg Ryan—like all of Campion’s heroines who, as discussed, look plain in relation to the star actors that they commonly are). However, as the film evolves, it reveals that they are alike, they share inner lives and both indulge in romantic fantasies. Pauline wants to be married and have the odd love child; she has queried, ‘Is a husband too much for me to ask for?’ She imagines the doctor she is stalking will realize that he is in love with her, that ‘one thing will lead to another’ and ‘we get married’. Frannie collects romantic poems from train walls, and imagines her mother in the image of the delicate figure on the inside of a music box. The sisters are unashamed sexual beings, and the film offers this in a “dogged focus on female pleasure and pain”.⁷²⁰

⁷¹⁸ Sandra Hall, ‘Sex, brains, swagger and an arrogance that cuts both ways’, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 13/11/03, p.15.

⁷¹⁹ Campion describing Frannie in Anthony Quinn, ‘Lady Jane’s bloody reign’, *Saturday Sydney Morning Herald* – 47 Hours, 25/10/03, p.1.

⁷²⁰ Joy Press, ‘Making the Cut’, *The Village Voice*, 22-28/10/03 at <http://www.villagevoice.com/issues/o343/press.php> Accessed 20/8/04.



What I believe Campion is saying about the two sisters is that they are similar, not just because they are sisters, but because they inherently share something by dint of being women in the world. Meg Ryan has said the film centres on “a seemingly tiny movement to make a soul connection”.⁷²¹ Gillett has said that after a romantic disaster, Pauline is represented “compassionately and with humour as an ordinary, flawed, human woman, neither slut nor wife, neither good girl nor bad. ... This is not a dangerous woman but simply a sad woman looking for love in the wrong places”.⁷²² While this scenario might sound conventional, it is the compassionate and non-judgmental treatment of Pauline’s character that makes this unconventional in comparison to most representations of women like her.

Susanna Moore has said that her novel of *In the Cut* is about “trying to make sense of being female”.⁷²³ Moi claims that nineteenth-century women writers used the word *female* persistently (for example ‘female writing’, ‘tradition’ or ‘creativity’) to express their “female anger in a series of duplicitous textual strategies whereby both the angel and the monster, the sweet heroine and the raging madwoman, are aspects of the author’s self-image, as well as elements of her treacherous anti-patriarchal strategies”.⁷²⁴ Moi argues, using the example of a text by Gilbert and Gubar, that “female authors always experience anti-patriarchal rage in their hearts and that this *feminist* anger will create a typically

⁷²¹ Graham Fuller & Lizzie Francke, ‘Sex and Self-Danger’, *Sight and Sound*, No.13 (11), November 2003, p.16.

⁷²² Gillett, 2004, ‘Engaging Medusa’.

⁷²³ Anthony Quinn, ‘Passages from India’, *Saturday Age* —Good Weekend, 14/2/04, p.36.

⁷²⁴ Moi, 1997, p.114. Moi has said that American feminist critics have studied women writers (‘gynocritics’) and, citing Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar’s *The Madwoman in the Attic*, a text she writes furnishes “an instructive example of the consequences of the confusion not only of femaleness with femininity, but also of this amalgamated femaleness/femininity with feminism”.

feminine pattern of writing”.⁷²⁵ This position can be criticized for assuming all women write from a feminist politic; it would also be difficult to prove, and it does not account for the possibility of women taking up other subject positions (or for the fractured nature of the subject). However, despite these potential criticisms, it is interesting, since it proposes something unconscious at work in romantic genres and female writing—something that might intuitively lead to the work being constructed from a non-patriarchal perspective.

If this anti-patriarchal rage is evident in the work of nineteenth-century women writers, then it would be likely that Campion would have been exposed to it, given that, as outlined already, she has acknowledged her interest in nineteenth-century writers. I am not implying that Campion’s work expresses rage as we would ordinarily understand it, but rather that it might be understood in the light of this idea, to be intuitively anti-patriarchal, or to embody a *‘feminine* pattern of writing’ as described above.

The faultiness of human knowing, and the slippage between things

While the idea of the faultiness of human knowing is something that imbues Campion’s work generally, it should be noted that these ideas of duality, and an emphasis on the faultiness of human knowing, can also be found in Susanna Moore’s novel on which *In the Cut* is based. My intention here is to concentrate on Campion’s role and voice, rather than that of any other potential authors. However, this quality of the novel may be a reason Campion was originally attracted to it. For example, Pauline’s body is characterized in the novel as a statement on the way humans might read each other and come up with inaccurate readings from judging what they see: Pauline is described as having “a soft, ample mouth which she claims is one of the most misleading things about her in a swamp of misleading things”.⁷²⁶

One of the earliest shots of *In the Cut* features Pauline standing in Frannie’s garden. Campion has said that this shot sums up the film “in a nutshell” (which is interesting

⁷²⁵ Moi, 1997, p.114.

given that this scene is not in the novel—which instead begins with Frannie meeting Cornelius, her student, at the Red Turtle). The film begins with what Campion describes on the DVD commentary as a girl looking lost (although for me she looks more like she is experiencing the moment). In direct contrast, in the background we see someone highly disciplined, doing some kind of martial arts. Simultaneously blossom falls from the trees and Frannie awakes—seeing it in her half consciousness. Campion has described this as “a beautiful ... a kind of transcendent moment ... Frannie ... mistakes these blossoms for snow”, and this is the first misrecognition resulting in the first misreading.⁷²⁷ Campion has said of this moment that it is

so emblematic of the whole way this film moves ... a series of mistaken identities ... just how thinking is like that we think we've seen something but we haven't seen it all or haven't seen enough of it. ... Off you go on the wrong course ... Frannie's private dream ... in the story ... the dream she's trying to free herself ... [from is the] romantic mythology of her father which is on the one hand so attractive because its so heightened and beautiful ... but on the other hand, she saw her mother who was so betrayed by him; so you have the thing that is so desired and the harm it has done.⁷²⁸

Thus Frannie's fantasy has a dual nature, being her ultimate representation of romance, one that simultaneously embodies heartbreak and allure—just like the petals and snow which are not portrayed as opposites, but things that are alike; this is the first inkling of a refutation of opposites—that things, or human identity, are neither binary, nor essential. This scene has no link to rationality or logic—it couldn't have snowed at this time, but occurring as it does in the space between waking and dreaming, this misrecognition is about the link between understanding, knowledge and memory. Frannie's memory

⁷²⁶ Moore, 1995, p.29.

⁷²⁷ This reminds me of fairytales which structurally always have a fault or flaw that propels the tale. In his analysis of the structures of fairytales, Luthi points out that in the Cinderella story, her lost shoe leads to her being identified and thus to happiness but the lost shoe also is an indication that something is not in order, a flaw in perfection. He has said that the flaw is a motif embedded in the fairytale and that fairytales themselves teem with commandments, conditions, and prohibitions and that each violation of a prohibition is a lapse. Snow White violates a prohibition when she accepts the poison apple out of greed; just as the father of the sleeping beauty violates etiquette when he does not invite the thirteenth fairy to the Princess's christening. See Max Luthi, (Translated by Jon Erickson) *The Fairytale, As Art Form And Portrait of Man*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1984.

⁷²⁸ All quotes from the director's commentary, *In the Cut* DVD.

incorporates a fantasy of her parents, and that colours understanding, reading and knowing.

Throughout Campion's oeuvre there is a fascination for a conceptually ambivalent 'in-between-ness,' bringing forward the spaces between child and adult; between what we can control and chance or fate; between the past and the present; between sin and purity; between nature and culture. As I illustrate further on, Campion's vision, or the way in which she makes meanings, is not through oppositions or binaries but through problematising of the relations between things—something that works to deconstruct the binary nature of Western thinking. For example, good and evil are not oppositions but integral to each other: more like archetypes with a light and shadow side—or fairytales, which appear light but always encapsulate some darkness. While Campion relies on them to structure the narrative, she frames them deconstructively, as integral to each other.

The slippage between things is an important part of the texture of the film, from its title (during intercourse Malloy tells Frannie he likes it 'in the cut'⁷²⁹—but the film also centres on the search for a serial killer who cuts off victims' heads). The slippage also refers to the use of language⁷³⁰ which is often revealed to mean more than one thing (for example, 'to do' means 'to kill' as well as 'to fuck'⁷³¹), or the importance of subjectivity to meaning. For example, what Frannie sees or doesn't see is subject to perception—not reality; her poor eyesight and the camera's emphasis of it are signifiers for this, as are

⁷²⁹ When one is 'in the cut', then one is between, in the slippage, in a state of joining, and therefore, not one thing or the other.

⁷³⁰ This could be understood as important in the Foucaultian sense of an interest in the slippage between language and the meanings it makes, of the organic nature of language in shifting or not remaining static but there being infinite relationships between words and the things they represent. This use of language is interesting as it foregrounds that language can not be relied upon, and this may link to the idea that language has been important in propagating patriarchy, that it constructs chains of signification that construct difference—a difference understood as reality, but which Campion is deconstructing here (following the novel). This is another example of the postmodern-feminism of her films.

⁷³¹ Moore, 1995, p. 98. In an interview, Moore has outlined that how she researched the novel by riding with two homicide detectives and listened to their specific language. She says that they said a suspect was 'in the cut'—meaning that s/he was laying low in a safe place—but Moore discussed with them whether this came from, or was a reference to being in the vagina. See David Konow, 'Rough Cut: Jane Campion and Susanna Moore on *In the Cut*', in *Screenwriting* 10.5, 2003, p.69.

other sequences, such as mistaking blossom for snow in the opening of the film, or mistaking Malloy for the killer. All of which emphasizes one of the film's key points, that things, or people, are not what they seem or appear. This is however not a question of what is true or false but rather an emphasis on the way understood 'reality' keeps getting disrupted. It is an exploration of epistemology rather than truth—a questioning of the nature of knowledge, and what constitutes it. Frannie doesn't trust memory.⁷³² In addition, "[L]iteral minded as he [Rodriguez] is, he can't appreciate her meaning: that truth is not fixed in the past; that the observer, the actor, carries her own desires into the events she is living, that this can alter what she sees, and how she sees".⁷³³

The character of Malloy is more able to appreciate that things are not necessarily black or white—in fact, Malloy himself is ambiguously represented. As Adrian Martin has observed, Malloy is "an odd mixture of brutalism and sensitivity ... the classic figure of the 'demon lover', both repellent and seductive, who drives so many contemporary thrillers centred on women".⁷³⁴ PJ in *Holy Smoke!* and Baines in *The Piano* are also represented as both rough and soft. From this view, one could argue that Malloy—and other central male protagonists in her films—embody a slippage between things: something that works to emphasize that meanings (and humans) are complex constructions, and one is not necessarily one thing or the other. It is this mixture that in fact attracts Frannie to Malloy, and through them Campion seems to be trying to understand how men and women relate to each other—a resonant theme, but one explored in particularly complex ways in her last three feature films.

Other explorations of 'in-between-ness' are played out between the two male characters (Malloy and Rodriguez); the two female characters (Frannie and Pauline); and male and female characters (particularly Frannie and Malloy). Malloy and Rodriguez are linked by their partnership as detectives, their mateship (illustrated most strongly by Malloy's uncharacteristic misogyny in the bar scene on his date with Frannie), and through their

⁷³² In Moore's novel, Frannie comments that: "I don't think memory is very reliable. ... My memory isn't fact" and "I think memories are like dreams. Not reliable proof of anything". Moore, 1995, p.113.

⁷³³ Gillett, 2004, p.103.

tattoos (which we learn they did together and is a sign of their bonding at their first big bust). While they will inevitably be read by some as taking up the oppositions of good and evil by the end of the film, their representation is not a binary and is ambiguous. They are so similar that when Frannie first sees Rodriguez in the basement of the Red Turtle, she thinks she ‘sees’ Malloy, and consequently Frannie constructs both Rodriguez and Malloy into the one sexual fantasy. The idea of what the character ‘sees’ (or mis-sees) is played out constantly through the film: for example, as the Doris Day tune reminds us, ‘the future’s not ours to see’, and as Campion points out on the DVD director’s commentary, the poems signify that Frannie isn’t seeing things; in addition, Frannie is short sighted—as emphasized with the shallow focus throughout the film. Frannie misreads the discovery of the charm from her bracelet, and Cornelius misreads Frannie (Campion has said in the DVD of the film that Frannie has hoped it is Malloy when Cornelius arrives). In order for Malloy to capture Frannie’s imagination, he must partly embody Rodriguez: he is part imagination and part reality. These scenes illustrate the way in which Campion uses the products of vision, and the gaze, to emphasize that the tangible is intangible, that there are illusions of tangibility, and that ‘seeing’ is a particularly fraught method of perception. In another mistake of ‘seeing,’ Malloy thinks he ‘sees’ Frannie when he looks at a photograph of Pauline in Frannie’s apartment; as Campion has said, “all human knowing is so faulty”⁷³⁵—and the film constantly illustrates that knowledge is laden with presuppositions.

Towards the end of *In the Cut* where Rodriguez is taking Frannie to the lighthouse⁷³⁶, there is a discussion of Virginia Woolf’s novel, *To the Lighthouse* (1927)⁷³⁷, a novel that in

⁷³⁴ Adrian Martin, ‘Master or Myth?’, *Age-Metro* A3, 13/11/03, p. 6.

⁷³⁵ Director’s comments on the *In the Cut* DVD.

⁷³⁶ Campion has said the significance of the phallic red lighthouse is that your fate is awaiting you, and evidence of this is everywhere if you look for it. See Andrews, 2003.

⁷³⁷ Woolf is renowned as a feminist author whose work considered the role of patriarchy in structuring oppression. *To The Lighthouse* is an autobiographical novel linked to her own childhood and to dealing with relationships, her feelings towards her parents, feelings of loss. In Woolf’s novel, the lighthouse is a place, described by Lisa Martin McAfee as “symbolic of that inner place in one’s soul where one finds solace, harmony, balance and atonement” – which may not be the lighthouse of Campion’s film, but is reminiscent of her ending (one that is significantly different to the ending of Moore’s novel version of *In the Cut*). See Lisa Martin McAfee, ‘To the Lighthouse’, at http://www.suite101.com/chapter.cfm/jane_austen/64746 Accessed 30/8/04.

the film's narrative Frannie is studying with her students. Spivak has described Woolf's story as a project centrally about catching the essence of Mrs Ramsay—something that is interesting in terms of Campion/Moore's story. For those who know the novel *To the Lighthouse*, the reference to it is an important intertextual signifier of the battle within representation and culture, to be free of binary constructions of gender. Moi has written about this 'battle', describing the character Lily as a person whose journey ('to be her own woman') is similar to Frannie's journey:

To the Lighthouse illustrates the destructive nature of a metaphysical belief in strong, immutably fixed gender identities – as represented by Mr and Mrs Ramsay – whereas Lily Briscoe (an artist) represents the subject who deconstructs this opposition, ... and tries as far as is possible in a still rigidly patriarchal order to live as her own woman, without regard to crippling definitions of sexual identity ... This is not, as Showalter argues, a flight from fixed gender identities, but a recognition of their falsifying metaphysical nature.⁷³⁸

This comparison between the two texts illustrates how both texts are involved in feminist explorations that reveal these battles in representation and culture.

This problematising of binary oppositions permeates Campion's films, which are patchworks or complex tapestries of overlapping ideas; this is perhaps why for some audiences they are often difficult to access, and alienating. Critics have noted this patchwork: for example John Slavin has written that Campion "is willing to forgo the requirements of coherent narrative in favour of a paradigm of isolated and exaggerated signifiers".⁷³⁹ Adrian Martin's reaction to Campion's *Holy Smoke!* (1999) could also be applied to *In the Cut*:

A heretical thought occurred to me. Perhaps quite simply, Campion is not really a storyteller. All her films are full of narrative illogicalities, abrupt breaks, blocks of material bashed up against each other. Perhaps she is more interested in imagery, atmosphere, and things in the world that just never come together into a satisfying, reconcilable whole – especially the contradictory behaviours of confused people. ... [she is] not alone on the

⁷³⁸ Moi, 2001, p.13.

⁷³⁹ John Slavin, 'The Films of Jane Campion', *Metro*, No.95, Spring, 1993, p. 28.

world cinema stage: Lynch and Tim Burton are also indifferent towards the stories they use as mere pretexts for other kinds of exploration.⁷⁴⁰

Here Martin is linking Campion to two (male) directors who are situated within a particular strand of contemporary cinema, and this implies that this feature of Campion's work is a postmodern feature—although as argued in chapter three (p.111), dislocations are a common feature of 'woman's cinema' or female authorship, and therefore this could also be argued to be a postmodern-feminist feature of her work. However, whatever the genesis, it is worth exploring further these other "kinds of exploration" that so engage Campion. In the next sections, I explore what I believe these are, and illustrate that many of them have a particularly feminine texture.

Myth: love, romance, sex and femininity

You're no good

I think I love you

What am I afraid of?

I don't want to wait in vain for your love

I'm glad I found you

I just can't let you say goodbye

Que Sera Sera ...

Lyrics from songs in *In the Cut*.

The calling card left by the serial killer on each of his victims is a single solitaire diamond ring. This problematises the ring, which in ordinary circumstances signifies engagement: romance, love ('happy-ever-after'), and sex, but in this context is a sign of evil and derangement; this could be read as a sign of duality: that danger, as well as pleasure, is embodied in romantic ideals or myths. There are numerous motifs in the film⁷⁴¹—such as the courtship fantasy bracelet that Pauline gives Frannie—that seem to hold dual meanings in recognising a tension between patriarchal hegemony, and the desire or

⁷⁴⁰ Adrian Martin, 'Smokescreen for a wispy plot', *Age*, 24/12/99, B4.

pleasure that this hegemony engenders in those who subscribe to it. This indicates that Campion is playing with our cultural understandings throughout the film. Another example of her doing this is the Buddha sitting at Pauline's door: the Buddha signifies peace and tranquillity, but this is where the door key is kept, and this is how the murderer is able to get in (a detail conveyed when Frannie cannot find the key under the Buddha).

When Frannie is attacked in the street, a charm from her bracelet is lost (the baby in the carriage) and she also loses one of her shoes (Frannie is often seen wearing only one shoe⁷⁴²). Frannie runs home without both, but Molloy later returns them to her. This signifies the Cinderella tale⁷⁴³, as well as differentiating Frannie's story from the myth, because she snares an attacker rather than a prince (reiterating the failure of romantic myths). It also leads to a misreading, because Molloy—the figurative, but not idealized prince—picks up Frannie's lost charm, and this leads her to falsely assume that he is the attacker. It also emphasizes her bravery/foolhardiness, given that she does not allow this suspicion to stop her from seeing him.

