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| University of Sheffield - School of English |
| Narrative in Fiction and Film: A Practical Study of the Nature of Cross-Pollination in Narrative Structure |
| A dissertation presented by |
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# ‘Narrative in Fiction and Film: A Practical Study of the Nature of Cross-Pollination in Narrative Structure’: An Introduction

## Intro. 1: Aims

This study is designed to examine the nature and extent of the influence that the moving picture has had on structure in written fiction. By structure I mean narrative structure, the ways in which discourse is constructed, from the smallest units at line level to the full expanse of complete works. I will contend that audio-visual influence is highly pervasive, if not ubiquitous, and that this influence is now intrinsic to the basic processes of text production at the level of mental processing.

At the outset, I should state that, owing the highly complex and culturally interlinked evolutionary trajectories of art forms, it may not be possible to make absolute statements about this cross-pollinating influence between the written and the visual. My conclusions here will not strive to be definitive, but they will *strongly suggest* what I believe are the overriding factors that have precipitated change.

This is a practical study. The processes I hope to illuminate in my primary texts are those of composition, both in terms of the structural design of my subject texts and, as far as possible, the cognitive processes by which those designs were derived. Although this approach might seem somewhat speculative, in the absence of direct contact with the producers of those texts, I will argue that evidence for their thought processes may be gleaned from their working documents and the final products. To demonstrate these more fully in practice, I will draw from knowledge of my own processes, at inspirational, methodological and productive levels to offer comparative insights and to formulate conceptions of the ‘drivers’ of mental processing at work in the production of texts and how these drivers may have been modified by inter-art influences. The combination of the analytical and the creative, in the context of the cognitive processes of production will, I hope, show evidence for my strongly suggested outcomes.

My intention in undertaking this programme of study was to research, formalise and develop tentative ideas that I have been considering over many years in the practice of creative writing and creative writing teaching. The strategy is three-fold: to see if anything substantive can be said about this audio-visual influence; to see how knowledge of this influence and its effects can aid the writer’s processes in creating works of fiction; to see if this knowledge can help to develop teaching strategies in creative writing.

For the first of these the aim is simply interest. It’s apparent that literature has developed in many ways since the advent of film in the late nineteenth century. Despite changes in use of language which would easily differentiate a George Eliot novel from one by Ian McEwan in the minds of readers, there would seem to be something more fundamental in terms of how that language builds into differing discourse structures over sentences, paragraphs, sequences and chapters. It’s now not possible to write a novel of the kind of omniscient narration and prolonged descriptive nature characteristic of the Victorian period without it being a pastiche. Why has this happened and what role has film played in shaping these changes?

For the second, it’s the desire to improve the quality of my own writing, particularly in terms of structure. It is my experience that it’s most often in structural terms that a given work, particularly of the extended nature of a novel, will thrive or fail. Most writers can put together effective passages and scenes, but many struggle with placing these passages and scenes into sequences that provide effective development of the overall narrative and with creating the right sort of momentum and discourse management that does justice to their intentions. When I say ‘thrive or fail’ I do not necessarily mean financially or in terms of publication figures or critical success, but that the work achieves something of what it sets out to achieve. Unless for private consumption alone, writing is an act of communication, and the writer will generally have something in mind that they would like to communicate. The effectiveness of this communication is heavily dependent on how its discourse is structured. As soon as two words are placed together, there are the beginnings of structure, so considerations of structural qualities are fundamental at the very onset of the writing process. I say then, that structure is key. Unless one’s work is ultimately compelling on a line level, then it’s the strength of the arcs of narrative, of the management of tension, and of suspense, and of denouement that is crucial to maintaining reader interest and engagement with the text (the ‘page-turnability’ that will keep them reading until the end).

If, then, film has influenced the way that written fictions are now put together, does a knowledge of this influence allow the writer to understand better their own creative processes and to create strategies for working to more effective ends? If this filmic influence is as pervasive as it would seem from even a cursory examination of the structures of written fiction, then does an understanding of it, a transformation of tacit knowledge to explicit, enable the writer to modify and improve their processes and their product?

The third aim follows from the second. Whilst many writers that I have spoken to or heard accounts from would shy away from wanting to understand too much about the mechanics of the writing process in case the magic spell be broken (killing the proverbial goose that lays the golden eggs), for me that understanding provides opportunities for developing my craft that would not otherwise be possible. In my long history of facilitating narrative works, through creative writing teaching, workshops and sessions of peer group review, it has always been the broad structural issues that have proved the most intractable. How does one communicate to another what kind of thing ought to go in what kind of place? How does one suggest the placement and development of scenes into scene sequences, into chapters, into complete narratives that might extend to hundreds of thousands of words? This is where film can demonstrate its value as an easily accessible exemplum of narrative form. The reasons why I think this is the case will be outlined in my overall conclusion, but I will just add here a brief note about ‘why film?’

The origins of this approach on my part go back to an event in the mid-1990s, when I was studying for my MA in Creative Writing at Bretton Hall College. In an environment that mostly privileged peer group review as the method of evolving the students’ creative skills, the few taught seminars stood out. In one of these, the head of Creative Writing, the writer and filmmaker Robert Watson, described and explained the 180 degree rule, the filmic convention that the camera usually persists at one side of the action so that, for example, if shot one shows a character running from left to right and shot two of one running right to left, then they are generally considered to be running towards each other.[[1]](#footnote-2) The object of this, or at least the effect for me, was to foreground ways of looking at the conventions of focalisation. These conventions allow both clarity of communication and shared values between filmmaker and viewer that facilitate the act of that communication. In terms of writing, similar aspects apply. If one can create mental models of scenarios, ‘the quasi-visual’ representations that one forms as a precursor to writing the text, with reference to effective focalisation and placement of the **origo**, then one has better control of the discourse in a way that helps to guide the re-representation of those scenarios in the mind of the reader.

Prior to this seminar, I knew nothing of the 180 degree rule, although I had been implicitly subject to it every time I had watched anything on screen. Learning about it added just a little bit to the armoury of skills one requires as a writer – the tacit had become the explicit – and has also precipitated twenty years of thinking how filmic exempla might be used to inform and enhance other aspects of the creative process.

Of course, using film as an educational tool in creative writing is not new, particularly in terms of looking at the ways in which narrative can be put together. ‘Screenwriting is structure’.[[2]](#footnote-3) One has only to look at a typical film or television script to see why this is the case. Famous script guru Robert McKee has made a career out of packing rooms with aspiring writers and expounding on the dynamics of the script as a source for structural models.[[3]](#footnote-4) Robert J. Ray’s *The Weekend Novelist* series also references film and script nomenclature and practices as a way for writers to understand structural formulae and aid construction of their own texts.[[4]](#footnote-5) These are popular examples, but they serve to indicate the way in which the professional end of the craft-aspects of creative writing operate.

So, what is there to add? Where I think I can contribute something here is in looking at the processes of creation at a fundamental level, both as a method for understanding this cross-pollination and to better understand it for the purposes of informing the creative and pedagogical goals outlined above. This combined approach, I believe, also offers a more comprehensive method for examining whether or not anything definite may be concluded about how this influence has manifested in the literature.

## Intro. 2: Limitations of study and choice of texts

It could be argued that a study which seeks to pin down the nature of the evolution of this audio-visual influence in a definitive way would need to look at all of the evidence, that is, every piece of fiction published since the advent of film and also every narrative film. A counter argument might run that, if this influence is universally pervasive, then any single example would provide a synecdoche that would illustrate the rule. There is, of course, even allowing for conventions of genre, not one type of film or one type of novel. A novel is also, demonstrably, not a film, and vice versa, though books often contain illustrations and films generally start with a written document (be it a treatment or script). The choice of novels as material may also seem inapposite, as Hitchcock would have it:

A film cannot be compared to a play or novel. It is closer to a short story, which, as a rule, sustains one idea that culminates when the action has reached the highest part of the dramatic curve.

As you know, a short story is rarely put down in the middle, and in this sense it resembles a film.

And, from an earlier part of the same interview, in answer to a query from Truffaut on whether Hitchcock could conceive of adapting Dostoyevsky’s *Crime and Punishment*:

[…] to really convey that in dramatic terms, substituting the language of the camera for the written word, one would have to make a six- to ten-hour film. Otherwise, it wouldn’t be very good.[[5]](#footnote-6)

Notwithstanding that there have been some very long narrative films, this implies that the transmission of material from one medium to another is generally fraught with compromises and omissions. However, clearly, many films are adapted from novels and, in questions of structure, I feel that there is more scope in examining the novel form in concert with film. Both the novel and the typical feature film I would describe as sustained forms of narrative and, as there have been countless successful adaptations, then something of the broad structural nature of the original narrative must be transferable. With this in mind, I have selected two sets of paired texts, one from the middle part of the twentieth century and one that spans the latter part and into the twenty-first. In fact, neither of these is strictly a pair, as will become clear when I examine them in their respective chapters, but they do offer examples of the same (or similar) narratives presented in different media. This, I suggest, offers the best opportunity for understanding the differences and similarities between structural elements across the audio-visual/written divide.