Ironically, Frannie might not have seen Malloy again after their meeting in the bar; but because she is mugged and has to call the police, she calls Malloy. The mugging effectively snares the 'prince', and chance or fate brings them back together. This is achieved via the shoe, which is an important motif in the film. Malloy brings her shoe to her following the mugging, and caringly rubs her feet. After Pauline's murder, Malloy brings another of Frannie's lost shoes to the police station, a shoe that in her distress, she'd left at the murder scene. The shoe Frannie loses when she is mugged is high heeled (uncharacteristic for Frannie who wears flat shoes throughout the rest of the film⁷⁴⁴): they

⁷⁴¹ Campion has said (DVD) that she doesn't want people to read the film symbolically but, it is very difficult not to in her densely detailed mise-en-scène.

⁷⁴² This could be read as problematising the Cinderella myth or romantic myth in general. Being barefooted could also be read as a signifier of wantonness.

⁷⁴³ I note however that the Cinderella tale originally comes from a Chinese story about foot-binding (a culturally sanctioned form of torture and deformity) and, the original Grimm's fairytale features an ugly sister who cuts off her toe in order to fit into the shoe (self mutilation).

⁷⁴⁴ As signifiers shoes are interesting and have been read as signifying mating behaviour. In Alison Lurie's book *The Language of Clothes* she has said: "An extended leg is the biological sign of sexual availability in several animal species. High-heeled shoes make the legs look longer and produce what

are borrowed heels from Pauline. This further links the sisters, who are also linked by the many shots of their hands touching (something that also links Frannie with Malloy). That Frannie is mugged while wearing high heels is significant because it brings to mind the paternal (or patriarchal) warnings that girls shouldn't go out dressed like 'that'; such warnings don't ring in Frannie's ears—she is fearless, although Molloy implies she is instead reckless. The shoe links repeatedly to danger; later Frannie uses one to prop open the door for Cornelius (something that again causes a close call in terms of her personal safety, when Cornelius misreads her as having desire for him). The shoe also has significance, given that many second wave feminists saw the high heel shoe as crippling, phallic, and inspired by sexist traditions⁷⁴⁵—but, by the 1990s, "a girl wearing the kind of shoes 'she wants to' became almost prototypically 1990s 'feminist'—although anxieties were such that she probably would have not chosen to use the F-word"⁷⁴⁶ (feminism). While this link is not explicitly played out in the film, the fact that the shoes are such a prominent motif means that these ideas are signified.

The director and her project

When Frannie and Malloy have their first date in a bar, Campion is in the background dancing with Rodriguez.⁷⁴⁷ She then walks out of sight, in what is her first ever cameo in one of her films: "Jane Campion flirts with the killer and lives to tell the tale!"⁷⁴⁸ The significance of this cameo is more than just a reference to Alfred Hitchcock or other auteurs who appear in their own films⁷⁴⁹; it can be understood from a number of

anthropologists call a courtship strut." Alison Laurie in Stead, A., 'The Height Report', *Age*, Good Weekend, October 2, 1987. In *Cinedossier* Issue No. 288, October 1987, p.44.

⁷⁴⁵ For example see bell hooks, *Feminism Is For Everybody: Passionate Politics*, Pluto Press, London, 2000, p. 32.

⁷⁴⁶ Lorraine Gamman, 'Self-Fashioning, Gender Display, and Sexy Girls Shoes: What's at Stake – Female Fetishism or Narcissism?' in Shari Benstock & Suzanne Ferriss (eds.), *Footnotes: On Shoes*, Rutgers State University, 2001, UK, p.97. The 'feminist' referred to is the postfeminist.

⁷⁴⁷ Dancing brings to mind the ball, where Cinderella meets Prince Charming, it is where they meet and fall in love. Perhaps it is a metaphor for courtship, seduction or relationships being a 'dance'. There are other seductions underway within the film, for example, Frannie has said of Cornelius that 'they all flirt, its part of the ritual'.

⁷⁴⁸ Gillett, 2004, p.103.

⁷⁴⁹ This could be a signifier for Campion as an auteur, or as Sue Gillett points out (see Gillett, 2004, p.106), this could be a reference to Hitchcock who made a cameo appearance in many (although not

perspectives. Firstly, Mayne outlines that much feminist writing about film suggests that “the cinema is peculiarly and forcefully resistant to the female creator”⁷⁵⁰, something she argues is related to cinema obstructing female self-representation. This history of the relationship of female creators to the cinema may be one reason why Campion seeks to trace her relationship, or perhaps the relationship of women, to cinematic production.⁷⁵¹ Secondly, or alternatively, it could be read as a reference to Campion’s own relationship to romance. She has said that it “was kind of a revelation for myself, ... Just how and to what degree I myself have swallowed the romantic myths and how they disempower my actual relationships with people”.⁷⁵² In the scene, Malloy isn’t romantic but is explicitly sexual, perhaps a comment on the slippage between these states/forms, something Meg Ryan has observed: “Frannie and Malloy’s affair goes from highly intimate oral sex to wham-bam intercourse to kissing on a car hood like teenagers. ‘It’s all turned around, on its head, very intentionally’”.⁷⁵³

There are also other possible references to Hitchcock’s work. In the initial shots of *In the Cut*, featuring Pauline in Frannie’s garden, the song we hear is *Que Sera Sera*⁷⁵⁴ (a song Doris Day first sang in Hitchcock’s *The Man Who Knew Too Much*, 1956). Day has been described as having become a “symbol of pre-feminist female sexual innocence”⁷⁵⁵; her films were made “when virginity was still a plot point and Doris Day was the most celebrated virgin of them all”⁷⁵⁶—and she was a “professional’ virgin”.⁷⁵⁷ While it should

all) of his films. Hitchcock is often described as the master of suspense and an inventor of the modern thriller—something that adds meaning to this particular film. Hitchcock was, as well, a master of voyeurism. I note that Scorsese is also known for making such appearances.

⁷⁵⁰ Mayne, 1990, p.93.

⁷⁵¹ One might ask why she might be doing this with only this film. It is the only one in which she has appeared, and this could be a sign of her confidence as a director, and her satisfaction with the success of her career.

⁷⁵² Jane Campion in Stephanie Bunbury, ‘Cutting in on Campion’, *Age—Agenda*, 16/11/03, p.18.

⁷⁵³ Kim Linekin, ‘Open and Cut Case: Jane Campion takes a dark stab at a whodunnit’, <http://www.eyenet.net/eye/issue.10.30.03/film/inthecut.html> Accessed 20/8/04.

⁷⁵⁴ A framing device as the film ends with the same song—although into the credits we hear Willie Nelson’s ‘I just can’t let you say goodbye’.

⁷⁵⁵ Sanity.com.au – More movies, more music

<http://www.sanity.com.au/artist.asp?intArtistID=9592> Accessed 31/1/05.

⁷⁵⁶ *Down with Love* Fairfax Archives August 16, 2003

<http://www.smh.com.au/chapters/2003/08/15/1060936061221.html> Accessed 31/1/05.

be noted that others, such as Molly Haskell, have argued against these views of Day—who was considered seriously by a number of feminist critics (arguing that Day was in fact ideologically offering a feminist view); for the layperson, she is in general the ultimate signifier of the good girl. The tradition of the good girl “of the feminine sex, includes *limited destiny* (‘will I be pretty, will I be rich?’), *disabled vision* (‘the future’s not ours to see’), and *passive feminine surrender* (‘whatever will be, will be’).⁷⁵⁸ Thus *In The Cut* signifies Doris Day, who can be read as both ‘professional virgin’ or a ‘feminist champion’, and the concept of dual representations and a slippage between them is brought to the fore. This is also the case in *The Man Who Knew Too Much*, where ‘Que Sera, Sera’ is introduced “in the Moroccan segment of the film ... [which] reflects not the mundane world but the unpredictable, complex future, the ‘what ever-will-be’ that will be”.⁷⁵⁹

Meg Ryan’s body⁷⁶⁰ in numerous film roles has long been (mimetically) a text on romance: “a byword for romantic fluffiness”⁷⁶¹—as Day’s was. The role of Frannie works against what the majority of Ryan’s previous roles signified⁷⁶²: *In the Cut* has blown “her good-girl image to smithereens”.⁷⁶³ Ryan has said of her romantic leads prior to this film “stop me before I kiss again”.⁷⁶⁴ She has observed that her “romantic-comedy characters are the flip side of Frannie ... they perpetuate a romantic myth”,⁷⁶⁵ admitting: “I’ve made a living as a neurotic ... [and,] if you betray the archetype then you suffer the

⁷⁵⁷ Janey Place, ‘Women in Film Noir’ in E. Ann Kaplan, *Women in Film Noir*, BFI, London, 1998, p.47.

⁷⁵⁸ Gillett, ‘Engaging Medusa’, 2004. My emphasis.

⁷⁵⁹ Murray Pomerance, ‘The Future’s Not Ours to See’: Song, Singer, Labryinth in Hitchcock’s *The Man Who Knew Too Much* in Pamela Roberston Wojcik & Arthur Knight (eds.), *Soundtrack Available: Essays on Film and Popular Music*, Duke University Press, USA, 2001, p.57.

⁷⁶⁰ I am using the body as a text here in the way in which Jeff Lewis uses it, as a discourse. He argues that the body needs to be ‘read’, that the body can be read in a text, or the body can be a text in itself; so Ryan is symbolically both what she represents in the text and also, brings significations from outside that text. See Jeff Lewis, *Cultural Studies: The Basics*, London, Thousand Oakes, New Delhi, 2002, p.302.

⁷⁶¹ Anthony Quinn, ‘Lady Jane’s bloody reign’, *Saturday Sydney Morning Herald*—47 Hours, 25/10/03, p.1.

⁷⁶² By this I mean that she herself was a text on romance—something that her long marriage to Dennis Quaid worked towards, and also her many roles in films such as *When Harry Met Sally* (Rob Reiner, 1989) and *Sleepless in Seattle* (Norah Ephron, 1993).

⁷⁶³ General News, ‘Meg Cuts It in a Racy Role’, *MX—Melbourne*, 14/8/03, p. 30.

⁷⁶⁴ Author unknown, ‘Meg cuts the cute’, *Saturday Mercury*, 8/11/03, p.47.

⁷⁶⁵ Juliet Herd, ‘Sweet No More’, *Weekend Australian*—Review, 1/11/03, p.16.

consequences”.⁷⁶⁶ The consequences of breaking from the classic femininity of her most well known screen roles were the negative press and public reaction to her role in *In the Cut*—punishment for stepping outside of the sleek, classic body and into the realm of the female grotesque.

Meg Ryan has indicated that she believes the film is “a triumph of love over romance ... I think in Jane’s world and in this movie, romance is the lie and love is the truth”.⁷⁶⁷ Ryan hints here that her view is that there is an autobiographical thread from the director through to her film. However, ‘the truth’ is a complex, slippery, and perhaps unknowable thing—especially in Campion’s films, which as we’ve seen, like to play with such notions. *In the Cut* reveals “the complexities and ambiguities in sex and romance”,⁷⁶⁸ and is filled with ambiguities around subjects such as relationships, and romance.

Campion situates romance with profound ambivalence: as compelling, but also as fantasy (as an ideal). *In the Cut* has been described as conveying the

ultimate emptiness of modern romantic myths. ... [and Campion herself has said that]
‘What was revealed to me was not just how in thrall Frannie and [her sister] Pauline
were to the Western world’s myth of romance and love, but [how] in so many ways it
has disappointed me and them because we have an ideal of what romance and love are
going to be.’⁷⁶⁹

The bride we see a few times in the film is both on the train and left behind on the station – perhaps Campion, or Frannie, is leaving the mythology, but also taking it with her? As if it were ideology that one might ostensibly reject, but also be unable to shake. If this is so, her characterization of Frannie could be read as that of a woman who is able to move on, but also one that acknowledges that Frannie embodies oppositions (myth, romance, modern pragmatism) in terms of who she is.

⁷⁶⁶ Andrew Anthony, ‘Cut the Act’, *Sunday Herald Sun*—Sunday Magazine, 9/11/03, p.8.

⁷⁶⁷ Linekin, 2003.

⁷⁶⁸ *The Times* quoted in the Advertising handbill for *In The Cut*.

⁷⁶⁹ Juliet Herd, ‘Sweet No More’, *Weekend Australian* – Review, 1/11/03, p.16.



770

The character of Frannie clearly subscribes to romantic myths. She retells the story of her parents meeting, which Campion represents via an ‘arresting image⁷⁷¹’ of a skating sequence—a scene that is a reoccurring motif in the film. Campion illustrates the pleasure Frannie gets from the myth, its compelling nature as fantasy or desire. However she also works to undermine the myth, in representing it as an illusion Frannie entertains in the face of her mother’s heartbreak, and the failure of this romantic beginning to ultimately succeed. Here we have a modern woman who knows the world and its realities. She does not condemn her philandering father, but seeks to see something of value in what her parents had, and ultimately settles on romance—despite having enough information to rationally reject it. Thus these two opposite views, reality and fantasy, can co-exist, and this again reinforces the idea that with Campion there is always a complexity, there are at least two views that one can see.

In the story world Frannie and Pauline could be read as victims of romantic myth, given that they both subscribe to romantic fantasies (particularly in regard to their parents), but Campion has said admiringly of them that, “these girls are smart”;⁷⁷² she accepts their foibles and their fantasies as part of who they are, rather than insist that they abandon romantic fantasy as oppressive. She describes them as “war veterans” of “romance and love”⁷⁷³ and in so doing locates them concretely in the world of their experiences, and

⁷⁷⁰ Source of image:

<http://images.google.com.au/imgres?imgurl=http://www.shillpages.com/movies/thumbs/inthecut2003dvd.gif&imgrefurl=http://www.shillpages.com/movies/ii.shtml&h=55&w=100&sz=6&hl=en&start=302&um=1&tbnid=nB4QaQIY46xuwM:&tbnh=45&tbnw=82&prev=/images%3Fq%3DCampion,%2B%2527In%2Bthe%2Bcut%2527%26start%3D300%26ndsp%3D20%26svnum%3D10%26um%3D1%26hl%3Den%26sa%3DN>

⁷⁷¹ As defined in chapter four.

⁷⁷² Director’s commentary, *In the Cut*, DVD.

⁷⁷³ Director’s commentary, *In the Cut*, DVD.

subject to ideology. Campion weaves a web of interlocking ideas: for example, dreams enter Frannie's consciousness, not just for surrealist effect (something for which Campion is known) but because there is no escaping the psyche. Campion has said that "you go to sleep ... you wake up sobbing".⁷⁷⁴ The view expressed in the film is not that of second wave feminism, where a subscription to romantic myths would have been regarded as a character (or person) being complicit in their own oppression (and that they should stop it). The viewpoint of the film acknowledges that ideology is difficult to step outside of (patriarchal constructs such as wishing for a 'knight in shining armour' might be oppressive, but are also compelling). Campion's film embodies a more contemporary feminism; a postfeminism that does not judge but accepts that there are women like this, their pleasures in romance are real, if contradictory; and denying their existence isn't going to eliminate this fact.

Influences

Campion has acknowledged that *In the Cut* was influenced by Alan J. Pakula's 1971 film *Klute*⁷⁷⁵, another film that toys with notions of reality and truth, which probes the emotions of its characters, and also contains a story of a serial killer. Given her own thematic preoccupations, it is not surprising that Campion was interested in many of the explorations of *Klute*—the threat to women, the intimacy between a man and a woman, and the idea of "woman as enigma".⁷⁷⁶ Both films relate to words in that they contain explorations of the role of language in constructing reality and social control. Christine Gledhill argues that the Klute character (the private detective played by Donald Sutherland) doesn't have the usual male voice-over of the film noir genre⁷⁷⁷ and he is silent, which Gledhill has said is a "source of power, for words are shown in this film to be

⁷⁷⁴ Director's commentary, *In the Cut*, DVD.

⁷⁷⁵ Quinn notes that Campion and Beebe were after the edgy, paranoid atmosphere of Pakula's *Klute* (1971). Both films are about a lonely woman, and Quinn claims that it is impossible to watch Frannie and not be reminded of the way Jane Fonda was filmed in *Klute*. Anthony Quinn, 'Lady Jane's bloody reign', *Saturday Sydney Morning Herald* – 47 Hours, 25/10/03, p.1.

⁷⁷⁶ Tasker, 1998, p.5.

⁷⁷⁷ Only some noirs have voice-over, so this point could be disputed.

deceptive, not adequate to the truth, and eventually dangerous”.⁷⁷⁸ Bree (Jane Fonda) has a claim to words through making tape recordings of a pervert, and Frannie has them through her profession (she explores the duality of words, and slang—which she says is ‘either sexual or violent’).



Frannie is in many ways like Bree Daniels in *Klute*, including physically. They have mid-length, shortish brown haircuts, which while different in style, both signify that they are ‘modern’ women of their respective times. Gledhill has said that *Klute* is “trying to articulate, within the ambience of the thriller, a modern version of the independent woman, ... sexually liberated, unattached, hip ... without mentioning feminism ... arguably trying to cash in on these concerns to enhance the modernity of the type”.⁷⁷⁹ Both films explore contemporary life, are set in New York, feature lonely women who have fairly empty lives—no real friends, no boyfriends, no activity other than working (although Frannie has a sister). The two films also explore voyeurism; the criminal problem is a sexual one; and themes include romance and male psychosis in regard to women.⁷⁸⁰

Diane Giddis describes the two male characters in *Klute* (one a murderer, the other the detective) as “symbolic extensions of the heroine’s divided self,”⁷⁸¹ saying that the film functions as “a straight suspense story and as a dramatization of intense inner world

⁷⁷⁸ Gledhill quoting Giddis in Gledhill, 1998, pp.110-111.

⁷⁷⁹ Gledhill quoting Giddis in Gledhill, 1998, p.99. It should be noted that Gledhill reads the film as acting in an anti-feminist way (p.100). For example Gledhill sees *Klute’s* structure as rearticulating the *femme fatale* stereotype of film noir to bring it in line with contemporary female stereotypes and thus neutralizing the female threat to patriarchy. (See p.104).

⁷⁸⁰ There are also many differences between these two films, not that least of which is that *Klute* was directed by a man, and written by men (Andy and Dave Lewis).

⁷⁸¹ Giddis in Gledhill, 1998, p.99.

conflict”.⁷⁸² While mindful of the structuring role of the noir genre on the female image, Gledhill notes that Giddis sees *Klute* as about “one of the greatest contemporary female concerns: the conflict between the aims of love and the aims of autonomy”.⁷⁸³ Klute accepts Bree without moralistic judgment, but “far from seeking to expose the evil of her sexuality, his desire is to save her”.⁷⁸⁴ However, Malloy has no such desire and he isn’t involved in a struggle to relocate the “woman in a place less threatening to patriarchy”⁷⁸⁵—as Gledhill argues of *Klute*. In both films there are scenes where men resist women, and there is a play around power. In *Klute*, Bree offers sex in exchange for the tapes (but Klute resists), and in *In the Cut*, Malloy resists Frannie at the river when he says to her: ‘you don’t go nowhere with me [if] I don’t fuck you’, and he gets back in the car having only kissed her. A significant difference between the two films is that *Klute* leads Bree to a patriarchal version of redemption, but Malloy accepts Frannie—they are what they are and ‘whatever will be, will be’.

Pauline remembers every sexual encounter by the way the man, rather than herself, wanted it to be. While this is a sad revelation, there is no suggestion that Frannie is being represented as the preferred model of female desire. There aren’t any preferred models, but rather, a level of acceptance or pragmatism, which is something that permeates Campion’s oeuvre generally. For example, Campion has said of James’ *The Portrait Of A Lady* that he is “very modern because he’s already tearing apart the fairytale. He’s saying, ‘Be real. Life is hard ... No one’s going to get the right person’”.⁷⁸⁶ A journalist suggested to Campion that *Portrait* is antifeminist in that it punishes “Isabel for aspiration to feel free” and Campion replied that James was “a realist,” and “whatever you might want for women or for men, the important thing is to see the truth and be a commentator on that”.⁷⁸⁷ This recalls the idea of the integrity or authenticity of characterization in relation to understanding the characters’ individual historic and cultural contexts. It also

⁷⁸² Gledhill, 1998, p.99.

⁷⁸³ Gledhill, 1998, p.99.

⁷⁸⁴ Gledhill, 1998, p.103.

⁷⁸⁵ Gledhill, 1998, p.107.

⁷⁸⁶ Wexman, 1999, p. 206.

⁷⁸⁷ Wexman, 1999, p.199.

reflects Campion's pragmatic view of romance and life, and that perfect, romantic situations are ideals and part of fantasy life—rather than realities.

The extended series of references Campion makes to *Klute* are interesting intertextually, stylistically, and in relation to specific thematic links. In *Klute* the agency is given to the female character through Bree's voice-over (different to the genre's usual use of the male voice-over); so this distinguishes the film from much conventional cinema, and offers female subjectivity (despite being made by a male director). There is also a link in relation to representation, and Campion's tendency to make her major stars appear plain: there "are no beauty shots in *Klute*, no eye lights, hair lights—all of those Hollywood star glamour techniques which had been used for decades are stripped away".⁷⁸⁸

In addition, Christopher Sharrett has noted that *In the Cut* "depends for its sexual-political vision on *Klute*".⁷⁸⁹ *Klute* was made at a time when Hollywood was trying to woo a female audience, and it received critical attention from feminists; in fact Fonda herself credited it with leading her to become an advocate for the women's movement.⁷⁹⁰ So from this perspective, *Klute* may have been visible to Campion from a feminist perspective, given that it also emerged at a time when "feminism's demands for less stereotypical images of women [were met by the production of] films such as *Klute*"⁷⁹¹; although ironically *Klute* has also been described as encapsulating the "stereotype of the independent woman".⁷⁹² A postmodern intertextuality is evident. Campion comments on the earlier text by making a different statement to Pakula: while his film is patriarchal, Campion introduces two central characters whose relationship is not configured in relation to patriarchy. The link to *Klute*, a modern story, also works to signify her own film as a contemporary tale. Thus,

⁷⁸⁸ Vincent Lobrutto, *Principal Photography: Interviews with Feature Film Cinematographers*, Prager/Greenwood Publishers, Westport, 1999, p.19. This tendency was common in the 1970s and so can also be read as a to homage the style of that period.

⁷⁸⁹ Christopher Sharrett, 'False Criticism: Cinema, Bourgeois Society, and the Conservative Complaint', in Murray (EDT) Pomerance (ed.), *Cinema And Modernity*, Rutgers State University, 2006, p.136.

⁷⁹⁰ Jane Fonda in Edward P. Crapol, *Women and American Foreign Policy*, Scholarly Resources Inc. Wilmington, 1992, p.147.

⁷⁹¹ Carolyn M Byerly & Karen Ross, *Women and Media: A Critical Introduction*, Blackwell Publishing, Malden, Oxford & Carlton, 2006, p.25.

In The Cut is not merely homage, as the contrast between Pakula's vision and Campion's provokes a critical rereading of the earlier film.

⁷⁹² Tasker comments on Brunsdon's identification of Fonda in this context: Tasker, 1998, p. 213.

Fairytales, myths and desire

Campion has made reference to Frannie as being like Alice in *Alice in Wonderland*,⁷⁹³ and David Stratton has, in the same vein, said that Frannie “enters a strange new world when she sees, in a shadowy corner, a man and woman engaged in oral sex”.⁷⁹⁴ This intertextual comparison could be understood from a range of perspectives: as a superficial red herring; an ostensibly common narrative strategy; as something that suggests or captures something of the fairytale atmosphere, or a dreamscape that Campion creates (which is how Stratton appears to take her reference); or Campion might be making an oblique reference to Luce Irigaray’s version of Alice: *The Looking Glass, from the Other Side*.⁷⁹⁵

The ostensible subject of Irigaray’s *The Looking Glass, from the Other Side* is the film *Les Arpenteurs* (*The Surveyors*, Michel Soultier, 1972).⁷⁹⁶ Irigaray’s *Looking Glass* points to “the subversive or underground nature of her speaker’s perspective, that of the female subject who refuses to be circumscribed or named according to the rules of patriarchal logic”.⁷⁹⁷ And this is not the only way that *The Looking Glass, from the Other Side* links to *In the Cut*: she also creates a vivid and evocative dreamscape in the piece; for example, I am reminded of the basement of the Red Turtle⁷⁹⁸, and the scene by the river, in the following description from Irigaray’s *The Looking Glass, from the Other Side*: “a sort of cave. A concealed, hidden, protected place. A bit dark. Is this what Alice was trying to find? What he’s looking for himself? And, since they’ve gotten to the point of telling secrets, they whisper in each other’s ear. Just for fun, not to say anything”.⁷⁹⁹ *The Looking Glass, from the Other Side* is set in a garden; there is a girl with glasses, light and dark, desire, a cave and cops. “Who’s one? Who’s the other ... the ladies blur together, virgin and/or whore

⁷⁹³ In the novel of *Holy Smoke!* Ruth says that India makes about as much sense as *Alice In Wonderland*. Jane & Anna Campion, *Holy Smoke!*, Bloomsbury Publishing, London, 1999, p.13.

⁷⁹⁴ David Stratton, ‘Campion cuts to heart and soul,’ *Weekend Australian*—Review, 15/11/03, p.18.

⁷⁹⁵ Irigaray, pp.9–22.

⁷⁹⁶ Porter and Burke have indicated that the surveying means ‘striding back and forth between houses, people and feelings’—not unlike Campion’s films, and this one, which are not fixed on the story but the details. See Irigaray, 1985, p. 21.

⁷⁹⁷ Irigaray, 1985, p.219.

⁷⁹⁸ I am also reminded of a space in Scorsese’s film *After Hours* (1985)—a surreal film also set in Manhattan.

... the looking glass dissolves ... Everything is whirling. Everyone is dancing”.⁸⁰⁰ A character is “completely lost ... always been lost ... but ... didn’t feel it before [because] I was busy conforming to their wishes”.⁸⁰¹ The space between things is ambiguous:

There they are, all lost, without their familiar reference points. What’s the difference between a friend and no friend? A virgin and whore. Your wife and the woman you love? The one you desire and the one you make love with? One woman and another woman? The one who owns the house and the one who uses it for pleasure? In which house and with which woman does – did - will love happen? And when is it time for love, anyway? Time for work? How can the stakes in love and work be sorted out? Does ‘surveying’ have anything to do with desire, or not? Can pleasure be measured, bounded, triangulated, or not? Besides, ‘it’s autumn’, the colors are hanging. Turning red. Though not for long.⁸⁰²

Ultimately Irigaray argues for pushing through ‘to the other side,’ where women can find a sense of self that is not reflected through a patriarchal lens, and where they can gain (and represent) their own sexuality (as intricate and multifaceted as it might be)—a project *In the Cut* also appears to be engaged in. Other Campion films can also be seen from this perspective. For example, in *Holy Smoke!* Ruth says she has won, but PJ remarks that they are still in the cave—by which I understand Campion as meaning that they have not crossed to the other side—although by the end both Ruth and PJ grow, and cross to the place *not* circumscribed by patriarchal logic.

Another reference that can be related to the fairytale is the motif of hair. When Rodriguez chooses Frannie, he breaks his normal hair fetish (before this, the victims have long, wild, curly hair). Robert B. Sherwood has said that female hair is “usually viewed as seductive with the color and length being used to categorize ... brunettes as aggressive, and blondes as submissive. Long hair ... fertility and availability, and short hair as independent and forceful”.⁸⁰³ Mythology is full of stories about hair. Rapunzel for

⁷⁹⁹ Irigaray, 1985, p. 13.

⁸⁰⁰ Irigaray, 1985, p. 15.

⁸⁰¹ Irigaray, 1985, p. 17.

⁸⁰² Irigaray, 1985, p. 10.

⁸⁰³ Robert B. Sherwood, ‘Hair and Sex?’, *Hair News Magazine* (1995) at <http://www.hair-news.com/hair-and-sex.html> Accessed 31/8/04.

example was significant for being both innocent and sexual. The witch locked Rapunzel away because of her beauty, but her hair (a symbol of her sexuality) is how the prince, who'd been lured by her singing, was able to climb into her tower. Although Rapunzel loses her hair, like Samson (in the biblical myth of Samson & Delilah) it grows back eventually (bringing her the lover—symbolising the irrepressibility of sexuality, and bringing Samson back his strength—his hair symbolic of his virility⁸⁰⁴).

The motif of hair takes many forms in *In the Cut*; when Malloy tells Frannie that he was sexually initiated into how to give a woman pleasure by the 'chicken lady', he describes her as 'a real woman' with masses of black, curly pubic hair 'like those Spanish girls'.⁸⁰⁵ Malloy recalls that his first instinct was to run, but instead she taught him cunnilingus—in the art of which he has come to regard himself as a master. The first murder victim, with her long tangled hair and ravenous gorging on a phallus (which she strokes with long metallic blue⁸⁰⁶ fingernails), might be the archetypal sex worker (and thus a fallen woman within patriarchal culture) but all the people in the film are, to varying degrees, ravenous—be it sexually or emotionally.

Frannie witnesses the fellatio in the basement of the Red Turtle in a transfixed state. Her sexual imagination is aroused, and this has two effects: to emphasize the importance of sexual imagination, and to acknowledge her as a sexual being. Frannie observes every detail, even the small diamonds in the blue fingernails. This observation is not just important for the story, but also for decentring the phallus, which, observed by the woman, is very much of the body. This decentring occurs when "the usually invisible penis is available for comparisons, unable to evade the fate of all fleshy objects—that of

⁸⁰⁴ Campion is interested in this hair motif in other films—such as the example already discussed in *Holy Smoke!* when Ruth pulls off her father's toupee.

⁸⁰⁵ In the novel, Frannie has said the chicken-lady must have been "like sleeping with a goddess". She asks if she made him feel powerful and powerless—something he angrily refutes, not really getting her meaning but rather seeing her comments as a challenge to his masculinity and the truth of his story. Moore, 2004, p. 83.

⁸⁰⁶ The fingernails possibly signify Charles Perrault's *Bluebeard*, a patriarchal tale where a wife is almost decapitated but is saved—as Frannie is (although Frannie saves herself rather than being rescued).

becoming a humble, exchangeable signifier rather than the supreme signified”.⁸⁰⁷ As fleshy, slippery, and seeping, the phallus enters the domain of the abject in the sense that it is not monumental, classic, and restrained (the ‘proper’ socially acceptable body), but disorderly and unclean. Linking men with the abject threatens the symbolic order of phallocentrism, and moves towards a women’s language through placing male and female sexual difference side by side. Women are traditionally linked with the abject but in linking both men and women, Campion also achieves a dialogue with the Cartesian idea of historic dualism, and the mind/body split. The serial killer decapitates—his pathology is to literally and symbolically separate the mind from the body. It is significant also that Rodriguez and Malloy have completely opposite reactions to the feminine; Rodriguez seeing it as ‘monstrous’⁸⁰⁸, whereas Malloy is not just unafraid of female genitals or female sexual desire, but relishes them, with the effect of placing female sexuality beside male sexuality rather than as lesser.⁸⁰⁹

Malloy is a man who is able to enjoy female sexuality fearlessly—comfortably luxuriating in a woman ‘in the cut’ or in cunnilingus. Campion acknowledges that “the sexuality is generated by the man [Malloy] and he has a focus on the female. It’s clear that he’s made it his business to know how to love a woman sexually. I like it because the woman is not in control”.⁸¹⁰ Campion does not construct female control or power, in this film she acknowledges that there can be pleasure in the lack of it, and as such is at odds with some feminisms, but not postmodern-feminism, which can accommodate the contradiction of the feminist who might also want to be dominated in some situations (or can separate fantasy and reality). Desire is not correct, and individual fantasy is not easily rationalized within the politics of some feminisms.

⁸⁰⁷ Gillett, 2004, p.90.

⁸⁰⁸ See Creed’s *The Monstrous Feminine* on this, particularly as it relates to the ‘vagina dentata’: Creed, 1993.

⁸⁰⁹ This is emphasized when Frannie finds Pauline’s head. She rocks it back and forth in her arms. When Molloy arrives, he takes it from her gently. This illustrates a lot about both characters.

Abjection is not a barrier to either of them—as if, when you truly love, the abject isn’t a barrier.

⁸¹⁰ Libby Brooks, ‘A Lust Cause’, *Sun Herald*—Magazine, 19/10/03, p.21.

Campion has said of the scene where Frannie has come to meet Malloy in a bar that Malloy is offended when he speaks of sex to Frannie and she says nothing, and this is why he turns to Rodriguez and is so rude to her, and so she leaves.⁸¹¹ Campion says that Frannie isn't ready to reciprocate, and regards her reluctance to reveal her interest in him as being linked to the fact that doing so would make her vulnerable (and thus it is about holding or relinquishing power). Moore describes Frannie's reaction in the following way: "I remind myself that Pauline has said they [men] have to despise us in order to come near us, in order to overcome their terrible fear of us. She has some very romantic ideas".⁸¹²

In the novel version of *In the Cut*, there are numerous references to the differences between men and women; for example, Frannie comments, "I know that. The difference between male and female perversion",⁸¹³ and when Frannie meets Malloy, she notes that he ordered by putting "a twenty-dollar bill on top of the bar. It was not something a woman would do, lay money on a bar like that. I am very interested in the ways that men are different from women".⁸¹⁴ While this is written by Moore, Campion's films frequently explore a similar idea, questioning the differences between men and women, particularly in understanding how they manage to operate in the world in relation to each other—although she shows that it is more complicated than it might appear.

The film's ending

Pauline says to Frannie, "you're brave in so many ways", and throughout *In The Cut*, Frannie displaces dominant representations of women through her bravery.⁸¹⁵ For example, when Frannie finds the lock of Pauline's hair with bloodied roots, she knows what has happened, but she still (courageously) goes in to Pauline's bathroom to discover her decapitated body. In the same circumstances, with the same knowledge, I am not sure

⁸¹¹ See the director's commentary on the DVD.

⁸¹² Moore, 1995, op. cit, p.51.

⁸¹³ Moore, 1995, op. cit, p. 77.

⁸¹⁴ Moore, 1995, op. cit, p.42.

⁸¹⁵ The only time Frannie expresses fear is when she has said she is scared of what she wants.

that the average person would do this. This bravery sometimes appears as a careless lack of regard to her safety⁸¹⁶, and some have indicated that this story “set in a world of endlessly possible male violence,” is in part about the way that “some women may quite deliberately enter into situations fraught with danger”.⁸¹⁷ However, although sexual (and other) violence against women is a reoccurring theme in Campion’s work⁸¹⁸, in this film a key idea that the audience is left with is Frannie’s bravery.

Adrian Martin has observed that “[j]ust about every guy who walks into this film ... could be the killer⁸¹⁹”—but Frannie faces them all. For example, when she finds her crazy, ex-boyfriend John Graham (Kevin Bacon) in her bed, she doesn’t freak out, but calmly tells him that she is going out (and therefore gets him to leave). When she realizes that Rodriguez is going to kill her at the lighthouse, she dances with him, going along with his romancing of her—until she gets her chance. When Frannie is being strangled and kissed by Rodriguez at the lighthouse, she again has the fantasy of her parents skating/romantic meeting. Campion has said that Frannie realizes (it seems to me like an epiphany): “he’s the guy, shoot Daddy ... enough to save herself, that is the conceit of the film’s psychology”.⁸²⁰ In shooting ‘Daddy’, she frees herself symbolically from the ideology that constrains her and is able to accept love; she abandons (or releases herself from) ‘the law of the father’ at this moment. In regard to this ending, Gillett offers that the “effect of this climactic visual sequence is to give symbolic form to Frannie’s victory within the imaginary realm”,⁸²¹ and she reads it as relating to “a history of women’s struggles to free their stories from the sadomasochistic traditions of fairytale, myths, horror narratives and histories”.⁸²² Campion is successful “in constructing a *different* story

⁸¹⁶ Issues of personal safety are of interest to Campion and are especially evident in her early work (see *A Girl’s Own Story* or *After Hours*). In this film, when Frannie walks the streets, she particularly risks her safety, as Cornelius and Malloy both warn.

⁸¹⁷ Polan, 2001, p.159.

⁸¹⁸ In *Sweetie*, the fortune teller says to Kay: ‘Forget your mind. Courage and sex, that’s what love is’.

⁸¹⁹ Adrian Martin, 2003, ‘Master or Myth?’.

⁸²⁰ Director’s commentary, DVD, *In The Cut*.

⁸²¹ Gillett, 2004, p.105.

⁸²² Gillett, 2004, p.105.

of female heterosexual desire”.⁸²³ This ‘difference’ is evidence that Campion speaks with a female voice.