Both pairs come from the American tradition, which is coincidental. I selected them specifically because I felt that the novel had particular filmic qualities that might yield to determined analysis and because there was a film adaptation to offer comparisons. Such a selection may seem artificial or wilfully biased towards a preferred conclusion but, in this instance, I hope to demonstrate that the specific does go some way to proving the rule. To this effect, I have tried to design analytical strategies that should ‘tease out’ the influence by examining the comparative natures of texts at the discourse level to see how they are structured and how this might affect how they operate during reception (processing), and why those particular structures have emerged from the methodologies of their production.

I am also aware that audio-visual media has not been the sole source of influence on written fiction. Writing cannot exist outside cultures and cultures change and evolve for multifarious reasons. One may not now be able to produce a classical novel because of the advent of broadcast radio or because of influential new modes of journalism favouring vivid stories of personalities and events (I will look at aspects of this in my first chapter). There are also changing tastes in the arts, the impacts of world wars, developing permissiveness, feminism, the advent of psychoanalysis and theories of unconscious motivations, and so on *ad infinitum*. There are countless examples of cultural and political change exactly contemporaneous with the development of the art of Cinema. The twentieth century might be considered the ‘urban century’, following the mass migrations to the industrial and mercantile centres during the latter part of the nineteenth century (which have continued and even accelerated worldwide in this century). Mass populations require mass media to entertain them, so the increasing availability of cinema, in terms of range and density of distribution (and pricing) must reflect demographic changes that have repercussions for the other arts and the ways those arts are produced, marketed and consumed. Cinema itself is also subject to change, and so its influences are, to an extent, mutable and reactive to environmental factors. Cinema’s position as the mass entertainment of choice, which superseded music-hall and the variety theatre, is in turn affected by the availability of television and then home entertainment and console gaming, and then computing and the resources of the internet.[[6]](#footnote-7) As a result, it could be argued that there is anything but a stable source to exert its influence, or even a source domain that is any way completely definable. Nevertheless, I will maintain that the nature of the cross-pollination between film and written fiction is demonstrable and trust that my examples will provide evidence of this.

## Intro. 3: Methodology

My critical approach in this thesis falls broadly under the category of Cognitive Poetics. By this, I mean that it seeks to establish what kinds of things are happening at levels of mental processing rather than seeking conclusions through attempts to pin down how structural elements may be defined in an ontological sense. Because this thesis is an interdisciplinary project, and includes the creation of an original work of fiction, it seems logical to account for the processes of production in both the theoretical component and the creative. The creation of texts is a process initiated and maintained through cognitive activity and any influence across media must be inherent in that creation at a level of mental processing, whether conscious or not. The basic nature of perception’s and creativity’s intrinsicality to the embodied mind is fundamental to the methodology of this study. To quote Mark Turner:

The mind is patterns of brain activity. The brain is part of the body, not something separate from the body. Culture, society and language do not lie outside of the brain. Culture, society and language are patterns in brains. Meaning is patterns in the human brain. Meaning is something the human brain attributes to its world. Things outside the brain do not have meaning in themselves.[[7]](#footnote-8)

Therefore, any discussion of cultural and artistic endeavours must end with a consideration of formative mental processes.

It would also seem logical, then, to compare the cognitive activities occurring in the reception of texts, particularly when those texts have analogous elements, be they acts, scenes or the minutiae of composition down to the level of phrase and shot. The process of adaptation must also, by definition, start with a reading and that reading must engender an interpretation. In the interplay between book and film, and between audio-visual influence and the composition of a book, the processes of creation and re-creation takes place first in the mind, as representational models are established to enable the act of production. So, a study that looks at the nature of influence at the level of production must pay heed to those processes in an attempt to try to establish the factors that are conditioned by that influence.

A narratological project will necessarily include background reading from many narratological sources and theoretical frameworks which are too numerous to describe in their entirety, but I will attempt to cover the main ground here. I would cite in particular introductory works by H. Porter Abbott (*The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative: Second Edition*) for its historical overview and Monika Fludernik’s *An Introduction to Narratology* for her description and definition of some of the terms used in this study.[[8]](#footnote-9) Also *Cognitive Poetics: An Introduction*, by Peter Stockwell, in respect of various apects of the ‘cognitive’ paradigm.[[9]](#footnote-10) In the correspondence between film and written fiction I have referred in part to ideas in Seymour Chatman’s *Story and* *Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film*, which has helped to clarify some of my thoughts about adaptation (see overall conclusion).[[10]](#footnote-11) For the specifics of film theory and its history, I have drawn particularly from Robert Stam (*Film Theory: An Introduction* and other sources) and from Edward Branigan’s *Narrative Comprehension and Film*, at which I am sometimes at odds, but which provides contributions in several areas.[[11]](#footnote-12) Some aspects of the physiology of film reception and its cultural context have been informed by James Monaco’s oft reprinted *How to Read a Film: Movies Media and Beyond*.[[12]](#footnote-13) As a constant reference I have always had at hand David A. Cook’s *A History of Narrative Film*.[[13]](#footnote-14) Though a few of these texts are described as ‘introductory’ I suggest that this somewhat underrates their impact. Always, of course, one is responding also to creative texts, to novels and short stories and films, both imaginatively and analytically. I will mention a few examples of these in the main body of text and some in footnotes where I feel that it’s appropriate.

For analysis of full narrative forms I have adopted a process of segmentation, where the structure is broken down into sub-units which are then laid out in a listing format to demonstrate act, scene breaks etc. My original model for this is from David Bordwell and Kristen Thompson’s *Film Art: An introduction*.[[14]](#footnote-15) I have adapted this technique in a variety of ways to offer breakdowns of the key narratives in this study. I have employed Bordwell also in respect of his theory of film ‘narration’, which I discuss in respect of my second set of texts.[[15]](#footnote-16) Bordwell was a relatively early advocate for the use of cognitive psychology as a critical tool in the study of film and, although I have utilised methodologies according to my own scheme, I should mention his influence in this respect.[[16]](#footnote-17) His explanation of ‘constructivist’ processes in narrative comprehension in *Narration in the Fiction Film* are particularly well mediated and, although it is primarily aimed at the processes of film reception, applies equally to the way in which texts in other media are cued and represented. Constructivism, a process of deriving meaning by testing perceived data against existing models is also fundamental to my analysis. As Bordwell puts it:

The dynamic nature of the Constructivist account makes it highly attractive. The perceiver in effect bets on what he or she takes to be the most likely perceptual hypothesis. Like all inferences, perceptual experience tends to be a little risky, capable of being challenged by fresh environmental situations and new schemata. After some interval, a perceptual hypothesis is confirmed or disconfirmed; if necessary, the organism shifts hypotheses or schemata. This cycle of perceptual-cognitive activity explains the ongoing, revisionist nature of perception. The theory also explains why perception is often a skilled, learned activity; as one constructs a wider repertoire of schemata, tests them against varying situations, and has them challenged by incoming data, one’s perceptual and conceptual abilities become more subtle and nuanced.[[17]](#footnote-18)

Clearly, there is no constructivism without a theory of schematised knowledge. My sources here include original work by Frederic Bartlett (*Remembering: A Study in Experimental and Social Psychology*), Guy Cook (*Discourse and Literature: The Interplay of Form and Mind*) and Elena Semino (*Language and world creation in poems and other texts*, as above).[[18]](#footnote-19) An explication of ‘template’ and ‘prototype’ schemata, which is of relevance to the variations of schematised knowledge that includes narrative structures in books and films can be found in Reid Hastie’s essay ‘Schematic Principles in Human Memory’.[[19]](#footnote-20)

I have also used a measure of Text World Theory to make certain points in my analysis, both in terms of production of texts and their reception. My main sources here are Paul Werth, from his groundbreaking book *Text Worlds: Representing conceptual space in discourse* and, particularly in respect of terminology and practical application, Joanna Gavin’s *Text World Theory: An Introduction*.[[20]](#footnote-21) Again, Elena Semino provides a good account of the practical apparatus of world building in *Language and world creation in poems and other texts*.

For a model of the tracking of events in narrative, I refer to Catherine Emmott’s theory of ‘Contextual Monitoring’ from her book *Narrative Comprehension: A Discourse perspective*, although I am using this in a partial way and with additions and modifications of my own (see Chapter 3).[[21]](#footnote-22) Work in this area of theory is, of course, ongoing, but there are certain terms in here which provide a useful starting point for discussing some of the memory and representational actions of receiving and processing natural texts.