Barbara Creed has written that women’s films (referring to films made by women) are different to, and challenge, classic narratives because they tend to refuse closure, and retain “an open-ended structure”.⁸²⁴ The ending of *In the Cut*, like many other Campion films (most famously the multiple endings of *The Piano*, 1993) makes no promises for the future. The ambiguities present throughout the film are still present at the end of her films—in the sense that nothing is reliably or authoritatively tied up. And as for the romance, you never know if it will really last, although this film, and her films generally, offer hope for love but not certainty in it. The novel and the film of *In the Cut* have different endings. Campion herself has said that in “the book she has a different trajectory because she dies, but in the movie she is a survivor. It’s a healthiness that’s not in the book”—but she has also admitted that it was a financial decision, given that “[n]o one would fund the film [in its original version]”.⁸²⁵

Chapter conclusion

Campion creates *another social vision* with *In the Cut*—an alternative inscription. This is achieved through a number of strategies, not the least of which is a central focus on female inner life—including relationships, love, female desire, and trauma. Her feminist perspective on gender relations, ideology, identity, and the situation for modern, urban, Western women, illustrates the tensions and ambiguities of modern life; it emphasizes sexual difference, and offers this in non-oppositional terms. *In the Cut* has a focus on the relationship of women to language, but through the representations of its duality, she offers an alternative to the idea of language as masculine and fixed—allowing space for

⁸²³ Gillett, 2004, p.105.

⁸²⁴ Although it is a commonality, I acknowledge that this is not purely the domain of ‘feminine writing’. Blonski et al, 1987, p.309.

⁸²⁵ Sydney Writer’s Festival, 2004:

<http://www.writersfestival.uts.edu.au/2004/paneltalk/inthecut.html> Accessed 31/7/06. Campion received a lot of criticism for not ending the film as it ends in the book; see for example, the reference above, or <http://www.abc.net.au/rn/arts/sunmorn/stories/s993276.htm> Accessed 31/7/06.

the non-masculine, or asserting that there are multiple ways of understanding. As a female author, Campion explores what it is to be a woman in the world (as individual and multifarious as this might be); through her intuitively non-patriarchal approach, which embodies a 'feminine pattern', she asserts the need to feel a sense of self that is not reflected via a patriarchal lens. Through this she is able to offer a representation of 'woman' as different, not lesser to her masculine counterpart, existing alongside him rather in opposition. This is a postmodern-feminist constituent of the work as is her problematising the relations between things, and deconstruction of metanarratives that ideologically support cultural myths.

Thesis conclusion

The overarching aim of this thesis has been to explore the question: *are the films of Jane Campion centrally preoccupied with a cinematic articulation of female experience?* This research has revealed that Campion is an accomplished auteur whose aesthetic, craft and cinematic literacy is centrally employed in articulating female experience in the cinema. The thesis discusses this in two ways: through the authorship of her films, and through the texts themselves as cultural artefacts that aestheticise female experience. Campion's cinema is a practice that engages with the philosophical paradigms, concerns, and intellectual ideas of the era in which she has lived, and the multiple and contradictory forces, or meanings, that inform sexuality, gender and identity. Despite it involving the limits and complexities of an authorial approach, her film work, which now includes six features and has had reasonably large distribution within mainstream structures internationally, is a particularly useful site for the analysis of female authorship. Through her practice, Campion's own explorations are visible in that her films interrogate a range of questions in regard to what she wants to ask, to know, or to illustrate about how women and men live together in the world and in particular, how women experience that world; she is essentially exploring and articulating that difference which is the source of female experience. She does show that there is difference among women and that there are no universals, but more particularly, that there is a difference between men and women. Difference is a source of female experience from the perspective of alienation—not being able to 'speak'—and also from the perspectives of sexual difference, power relationships and women's encounters with difference. Difference is also represented in terms of the qualitative difference in femininity and masculinity 'lived' by men and women—that men and women could both embody femininity, but her representations imply that they cannot 'live' gender in the same way given gender is experienced differently by the 'sexed' body.

This thesis explores Campion's films as artefacts created in a context of the history of various intellectual, aesthetic, personal, institutional, and cultural trajectories. The most significant of these are outlined in the early sections of this thesis: feminism, postmodernism, and Campion's pathway as a (female) film author. In considering

authorship, this thesis was able to explore Campion's films as products of her own artistic approach, personal experience and subjectivity—all of which give her a specific perspective and viewpoint. As a feminist project this thesis has been deeply interested in feminist ideas and approaches, and this research has been concerned with the usefulness of these ideas for examining Campion's cinema in relation to the thesis question, and also, her own expressed relationship to feminist ideologies, theories and approaches. Feminisms provided theories that could be considered in order to negotiate the many problems arising in the exploration of the thesis question, such as problems of essentialism, difference, and observing a female or feminist voice or aesthetic.

An overview of Campion's feature films reveals characteristics that demonstrate an interest in if not a commitment to, feminist perspectives. This includes a significant interest in sexual difference—using her work to engage with, or understand this—as well as the offering of alternative ways of seeing power relationships between the sexes. A feature of her work is the representation of women and female viewpoints, which offer identification for women audiences, and give a 'voice' to women. She explores how patriarchy affects her characters—particularly through exposing patriarchal ideology, and disrupting, or sometimes opposing it—and moving beyond it. Women with a feminist perspective are interested in the place of women in society (both contemporary and historical), and have an interest in the female, for example in representing women's experience and achievements, or expressing female perspectives—as Campion does. The case study of Campion illustrates that some women filmmakers make films that are different to conventional cinema; through this the thesis contributes to a broader understanding of female cinema—films made by women with from a female perspective. In summary, Campion's films can be described as feminist (and this is a key area of engagement); as having a feminist aesthetic; and Campion herself can be described as a feminist author.

In addition, postmodern-feminism provided a useful approach that was neither essentialist nor constructionist. This discursive space allowed an investigation of the

impact of being in a female sexed body, and living in a world that has an impact on that body, but not holding that either is more important than the other. Such an approach allowed a discussion of difference from a theoretical position that could (or was not afraid to) speak from a gendered perspective, given that this research revealed that a fear of essentialism had previously stifled gendered enquiries. I felt that taking gender out of a discussion of subjectivity was impossible: it is a central feature of subjectivity, and of Campion's films; and it was also necessary in order to pursue the research question. Postmodern-feminism provides a contingent and heterogeneous way of thinking about women's historic and cultural specificity: it asserts gender struggles as central, but unfixes the idea of gender as any singular or homogenous thing, and illustrates how broad and complex the issues are.

Postmodern-feminism also proved to be a critical lens that is particularly suited to an examination of Campion's work. Her representations are of women who construct their own identity from their own specific experiences; they negotiate their own pathway with the expected direction for their gendered identities, and make known their individual, specific journeys, which reveal them to be products of their (gendered) experience. In this way gender is constructed as meaningful to the identity of Campion's characters, but via experience rather than in an essentialist manner. The experience of gender and existing in a sexed body is also something women share; described as an 'oppositional consciousness' in this thesis, Campion's central female protagonists share this awareness of difference from the male gender—and this is evidence that she is explicitly conscious of herself as a woman. Difference is central—it is something that Campion's characters come to understand.

It became clear through this research that in order to counter the pluralism of a postmodern-feminist approach (or charges of a liberal pluralist view from everywhere), I had to contextualize my discussions within the historic, cultural and material conditions of Campion. In addition, in the last two chapters, I have undertaken this by focusing on her cinematic explorations through the leading protagonists in her two most recent films.

These central female protagonists act out female experience: they are women whose issues, political circumstances and every day lives Campion portrays as always subject to patriarchy, but who are always able to achieve self-determination.

Campion's aesthetic offers a radical alternative to much of conventional cinema in consistently exploring female perspectives, and offering difference itself in non-oppositional terms. Her representations refuse any singularity or homogeneity of womanhood (without denying that women may feel themselves as female), and as such are feminist in that they work against patriarchal constructions, codifications or masculinist conceptions of 'woman', while also making visible the culturally conditioned aspects of female subjectivity; they also construct a 'woman's look' and privilege female agency and authority.

Campion's commitment to finding commonalities of female experience is evidenced by her aesthetic, which conveys female subjectivity and thus reveals how women might know themselves as women. This has been illustrated throughout the thesis: for instance, when Ruth in *Holy Smoke!* is surrounded or corralled by the men in her family, Campion signifies a whole patriarchal history of men attempting to control women; when Isabel in *The Portrait of A Lady* rejects Lord Warburton's proposal of marriage, she cannot convey her true meaning and through this, Campion signifies a whole history of the gendered nature of experience and language; Ada's voice-over in *The Piano* is a constant signifier of the battle between her internal self, and the world in which she lives—a constant engagement of her self, with social identity. Campion's representations stress how culture engenders women as female through illustrating how women's subjectivity is, and has historically been, linked to their gender and female sex. She thus emphasizes that difference has been historically found in the power relations between men and women and that the masculine has been embedded in western culture and thought.

This research was inspired by my own felt sense of self as a woman, and a conviction that one's sex is a factor in how one experiences the world. I discovered that there are

numerous research sources illustrating that many other women feel this collective, gendered identity. This is important because without this understanding of difference, identifying ‘female experience’ would have been impossible. Campion does not want to speak of female experience as one thing, or gender as monolithic, but rather, expresses commonalities between women, even as their particular circumstances vary. I have made the argument that her films do express female subjectivity. However but proving that there is something that is only accessible from inside that gender, for example arguing that a man cannot write a woman’s subjectivity (and visa versa), is an extremely difficult undertaking—although I argue that men and women are differently constituted in the world (for example in relation to power or patriarchy). While I have thoroughly explored this question of subjectivity, despite having found some evidence to support the idea that only a woman can construct a woman’s subjectivity, this is something that I have to concede cannot be conclusively proven.

One particularly useful approach offered is that Campion regards femininity as *a style* (and this links to her aesthetic), in other words not as something essential or innate in women filmmakers, and therefore potentially a ‘style’ which male filmmakers could employ. What I can claim from this research is that Campion’s explorations are constructed from a female perspective, she makes them *as* a woman, and *like* a woman (identification as female, feminine and feminist). This is firstly, performative in that her films are discursive productions demonstrating that gender is a cultural phenomenon, and that masculinity and femininity are intertwined and experienced in relation to the sexed body. Secondly it is a natural inclination (because she is a woman); and thirdly, it is a political choice of vantage point—and consequently the position from which preferred meanings are constructed in her cinema.

Campion’s creation of a ‘femininity of vision’ specifically addresses and offers identification for female spectators. She uses what can be identified as feminine symbols and spaces; her representations illustrate that ways in which women connect with each other are different to the ways in which they connect with men (although she is deeply

interested in both, but accords little subjectivity and agency to men). This feminism is also a part of her ‘feminist aesthetic’, which informs the discourses she constructs around the representation of ‘woman’.

Campion’s feminist aesthetic works using a ‘feminine style’ and creates a ‘feminine vision’, constituting what has been described in this thesis as a female, and feminine, aesthetic. Where she makes the women’s collective identity explicit through a visibility of female culture, this resonates with other women—who relate to her exploration of ‘woman’ as a social category and felt sense of self, and who identify with the particularly female orientated expression, or view. The female viewpoint is the place from which Campion speaks, as emphasized by the aestheticising of female experience: for example, the everyday gestures of women, signifiers of female space, female desire, and perspectives centring on central female characters. As argued in this thesis, these are all constructed in relation to each central protagonist, to her specific needs, and they provide ‘shocks of recognition’ for many female audience members. This is because they offer a vision of female subjectivity that includes elements that have generally been silent or absent; instead, they dramatize specific constructions of female subjectivity, offering the semiotic, historical, psychological, and cultural processes that construct the ‘woman’ (the central protagonist, and sometimes other key protagonists) in each of her films. The exploration of female desire is a central concern for Campion, and appears to be a common feature in women’s cinema. The fact of female authorship is significant in Campion’s films not just in relation to a tendency to a female, feminine and feminist aesthetic, but also because of this focus on female desire. This focus entails trying to understand, represent and communicate through her cinema what it is to exist in the body of a woman, in the female gender: not just how culture and society (and its ideology) impact on the gendered subject, but also how that subject might be driven by forces of desire. These forces include imagination, and other complex and rarely represented yearnings or needs of female subjects.

This thesis has outlined Campion’s distinctive style as an auteur, the thematic and

autobiographical referents of her work, and the cultural and historical frameworks in which her films are elaborated; but more particularly, this research has evidenced that Campion's films aestheticise female experience through representational, aesthetic, formal, stylistic, or thematic markers that point to, in this case, a specifically female authorial imprint (or voice). Through her focus on female experience Campion's films highlight cultural silences—such as a lack of representation around female experiences—in the majority of mainstream filmmaking. I have outlined how Campion explores the subjectivity of her characters as they are constructed semiotically and historically, through her reading of, or performance of, their (female) historical and cultural specificity, or engagement with social reality. This subjectivity is mediated through the lens of Campion's own historical and cultural specificity as a contemporary female filmmaker, who wants to tell modern stories that centre on women; reflect female desire; and specify or point to her own times—and the issues and intellectual ideas of those times. Campion creates a discernable approach in her films, which specifically relates to her gender, and which reflects her consciousness of being a woman. As such, this thesis finds that the author's oeuvre is imbued with her gender, and her works are discourses about her relationship to, and understanding of sex and gender.

To conclude, Campion's films communicate or 'speak' of gendered experience, and they aestheticise it. This research offers a case study that makes an important contribution to the field in examining the function and position of the female author—something that other feminist scholars will (and need) to continue. Campion's oeuvre, with its focus on the lives of women, their battle to reconcile liberty, creativity and relationships or love, offers her unique view of female experience; such a view allows insights into the impact of sex and gender on identity. This articulation of female experience makes female desire visible. The present research makes a contribution to theory around the photographic image: it outlines how a director might be one of the speakers in her films; it adds to the scarce body of research on women in film, particularly in the Australian film milieu, and in relation to female and feminist authorship in contemporary cinema; it interrogates how female experience might be aestheticised; and it explores how women's desires have been

made perceptible by Campion (in the context of film history where they have rarely been manifest). This thesis therefore concludes that Campion's aesthetic and perspective is not only feminist, but also, female, and feminine, and that the films of Jane Campion are centrally preoccupied with a cinematic articulation of female experience. Campion's own words about her contribution to the articulation of female experience in the cinema are an appropriate place to close:

*I think I know things about women that men cannot express.*⁸²⁶

*Most of my films are written about women, and people often ask why I make films about women. It's as basic as that to me. I think the reason that actresses have excelled in my films is that I'm speaking in their language; I'm speaking through the body of a woman, the psyche of a woman, and that's my particular insight.*⁸²⁷

Jane Campion

⁸²⁶ Wright Wexman, 1999, p.129.

⁸²⁷ Campion in Goodridge, 2002, p.85.

Bibliography

- Aaron, M., (ed.), *The Body's Perilous Pleasures: Dangerous Desires and Contemporary Culture*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 1999.
- Aaron, J. & Walby, S. (eds.), *Out of the Margins*, Falmer Press, London & New York, 1991.
- Abrams, N., Bell, I., & Urdis, J. (eds.), *Studying Film*, Oxford University Press, London & New York, 2001.
- Adams, P., 'Holey smoking reputation', *Weekend Australian Review*, 5/2/00, p.32.
- Alexander, J., Eyerman, R., Giesen, B., Smelser, N.J., Sztomka, P., *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 2004.
- Allen, R., 'Female Sexuality, Creativity, and Desire in *The Piano*', in Coombs, F., & Gemmell, S. (eds.), *Piano Lessons: Approaches to the Piano*, Sydney, 2000.
- Alysén, B., 'Australian Women Filmmakers: Part 4. Jeni Thornley and Martha Ansara', *Cinema Papers*, No.23, Sept/Oct, 1979, pp. 497-499.
- Andrews, N., 'FT Weekend Magazine—The Arts', *Financial Times*, London (UK), 18/10/03, p. 26.
- Anthony, A., 'Cut the Act', *Sunday Herald Sun – Sunday Magazine*, 9/11/03, p.8.
- Applebaum, A., 'Interview: Jane Campion', *BBC Films* at: http://www.bbc.co.uk/films/2003/10/14/jane_campion_in_the...
- Ardener, E., 'Belief and the problem of women', in S. Ardener, *Perceiving Women*, London, 1975.
- Armitage, K., Marchessault, J., Longfellow, B., & Banning, K., *Gendering The Nation*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, Buffalo, London, 1999.
- Arya, C., *An Introduction to Film Studies*, Routledge, UK, 2003.
- Audé, F., 'La Leçon de Piano : Une expérience de femme', *Positif*, No. 387, May 1993, p. 22 (Written in French).
- Author not given, 'Down with Love', *Fairfax Archives* (August 16, 2003): <http://www.abc.net.au/rn/arts/sunmorn/stories/s993276.htm>
- Author not given, 'Beauty and the beastly book', *Sun Herald*, 30/3/97, p.5.
- Author not given, 'Meg Cuts It in a Racy Role', *MX-Melbourne*, 14/8/03, p. 30.
- Author not given, 'Meg cuts the cute', *Saturday Mercury*, 8/11/03, p.47.
- Author not given, 'Parvati, the Mother Goddess', at: www.crystallotus.com/shiva/07.htm
- Bailey, J. J., *Reel Women: Working in Film and Television*, AFTRS, Sydney, 1999.
- Barber, L., 'Holy spirits', *Financial Review*, 24/12/99, p.6.
- Barber, L., 'Reel Women', *Australian (Review)*, April 25-26, 1998, p. 6.
- Barker, C., *Cultural Studies: Theory and Practice*, Sage, London, California & New Delhi, 2000.
- Barlow, H., 'Review', *Age—Metro E.G.*, 7/11/03, p.3.
- Barrett, T., *Criticizing Art: Understanding the Contemporary*, 2nd. Ed., Mayfield Publishing Co., Mountain View, California, 2000.
- Barthes, R., 'The Death of the Author' (1968), in Richard Howard (translation), *The Rustle of Language*, Hill and Wang, New York, 1986.
- Baudelaire, C., 'The Painter of Modern Life', in *Selected Writings on Art and Literature*, trans. PE Charvet, Penguin Books, New York, 1972. First published in 1863.
- Beasley, C., *Gender and Sexuality: critical theories, critical thinkers*, Sage, London, Thousand Oakes, New Delhi, 2005.
- Beauvoir, S., de *The Second Sex*, Bantam Books, New York, 1961 (trans. From Le Deuxième sexe, Librairie Gallimard, 1949).
- Bella, R., 'Conditional Feminism in a Postmodern World', Department of Communication Studies, California State University, 2000 at [http://hy\[per.vcsun.org/HyperNews/battias/get/coms633/f2002/e...](http://hy[per.vcsun.org/HyperNews/battias/get/coms633/f2002/e...)
- Bellour, R., 'Hitchcock the Enunciator', *Camera Obscura*, No.3/4, 1977, pp.71-103.
- Belsey, C., & Moore, J. (eds.), *The Feminist Reader*, Blackwell Publishers, Malden, USA, 1997.
- Belton, J., *American Cinema/American Culture*, McGraw-Hill Inc., New York, 1994.
- Bertrand, I., and Hughes, P., 'Media Research Methods: Audience, Institutions, Texts', Palgrave Macmillan New York, 2005.

- Beugnet, M., *Claire Denis*, Manchester University Press, Manchester and New York, 2004.
- Bilbrough, M., 'Different Complexions: Jane Campion, An Interview' in Dennis, J., & Biering, J. (eds.) 2nd ed., *Film in Aotearoa New Zealand*, Victoria University Press, Wellington, 1992.
- Blonski, A., Creed, B., & Freiberg, F. (eds.), *Don't Shoot Darling, Women's Independent Filmmaking in Australia*, Greenhouse Publications Pty Ltd, Richmond, Australia 1987.
- Bloom, L. (ed.), *With Other Eyes: Looking at Race and Gender in Visual Culture*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1999.
- Bloustien, G., 'Jane Campion; Memory, Motif and Music', in *Continuum* 5:2, 1992, pp. 29-39.
- Blowers, G.H., 'Psychological approaches to film audience research: A critique', in Austin, B., A. (ed.), *Current research in film: Audiences, economics and law*, Norwood, NJ: Ablex, 1991, Vol.V., pp.56-67.
- Bogdan, D., Davis, H.E., & Bertson, J., 'Sweet Surrender and Trespassing Desires in Reading: Jane Campion's *The Piano* and the Struggle for Responsible Pedagogy', *Changing English*. No. 4, March 1997, pp. 81-103.
- Bono, P., & Kemp, S. (eds.), *Italian Feminist Thought: A Reader*, Blackwell, Oxford UK & Cambridge USA, 1991.
- Bordo, S.,
 - 'Feminism, 'Postmodernism, and Gender-Scepticism', in Linda J. Nicholson, (ed.), *Feminism/Postmodernism*, Routledge, New York and London, 1990.
 - *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body*, (2nd edition) University of California Press, London, 2003.
- Borman, J. & Weibrecht, I., *Projections 13: Women film-makers on filmmaking*, Faber and Faber, London, 2004.
- Brennan, T., *History After Lacan*, Routledge, London & New York, 1993.
- Brofen E., in Saleci, R. (ed.), *Sexuation*, Duke University Press, Durham, 2000, pp.170-215.
- Brook, A., *Postfeminisms, Feminism, cultural theory and cultural forms*, Routledge, London & New York 1997.
- Brooks, L., 'A Lust Cause', *Sun Herald* – S Magazine, 19/10/03, p.21.
- Bruzzi, S.,
 - 'Tempestuous Petticoats: Costume and Desire in *The Piano*', *Screen* Vol. 36, No. 3. Autumn, 1995, pp. 257-66.
 - *Holy Smoke!*, *Sight & Sound*, Vol.10, No.4, April 2000, p. 48.
 - 'Replaying *The Piano*', *Sight and Sound*, Vol.4, No.3., March 1994, p.64.
 - 'The Piano debate: Tempestuous petticoats: costume and desire in *The Piano*', *Screen*, Vol. 36., No.3., Autumn 1995, pp. 257-266.
 - 'Jane Campion: costume drama and reclaiming women's past', in Pam Cook and Philip Dodd (eds.), *Women and Film: A Sight and Sound Reader*, Temple University Press, Philadelphia, 1993, pp.232-242.
- Bullock, A., Stallybrass, O., & Trombley, S. (eds.) *The Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought* (2nd ed.), Fontana Press, London, 1989.
- Bullock A., & Trombley, S. (eds.), *The New Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought*, (3rd ed.), Harper Collins Publishers, 2000.
- Bunbury, S., 'Cutting in on Campion', *Age—Agenda*, 16/11/03, p.18.
- Bush, C.E., 'Smoke and Fire', *Christian Century*, 1/3/00, p. 249.
- Bussi, E., 'Voyages and Border Crossings: Jane Campion's *The Piano* (1993)', in Everett, W. (ed.), *The Seeing Century: Film, Vision and Identity*, Rodopi B.V., Amsterdam & Atlanta, 2000, pp. 161-173.
- Butler, J.,
 - *Gender Trouble*, Routledge, New York, 1999.
 - 'Gender Trouble, Feminist Theory and Psychoanalytic Discourse', in Linda J. Nicholson (ed.), *Feminism/Postmodernism*, Routledge, New York and London, 1990.
- Butler, J., & Scott, J. W. (eds.), *Feminists Theorize the Political*, Routledge: Chapman Hall Inc., New York & London, 1992.
- Byerly C.M., & Ross, K., *Women and Media: A Critical Introduction*, Blackwell Publishing, Malden, Oxford & Carlton, 2006.
- Callahan, C., 'His Natural Whiteness: Modes of Ethnic Presence and Absence in Some Recent Australian Films', in Craven, I. (ed.), *Australian Cinema in the 1990s*, Frank Cass, London, 2001, pp. 95-114.
- Campion, A. & J., *Holy Smoke!*, Bloomsbury Publishing, London, 1999.

- Caputo, R., & Burton, G., *Second Take, Australian Film-makers Talk*, Allen & Unwin, 1999.
- Carriere, M., *Writing in the Feminine in French and English Canada*, University of Toronto Press Inc., Toronto, Buffalo & London, 2002.
- Carson, D., Dittman, L., & Welsch, J., *Multiple Voices in Feminist Film Criticism*, University of Minneapolis Press, Minneapolis, 1994.
- Casetti, F., *Theories of Cinema: 1945-1990*, University of Texas Press, USA, 1999.
- Caughie, J. (ed.), *Theories of Authorship: A Reader*, Routledge & Kegan Paul in association with the BFI, London, Boston & Henley, 1981.
- Caughie, J. & Kuhn, K. (eds.), *The Sexual Subject: A Screen Reader in sexuality*, Routledge, London, 1992.
- Chafetz, J. S. (ed.), *Handbook of the Sociology of Gender*, Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers, New York, 1999.
- Chanter, Y., & Ziarek, E. P. (eds.), *Revolt, Affect, Collectivity: The Unstable Boundaries of Kristeva's Polis*, State University of New York Press & SUNY Press, Albany, New York, 2005.
- Chatman, S., & Duncan, P. (eds.), *Michelangelo Antonioni*, Taschen, 2004.
- Cheshire, E., *Jane Campion*, Pocket Essentials, Harpenden, UK, 2000.
- Chisholm, D., *Queer Constellations: Subcultural Space in the Wake of the City*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis and London, 2004.
- Christopher, E., Bush, 'Smoke and Fire', *Christian Century*, 1/3/00, p. 249.
- Ciment, M., 'Jane Campion and *Positif*', in Caputo, R., & Burton, G., *Second Take, Australian Film-makers Talk*, Allen & Unwin, 1999.
- Colbert, M.,
 - 'All Men are Liars: 'A lie? 'Tis but the truth in masquerade': Lord Byron', *Cinema Papers*, No. 106, October, 1995, p. 6.
 - 'Jane Campion on Her Gothic Film: *The Piano*', *Sight and Sound*, 3.10, October 1993, p.6.
- Collins, F., *The Films of Gillian Armstrong*, ATOM, Melbourne, 1999.
- Columpar, C., 'The Dancing Body: Sally Potter as a Feminist Auteure', in Levitin, J., Plessis, J., & Raoul, V. (eds.) *Women Filmmakers: Refocusing*, University of British Columbia Press, Vancouver, 2003, pp. 108-118.
- Cook, P., & Bernink, M. (eds.), *The Cinema Book* (2nd ed.), British Film Institute, London, 1999.
- Cook, P., and Dodd, P. (eds.), *Women and Film: a Sight and Sound Reader*, Temple University Press, Philadelphia, 1993.
- Coombs, F., & Gemmell, S., *Piano Lessons, Approaches to The Piano*, Southern Screen Classics:1, John Libby & Co. Pty. Ltd., Sydney, 2000.
- Coward, R., *Patriarchal Precedents: Sexuality and Social Relations*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1983.
- Cowie, E.,
 - *Fantasia*, M/F no.9, 1984, pp.70-105
 - *Representing the Woman: Cinema and Psychoanalysis*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1997.
- Cox, E., 'Jane's Obsession', *The American Enterprise* (online) viewed 20/12/06 at http://www.taemag.com/issues/articleID.17753/article_detail.asp
- Crapol, E. P., *Women and American Foreign Policy*, Scholarly Resources Inc. Wilmington, 1992.
- Craven, I. (ed.), *Australian Cinema in the 1990s*, Frank Cass, London, 2001.
- Crawford, Anne-Marie & Martin, Adrian, 'Sweetie', *Cinema Papers*, No. 75, pp. 56-57.
- Crawford, J., 'A national obsession: Australian cinema and the national identity since 1945', *Cabbages and Kings*, Vol. 18, 1990, pp. 22-44.
- Creed, B., *The Monstrous Feminine*, Routledge, London, 1993.
- Cummings, R., 'The Piano Revisited', *Sight and Sound*, Vol.4, No.2., Feb. 1994, p.72.
- Crofts, S., Foreign Tunes? Gender and Nationality in Four Countries' Reception of *The Piano*, in Harriet Margolis, *The Piano*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2000, pp.135-162.
- D'Cruz, D., Textual Enigmas and Disruptive Desires in Jane Campion's *Sweetie*, *Australian Feminist Studies*, Vol.21, No.49, March 2006, pp.7-22.
- Davies, J., & Dowson, J., *Classical Dictionary of Hind Mythology and Religion*, Geography, History and Literature, Kessinger Publishing, London, 2003.

- Davis, M., 'Tied to That Maternal 'thing': Death and Desire in Jane Campion's *The Piano*', *Gothic Studies*, No. 4, May 2002, pp. 63-78.
- de Beauvoir, S., *The Second Sex (Le Deuxieme Sexe)*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1953.
- Dennis, J. & Bieringa, J., *Film in Aotearoa New Zealand*, Victoria Uni. Press, New Zealand, 1996.
- de Lauretis, T.,
 - *Alice Doesn't, Feminism Semiotics Cinema*, Indian University Press, Bloomington, 1984.
 - *Technologies of Gender, Essays on Theory, Film and Fiction*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington & Indianapolis, 1987.
- Derrida, J.,
 - *The Ear of the Other: Texts and Discussions with Jacques Derrida—Otobiography, Transference, Translation*, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 1985
 - *Of Grammatology*, (trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak), John Hopkins University Press, Maryland, 1997.
 - *Positions*, (trans. Alan Bass) University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1981.
 - 'Women in the Beehive', in Alice Jardine and Paul Smith, *Men in Feminism*, Methuen, New York and London, 1987.
- Dermody, S., & Jacka, E. (eds.),
 - *The Imaginary Industry, Australian Film In The Late '80s*, Australian Film, Television And Radio School, 1988.
 - *The Screening of Australia; Anatomy of a Film Industry*, Vol. 1, Currency Press, Sydney, 1987.
- Di Stefano, C., 'Dilemmas of Difference: Feminism, Modernity, and Postmodernism', in Nicholson, L. J. *Feminism/Postmodernism*, Routledge, New York and London, 1990, pp. 63-82.
- Dissanayake, W., Rothman, W., & Dudley, A. (eds.), *Melodrama and Asian Cinema*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1993.
- Doane, M.A., *The Desire to Desire: The Woman's Film of the 1940s*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1987.
- Doland, A., 'Campion laments lack of female filmmakers', *Age*, 22/5/07, p.15.
- Donaldson, L. E., *Decolonizing Feminisms: Race, Gender and Empire Building*, The University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill & London, 1992.
- Douglas Varvur, M., *Postfeminist News: Political Women in Media Culture*, State University of New York Press, Albany, 2002.
- Dowling, C., *The Cinderella Complex, Women's Hidden Fear Of Independence*, Michael Joseph Ltd, 1982.
- Dudley, A. & Shafto, S. (eds.), *The Image in Dispute: Art and Cinema in the Age of Photography*, The University of Texas Press, Austin, 1997.
- Dyson, L., 'The return of the repressed? Whiteness, femininity and colonialism in *The Piano*', *Screen*, Vol. 36., No.3., Autumn 1995, pp. 267- 276.
- Eagleton, M. (ed.), *Concise Companion to Feminist Theory*, Blackwell Publishing, Malden, Oxford, Carlton & Berlin, 2003.
- Eisenstein, H., & Jardin, A., (eds.) *The Future of Difference*, Rutgers University Press, Boston, 1988.
- Elam, D., *Feminism and Deconstruction*, Routledge, London and New York, 1994.
- Enker, D., 'The Girl's Own Story', *Cinema Papers*, No.60., Nov., 1986, p.47-48.
- Evans, M., *Introducing Contemporary Feminist Thought*, Blackwell Publishers Inc. Malden USA, 1997.
- Everett, W. (ed.), *The Seeing Century: Film, Vision and Identity*, Rodopi B.V., Amsterdam & Atlanta, 2000.
- *Feeling Sexy* web site at <http://www.maverickfilms.com.au/feelingsexy.html>
- Felperin, L., 'Chick Flicks' (Editorial), *Sight and Sound*, Vol. 9, Issue 10, October 99, p. 3.
- Fieldman Miller, L., *The Hand That Holds The Camera; Interviews with Women Film And Video Directors*, Garland Publishing Inc., New York & London 1988.
- Fink, B., *The Lacanian Subject: Between Language and Jouissance*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1995.
- Firestone, S., *The Dialectic of Sex: The Case for the Feminist Revolution*, Morrow, New York, 1970.
- Fischer, L., *Shot/Countershot, Film Tradition and Women's Cinema*, British Film Institute Cinema Series, Princeton University Press, 1989.
- Flax, J., 'Postmodernism and Gender Relations' in Nicholson, L. J. *Feminism/Postmodernism*, Routledge, New York and London, 1990, pp. 39-62.

- Foucault, M., *The History Of Sexuality, Vol.III; The Care Of The Self*, Allen Lane/ Penguin, London, 1986.
- Fowler (ed.), *The European Cinema Reader*, Routledge, London & New York, 2002.
- Frame, J., *The Envoy from Mirror City*, The Women's Press, London, 1985.
- Friedberg, *Window Shopping: cinema and the postmodern*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1993.
- Freiberg, F., 'The Bizarre in the Banal: Notes on the Films of Jane Campion', in Blonski, A., Creed, B., & Freiberg, F. (eds.), *Don't Shoot Darlings: Women's Independent Filmmaking Australia*, Greenhouse Publications Pty Ltd, Richmond, Australia, 1987, pp.328-333.
- French, L. (ed.), *Womenvision: Women and The Moving Image in Australia*, Damned Publishing, Melbourne, 2003.
- French, L.,
 - 'Romance, Fantasy, and Female Sexuality in Feeling Sexy', *Metro: Film, Television, Radio & Multimedia Journal*, No.123, January 2000, pp.13 - 17.
 - Do Contemporary Australian Women Filmmakers Share a Feminist Perspective in their Work?, La Trobe University Masters Thesis, 1995.
 - 'Love Serenade: Is It a Feminist Film?', *Metro: Film, Television, Radio & Multimedia Journal*, No.112, 1997, pp.78-82.
- Freud, S., *The UnCanny*, McLintock, D. (trans.), Penguin, New York & London, 2003
- Fuery, P., *New Developments in Film Theory*, Macmillan Press Ltd., London, 2000.
- Fuller, G., & Francke, L., 'Sex and Self-Danger', *Sight and Sound*, No.13 (11), November 2003, pp. 16-19.
- Fuss, D., *Essentially Speaking: Feminism, Nature & Difference*, Routledge, New York, 1989.
- Gamble, S., *The Routledge Companion to Feminism and Postfeminism*, Routledge, London & New York, 2001.
- Gadamer, H-G., *Truth and Method*, 2nd revised ed., Crossroad, New York, 1989
- Gamman, L., & Marshment, M. (eds.) *The Female Gaze; Women as viewers of Popular Culture*, The Women's Press, 1988.
- Gamman, L., 'Self-Fashioning, Gender Display, and Sexy Girls Shoes: What's at Stake—Female Fetishism or Narcissism?' in Shari Benstock & Suzanne Ferriss (eds.), *Footnotes: On Shoes*, Rutgers State University, UK, 2001, 93-115.
- Gatens, M., *Imaginary Bodies: Ethics, Power and Corporeality*, Routledge, London & New York, 1996.
- General News, 'Meg Cuts It in a Racy Role', *MX - Melbourne*, 14/8/03, p. 30.
- Gentry, E., 'Painterly Touches', *American Cinematographer*, Vol.78., No. 1., Jan., 1997, pp.50-57.
- Gergen, M., 'Facing Off: Postmodern/Feminism' at <http://www.taosinstitute.net/manuscripts/facingoff.html>
- Gerstner, D.A., & Staiger, J., (eds.), *Authorship and Film*, Routledge, London & New York, 2003. p. 38.
- Gillett, S.,
 - 'Lips and fingers: Jane Campion's *The Piano*', *Screen*, Vol. 36., No.3., Autumn 1995, pp. 277-287.
 - 'Engaging Medusa: Competing Myths and Fairytales in *In the Cut*', *Senses of Cinema*, Issue 31, April 2004, at www.sensesofcinema.com/contents/04/31/in_the_cut.html
 - 'Never a Native: Deconstructing Home and Heart in *Holy Smoke*', *Senses of Cinema*, March 2000, <http://www.innersense.com.au/senses/contents/5/holy.html>
 - *Views From Beyond the Mirror: The Films Of Jane Campion*, ATOM, Melbourne, 2004.
- Gleber, A., 'Women on the Screens and Streets of Modernity In Search of the Female Flâneur', in Andrew Dudley & Sally Shafto (eds.) *The Image in Dispute: Art and Cinema in the Age of Photography*, The University of Texas Press, Austin, 1997.
- Gledhill, C., 'Klute 2: Feminism and Klute' in E. Ann Kaplan, *Women in Film Noir*, BFI, London, 1998, pp.99-114.
- Goode, P., *Settler romance in The piano and Far and away*, unpublished thesis, University of Auckland, New Zealand, 1996.
- Goodridge, M., *Screencraft Directing*, Rotovision, Switzerland, 2002.
- Gordon, S., 'I Clipped your Wing, that's all: auto-erotism and the female spectator in *The Piano* debate', *Screen*, Vol. 37., No.2., Summer 1996, pp. 193- 205.
- Grosz, E.,