For some of the fundamentals in the field of cognitive linguistics, I draw attention to George Lakhoff’s *Women, Fire and Dangerous Things: What Categories Reveal about the Mind*, which has much to say about the immediate mechanisms of comprehension, categorisation and understanding. For a sustained treatise on the subject of the embodied mind, which is relevant to my overall conclusions, I refer readers to Ray Gibbs’s *Embodiment and Cognitive Science*.[[22]](#footnote-23) Also of relevance is David Herman’s book *Storytelling and the Sciences of the Mind*.[[23]](#footnote-24) Herman also provides an interesting discussion of semiotics, Lacanian psychoanalysis and film meaning in *Universal Grammar and Narrative Form*.[[24]](#footnote-25) Influential work on mental representation can be found in Philip Johnson-Laird’s book *Mental Models: Towards a Cognitive Science of Language, Inference and Consciousness*.[[25]](#footnote-26)For a distilled account of some of the facets of, and theoretical approaches to, mental representation in narrative processing, I have looked to Richard J. Gerrig’s and Giovanna Egidi’s essay, ‘Cognitive Psychological Foundations of Narrative Experiences’.[[26]](#footnote-27)

I will also refer to an area of human experience and mental processing that is described under various terms: Theory of Mind; Mind-style; Mind-modelling. I am aware that this subject is somewhat vexed, particularly in respect of the term Theory of Mind, which has specific meanings in the field of psychology that correspond to the developmental stages of childhood. My sources here are numerous conference papers from individuals such as Lisa Zunshine, Alan Richardson and Alan Palmer. For the last of these, I have also drawn from sections of his book *Fictional Minds*.[[27]](#footnote-28) For the ends I am pursuing here, the idea of ‘mind-modelling’ might be considered a more appropriate system for representing the psychological activities (my main source in this respect is Peter Stockwell’s *Texture: A Cognitive Aesthetics of Reading*).[[28]](#footnote-29) However, for my purposes in looking at production strategies in creativity, I will mostly be using the term ‘mind-style’, for reasons which I hope will become apparent from the analysis. The approach is designed to be multi-layered, in that the various theoretical frameworks combine to suggest the high densities of information present in even short sequences of text, and how the structural mediations of that information prompt complex processing reactions in the minds of receivers of those texts. By analysing the actions of specific texts in adaptation and from a perspective of production, the mechanisms by which that production has been influenced should become apparent.

Ideas about production also come from numerous sources, not least my years of creative writing practice and teaching, as well as countless conversations and discussions about the mechanisms of creativity. However, for this thesis, I have selected a few thoughts from the work of the psychologist and writer Keith Oatley. His notion of the creative process as emanating from a kind of waking dream state has some resonance in this field of study and this is something I draw upon and supplement to develop my conclusions.[[29]](#footnote-30) In this context I have also drawn briefly from the theories of Robert Olen Butler, from an edited and collected series of academic lectures originally presented by him at Florida State University in 2002.[[30]](#footnote-31)

My methodology also includes a level of more orthodox contextual and (what one might call) cultural criticism. This is partly to place the texts, to some extent, in the cultural and personal environments extant at their conception and partly for an ulterior motive which I will outline in the overall conclusion.

In the field of cognitive poetics, many definitions of terms can be specific to particular methodologies and adaptable across various theoretical bases. For this reason, where I have thought that there might be any ambiguity, or because I may have used terms in a way that may be specific to my own method of analysis, I have glossed those terms in Appendix A after the main body of the text. If this is so, in the first instance of usage they will be emboldened (as with **origo**, above). Where I am able to, and when it might have an impact on the definition of a term, I have tried to determine and supply its original context. Where I feel that terms are more generically understood, I have left them unglossed. My basic terminology for categorising structural elements is derived from Teun A. van Dijk and Walter Kintsch’s book *Strategies of Discourse Comprehension*, which I define for my purposes in the glossary, but I do not use their model of discourse representation based on a ‘text base’, which forms one of the fundamental tenets of that volume.[[31]](#footnote-32)

There are a couple of other strategies of analysis that I have not employed in this study, the decisions for which may credit explanations. First, I have deliberately eschewed any kind of semiotic approach. This is not to say that this may not have value in certain applications but, in my overall strategy, it is both difficult to integrate and, I believe, less than illuminating in the context of a methodology arising predominantly from cognitive science. I will cover the reasons for this in a little more detail in my section on ‘current thinking’ and further in my overall conclusion.

Second, with a couple of exceptions, I have largely avoided questions of deixis, which may seem somewhat counter-intuitive in the context of film, with its multiple dynamics of vectored motion and shifting viewpoints but, whilst this might be an effective methodology for studying the composition and reception of moving images, it does not necessarily add anything to the questions of narrative structure which I am addressing here. This is in the main because, whilst it has its effects on real-time processing, at some level I will have to take that processing as ‘read’ to allow space to concentrate on my structural concerns. Its main use, therefore, in my account, is to demonstrate some of the conceptual processes inherent in text production which may have particularly strong filmic resonance, or, where it might have a particular structural effect.

## Intro. 4: A Note on Structure

When I discuss structure in narrative, I conceive of this as the way in which narrative elements are comprised and built up into entire narrative forms. Entire narratives and larger constituent components (chapters, scenes, passages, shot-sequences etc.) express **macrostructural** and **superstructural** qualities, whereas smaller components (sentences, sentence-sequences, shots etc.) can be thought of as being of a microstructural nature. At what point microstructure accumulates into macrostructure or superstructure may be highly debatable, and also case dependent, but the terms are effective in most cases. At the smallest level of detail, written narrative and film representation will break down into different components. A short phrase in writing may have microstructural qualities, whereas a shot, a single take, may still be a macrostructural element. Divining how literature and film advance their narratives at this level of activity is one of the key enquiries of this study and forms the basis of the main strands of research. I believe that this is best demonstrated by example and my selection of texts reflects this.

The term ‘structure’ in narrative can, of course, be applied to such diverse concepts as the ‘positioning’ of narrators and narratees and perceptions of spatial relationships in written description and filmic representation. However, I will confine my usage of it here to mean the discourse and story structures that demonstrate narrative sequences of events.

I define narrative as that which is the combined effect of a narrative discourse and a story world, in which narrative discourse is the actual text that is being received and story world the implied (or actual in the case of real) events that the narrative discourse describes. I will generally shorten these to discourse and story. Seymour Chatman defines these as a ‘what’ and a way’: ‘The what of narrative I call its “story”; the way I call its “discourse”.[[32]](#footnote-33) I choose these terms over the formalist Russian alternatives szuyzhet and fabula to avoid any confusion over the secondary meaning of the latter, which can indicate an archetypal story form or folk tale.[[33]](#footnote-34)

## Intro .5: Current Thinking

This will be, of necessity, a somewhat partial and specific overview of the vast field of film studies in the context of inter-art analogies, but it should provide a reflection on which areas of thought this study is reacting to and which it seeks to develop. This forms the first part of this section. A second part will look in more detail at four individual texts that more directly address the question of cross-pollination. Prior to commencing the formal part of my research, I had imagined that there was much published material pertaining specifically to the question of filmic influence, but this turns out not to be the case. Of this work, I have selected the four examples which I feel have the most relevance for this study.

Much of the research into the relationship between film and written fiction emanates from the field of adaptation studies, and much of this seeks to identify the extent to which adapted texts (films) maintain fidelity to their sources. In essence, it’s an analysis of what is able to transfer and what is ‘lost’ in translation. The conception of loss, of the new version eliding material qualities of the source, then leads to evaluative assessments of the worth of the adaption over the adapted. It’s that idea that ‘the film is not as good as the novel’.

Part of this attitude derives from a perceived hierarchy of the arts, in which the older as seen as the better and the upstart as the inferior. As Robert Stam puts it:

Although the persuasive force of the putative superiority of literature to film can be partially explained by the undeniable fact that many adaptations based on significant novels are mediocre or misguided, it also derives, I would argue, from deeply rooted and unconscious assumptions about the relations between the two arts. The intuitive sense of adaptation’s inferiority derives, I would speculate, from a constellation of substratal prejudices. First, it derives the a priori valorization of historical **anteriority** and **seniority**: the assumption, that is, that **older** arts are necessarily **better** arts. […] the arts accrue prestige over time. The venerable art of literature, within this logic, is seen as inherently superior to the younger art of cinema, which is itself superior to the even younger art of television, and so forth ad infinitum. [Stam’s emphasis][[34]](#footnote-35)

The relationship then, may not even be an equal one, notwithstanding the existence of films which may exceed the artistic ambitions of their prose sources. As Stam continues: ‘The inter-art relation is seen as a Darwinian struggle to death rather than a dialogue offering mutual benefit and cross-fertilization.’(*Literature and Film*, p. 4). Of this apparent binary opposition, I will be concentrating on the second part, because an evaluation doesn’t necessarily correspond to a valuation. No art can exist in a vacuum that prohibits influence from other elements of its cultural environment, even those founded on strict rules of production, such as Classical ballet or Japanese *No* theatre. Even sacred texts are liable to reinterpretation and adaptation, as evinced by the many biblical epics from even the earliest years of Hollywood output.