- 'Ontology and Equivocation: Derrida's politics of Sexual Difference' in Nancy J. Holland (ed.) *Feminist Interpretations of Jacques Derrida*, The Pennsylvania State University Press, Pennsylvania, 1997, pp.173-102.
- *Sexual Subversions: Three French Feminists*, Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest, NSW, 1989.
- *Volatile Bodies: Towards a Corporeal Feminism*, Allen & Unwin, St Leonards, NSW, 1994.
- Grunberg, S., Australia; From Desert to Hollywood, *Metro: Film, Television, Radio & Multimedia Journal*, No. 100, Summer, 1994/95, pp. 27-31.
- Gunby, I., 'Postmodern Feminist Identity Politics', at <http://www.massey.ac.nz/~nzsrda/nzssreps/journals/sites/sites24/gunby24.htm>
- Guneratne, A., Dissanayake, W., (eds.), *Rethinking Third Cinema*, Routledge, London & New York, 2003.
- Gunther, R., *Marguerite Duras*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 2002.
- Hall, E., Wrigley, A., MacIntosh, F., (eds.), *Dionysus Since 69: Greek Tragedy at the Dawn of the Third Millennium*, Oxford and New York, 2004.
- Hall, S., 'There's smoke but little fire', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 23/12/99, p.12.
- Hall, S., 'In The Cut', *Sydney Morning Herald* – 48 Hours, 15/11/03, p.9.
- Hall, S., 'Sex, brains, swagger and an arrogance that cuts both ways', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 13/11/03, p.15.
- Hall, S., 'Star-crossed Family', *The Bulletin*, 26/9/89 in AFI *Cinedossier*, p.66.
- Hall, S., *Representation: Cultural Representations And Signifying Practices*, Sage, 1997.
- Haraway, D., 'A Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology and Socialist Feminism in the 1980s', in Linda Nicholson (ed.) *The Second Wave: A Feminist Reader*, Routledge, London, New York, 1997, pp.190-232.
- Haraway, D., 'A Manifesto for Cyborgs', Linda J. Nicholson, L.J., *Feminism/Postmodernism*, Routledge, New York and London, 1990.
- Hart, K., *The Trespass of the Sign: Deconstruction, Theology, and Philosophy*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge and New York, 1989.
- Harvard University, *Harvard Film Archive*: <http://www.harvardfilmarchive.org/calendars/00mayjun/leftbank.htm>
- Haskell, M.,
 - 'Are Women Directors Different?', in Allen, R., (ed.) *Channels Of Discourse; Television And Contemporary Criticism*, University of North Carolina Press & Routledge, UK, 1989.
 - 'Feminism, take two', *Film Comment*, XVI/6, Nov/Dec, 1989, pp. 70-73.
- Haslem, Wendy, 'Towards a darker vision', *OnScreen*, Feb.-March, 1997, pp.17-18.
- Hayward, S., *Cinema Studies: Key Concepts*, (2nd ed.), Routledge & London, 2000.
- Heartney, E., *Postmodernism*, Tate Publishing, Millbank, London.
- Hebron, S., 'In the Cut', *The London Times* at http://www.iff.org.uk/films_details.php?FilmID=120
- Hekman, A. J., *Gender and Knowledge: Elements of A Postmodern Feminism*, Polity Press, Cambridge, UK, 1990.
- Hendershot, C., '(Re)Visioning the Gothic: Jane Campion's The Piano', *Literature Film Quarterly*, Vol. 26, No.2, 1998, pp. 97-108
- Herd, H., *Independent Filmmaking in Australia 1960-1980*, Australian Film and Television School, 1983.
- Herd, J., 'Sweet No More', *Weekend Australian* – Review, 1/11/03, p.16.
- Hessey, R.,
 - 'Campion goes out on a limb—again', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 5/7/89, in AFI *Cinedossier*, p.55.
 - 'Lord, it's hard to be humbled', *Sunday Age*, 9/1/00, p.8.
 - 'Where there's Smoke ...', *Independent Filmmakers (IF)*, Dec.'99-Jan '00, p.34.
- Hill, L., *Marguerite Duras: Apocalyptic Desires*, Routledge, London, 1993.
- Holland, H. J. (ed.), *Feminist Interpretations of Jacques Derrida*, The Pennsylvania State University Press, Pennsylvania, 1997.
- Hollow, J., *Feminism, Femininity and Popular Culture*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 2000
- hooks, b., *Feminism Is For Everybody: Passionate Politics*, Pluto Press, London, 2000.
- Hopgood, F.,

- 'Jane Campion', *Senses of Cinema*, Issue 22, Sept.-Oct., 2002 at: <http://www.sensesofcinema.com/contents/directors/02/campion.html>
- 'Inspiring Passion and Hatred: Jane Campion's 'In The Cut'', *Metro: Film, Television, Radio & Multimedia Journal*, No. 139, pp. 28-33.
- 'A Special Kind of Excess: The unruly woman of comedy and melodrama in Jane Campion's *Sweetie*', *antiTHESIS*, No 15., 2005, pp.91-113.
- Horrocks, R., 'New Zealand Cinema, Cultures, Policies, Films' in Verhoeven, D., *Twin Peaks, Australia and New Zealand Feature Films*, Damned Publishing, 1999, pp. 129-137.
- Humm, M., (ed.), *Feminism A Reader*, Harvester Wheatsheaf, New York, London, Toronto, Sydney, Tokyo & Singapore, 1992.
- Humm, M.,
 - *Feminism and Film*, Edinburgh & Indiana University Press, Edinburgh, 1997.
 - *The Dictionary of Feminist Theory*, (2nd ed.) Prentice Hall/ Harvester Wheatsheaf Hertfordshire, 1995.
- Irigaray, L., (Catherine Porter with Caroline Burke, translation), *This Sex Which Is Not One*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, New York, 1985.
- Jacobs, L., *Now Voyager*: Some Problems of Enunciation and Sexual Difference, *Camera Obscura*, No.7, 1981
- James, H., *The Portrait Of A Lady*, Penguin Books, London, 2003.
- Jancovich, M., Reboll, A. L., Stringer, J., Willis, A., (eds.), *Defining Cult Movies: The Cultural Politics of Oppositional Taste*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, New York & Vancouver, 2003.
- Jardin, A., & Smith, P. (eds.) *Men In Feminism*, Methuen, New York, 1987.
- Jayamanne, L., *Toward Cinema and Its Double: Cross-Cultural Mimesis*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington and Indianapolis, 2001.
- Johnson, B., *The Feminist Difference: Literature, Psychoanalysis, Race and Gender*, Harvard Uni. Press, England, 1998.
- Johnston C. (ed.), *The work of Dorothy Arzner: Towards a Feminist Cinema*, BFI, 1975.
- Johnston, C.,
 - 'Myths of Women in the Cinema', in G. Perry, (ed.) *Women and the Cinema, A Critical Anthology*, Dutton, New York, 1977, pp.407-411.
 - 'Notes on Women's Cinema', in *Women and Film*, Society for Education in Film and Television, 1973.
 - *The Work of Dorothy Arzner: Towards a Feminist Cinema*, BFI, London, 1975.
 - 'Women's Cinema as Counter-Cinema', in Nichols, B., *Movies and Methods*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1976, p. 208-217.
- Johnson, P., *Feminism as Radical Humanism*, Allen and Unwin, St Leonards, NSW, 1989.
- Kaplan, E. A.,
 - *Women and film: Both Sides of the Camera*, Methuen, New York, 1983.
 - *Women in Film Noir*, BFI, London, 1998.
 - 'Melodrama/ subjectivity / ideology: Western melodrama theories and their relevance to recent Chinese cinema', in Dissanayake, W., Rothman, W., & Dudley, A. (eds.), *Melodrama and Asian Cinema*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1993.
 - 'Women, Film, Resistance: Changing Paradigms', in Levitin, J., Plessis, J., & Raoul, V., (eds.) *Women Filmmakers: Refocusing*, University of British Columbia Press, Vancouver, 2003, pp.15-28.
- Jones, S. M., *Projecting a nation: New Zealand film and its reception in Germany*, Studies in New Zealand Culture, No.3., Kakapo, Nottingham, 1999.
- Katz, E., 'Marguerite Duras', *The Film Encyclopedia* at <http://www.geocities.com/paris/metro/9384/directors/duras.htm>
- Kauffmann, S., 'A Passion in the Desert', *The New Republic*, 7/2/00, p.26 & 28.
- Kennedy, B., 'Post-feminist futures in Film Noir', in Aaron, M., (ed.), *The Body's Perilous Pleasures: Dangerous Desires and Contemporary Culture*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 1999.
- Kissane, K., 'The Fruits of Feminism', *Age*, 30 July, 1994, p. 17.

- Kinsley, D.R., *Tantric Visions of the Divine Feminine: Ten Mahavidyas*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1997.
- Kizilos, K., 'Giving girls a chance to act out and act up on screen', *Age*, April 27, 1994, p.19.
- Klawans, S., 'Rescuer Down Under: Holy Smoke- The Edge of the World', *The Nation*, 31/1/00, pp.35-36.
- Klinger, B., 'The Art Film, Affect and the Female Viewer: The Piano revisited', in *Screen*, Vol. 47, No.1, 2006, pp.19-41.
- Konow, D., 'Rough Cut: Jane Campion and Susanna Moore on *In the Cut*', in *Screenwriting* 10.5, 2003, pp.69-73.
- Kristeva, J.,
 - *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature in Art*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1980.
 - *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans Leon D. Roudiez, Columbia university Press, New York, 1982.
- Kuhn, A., & Radstone, S. (eds.), *Women's Companion to International Film*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1990.
- Kuhn, A., *Women's Pictures: Feminism and Cinema*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, Boston, Melbourne and Henley, 1982.
- Le Gate, M., *In Their Time: A History of Feminism in Western Society*, Routledge, New York & London, 2001.
- Leslie, E., *Walter Benjamin's Arcades Project*, at <http://www.militantesthetix.co.uk/yarcades.html> - undated.
- Leuthold, Steven, *Indigenous Aesthetics*, University of Texas Press, Texas, 1998.
- Levitin, J., 'Mother of the New Wave: An Interview with Agnes Varda', *Women & Film*, Vol. 1, No. 5-6, 1974, p. 62-66, & 103.
- Levitin, J., Plessis, J., & Raoul, V. (eds.) *Women Filmmakers: Refocusing*, University of British Columbia Press, Vancouver, 2003.
- Lewis, B., 'Sam Neill and the Cinema of Unease', *Cinema Papers*, No. 106, October, 1995, p.10.
- Lewis, J., *Cultural Studies: The Basics*, London, Thousand Oakes, New Delhi, 2002.
- Lewis, J., 'Wholly Jane', *LA Weekly*, 21-27/1/00, p. 36.
- Lewis, L., 'Sam Neill and the Cinema of Unease', *Cinema Papers*, No. 106, October, 1995.
- Lippard, L. R., *From the Center: Feminist Essays on Women's Art*, Dutton, New York, 1976.
- Linekin, K., 'Open and Cut Case: Jane Campion takes a dark stab at a whodunnit', 2003, <http://www.eyenet.org/issue/10.30.03/film/inthecut.html>
- Lobrutto, V., *Principal Photography: Interviews with Feature Film Cinematographers*, Prager/Greenwood Publishers, Westport, 1999.
- Longhurst, R., *Bodies: Exploring Fluid Boundaries*, Routledge, London and New York, 2000.
- Loomba, A., *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*, Routledge, London and New York, 1998.
- Luthi, M., (Translated by Jon Erickson) *The Fairytale, As Art Form And Portrait of Man*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1984.
- Lyon, C., *Directors/Filmmakers*, Vol. 2, Papermac, St James Press, London and Basingstoke, 1984.
- Maddox, G., 'For film-maker Campion, it's a wrap-for now', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 7/11/04, p.3.
- Mandy: see filmography.
- Margolis, H., *The Piano*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2000.
- Marks, E., & de Courtivron, I. (ed.), *New French Feminisms*, Schocken, New York, 1984.
- Margulies, I., *Nothing Happens: Charntel Ackerman's Hyperrealist Everyday*, Duke University Press, USA, 1996.
- Martin, A., 'Refocusing Authorship in Women's Filmmaking', in Levitin, J., Plessis, J., & Raoul, V. (eds.) *Women Filmmakers: Refocusing*, University of British Columbia Press, Vancouver, 2003.
- Martin, A.,
 - 'Bag ladies of cinema', *Age*, A3, 10/9/03, p. 13.
 - 'Master or Myth?', *Age*—Metro A3, 13/11/03, p. 6.
 - 'Smokescreen for a wispy plot', *Age*, 24/12/99, B4.
- Mascia-Les, F. E., & Sharpe, P., *Taking a Stand in a Postfeminist World: Toward an Engaged Cultural Criticism*, State University of New York Press, Albany, 2000.
- Maslin, S., 'Women? They hardly feature here too', *Encore*, Sept. 13-26, 1991, pp. 27 - 28.

- Mathews, S., *35 mm Dreams: Conversations with Five Directors about the Australian film revival*, Penguin, 1984.
- Mautner, T. (ed.), *A Dictionary of Philosophy*, Basil Blackwell Publishers Ltd., Oxford, 1996.
- Mayne, J.,
 - *Cinema and Spectatorship*, Routledge, London, 1993.
 - *Directed by Dorothy Arzner*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington & Indianapolis, 1994.
 - 'Feminist Film Theory and Criticism', *SIGNS, Journal of Women In Culture And Society*, Vol.11, No. 1, Autumn 1985, pp. 81-100.
 - *The Woman at the keyhole: Feminism & Women's Cinema*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1990.
- Mazzoni, C., *Saint Hysteria: neurosis, mysticism, and gender in European culture*, Cornell University Press, New York, 1996.
- McIntyre, A., 'Sex Makes A Difference', *Weekend Australian*, October 22-23, 1994, p.29.
- McAfee, I., 'To the Lighthouse', at http://www.suite101.com/chapter.cfm/jane_austen/64746
- McCormack, P. (ed.), *Questioning the Master: Gender and Sexuality in Henry James's Writings*, University of Delaware Press, Newark & Associated University Press, London, 2000.
- McFarlane, B., & Mayer, G., *New Australian Cinema: Sources and Parallels in British and American Film*, Cambridge, New York & Oakleigh, 1992.
- McFarlane, B., 'An Angel At My Table', *Cinema Papers*, No.81., December, 1990, p. 52.
- McGowan, T., & Shelia Kunkle, (eds.), *Lacan and Contemporary Film*, Other Press, New York 2004.
- McHugh, K., 'Sounds That Creep Inside You: Female Narration And The Voice Over In The Films Of Jane Campion', *Style*, Vol. 35, No. 2, 2001, pp.193-218. Available at:
<http://www.highbeam.com/library/docfree.asp?DOCID=1G1:97074180&ctrlinfo=Round19%3AMode199a%3ADocG%3AResult&ao=>
- McMurchy, M., 'The Women and Film Work', (reprinted from Feminist Film Workers Discussion Papers), *Refractory Girl*, No.18/ 19, Dec. 1979-Jan. 1980, pp. 41-43.
- McNair, B., *Striptease Culture*, Routledge, London, New York & Canada, 2002.
- Meese, E., *Crossing the Double-Cross: The Practice of Feminist Criticism*, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill and London, 1986.
- Mein Smith, P., *A Concise History of New Zealand*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2005.
- Mellencamp, P., *A Fine Romance; Five Ages of Feminism*, Temple Uni. Press, Philadelphia, 1995.
- Merck, M., *The Sexual Subject: A Screen Reader in Sexuality*, Routledge, London and New York, 1999.
- Mertz Hsieh, D., 'Sexual Difference as Metaphysical', Washington University in St-Louis , 21 April 1995, at <http://www.dianahsieh.com/undergrad/sdam.html>
- Millar, M., *What's Wrong With This Picture?*, Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance Survey on Gender Discrimination in Roles and Stories of Australian films, September, 1994.
- Miller, T., & Stam, R. (eds.), *A Companion to Film Theory*, Blackwell Publishing, Oxford, UK, 2004.
- Millet, M., *Sexual Politics*, First Illinois Paperback, USA, 2000 (first published in 1969).
- Mills, S., *Michel Foucault*, Routledge, London & New York, 2003.
- Moana Thompson, K., 'The Sickness Unto Death: Dislocated Gothic in a Minor Key', in Coombs & Gemmell, 2000, pp.64-82.
- Modleski, T.,
 - *Feminism Without Women: Culture and Criticism in a Postfeminist Age*, Routledge, New York, 1991.
 - *The Woman Who Knew Too Much: Hitchcock and Feminist Theory*, Routledge, New York and London, 1988.
- Moi, T.,
 - 'Feminist, Female, Feminine', in Catherine Belsey and Jane Moore, (eds.) *The Feminist Reader: essays in gender and the politics of literary criticism*, (2nd ed) Blackwell Publishers, Malden, Great Britain, 1997.
 - *Sexual/Textual Politics*, Routledge, London, (2nd ed.) 2001.
 - *What is a Woman?*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1999.
- Moore, S., *In The Cut*, (2nd ed.), Picador/Man Macmillan, Sydney, 2004.
- Moran, A., & O'Regan, T., *An Australian Film Reader*, Currency Press, Sydney, 1985.

- Moran A., & Vieth, E., *The Historical Dictionary of Australian and New Zealand Cinema*, Scarecrow Press Inc., Maryland USA, 2005.
- Morny, J., O'Grady, K., Poxon, K. (eds.), *French Feminists on Religion: A Reader*, Routledge, London & New York, 2002.
- Morris, S.B., 'The Flâneur, the sandwich man and the whore: the politics of loitering', *New German Critique*, No.39, 1986, pp.99-140.
- Mulvey, L., 'Visual Pleasure And Narrative Cinema' *Screen*, vol. 16, no. 3, Autumn 1975, pp.6-18.
- Murdoch, A., 'Celluloid image of memory and desire', *Age*, in *Cinedossier*, AFI Research And Information, 1993, pp.11-12.
- Murphy, K., 'Jane Campion's Passage to India', *Film Comment*, Vol. 36, No.1, Jan/Feb 2000, pp.30-35.
- Murray, S. (ed.), 'Women of the New Wave; Australian Women's Film-making : mainstream or independent?', *Back Of Beyond, Discovering Australian Film and Television*, AFC, 1988.
- Murray, S. (ed.), *Australian Cinema*, Allen & Unwin in association with Australian Film Commission, Sydney, 1994.
- Murray, S., *Australian Film 1978 -1992*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1993.
- Naremore, J., 'Authorship' in Toby Miller & Robert Stam (eds.), *A Companion to Film Theory*, Blackwell Publishing, Oxford, UK, 2004.
- Neroni, H., 'Jane Campion's *Jouissance*: Holy Smoke and Feminist Film Theory', in McGowan, T., & Kunkle, S. (eds.), *Lacan and Contemporary Film*, Other Press, New York 2004, pp.209-232.
- Nicholls, M., 'She Who Gets Slapped: Jane Campion's Portrait of a Lady', *Metro: Film, Television, Radio & Multimedia Journal*, No. 111, 1997, pp. 43-17.
- Nicholson, L. J., *Feminism/Postmodernism*, Routledge, New York and London, 1990.
- Nicholson, L. J. (ed.), *The Second Wave: A Feminist Reader*, Routledge, London, New York, 1997.
- O'Connor, S., 'Less is Moore', *Saturday Herald Sun*—Weekend, 22/11/03, p. 29.
- Ondaatje, M., *The Conversations: Walter Much and the Art of Editing Film*, Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, London, 2002.
- Ortiz, G. (eds.), *Explorations of Theology in Film*, Blackwell, Oxford & Massachusetts, 1997.
- Peebles, C.M., *The Psyche of Feminism*, Purdue University, USA, 2004.
- Petro, P., *Aftershocks of the New: Feminism and Film History*, Rutgers University Press, 2002.
- Perry, G. (ed.), *Women & Film : Both Sides Of The Camera*, Methuen, N.Y. & London, 1983.
- Perry, G. (ed.), *Women And The Cinema, A Critical Anthology*, Dutton, New York, 1977.
- Pike, A., *Australian Film 1900-1977*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1980.
- Pinkus, J., *Feminist Poststructuralism*, at <http://www.massey.ac.nz/~alock/theory/feminism.html>
- Place, J., 'Women in Film Noir' in Kaplan, E. A., *Women in Film Noir*, BFI, London, 1998.
- Polan, D., *Jane Campion*, BFI Publishing, London, 2001.
- Powell, R., 'Producing the goods-women producers in the Australian film industries', *Pol*, June 1982, pp. 35-41.
- Press, J., 'Making the Cut', *The Village Voice*, 22-28/10/03 at <http://www.villagevoice.com/issues/o343/press.php>
- Probyn, F., 'J.M. Coetzee: Writing with/out authority', 2002 at <http://social.chass.ncsu.edu/jouvert/v7is1/probyn.htm>
- Pullinger, K., 'Women Directors: Soul Survivor', *Sight and Sound*, Vol. 9, Issue 10, October 1999, pp. 8-11.
- Quinn, A.,
 - 'Lady Jane's bloody reign', *Saturday Sydney Morning Herald* —47 Hours, 25/10/03, p.1.
 - 'Passages from India', *Saturday Age*—Good Weekend, 14/2/04, p.36.
- Quinn, K., 'Drag, Dag and the Suburban Surreal', *Metro: Film, Television, Radio & Multimedia Journal*, No. 100, Summer, 1994/95, pp.23-26.
- Radway, J. A., *Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarch, and Popular Literature*, 2nd ed., The University of North Carolina Press, USA, 1991.
- Raengo, A., & Stam, R., (eds.), *Literature and Film: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Film Adaptation*, Blackwell Publishing, Malden, MA, 2005.
- Rashkin, E., *Women Filmmakers in Mexico: The Country of Which We Dream*, University of Texas Press, Austin, 2001.

- Rattigan, N., *Images of Australia, A hundred films of the new Australian cinema*, Southern Methodist University Press, Dallas, USA, 1991.
- Rayson, H., 'Women's Laboratory - The Sequel', *Filmnews* Vol.24, No.3, April, 1994, p.6.
- Reynolds, N., *Geographies of Writing: Inhabiting Places and Encountering Difference*, Southern Illinois University, Illinois, 2004.
- Rich, A., *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution*, Norton, New York, 1976.
- Richards, H., 'Sex and the City: a visible flâneuse for the postmodern era?' in *Continuum: Journal of Media & Cultural Studies*, Vol.17, No.2, 2003, pp. 147-158.
- Roach, V., 'Mark of Campion', *Daily Telegraph*, 18/12/99, p.36.
- Roberston Wojcik, P., & Knight, A., (eds.), *Soundtrack Available: Essays on Film and Popular Music*, Duke University Press, USA, 2001.
- Robson J., & Zalcock, B., *Girls' Own Stories, Australian and New Zealand Women's Films*, Scarlet Press, London, 1997.
- Rooney, E., 'Gayatri Spivak with Ellen Rooney; 'In a Word': Interview', in Nicholson, L., (ed.) *The Second Wave: A Feminist Reader*, Routledge, London, New York, 1997, pp.356-378.
- Rorty, A.O., (ed.), *Essays on Aristotle's Poetics*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, N.J., 1992.
- Roscoe, J., 'National Preoccupations' in *Continuum: The Australian Journal of Media & Culture*, (Aotearoa /New Zealand A New Mediascape), Vol.10., No. 1, 1996, pp.192- 194.
- Rowe, K., 'Roseanne: Unruly Woman as Domestic Goddess', in Stam, & Miller, 2000, pp.634-643.
- Rueschmann, E., 'Out of Place: Reading (Post) Colonial Landscapes as Gothic Space in Jane Campion's Films', *Postscript: Essays in Film And The Humanities*, Vol. 24, Nos. 2 & 3, Winter/Spring & Summer 2005, p.2-21.
- Russo, M. J., *The Female Grotesque: Risk, Excess and Modernity* Routledge, New York, 1994.
- Saleci, R. (ed.), *Sexuation*, Duke University Press, Durham, 2000.
- Sandoval, C., *Dis-Illusionment and the Poetry of the Future: The Making of Oppositional Consciousness*, PhD qualifying essay, University of California, Santa Cruz, 1984.
- Sands, K., 'Women of the New Wave; Australian Women's Film-making : mainstream or independent?', *Back Of Beyond, Discovering Australian Film and Television*, AFC, Sydney, 1988.
- Sarris, A., (ed.), *The St James Film Directors Encyclopedia*, St James Press, New York, 1998.
- Schembri, Jim, 'Me Jane', *Age*, 8/8/93, p13.
- Schickel, R., 'Divine Enlightenment: *Holy Smoke!* Is surprising, inspiring and funny', *Time*, 31/1/00, p.73.
- Scholes, R., 'Reading Like A Man', in Jardine, A., & Smith, P. (eds.), *Men and Feminism*, Methuen, New York & London, 1987, pp.204-218.
- Sellers, S., *Helene Cixous: Authorship, Autobiography and Love*, Polity Press, Cambridge, UK, 1996.
- Sharrett, C., 'False Criticism: Cinema, Bourgeois Society, and the Conservative Complaint', in Murray Pomerance (ed.), *Cinema And Modernity*, Rutgers State University, 2006, pp.130-154.
- Sherwood, R. B., 'Hair and Sex?!', *Hair News Magazine* (1995) at <http://www.hair-news.com/hair-and-sex.html>
- Shirley, G., Women In The Australian Film Industry, *Cinema Papers*, No. 52, July 1985, pp. 36-38.
- Silverman, K., *The Acoustic Mirror: The Female Voice in Psychoanalysis and Cinema*, Indian University Press, Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1988.
- Sim, S. (ed.) *The Routledge Companion to Postmodernism*, Routledge, UK, 2003.
- Simpson, C., 'Suburban Subversions: Women's Negotiation of Suburban Space in Australian Cinema', *Metro: Film, Television, Radio & Multimedia Journal*, No 118. 1999, pp.24-32.
- Slavin, J.,
 - 'An Angel At My Table & Santa Sangre' *Metro: Film, Television, Radio & Multimedia Journal*, No. 84., Summer 1990/91, pp. 2-8.
 - 'The Films of Jane Campion', *Metro: Film, Television, Radio & Multimedia Journal*, No.95. Spring, 1993, pp.28-30.
- Smith, A., *Agnes Varda*, Manchester University Press, Manchester and New York, 1998.
- Smith, P., *A Concise History of New Zealand*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2005.
- Spivak, G.C., *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics*, Routledge, New York, 1988.
- Spines, C., 'Behind Bars: Town Without Bars', *Premier: Special Edition: Women in Hollywood*, January 2000, pp.45-48.

- Stacey, J., 'Desperately Seeking Susan', in Caughie, J. & Kuhn, K. (eds.), *The Sexual Subject: A Screen Reader in sexuality*, Routledge, London, 1992, pp. 244-260.
- Stam, R., *Film Theory, An Introduction*, Blackwell Publishing, Oxford, 1992.
- Stam, R. & Miller, T. (eds.), *Film and Theory: An Anthology*, Malden, Blackwell, 2000.
- Stead, A., 'The Height Report', *THE AGE: Good Weekend*, October 2, 1987. In *Cinedossier* Issue No. 288, October 1987, p.44.
- Stead, A., 'The Height Report', *THE AGE: Good Weekend*, October 2, 1987. In *Cinedossier* Issue No. 288, October 1987, p.44.
- Stern, L., 'Independent Feminist Film-making in Australia', *An Australian Film Reader*, 1985, pp. 314-332
- Stratton, D.,
 - 'Campion cuts to heart and soul', *Weekend Australian* – Review, 15/11/03, p.18.
 - 'No Place like om', *Financial Review*, 24/12/99, p. 14.
- Strauss, S., 'Abysses', *Cahiers du cinéma*, No. 467/8, May 1993, p. 15. (Written in French).
- Sutherland, C., 'Jane Campion considered directing her last film naked', *Herald Sun*—Hit, 13/11/03, p.5.
- Sydney Writer's Festival, 2004: <http://www.writersfestival.uts.edu.au/2004/paneltalk/inthecut.html>
- Talpade Mohanty, C., 'Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses', *Feminist Review*, No.30, pp.77-78.
- Tarr, C., *Diane Kurys*, Manchester University Press, 1998.
- Tasker, Y., *Working Girls: Gender and Sexuality in Popular Cinema*, Routledge, London & New York, 1998.
- Tasker, Y., (ed.), *Fifty Contemporary Filmmakers*, Routledge, London & New York, 2002.
- Tatar, M., *Secrets Beyond the Door: The Story of Bluebeard and His Wives*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 2004.
- Taubin, A., 'Fear and Desires: Jane and Anna Campion make a Religious-cult Classic', *Village Voice*, November 30, 1999, p.138.
- The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy, at <http://www.iep.utm.edu/a/apriori.htm>
- Thomas, P., 'Dig Yourself Out of This One', *Empire*, No.54., Dec, 1993., p. 16.
- Thompson, K. M., 'The Sickness Unto Death: Dislocated Gothic in a Minor Key', in Coombs & Gemmell op. cit, pp.64-82.
- Thornham, S., 'Feminism and Film' in Sarah Gamble (ed.), *The Routledge Companion to Feminism and Postfeminism*, Routledge, London and New York, 2002, pp. 93-103.
- Thornton, S. (ed.), *Feminist Film Theory: A Reader*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 1999.
- Tobin, Y., 'La Leçon de Piano : Maîtresse', *Positif*, No. 387, May 1993, p. 21. (Written in French).
- Tulich, K., 'Behind The Lens; Women directors in the Australian film industry', *Portfolio*, Vol. 1, Oct/Nov 1984, pp. 54-57.
- Turcotte, G., 'Footnotes to an Australian Gothic Script', *Antipodes* 7, No.2., December 1993, pp. 127-134.
- Turner, G.,
 - *National Fictions; Literature, film and the construction of Australian narrative*, Allen & Unwin, 1993.
 - 'Whatever Happened to National Identity?: Film and the Nation in the 1990s', *Metro: Film, Television, Radio & Multimedia Journal*, No. 100, Summer, 1994/95, pp.32-35.
- Valverde, M., *Sex, Power and Pleasure*, Women's Press, Toronto, 1995.
- Verhoeven, D., (ed.) *Twin Peaks, Australia and New Zealand Feature Films*, Damned Publishing, 1999.
- Vikki Riley, 'Ancestor Worship', *Metro: Film, Television, Radio & Multimedia Journal*, No. 102, 1995, pp. 57-60 & 61-64.
- Von Gunden, K., *Postmodern Auteurs: Coppola, Lucas, De Palma, Spielberg and Scorsese*, McFarland & Co., Inc., Jefferson, Nth Carolina and London, 1991.
- Waddell, T., *Absolutely Fabulous: 'The Grotesque, Dionysos, Trickster and the Patsy/Edina Dyad: Archetypal Fusion and Absolutely Fabulous', Practice: A Journal of Visual, Performing and Media Arts*, No.1., Summer 1996/97, pp.22-32.
- Walton, P. L., 'The Janus Face of James', in Peggy McCormack, (ed.), *Questioning the Master: Gender and Sexuality in Henry James's Writings*, University of Delaware Press, Newark & Associated University Press, London, 2000, pp. 37-53.
- Weedon, C., *Feminist Practice & Poststructuralist Theory*, Basil Blackwell Ltd, 1991.
- Wertmüller, L., 'An Interview with Lina Wertmüller', *Women & Film*, Vol. 1, No. 5-6, 1974, p. 10.

- Wild, F., 'Colliding with history in La Bête Humaine: Reading Renoir's Cinécriture', *Film Literature Quarterly*, 2003, at http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3768/is_200301/ai_n9212973
- Williams, E., 'Campion lengthens her stride dazzlingly', *Weekend Australian*, 23-24/9/89 in AFI *Cinedossier*, p.65.
- Williams, S.,
 - 'We are feminists but ...', *The Australian Magazine*, Insert to *The Australian*, January 28-29, 1995, pp.19 & 22-27.
 - 'The Portrait of a Certain Lady', *Weekend Australian*, Dec. 7., 1996, pp.55-61.
- Wolf, N., *The Beauty Myth*, Chatto & Windus, 1990.
- Wright Wexman, V. (ed.),
 - *Film and Authorship*, Rutgers University Press, Piscataway, 2003.
 - *Jane Campion Interviews*, University Press of Mississippi, 1999.
- Wrye, H. K., 'Tuning a clinical ear to the ambiguous chords of Jane Campion's *The Piano*', *Psychoanalytic Inquiry*, Vol. 18(2), 1998, pp. 168-182.
- Wu, H. H., 'Trading in Horror, Cult and Matricide: Peter Jackson's Phenomenal bad taste and New Zealand fantasies of inter/national cinematic success', in Jancovich, M., Reboll, A. L., Stringer, J., & A Willis, A. (eds.), *Defining Cult Movies: The Cultural Politics of Oppositional Taste*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, New York & Vancouver, 2003, pp. 84-108.
- Young, I. M., 'The Ideal of Community and the Politics of Difference' in Nicholson, 1990, pp.300-323.

Online bibliographies on Jane Campion

Jane Campion: A Cinema of National Identity: A Selected Annotated Bibliography of Jane Campion's Films, University of Otago, at:
<http://www.otago.ac.nz/communicationstudies/campion/bibliography.html>

Jane Campion: A Bibliography of material in the UC Berkeley Library:
<http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/MRC/campion.html>

NZ Film by Kiwi Film Nut, listing of web sites about Campion at: <http://nz-film-swicki.eurekster.com/jane+campion/>

Jane Campion

Born April 30, 1954 in Wellington, New Zealand.

Jane Campion: filmography

1980

Tissues

Writer/Director/Editor: **Jane Campion**

1982

Peel—An Exercise in Discipline

Producer: Ulla Ryght; Writer/Director/Editor: **Jane Campion**; Cinematographer: Sally Bongers;

Distributor: Ronin Films; Production Company: Australian Film, Television and Radio School;

Running Time: 9 minutes;

Cast: Tim Pye (Brother/Father), Katie Pye (Sister/Aunt), Ben Martin (Son/Nephew);

Awards: Cannes Film Festival, 1986: Palme d'Or, Best Short Film.

1983/4

A Girl's Own Story

Writer/Director/Producer: **Jane Campion**; Cinematographer: Sally Bongers; Original music: Alex Proyas; Editor: Christopher Lancaster;

Distributor: Ronin Films; Production Company: Australian Film, Television and Radio School; Running Time: 27 minutes;

Cast: Paul Chubb (Father), Gabrielle Shoregg (Pam), Jane Edwards (Deidre), Colleen Fitzpatrick (Mother), Joanne Gabbe (Sister), John Godden (Graeme), Geraldine Haywood (Stella), Marina Knight (Gloria);

Awards: Sydney Film Festival, 1984: Rouben Mamoulian Award; Australian Film Institute (AFI) Awards, 1984: Best Director Award (Non-Feature Section).

1983/4

Passionless Moments

Producer/Writer/Director (with Gerard Lee): **Jane Campion**;

Cinematographer/Camera Operator: **Jane Campion**; Editor: Veronica Haeussler;

Distributor: Australian Film and Television School; Production Company: Australian Film, Television and Radio School; Running Time: 9 minutes (black and white);

Cast: David Benton (Ed Tumbury), Ann Burriman (Gwen Gilbert), Sean Callinan (Jim Newbury), Paul Chubb (Jim Simpson), Sue Collie (Angela Elliott), Elias Ibrahim (Ibrahim Ibrahim), Paul Melchert (Arnold), George Nezovic (Gavin Metchalle), Jamie Pride (Lyndsay Aldridge), Yves Stenning (Shaun), Rebecca Stewart (Julie Fry);

Awards: Australian Film Institute Awards, 1984: Best Experimental Film.

1984

After Hours

Executive Producer: Anna Grieve; Writer/Director: **Jane Campion**;
Cinematographer: Laurie McInnes;
Distributor: Film Australia; Production Company: Film Australia (funded by the AFC's Women's Film Unit);
Running Time: 26 minutes;
Cast: Anna Maria Monticelli, Russell Newman, Danielle Pearse;
Awards: Don Reid Melbourne International Film Festival, 1984: IXL Elder Award.