Notions of fidelity and value, then, don’t necessarily get one far in the question of filmic influence, but questions of adaptation and the nature of what carries over, may. Here the emphasis is on similarity and, particularly, on difference, which some analysts consider fundamental. In his influential 1957 work *Novels into Film*, George Bluestone makes the claim that, ‘between the percept of the visual image and the concept of the mental image, lies the root difference between the two media.’[[35]](#footnote-36) Which would seem to have repercussions for this study. If film is composed of image and writing of purely linguistic cues, then where is the crossover? Both film and fiction are comprised of created discourses which, in narrative terms, must have similarities of operation (if narrative production/comprehension is seen as, at least, a natural outcome of being human, if not, in fact intrinsic to the ways that human beings make sense of the world).

The analysis, then, is beset by questions of what is common to the expressions of both media and what is different in each. Much of this encounters Bluestone’s paradigm. Yet few films are composed of just moving images. They contain words in many forms and may feature music and song at diegetic and extradiegetic levels. One looks at a book to read it. Both are mediated by sight, if film generally solely has the availability of the aural dimension (though this is possible if one is listening to music whilst reading).[[36]](#footnote-37)

Stam conceives of the ‘automatic difference’ as a question of cognitive vector:

The words of a novel have a virtual, symbolic meaning; we, as readers, fill in their paradigmatic indeterminacies. A novelist’s portrayal of a character induces us to imagine the person’s features in our imagination. While the reader moves from the printed word to visualizing the objects portrayed, the spectator moves in the opposite direction, from the flux of images to naming the objects portrayed and identifying the events recounted. A film actualizes the virtual through specific choices.[[37]](#footnote-38)

A way out of this conundrum is to devise a scheme by which film can be considered a language, with its own sematic rules. With this established, the question becomes one of comparisons between languages or, in the case of adaptation and inter-art influence, how the language translates across media. Concerted efforts to discern the basis for a language go back at least as far as the Russian formalists and Sergei Eisenstein’s theories of montage as a kind of redirected model of Hegelian synthesis.[[38]](#footnote-39) Mikhail Bakhtin’s conception of ‘chronotopes’, spatio-temporal structures that form into units of narrative once expressed in character and setting etc. also have qualities that can apply to cinematic processes.[[39]](#footnote-40) However, it is probably Christian Metz’s ideas of film language, derived from Saussurean semiology, that have provided the most significant currency in this regard. His conception of a ‘Grand Syntagmatique’ of film shot organisation makes an attempt to advance the nature of film’s mode of communication from a Saussurean *langue* (language system) to a fully operational *langage* (language) of eight syntagmas – prototype shot sequence constructions – that build into syntagmatic chains and hence into narrative macrostructures. This then overcomes the problem of seeking direct analogues for the rules and range of linguistic syntax in the shots and sequences of cinema. Where the morphemes and semantic units of written language can be said to have a finite (if vast) range of possible combinations, units of meaning in film may be considered infinite. Even a single still frame from a film might transmit huge amounts of information, like a painting or photograph, so cannot be considered a single unit of meaning in any sense. Metz’s innovation here is to see shot composition and editing-in-sequence as the unit (to include music, sounds, words, etc.), essentially narrative units that carry meaning through structure. The signification is moved away from the surface of the discourse and into the intentional organisation of the film that results from its direction and production.[[40]](#footnote-41)

There are difficulties with this conception of a language, not least the effect of content and of editing systems that do not conform to the pattern, but it does at least move the onus of communication onto structural aspects of narrative and the way that they effect a response in the receiver of the text. This is the line I will pursue in this research project, that it is at the level of narrative, of narrative elements and their expression in differing media, that the question of cross-pollination may be satisfied. It doesn’t need to be a language to have correspondence with another form. To impose the rules of language is to be overly inflexible, in adopting the paradigms of one domain to explicate another. In this context, comparisons may be odious; comparisons are to be made more profitably in examining the ways that narrative structures operate and, particularly, how they operate at the level of mental processing both in reception and production.

In adaptation studies, the pairing of texts provides the opportunity to delimit similarity and difference; in the production of adaptation, the central question of ‘what should carry forth?’ permits insight into the cognitive processes that attempt to define the central nature, the essence of narrative that can survive translation into another medium. Stuart McDougal characterises the requirements of adaptation thus: ‘Every art form has distinctive properties resulting from its medium; a filmmaker must recognize the unique characteristics of each medium before transforming a story into film.[[41]](#footnote-42) Adaptation is a process of selection, or perhaps redistribution, or sometimes simply straightforward abandonment of material:

The issue becomes one of **comparative** narratology, which asks such questions as the following. What events from the novel’s story have been eliminated, added or changed in the adaptation, and, more important, why? Although the fiction film has evolved a good deal since the five-minute silent versions of novels like Zola’s *L’Assomoir*, adaptations today typically still trim down the events in the novel to produce a film of “normal” feature length. Many filmmakers, in this spirit, “streamline” the novel by focusing on certain characters and events than others. Most film versions of *Robinson Crusoe*, for example, skip over the early chapters in order to rush to what they see as the “core” elements of the story: the shipwreck, the island, and the encounter with Friday. [original emphasis][[42]](#footnote-43)

As a process, adaptation cannot be free from methodologies of decision making or the effects of style. Assessing the variations requires a taxonomy of styles. This section will provide more than one example of this. Dudley Andrew classifies three varieties:

Borrowing – That which provides the greatest fidelity to the nature of the source text in the context of its ideas.

Intersecting – A complete re-imagining of the source expressed in a new medium.

Fidelity and Transformation – ‘The reproduction in cinema of something essential about an original text.’[[43]](#footnote-44)

These express something of the possibility of the artistic process through which adaptation takes place, though one could see how these might be prone to crossover or inclusion in a complex set of Venn diagrams. Gérard Genette finds five modes, which pay more attention to structural variations in the process. This is part of his concept of ‘transtextuality’, the notion that all texts have extended interrelationships with all those that have informed them or made them possible in a complex web of inter-reference and influence. His categories apply to all texts in adaptation (not just book-to-film), but they are worth outlining here for my own purposes:

‘Intertextuality’ – Reference in one work to background texts, which may be cultural prototypes such as the Bible.

‘Paratextuality’ – The relationship between a work and all that surrounds it, including forewords, newspaper interviews with authors etc.

‘Metatextuality’ – A response to a text that references it from a position that it may not occupy, thus a critique, a rebuttal or commentary that occupies ground outside the precinct of the original.

‘Architextuality’ – The text derives from a suggestion from the title of a text or an opposing response to it, which may express structural fidelity or may owe little to the source.

‘Hypertextuality’ – An originating ‘hypotext’ undergoes adaptation into a new form.[[44]](#footnote-45)

In terms of film adaptation and this study, hypertextuality has the most resonance in this context. Hypotexts may be more than singular, the same text or the same type of text in multiplicity. They may be the entire historical catalogue of textual or macrostructural influence. If the prototypicality can extend to superstructural models, then this permits the possibility of structural influence across media that is generic rather than specific. Here the category transects with intertextuality, but an intertextuality that operates on a level of structural form. This is somewhat to extend the philosophy beyond its intention, but it’s a way of proposing and grounding the type of intermedia influence that I am proposing.