1984⁸²⁸

Mishaps of Seduction and Conquest

Writer & Director: **Jane Campion**; Cinematographers: Sally Bongers, Nicolette Freeman, George Petrykowski, Paul Cox; Lighting & Editing: Tony Mandl; Sound: Kay Dineen; Director's Assistant: Louise Meek; Vision Switcher: Greg Punch; Art Direction Yolande Clarkson; Floor Manager: Wendy Thompson. Running Time: 15 minutes;
Distributor and Production Company: Australian Film, Television and Radio School;
Cast: Deborah Kennedy (Emma), Richard Evans (Geoffrey), Stuart Campbell (Mallory's voice).

1985

Dancing Daze

Producer: Jan Chapman; Director: **Jane Campion**;
Writers: Michael Cove & John Misto;
Running Time: 50 mins. (Episode of a television series);
Distributor and Production Company: Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC)
Cast: Merly Tankard (Phoebe Green), Patsy Stephen (Kate Green), Joe Wyatt (Laurence Clifford), Norman Kaye (Stephen Issacs), Lance Curtis (Harry), Paul Chubb (Oliver), Melissa Docker (Anita), Alan Wilson (Anita), Dennis Grosvenor (Col), Jane Clifton (Lee Harper), Robyn Moase (Melissa Carter).

1986

Two Friends

Producer: Jan Chapman; Director: **Jane Campion**; Writer: Helen Garner;
Cinematographer: Julian Penney; Editor: Bill Russo; Original music: Martin Armiger;
Production and Costume Design: Janet Patterson;
Distributor and Production Company: Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC);
Running Time: 75 minutes (telefeature);
Cast: Kris Bidenko (Kelly), Emma Coles (Louise), Peter Hehir, Kris McQuade (Louise's mother).

⁸²⁸ Some filmographies list this film as 1981, however, I have checked this directly with the AFTRS and it was made in 1984.

1989

Sweetie

Producers: William Mackinnon and John Maynard; Director/Casting/Co-Writer (with Gerard Lee): **Jane Campion**; Cinematographer: Sally Bongers; Editor: Veronika Haeussler; Original music: Martin Armiger; Costume Designer: Amanda Lovejoy; Distributor: Ronin Films; Production Company: Arenafilms; Running time: 97 minutes; Cast: Genevieve Lemon (Dawn aka Sweetie), Karen Colston (Kay), Tom Lycos (Louis), Jon Darling (Gordon), Dorothy Barry (Flo), Michael Lake (Bob), Andre Pataczek (Clayton), Jean Hadgraft (Mrs. Schneller), Paul Livingston (Teddy Schneller), Louise Fox (Cheryl), Ann Merchant (Paula), Robin Frank (Ruth Bronwyn), Morgan (Sue Sean), Callinan (Simboo), Diana Armer (Melony), Emma Fowler (Little Sweetie), Irene Curtis (Mandy); Awards: American Independent Spirit Award, 1991: Best Foreign Feature; Georges Sadoul Award, 1991: Best Foreign Film; Australian Film Critics' Association, 1991: Best Film, Best Director, Best Actress (Genevieve Lemon).

1990

An Angel At My Table

Producers: Bridget Ikin, Grant Major, John Maynard; Director: **Jane Campion**; Writer: Laura Jones—adapted from the autobiography by Janet Frame; Cinematographer: Stuart Dryburgh; Original music: Don McGlashan and Franz Schubert; Production Designer: Grant Major; Costume Designer: Glenys Jackson; Editor: Veronika Haeussler; Television Miniseries (Subsequently Released Theatrically); Distributor: Ronin Films; Production Company: Hibiscus Films; Running Time: 157 minutes; Cast: Kerry Fox (Janet Frame), Alexia Keogh (Young Janet), Karen Fergusson (Teenage Janet), Iris Churn (Mother), Kevin J. Wilson (Father), Melina Bernecker (Myrtle), Timothy Bartlett (Gussy), Dymock Hamish McFarlane (Avril Luxon), Edith Campion (Miss Lindsay), Andrew Binns (Bruddie), Glynis Angell (Isabel), Sarah Smuts Kennedy (June), David Letch (Patrick), William Brandt (Bernhard), Martyn Sanderson (Frank) and Campion's mother Edith Campion (Miss Lindsay); Awards: Venice Film Festival, 1990: Silver Lion and Grand Jury Prize; Sydney Film Festival, 1990: Most Popular Film; Australian's Film Critics' Circle, 1990: Best Foreign Film; Festival of Festivals, 1990: International Critics' Prize; Valladolid Film Festival, Spain, 1990: Best Actress; New Zealand Film and Television Awards, 1990: Best Film, Best Director, Best Screenplay, Best Female Performance (Kerry Fox), Best Performance in a Supporting Role (Martyn Sanderson); Berlin Film Festival, 1991: Otto Dibelius Film Prize, Most Popular Film; Union of Critics, Belgium, 1991: Best Film.

1993

The Piano

Producers: Jan Chapman, Alain Depardieu, Mark Turnbull; Director/Writer: **Jane Campion**; Cinematographer: Stuart Dryburgh; Original music: Michael Nyman; Production Designer: Andrew McAlpine; costume Designer: Janet Patterson; Editor: Veronika Jenet (aka Haeussler); Distributor: VIDZ OF OZ; Production Company: CIBY 2000 & Jan Chapman Productions; Running Time: 120 minutes; Cast: Holly Hunter (Ada), Harvey Keitel (Baines), Sam Neill (Stewart), Anna Paquin (Flora), Kerry Walker (Aunt Morag), Genevieve Lemon (Nessie) Cannes Film Festival, 1993: Palme d'Or, Best Feature, Palme d'Or, Best Actress (Holly Hunter); Awards: Academy Awards, 1994: Best Actress (Holly Hunter), Best Original Screenplay, Best Supporting Actress (Anna Paquin); British Academy Awards, 1994: Best Film, Best Director, Best Actress (Holly Hunter), Best Original Screenplay, Best Original Score; Directors Guild of America, 1994: Best Director; Golden Globe Awards, 1994: Best Film (Drama), Best Director, Best Actress (Drama) (Holly Hunter), Best Supporting Actress (Ann Paquin), Best Screenplay, Best Original Score; Independent Spirit Awards, 1994: Best Foreign Film; Los Angeles Film Critics Association, 1994: Best Director, Best Actress (Holly Hunter), Best Supporting Actress (Anna Paquin) (co-winner), Best Cinematography; New York Film Critics Association, 1994: Best Director, Best Actress (Holly Hunter), Best Screenplay; National Society of Film Critics, 1994: Best Actress (Holly Hunter), Best Screenplay.

1996

The Portrait of a Lady

Producers: Steve Golin, Monty Montgomery, Mark Turnbull, Ann Wingate; Director: **Jane Campion**; Writer: Laura Jones—adapted from the novel by Henry James; Cinematographer: Stuart Dryburgh; Original music: Wojciech Kilar and Franz Schubert; Production and Costume Designer: Janet Patterson; Film Editor: Veronika Jenet; Distributor: VIDZ OF OZ; Running Time: 144 minutes; Production Company: Poygram Films & Propoganda Films; Cast: Nicole Kidman (Isabel Archer), John Malkovich (Gilbert Osmond), Barbara Hershey (Madame Serena Merle), Mary-Louise Parker (Henrietta Stackpole), Martin Donovan (Ralph Touchett), Shelley Winters (Mrs. Touchett), Richard E. Grant (Lord Warburton), Shelley Duvall (Countess Gemini), Christian Bale (Edward Rosier), Viggo Mortensen (Caspar Goodwood), Valentina Cervi (Pansy Osmond), John Gielgud (Mr. Touchett), Roger Ashton-Griffiths (Bob Bantling), Catherine Zago (Mother Superior); Awards: Los Angeles Film Critics Association, 1997: Best Production Design (Janet Patterson), Best Supporting Actress (Barbara Hershey); National Society of Film Critics, 1997: Best Supporting Actor (Martin Donovan) (co-winner), Best Supporting Actress (Barbara Hershey).

1999

Holy Smoke!

Producers: Catherine Bishop (line), Jan Chapman/Julie Goldstein, Bob Weinstein & Harvey Weinstein (Executive), Mark Turnbull Associate;
Director: **Jane Campion**; Writers: **Jane Campion** and Anna Campion; Cinematographer: Dion Beebe; Original music: Angelo Badalamenti; Production and Costume Designer: Janet Patterson; Film Editor: Veronika Jenet;
Distributor: Miramax; Production Company: Miramax and Jan Chapman Productions;
Running Time: 115 minutes;
Cast: Kate Winslet (Ruth), Harvey Keitel (PJ Waters), Pam Grier (Carol), Julie Hamilton (Mum), Sophie Lee (Yvonne), Daniel Wyllie (Robbie), Paul Goddard (Tim), Tim Roberston (Dad), George Mangos (Yani);
Awards: Venice Film Festival, 1999: Elvira Notari Prize.

1999

See also ***Soft Fruit***, Executive Producer: **Jane Campion**

2003

In the Cut

Producers: Nicole Kidman, Laurie Parker;
Director: **Jane Campion**; Writers: **Jane Campion** & Susanna Moore—adapted from the novel by Susanna Moore;
Cinematographer: Dion Beebe;
Original music: Himar Örn Hilmarsson;
Production Designer: David Brisbin. Costume Designer: Beatrix Aruna Pasztor;
Distributor & Production Company: Pathé Productions & Screen Gems;
Running Time: 119 minutes
Cast: Meg Ryan (Frannie Avery), Mark Ruffalo (Detective Giovanni Malloy), Jennifer Jason Leigh (Pauline Avery), Nick Damici (Detective Richard Rodriguez);
Awards: Australian Cinematographers Award, 2004: Golden Tripod (Dion Beebe).

2005/6

The Water Diary – A segment from *8* (2007)

Producer: Christopher Gill; Writer/Director: **Jane Campion**;
Cinematographer: Greig Fraser, Music: Mark Bradshaw; Editor: Heidi Kenessey;
Production Company and Distributor: IDM Productions
Running Time: 17 minutes (clip at: <http://www.idmproductions.fr/8/>);
Cast: Ziggy (Alice Englert—Campion's daughter), Mum (Justin Clarke), Dad (Russel Dykstra), Pam (Genevieve Lemon), Sam (Tintin Kelly), Felicity (Isidor Tillers), Lunch Guest (Ian Abdulla), Lunch Guest (Di Adams), Simon (Harry Greenwood), Lunch Guest (Chris Haywood), Lunch Guest (Clayton Jacobson), Mrs Miles (Miranda Jakich), Cassia (Cassia Jurevic), Sam (Tintin Marova Kelly).

2007

The Lady Bug (segment of *Chacun son cinéma ou Ce petit coup au Cœur quand la lumière s'éteint et que le film commerce*).

Current

2008

Bright Star

Producers: **Jane Campion** and Jane Chapman

Writer/Director: **Jane Campion**

In preproduction—a drama based on the life of 19th century poet John Keats.

Cast: Abbie Cornish (Fanny Brawne), Ben Whishaw (John Keats)

Sources:

Collated from various sources including Wexman (1999) pp.xxiii-xxv11, BFI Film & TV Database, Internet Movie Database, National Film & Sound Archive Catalogue, film handbills, press kits, and credits from the films/videos.

Filmography

- *Adventures of Pricilla, Queen of the Desert, The*. Dir. Stephan Elliot. Australia. 1994.
- *All Men are Liars*. Dir. Gerard Lee. Australia. 1995.
- *Am I Beautiful*, (*¿Bin ich schön?*). Dir. Doris Dorrie. Germany. 1998.
- *Amy*. Dir. Nadia Tass. Australia. 1998.
- *Army Nurse*, (aka *Nu er lo*). Dir. Hu Mei. China. 1985.
- *Audacious*. Dir. Samantha Lang. Australia. 1994.
- *Aya*. Dir. Solrun Hoaas. Australia. 1990.
- *Bad Lieutenant, The*. Dir. Abel Ferrara. USA. 1992.
- *Barbe-bleue*. Dir. Georges Méliès. France. 1901.
- *Belle de Jour*. Dir. Luis Buñuel. France. 1967.
- *Big Steal, The*. Dir. Nadia Tass. Australia. 1989.
- *Blue Steel*. Dir. Kathryn Bigelow. USA. 1990.
- *Book of Revelation, The*. Dir. Ana Kokkinos. Australia. 2006.
- *Breakfast At Tiffany's*. Dir. Blake Edwards. USA. 1961.
- *Castle, The*. Dir. Rob Sitch. Australia. 1997.
- *A Cinema of Unease: A Personal Journey by Sam Neill*. Dirs. Sam Neill & Judy Rymer. New Zealand. UK. 1995.
- *Citizen Kane*. Dir. Orson Welles. USA. 1941.
- *Cléo de 5 à 7: souvenirs et anecdotes*. Dir. Agnes Varda. France. 2005.
- *Conformist, The* (*Conformista, II*). Dir. Bernardo Bertolucci. Italy/France/W.Germany. 1970.
- *Crush*. Dir. Alison Maclean. New Zealand. 1992.
- *Dance, Girl, Dance*. Dir. Dorothy Arzner. USA. 1940.
- *Deathwatch*. Dir. Bertrand Tavernier. France/Germany. 1980.
- *Desperately Seeking Susan*. Dir. Susan Seidelman. USA. 1985.
- *Documenteur* (aka *An Emotion Picture*). Dir. Agnès Varda. France. 1981.
- *Eraserhead*. Dir. David Lynch. USA. 1977.
- *Feeling Sexy*. Dir. Davida Allen. Australia. 1999.
- *Godfather, The*. Dir. Francis Ford Coppola. USA. 1972.
- *Green Tea and Cherry Ripe*. Dir. Solrun Hoaas. Australia. 1988.
- *Heavenly Creatures*. Dir. Peter Jackson. New Zealand. 1994.
- *Hideous Kinky*. Dir. Gilies MacKinnon. UK/France. 1998.

- *High Tide*, Dir. Gillian Armstrong. Australia. 1987.
- *How To Make An American Quilt*, Dir. Jocelyn Moorhouse. USA. 1995.
- *Japanese Story*, Dir. Sue Brooks. Australia. 2003.
- *Jeanne Dielman*, Dir. Chantal Akerman. Belgium/France. 1975
- *Jesus' Son*, Dir. Alison Maclean. Canada/USA. 1999.
- *Klute*, Dir. Alan J. Pakula. USA. 1971
- *L'Avventura*, Dir. Michelangelo Antonioni. Italy/France. 1960
- *Landru* (aka *Bluebeard*), Dir. Claude Chabrol. Italy/France. 1963.
- *Last Days of Chez Nous, The*, Dir. Gillian Armstrong. Australia. 1994.
- *Last Temptation of Christ, The*, Dir. Martin Scorsese. USA. 1988.
- *Les Arpenteurs* (*The Surveyors*), Dir. Michel Soulier. Switzerland. 1972.
- *Little Women*, Dir. Gillian Armstrong. USA. 1994.
- *Lives of Performers*, Dir. Yvonne Rayner. USA. 1972
- *Looking for Alibrandi*, Dir. Kate Woods. Australia. 2000.
- *Love and Other Catastrophes*, Dir. Emma-Kate Croghan. 1996.
- *Love Serenade*, Dir. Shirley Barrett. Australia. 1996.
- *Malcom*, Dir. Nadia Tass. Australia. 1985.
- *Mallboy*, Dir. Vincent Giarrusso. Australia. 2000.
- *Man Who Knew Too Much, The*, Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. USA. 1956.
- *Mr Reliable*, Dir. Nadia Tass. Australia. 1996.
- *Muriel's Wedding*, Dir. P.J. Hogan. Australia. 1994.
- *My Brilliant Career*, Dir. Gillian Armstrong. Australia. 1979.
- *Now Voyager*, Dir. Irving Rapper. USA. 1942
- *Only the Brave*, Dir. Ana Kokkinos. Australia. 1993.
- *Perfect Strangers*, Dir. Gaylene Preston. New Zealand. 2003.
- *Performance*, Dir. Donald Cammell & Nicolas Roeg, UK. 1970.
- *Picnic At Hanging Rock*, Dir. Peter Weir, Australia. 1975.
- *Point Break*, Dir. Kathryn Bigelow. USA. 1991.
- *Proof*, Dir. Jocelyn Moorhouse. Australia. 1991.
- *Pure Luck*, Dir. Nadia Tass. USA. 1990.
- *Pyongyang Diaries*, Solrun Hoaas. Australia. 1997.
- *Rebecca*, Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. USA. 1940.
- *Repulsion*, Dir. Roman Polanski. UK. 1965.

- *Rikky And Pete*. Dir. Nadia Tass. Australia. 1987.
- *Road to Nhill*. Dir. Sue Brooks. Australia. 1997.
- *Romper Stomper*. Dir. Geoffrey Wright. Australia. 1991.
- *Seven Beauties (Pasqualine Settebellezze)*. Dir. Lina Wertmüller. Italy. 1975.
- *Sleepless in Seattle*. Dir. Nora Ephron. USA. 1993.
- *Somersault*. Dir. Cate Shortland. Australia. 2004.
- *Spirits of the Air, Gremlins of the Clouds*. Dir. Alex Proyas. Australia. 1989.
- *Strange Days*. Dir. Kathryn Bigelow. USA. 1995.
- *Strictly Ballroom*. Dir. Baz Luhrmann. Australia. 1992.
- *Suburban Mayhem*. Dir. Paul Goldman. Australia. 2006.
- *Swaj ludzie z szasa*. Dir. Roman Polanski. Poland. 1958.
- *Taxi Driver*. Martin Scorsese, USA. 1976.
- *Thelma and Louise*. Dir. Ridley Scott. USA. 1991.
- *Titanic*. Dir. James Cameron. USA. 1997.
- *Titsiana Booberini*. Dir. Robert Luketic. Australia. 1997.
- *Two Jakes, The*. Dir. Jack Nicholson. USA. 1990.
- *Two Minutes Silence*. Dir. Paulette McDonagh. Australia. 1932.
- *Un Chien Andalou*. Dirs. Luis Buñuel & Salvador Dalí. France. 1928.
- *Walk The Talk*. Dir. Shirley Barrett. Australia. 2000.
- *Well, The*. Dir. Samantha Lang. Australia. 1997.
- *Whale Rider*. Dir. Niki Caro. New Zealand/Germany. 2002.
- *When Harry Met Sally*. Dir. Rob Reiner. USA. 1989.
- *Wild Party, The*. Dir. Dorothy Arzner. USA. 1929.
- *Women Film Desire: A Journey through Women's Cinema*, Dir. Marie Mandy. France. 2000.
- *Women in Love*. Dir. Ken Russell. UK. 1969.
- *Working Girls*. Dir. Dorothy Arzner. USA. 1931.