Of more practical use in this context may be Chatman’s concept of narrative ‘kernels’. These he describes as formative elements that are ‘logically essential’ to any given narrative: ‘Kernels are narrative moments that give rise to cruxes in the direction taken by events.’ (Chatman, p. 53). They tend to be to do with character choices. As we will see in my novel *Jacks*, my character Karl makes a choice about whether to make a particular investment. The outcome of that decision will have repercussions for his strand of the narrative and by connection, two of the other three. This type of narrative phenomenon is of the sort that Chatman refers to as a kernel, an irreducible element without which the narrative would not be the same: ‘kernels cannot be deleted without destroying the narrative logic.’ (Chatman, p. 53). Kernels are the base forms, which are surrounded by ‘satellites’, material which provide subsidiary information that is contingent upon the kernel, that ‘form the flesh on the skeleton’ (Chatman, p.54). Satellites are, thus, non-essential, but supply much of what constitutes the material of the narrative. Stripped of the satellitic material, this suggests that an arrangement of narrative kernels might constitute a core substance of narrative that is of such a fundamental nature that it can survive adaptation and re-interpretation. As Chatman has it:

[…] since events and existents, story and discourse, operate at a deep structural level and *independent of medium*, one does not look for their [the kernel’s] precincts in the actual words (or images or whatever) of a given text. They can only be discussed in the analyst’s metalanguage, which is a paraphrase (another manifestation) of the narrative. [my italics][[45]](#footnote-46)

There are arguments against this, that the kernels themselves may be mutable according to the way in which they are formulated in the reception of texts, and thus lack consistent status but, as it’s clear that narratives adapted across media can be perceived as having common (or related) identities at some level, then there must at least be the potential for substantive narrative forms. This might relate usefully to my usage of macrostructural and superstructural concepts in the sense of the crucial segmented events of a discourse, which I will discuss more fully later. It is clear that narratives are comprised of structures, less clear perhaps how these structures persist across structurally different media. Regardless of the counter-arguments, Chatman is resolute about the kernel/satellite equation:

The distinction between the major hinge events and the minor supplementary ones in a narrative is a psychological reality that anyone can prove to himself. He can see how easily consensus is reached about which are the kernels and which the satellites of a given story. Whether these particular terms are cumbersome is beside the point; what is important is that the narrative elements exist, indeed are crucial to narrative theory.[[46]](#footnote-47)

If so, then the debate about film language becomes, in some ways, extraneous to the arguments I am going to make in this thesis. What matters is not language, but the elements or qualities that are transmutable regardless of media. If this can be true in adaptation, then it can also be true in adapting the methodologies of one medium, which give rise to their expression in discourse, into the discourse outcomes of another.

I will now turn to my four specific texts. The first is Dennis J. Packard’s *The Film Novelist: Writing a Screenplay and Short Novel in 15 Weeks*.[[47]](#footnote-48) Although this is to some extent a ‘how-to’ guide for creating brief novels and adapted screenplays, based on Packard’s own practices and his teaching strategy at Brigham Young University, it commences with a historical overview of the development of writing in the Western canon and, in particular, the evolution of what he terms ‘scenic’ writing. His contention is that a change in attitude towards the novel in the middle of nineteenth century altered the way in which fictional prose was structured. Prior to this scenes would generally be commenced after brief exposition (typically on the nature of characters and situations), followed by a summary and then the action. In a stylistic innovation, the writer Gustave Flaubert decided to dispense with the former exposition and launch straight into his scenes, in a way that means that readers are delivered straight into the flow of events, creating an impression that they may be taking place in some version of real time. As Flaubert was initially a dramatist, Packard suggest that his prose adapts its techniques from the stage. He contends: ‘Because of Flaubert’s use of scene description, much of the narration in *Madame Bovary* can be reformatted in script form.’[[48]](#footnote-49) With the following proviso: ‘Flaubert didn’t always write scenically – he didn’t *always* engage readers in picturing scenes. But he did write much more scenically than novelists before him.’ [Packard’s italics][[49]](#footnote-50) However, the die is cast and this more directly scenic representation influences the next generation of writers, from Emile Zola to Anton Chekhov to Henry James. In these cases, the influence is a combined effect of other writers and, through them and by direct transmission, the structural demands of the theatre. Thus, prose structures have already transformed before the appearance of the moving image, which then exaggerates the effect: ‘Not until the advent of film do we see novelists mimicking the motion of a camera’s changing view of a scene by offering enough scene description for readers to continually picture new aspects of each scene as it unfolds.’[[50]](#footnote-51) Chatman is less convinced of this connection:

It has been remarked by critics […] that classical novels exhibit a relative constancy of alternation between scene and summary. Contrarily, modernist novels, as Virginia Woolf observed in both theory and practice, tend to eschew summary, to present a series of scenes separated by ellipses that the reader must fill in. thus, the modernist novel is more cinematic, although I do not argue that it changed under the influence of cinema.[[51]](#footnote-52)

However, lack of proof does not necessarily deny influence. The writing becomes more scenic, in a way that resembles film. The arch proponent of this new way of writing cinematically, Packard maintains, is James Joyce, with particular reference to the scenic structure of *Ulysses* (1922), which replicates filmic editing techniques to include ‘cross-cuts, fades, and dissolves, even slow motion.’.[[52]](#footnote-53)

There is enough to be said about Joyce and cinema to fill an entire volume (which it has) but, because of the limited space here, I will confine myself to a few points. In *The Tenth Muse*, Laura Marcus makes a case for elements of Joyce’s style sometimes replicating effects from Mutoscope machines, the hand-cranked ‘what-the-butler-saw’ devices of the type prevalent in Dublin prior to the establishment of cinemas.[[53]](#footnote-54) Certain ‘stuttering’ progressions of images, slowing down to a fixed image, speeding up again, mimic the way in which the manual advancement of the frames of the flicking photographs could be managed to create the semblance of natural motion or permit the examination of a single image. The ‘Nausicaa’ episode of *Ulysses* includes a section in which Bloom muses on one of these shows. However, she also makes a link between both this novel and Virginia Woolf’s *Mrs Dalloway*, which relates the cinematic to the context of setting:[[54]](#footnote-55)

Urban consciousness and cinematic consciousness become intertwined in these city fictions, with the deployment of the fictional equivalent of a fixed camera, which records, as pure contingency, everything that passes by it, and of ‘montage’ techniques represented by contrast and juxtaposition.[[55]](#footnote-56)

In *Joycean Frames: Film and the Fiction of James Joyce*, Thomas Burkdall extends this connection to the technological and societal changes that accompanied the development of modernist attitudes to art:

While Joyce was preparing for and painstakingly crafting the fiction that would transform literature, the society under which he lived underwent a transformation itself; the introduction of new machines such as telephones, phonographs, subway, and typewriters revolutionized early twentieth century urban life. With this revolution arose a general change in perception: the burgeoning modernist sensibility. Characterized in part by fragmentation and streams-of-consciousness, this new perception can be linked to the increased speed of communication and the new space-time relationships wrought by these technological innovations. This new modernist aesthetic appears in literature and cinema[[56]](#footnote-57)

He continues:

But the most important surviving technology may well be the cinema. Joyce availed himself of the affinities of the two media [film and written fiction] so that one can now use the theory of the cinema to interpret his fictions. As western culture evolves further into what we might call the pixeled universe of the video display terminal, of digitized sound and image, the cinema remains with us as a vestige of the modernist technologies.[[57]](#footnote-58)

As he concludes: ‘Joyce and the other modernists experienced a change in perception that arrived contemporaneously with the advent of cinema; certainly the movies played a role in the shaping of their experiences of the world and […] their means of expression.’ (Burkdall, p. 98). The evolution of literary art is thus contingent upon environmental and technological influences. Joyce was an avid film goer and was for a time a promoter for Italian film studios in Dublin. He later discussed film technique and theory personally with Sergei Eisenstein. If even an early twentieth-century work such as *Ulysses*, with its predisposition for interior monologue, can be said to be cinematic, then the influence of film must already be substantial. The natural evolution of this, as Packard would have it, is the ‘film novel’, short works of fiction that replicate the stylistic and structural procedures of film as the main mode of their production.

He takes the first example to be Dashiell Hammett’s *The Maltese Falcon*, whose construction imitates film form at a basic level:[[58]](#footnote-59)

This short detective novel consists of one visual scene after another, so that reading it is like watching a movie in your head. It uses almost all dialogue and scene description, with no narration or interior monologue. It is linear – with no flashbacks, flash-forwards, or imagined scenes. Formally, then, it would be identified as a simple film novel.[[59]](#footnote-60)

Packard cites also certain works of William Faulkner, John Steinbeck and Jean-Paul Sartre as way points, before he arrives at what he considers the first pure example of this type of narrative: Arthur Miller’s *The Misfits*.[[60]](#footnote-61) To realise the script for John Huston’s film (1961), Miller first constructed the narrative in the form of a prose story, which he referred to as ‘a story conceived as a film’ and a ‘cinema novel’.[[61]](#footnote-62) Miller uses minimal narration: most of the material is scenic, with ‘an economy of storytelling, every word either telling actors what to say (dialogue) or the camera what to see (scene description)’.[[62]](#footnote-63) In Miller’s own words:

Movies, the most widespread form of art on earth, have willy-nilly created a particular way of seeing life […] their swift transitions, their sudden bringing together of disparate images, their effect of documentation inevitable in photography, their economy of storytelling, and their concentration on mute action have infiltrated the novel and play writing – especially the latter – without being confessed to or, at times, being consciously realized at all.[[63]](#footnote-64)

This issue of the possibility of a film novel is an interesting one. Though Packard is providing a practical way for his students to produce short works and scripts in a disciplined way that privileges tightly wrought scenarios as a technique for deriving effective plot structures, he is clearly making a case for this effect of cross-pollination from early in the twentieth century (Hammett), which is fully resolved early in the second half (Miller). I will come back to Packard’s notion of the film novel, and to what I think is the substance of what Miller is saying, later on.

My second text is Alan Spiegel’s *Fiction and the Camera Eye: Visual Consciousness in Film and the Modern Novel*.[[64]](#footnote-65) Spiegel too makes a case for Flaubert as the originator of a new form of fictional representation (Packard’s account seems to owe quite a lot to Spiegel), although for him there is something of variable cline proceeding from Cervantes. Dickens represents a transitional figure that finds full fruition in Flaubert. Again, the innovation is a new way of visualising the scene, directly into action and moving logically from image to image to create a fully realised mise-en-scène. The effect is to give a semblance of pictorial or settled image of place, and character within place, in which the interrelationships between the two are manifested from the visual realisations. Spiegel calls this ‘concretized form’ and the narrative products of this approach the ‘concretized novel’. The effect is like cinema, but before the invention of moving film (though not photography). Here the reader makes judgements based on physical representations in a way that obviates the internalised assessment and evaluative delivery of the classical narrator. Flaubert’s innovation is not arrived at singularly, Spiegel suggests that it’s a cumulative development of his own influences (Honoré de Balzac; Charles Dickens; Nikolai Gogol; Nathaniel Hawthorne), the first three of whom were, of course, dramatists as well as writers of fiction.

Flaubert’s heirs – Henry James, Emile Zola, Joseph Conrad and others – take up the form and develop it in their own ways. The influence is not, then, cinema, but a new way of seeing, indeed, a new way of perceiving the world which will find its echo in film as it begins its journey from nascent technological upstart to fully fledged art form: ‘Both Griffith and Conrad […] were starting from opposite ends of the same line and moving toward the same point in the middle: a union of image and concept, of visual fact and value.’ (Spiegel, p. xii). The result for the novel is a new ‘cinematographic form’ that, once again, precedes the invention of cinema, a natural progression in ways of expressing human experience in art that privileges sight over opinion, a ‘literature of images’.

However, the progression does not follow a single trajectory. The concretized form of narration is shadowed by an ‘interior form’ in which the images are not represented neutrally and sequentially in the narration, but are manifestations of the ways in which they are received and processed in the mind of the observer. Though image remains paramount, it becomes more fragmentary, more indicative of the way thought and perception proceed in a flux of small events, sights and inferences. This interior form is a direct consequence of the concerns of modernism and is characterised by such works as Woolf’s *Mrs Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse*.[[65]](#footnote-66) Nevertheless, the two trajectories are related and counter to prior methods of representation: ‘[…] narrative itself is a demonstration of character, setting, plot or theme in the form of a sequential and integrated telling (pre-Flaubertian) or action (post-Flaubertian).’ (Spiegel, p. 164). The modern novel does not require filmic influence to change its form, because its form is changing owing to other circumstances that emanate from changes in culture and attitude.

For Spiegel, then, the arguments about filmic influence in Joyce are unconvincing. Joyce is creating concretized, cinematographic form at a time before he could possibly have seen motion pictures or been able to be fully immersed in their syntactic arrangements. In any case, what one might conceive of as the types of shot and framing, the moving camera cropping and closing in on its subject, then cutting away to subsequent establishing shots, that Joyce seems to have adopted from cinema, were not necessarily the predominant mode prior to the editing innovations of Edwin S. Porter and D. W. Griffith. Cinema, and particularly cinema that aspired to high art, generally framed from a distance, as if replicating the view of a proscenium stage, with full length figures arriving and leaving through the frame boundaries (what Spiegel terms ‘scenographic’ framing). Joyce’s apparent filmic eye is actually highly mobile and sequential in ways that anticipate the more fragmentary montage effects of later cinema. These, then, are concurrent developments rather than inter-art influences:

Joyce simply and revealingly discovered in the cinema a source of correspondence for his own imaginative projections, and in this instance, as in so many others, Joyce’s response can serve as a touchstone, a central gathering force for some of the prototypical intellectual currents of his literary era – and ours. It is, I think, one of the inescapable facts of literary life in this century [the twentieth] that the modern novelist often comes to his craft with at least a semi-conscious recognition that his own narrative art form can proceed to take the formal and textual shapes that find their precise correspondents in another and newer narrative art form, namely, film form.[[66]](#footnote-67)

Spiegel maintains that this correspondence can take four possible routes:

1. ‘The literary form develops, as a whole or in part, in conscious and professed imitation of the photographic art forms.’ (self-conscious filmic technique, practiced by such writers as Vladimir Nabokov, Aldous Huxley and others).

2. ‘The literary form develops, as a whole or in part, as an analogue to the photographic art forms, but never in conscious imitation of them.’ (Ernest Hemingway; Raymond Chandler; others).

3. ‘The novelist applies his craft directly to the film form.’ (writers who are also screenwriters, sometimes for their own work: John Dos Passos; William Faulkner; Jean-Paul Sartre; others).

4. ‘The artist defines himself as a cultural hybrid, as both man of letters and filmmaker, operates within each medium impartially and without condescension, and finds in each an outlet for his deepest creative concerns.’ (Alain Robbe-Grillet; Susan Sontag; others).[[67]](#footnote-68)

In the first category, Spiegel gets close to Packard’s idea of the film novel, which he calls the ‘Hollywood novel’. His archetype for this is William Faulkner’s *Sanctuary* (1931, adapted as *The Story of Temple Drake*, 1933): ‘Of all the serious novelists that emerged in the thirties and forties of this century, Faulkner is perhaps the most elaborate and prodigious exponent of the cinematized narrative.’ (Spiegel, p. 117).[[68]](#footnote-69) Yet still the filmic influence is either deliberate or accidental and not the result of unavoidable cross-pollination until much later on:

The effects of cinematic slow motion in Faulkner and photographic stop motion in Joyce are probably inadvertent: these are essentially the results of novelists who are simply following through the assumptions of concretized form in an attempt to render, as it were, the interstices of the existentialized moment. As the century wears on, however, and the pervasiveness of cinema becomes an unavoidable fact of modern life, we are not very surprised to discover in the work of certain exponents of the cinematographic form an obvious intermingling between consciousness and literary consciousness.[[69]](#footnote-70)

He cites here sequences from Nabokovs‘s *Lolita* (1955).[[70]](#footnote-71) Even then, the conclusions are not absolute:

[…] this novelist asks us pointedly to see something in a cinematographic manner, as he often does in his other film-orientated novels, *Laughter in the Dark* and *King, Queen, Knave*. But whether his effects are cinematic effects (effects of oblique perspective, retinal imagery, fragmented visual fields) or painterly (effects of extravagant color and tone, scenographic layouts), this passage, like so many others in his work, presents to the reader’s eye what is virtually a formal exercise in vision.[[71]](#footnote-72)

The effect is deliberately ‘aesthetic’, but not necessarily solely cinematic. This is because Spiegel thinks that what is cinematic is also literary, owing to this convergent evolution. Both literature and film have adapted to new ways of seeing. He categorises these, again, in four ways which have both photographic and literary analogues. I will summarise these briefly:

*The Adventitious*: of the kind of image-related happenstance, such as in a still photograph, that creates a new meaning of effect by dint of its stasis or capturing of a quality in the moment.

*Anatomization*: the highly detailed representations of movement and physical presence possible in sequences of still picture and moving film, allowing speeding up or slowing down of actions to the point of ‘surgical’ analysis. Some of Faulkner’s action sequences fall into this category.

*Depthlessness*: as of the camera’s flattening of the subject onto two planes, which Spiegel analogises to some elements of the modern and post-modern, the sense that the true nature of the subject is lost or inscrutable.

*Montage*: editing and sequencing of shots and written cues for images. Intrinsic to the values of modern film production, but not exclusive to them.

So, montage is not just a product of cinema, even if that is its ultimate syntactical contribution to the arts: it’s a product of modernism and the moves towards new modes of representation. This may have some currency, inasmuch as it suggests complications in the trajectory of my proposed evolution of cross-media influence in terms of structure, if not a complete repudiation thereof. The correspondence is accidental, or it is deliberate. Ultimately, it’s undesirable:

The form of a great novel may indeed be like the form of a movie, as we have seen, but to write a novel in conscious imitation of a movie often only results in a kind of literary second fiddling, an attempt to do in one medium what can obviously be done better in another.[[72]](#footnote-73)

The thesis here is relatively convincing, but some of its points hint at the obverse. If it is not certain that Nabokov’s sequential imagery and deployment of the ‘camera eye’ are anything more than coincidental and a result of individual intra-art evolutionary processes, then is also not certain that they are not. I will argue that the influence is often conscious, for reasons that include facilities in creating structural forms in writing economically, and in ways that are immediately accessible to film-literate audiences, if not merely for purposes of fiscal gain (easy adaptation). However, I will also argue that much of the influence manifests at unconscious and pre-conscious levels in the processes of text representation and production. Any undesirability, or otherwise, of this correspondence is then academic, it becomes a natural evolution of the creative processes in individuals who have been subject to its influence.

My third text is Kamilla Elliott’s *Rethinking the Novel/Film Debate*.[[73]](#footnote-74) As this is very much an extended treatise dedicated to the subject in hand, I will go into some detail here in an effort to summarise the development of her theoretical stance.

Elliott’s background includes specialisms in Victorian literature and she commences by discussing eighteenth-century debates upon the correspondence between painting and poetry, before tracking the developing argument through the nineteenth century. Her main contention here is that the Victorian novel, particularly in the more expensive editions, was rarely just words:

Novels are not poems; films are not paintings. Novels have been illustrated: nineteenth- novels in particular are brimful of pictorial initials, vignettes, full-page plates, frontispieces, and endpieces. Films abound in dialogue, intertitles, subtitiles, voice-over narration, credits, and graphic words on sets and props. Yet scholars continue to designate the novel “words” and the film “images” and to define them according to [Gottfried] Lessing’s categorizations of poetry and painting.[[74]](#footnote-75)

She shows how Thackeray’s vignettes and plates for *Vanity Fair* (1848 edition and others) form integrated elements of the discourse. Both the text and the illustration are Thackeray’s work and are designed from the outset to be complimentary and mutually supportive.

Novels contain images and films contain words. She amplifies the point that I made earlier, that narrative films usually evolve from written documents, as well as containing words in their dialogue and on screen. Yet most studies of adaptation separate film into image and written fiction into words. Her point here is that the divide is not that simple, and that the precedent for filmic images is part way set by the illustrated novel:

For all the discussions of the cinematic Victorian novel, few scholars have credited its illustrations with shaping film art, and those that do identify only the pictorial inheritances that specific film adaptations of these novels have borrowed in their casting, costuming, acting, framing and set design. Certainly, all three extant silent films of *Vanity Fair* reveal such influences of Thackeray’s illustrations, particularly the 1922 British production.[[75]](#footnote-76)

She includes also a long section on pictorial initials to underline this point, although she is also convinced that film owes even more to theatre as a progenitor of its forms and techniques: ‘The evidence to my mind is overwhelming: it is theatre rather than the novel that has been the dominant aesthetic influence on film and the art from with which film shares the most affinities.’ (Elliott, p. 125). James Monaco, in his book *How to Read a Film*, makes a strong case for the counter point: ‘The narrative potential of film is so marked that it has developed its strongest bond not with painting, nor even with drama, but with the novel.’[[76]](#footnote-77) The nature of the influence is, then, undecided and, in Elliot’s opinion, further obfuscated by the methods by which the effects of narrative in film and fiction have been addressed. The problem with adaptation studies, she suggests, is the way in which words and images have been used to find analogous crossover between the two. Novels are not films, but there is something of a relationship, most markedly in adaptation. It’s a problem of categorisation, in which the signifier and the signified cannot apparently survive the crossover into another medium: ‘When most scholars assert that words and images do not translate, what remains to transfer between a film and novel in translation?’ (Elliott, p. 133). She defines the fundamental obstacle thus:

From Walter Pater to Ferdinand Saussure, to New Critics and structuralists, scholars remain adamant that form does not and cannot separate from content. The dogma remains constant, despite many other changes in semiotic theory. And while postructuralist semiotics have exploded form/content binarisms, they have done so by debunking and ghosting content altogether, rendering claims that content passes between forms in adaptation even more heretical than in prior theories. Indeed, poststructuralist semiotics have fused form and content in such a way that evaporates altogether in favour of pure form.[[77]](#footnote-78)

This apparently insoluble difficulty would seem to undermine the nature of the kind of profound cross-pollination that I am proposing even before we are underway, though Elliott provides a solution, via a recapitulation and development of the historical modes of the theory of adaptation. She categorises these in six ways. I will describe these perhaps more briefly than they credit, but this should be sufficient for the purposes of this summary:

1: The Psychic Concept of Adaptation.

In which the ‘spirit’ of the adapted work, or of its author, is passed onto the adaptation. A new form is created from the ‘soul’ of the source, which can be represented by this diagram:

THE NOVEL’S SPIRIT → (THE NOVEL’S FORM) → (READER-FILMMAKER RESPONSE) → (FILM) → VIEWER RESPONSE [[78]](#footnote-79)

2: The Ventriloquist Concept of Adaptation.

That ‘pays no lip service to authorial spirit’ (Elliott, p. 143). In which the previous form is emptied of its signs, for them to be replaced and substituted in a new (filmic) version). Her diagram for this follows Roland Barthe’s typography to differentiate the two systems (novel: lower case; film: upper case):

The Novel’s Signs – The Novel’s Signifieds = The Novel’s Signifiers

THE NOVEL’S SIGNIFIERS + THE FILM’S SIGNIFIERS + THE ADAPTATION’S SIGNS [[79]](#footnote-80)

3: The Genetic Concept of Adaptation

What carries over are the deep narrative structures. The adaptation sources fundamental elements at a higher level of category than the specifics of signs, which can then be re-expressed in the language of the adaptive medium. There is no diagram for this concept.

4: The De(Re)composing Concept of Adaptation

In which the novel’s structural and propositional meanings are subverted or reinterpreted in light of new cultural readings. Elliott maintains that this mode of address arises from reader response theory. The filmmaker’s reading and adaptation realign the discourse to express the desires or expectations of that reading and/or its cultural audience.

5: The Incarnational Concept of Adaptation

The word is made flesh and realises its potential in its cinematic expression. Somewhat like the psychic model, although here a ‘transcendental’ signifier beneath the manifestation of the novel’s discourse can translate to another signifier in the film. Elliott cites examples of international (cross-cultural) examples of adaptation to demonstrate how the nature of the adapted work can survive and find expression in the new form.

6: The Trumping Concept of Adaptation

Here the adaptation exceeds the adapted, by finding and exploiting the potential of the source text in a ‘re-dreaming’ of the material that raises its capital, finds improved resonance and ‘corrects’ the inadequacies of the original. Although such adaptations may appear ultimately faithless, they are ‘outrepresenting rather than misrepresenting the novels they adapt.’ (Elliott, p. 181).

Of these modes, the ‘genetic’ is perhaps the one closest to the direction I will follow in this study. I will expand on this fully over the following chapters. For Elliott, the basic problem of the link between form and content in these six models remains:

Concerns about form and content have precluded a ready acceptance of poststructuralist tenets, not necessarily because of political agendas, but because poststructuralism does not offer a satisfactory answer as to how adaptation occurs. Culturally speaking, it is not enough to dismiss adaptation as a mass cultural hallucination simply because it does not follow semiotic dogma concerning form and content.[[80]](#footnote-81)

Also:

Officially, analogy maneuvers between the two problematic semiotic dogmas with which this book is concerned – the unbridgeable divide between words and images and the unbreakable bond between form and content – but unofficially, it serves a number of other agendas.[[81]](#footnote-82)

Therefore, she opts to find a mid-way, one that separates form from content, but retains a semiotic relationship:

[My model] yokes the pictorial and the verbal in cognition without erasing all differentiations between them and opens a space between form and content that nevertheless maintains their bond. Recently, cognitive linguistics has mounted significant challenges to both structural objective linguistic and psychoanalytical approaches to film. My discussion examines and to some extent integrates these three approaches, but finds that a cognitive linguistic approach offers the best available solution to the novel and film debate’s problematic dogmas. However, structural, deconstructive, and psychoanalytic approaches offer vital and indispensable steps on the way to the cognitive linguistic conclusion/solution, which, one discovers, lurks implicitly in reciprocal interart analogies dating back to classical times.[[82]](#footnote-83)

The space allows for the reorganisation of the relationship, in which the signs of the text are modified by a reception that allows them to be re-expressed in the new medium, through a process of mirroring or providing the possibility of a reflected ‘image’ of them. Both image and reflection are afforded a relationship, in which their reflective characteristics constitute the bond. The route to this relationship can be demonstrated through the way in which figuration translates between the media:

Figuration not only bridges word and image divides, it also opens up a space between form and content bonds. Visualizing a figure of speech pulls a reader/auditor out of binary semantic matchings of signifiers and signifieds into a third space that is neither signifier nor signified at the same time that it is both.[[83]](#footnote-84)

This ‘looking glass’ analogy is the basis of her theoretical framework. The contribution of cognitive linguistics is to provide a strategic outlook that enables a breaking down of the differential between the written word and the image, owing to the way they are mentally processed, whereby images create mental verbal responses and words quasi-visual representations: ‘Under looking glass principles, if a verbal metaphor raises mental imaging, then conversely and inversely, a pictorial metaphor raises mental verbalizing.’ (Elliott, p. 221). In essence:

Reciprocal looking glass analogies […] give the reader an eye and the viewer a brain, undoing the entrenched eye/mind dichotomy that has clouded discussions of verbal and visual arts for so long. [a] looking glass model of literary and filmic figuration provides a bridge between novels and films in adaptation and, by extension, between the verbal and visual more generally.[[84]](#footnote-85)

The process of adaptation thus proceeds both ways. Images latent in the writing can be exploited, via a reading, into the adapted film; the film’s images give rise to verbal responses. To Elliott, this provides a solution to the problem of word/image translation, permitting the carrying over of the essence of the source, which is both informed by it and is transformed in the process:

This continuum of figurative expression, of figures and images running across and between verbal and pictorial signs, provides an incremental bridge along which words can transform to images and through which words and images can cohere in each other. More than this, looking glass figures point to a reciprocally transformative model of adaptation, in which the film is not translation or copy, but rather metamorphoses the novel and is, in turn, metamorphosed by it. Adaptation under such a model is neither translation nor interpretation, neither incarnation nor deconstruction: rather it is mutual and reciprocal inverse transformation that nevertheless restores neither to its original place.[[85]](#footnote-86)

The relationship between form and content is thus subject to a mediation in adaptation that has repercussions for the analysis of the cycles of cross-media influence. Because there is a commonality or mirror state in the processing of word and image in which each contains elements of the other’s effects, then that commonality must be inherent at a very basic level of mental activity. Elliott here remains attached to what might be termed microstructural factors, translations and reimaginings in adaptation. Although I am looking at structure, her looking glass analogy is perhaps *too* structural in that it seeks the answers at this level, whilst still endeavouring to uncover the global effects. The looking glass is itself a metaphor which I don’t necessarily think does complete justice to the question. This is not to say that I think that it’s erroneous, simply that I propose that there is something even more fundamental to the mental processes going on here and that this is at the root of the nature of trans-media cross-pollination. In her conclusion Elliott defines her central inquiry: ‘Why is a film like a novel?’ (Elliott, p. 241). My question might be ‘Why are novels like films?’ and, if so, where does that get us?

I too will use examples from adaptation to develop my argument, but I will extend into the realm of theories of production, because I think that it’s this area that offers the best potential for solutions to the questions. If there are ways in which word and image correspond, and film and written texts are products of mental processes (whether original, adapted or a combination of both), then they must also have the potential to influence each other at basic levels of production, or even before the act of production takes place.

My last text is *Film and Fiction: The Dynamics of Exchange* by Keith Cohen (1979).[[86]](#footnote-87) Cohen too examines some of the changes in the nature of novels in the transition between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. However, he draws the origins of this change, and of the historical background of cinema, back to the early years of the former. The new ways of seeing have their foundations in Romanticism, particularly Romantic poetry, with its emphasis on the emotional resonance of personal experience of the world and its phenomena, filtered through a sensibility of observation and acute awareness. In a sense, the evolution of observational science, and of philosophies of the mind and society necessarily begin to undo the world pictures and hierarchical certainties of the previous centuries. By the end of the nineteenth century, regardless of the innovations of scenic writing during the middle part of the century (Cohen cites Flaubert and Maupassant), art is still awaiting a revolution, which he suggests is epitomised by the move towards impressionistic painting, which begins to break down accepted notions of perception into more personal responses, in which it is the senses, mediated through processes of thought and emotion, that seek to find the true nature of the object. Even if the expression of that ‘true nature’ might be at odds with traditional ‘realistic’ modes of representation and naturalistic perspective, the observer is nonetheless free to access the nature of the object without the hindrance of accepted prescriptive doctrine.

In Cohen’s view, there were already moves towards more objective, less mediated representations in the arts prior to the arrival of moving film. In France, suggests Cohen, theatre was dominated by middle-class plays almost entirely about language at the expense of action. So too in the United States and Europe, there was a desire for more dynamic visual spectacle across media. Cinema is the nineteenth century’s ‘watershed’ intellectual development, the culmination of numerous strands of thought and scientific advancement, the functions of which Cohen categorises in three ways: ‘(1) to synthesise disparate arts, schools, attitudes, and trends; (2) to reclaim and sublimate vast areas of second-rate, “subcultural” art; (3) to incorporate in itself and galvanize the fruits of modern technology.’ (Cohen, p. 39). Cinema’s immediate effect, then, is synthetic: it creates itself and, as a consequence, creates impetus for other arts to galvanize themselves. As he states: ‘[…] cinema represents not simply another element in turn-of-the-century *zeitgeist* but a privileged precedent, aesthetically and epistemologically, to the experiments carried out by the classic modern novel.’ (Cohen, p. x). Literature was ready to adapt for its own purposes and had already started to do so:

It should be clear by this time that the earmarks of this new turn-of-the-century novel dovetail completely with those of the new film sensibility. The advent of the movies served to reinforce the anti-nineteenth-century bias of the radical novelists. Thriving in the midst of a new machine culture and the general change of heart associated with the *contre-décadance*, the movies necessarily took a proscientific, documentary attitude toward the object. All was visual, hence all was shown: rendered, not told.[[87]](#footnote-88)

Here, again, is this desire for a new vitality orientated around the visual and in resistance to the overly narrated, particularly the omniscient ‘telling’ of the classical eighteenth and nineteenth century novels, even those that had purported realism:

Writers like James and Conrad, taking their cue from the earlier French “realist” tradition of Flaubert and Maupassant, sensed a need for the novel’s total reorientation. Perhaps influenced by the prevailing doctrines of scientific causality, they posited a new relation between creating subject and created object. By means of a method that may have owed something to the impressionist painters, the emphasis was on showing the object rather than telling about it, on seeing it and making it seen. […] Finally, their impatience with the stock responses established by conventional nineteenth-century fiction led them to emphasize the reader’s participation in the elaboration of conceptual images.[[88]](#footnote-89)

Cohen adopts an even-handed approach. Cinema is a cultural and technological phenomenon that fits exactly into a time in which its modes of experimentation and representation tally with artistic aspirations that are waiting for it:

In fact, the novel’s liability to a massive technical reorientation that cinema fostered was due in large measure to the decline of the bourgeois novel toward the end of the nineteenth century. […] Bored with the prevailing trend of an inflexibly omniscient, authoritative narrator, innovative novelists, beginning with James and Conrad, sought to lay bare the process of fiction by inserting a highly self-conscious narrator as first-person teller or third-person “central reflector.” The emphasis, as a result, was on *showing* how the events unfold dramatically rather than recounting them[[89]](#footnote-90)

Cohen’s ideas of cross-pollination and parallel development include the emergence of shifting and simultaneous viewpoints, a new ‘perspective mobility’, discontinuity (analogous to the juxtapositions of editing) and ‘paralepsis’ (where information is omitted, but not necessarily in the same ways as ellipsis in story). It’s a radical process of ‘multiperspectivism’. Human beings assess the world in predominantly tempero-spatially, and the brand new art provides exemplary technique: ‘[…] the modern novelist has, consciously or unconsciously, staked a trail that leads to perspectival techniques strikingly similar to the continual shifting of angle and distance in the camera set-ups of cinema narration, or montage.’ (Cohen, p. 157). As he continues:

The modern novelist, however, without entirely forsaking these methods [the traditions of realism], expands the narrative viewpoint in a more “cinematic” way by allowing the character’s point of view to command a portion of the text without any direct narrative mediation. In this manner, scenes are constructed from a double vantage point: the point of view of the relatively detached narrator (the nonparticipating observer) juxtaposed with that of the protagonist (the participating observer).[[90]](#footnote-91)

This somewhat invokes Speigel’s ‘camera eye’, but here the eye takes on a multiplicity of possible modes. This is less a new way of looking as a new, hypermobile potentiality of focalisation. Joyce’s *Ulysses* is free of the restrictions of narratorial realism and can place the point and qualities of observation where it wants. Cinema provides a concrete realisation of the possibilities of this motion, even if the nineteenth-century literary experimenters had already embarked upon this route. With the advent of cinema, audiences are primed for these new methods of visualisation. As film grows from infancy, and techniques of continuity editing become (broadly) standardised, so readers are more able to accept the possibilities of the discontinuities which cinema frequently adopts in its juxtapositions of (often contrasting or opposing) images, shot-reverse-shot, sudden cuts to completely different locales etc. The challenge is to render these effects into words:

Though changes in distance, angle and set-up cannot take place in the novel with the facility and automatism of the cinema because of fundamental differences in the production and articulation of their signs, experiments with such changes do nonetheless become more and more frequent in the postcinema novel. While in traditional forms of narration, a change of point of view (or scene or locale) required the drawing of a curtain, an intrusive explanation, or at least a break in the text, the film’s narration is essentially transitionless. […] Distance and angle are built into the image, whereas in any discursive, literary art, such as the novel, they are subtle and constantly varying factors that are determined at another level, so to speak, of production.

Nevertheless, as with simultaneity [coinciding viewpoints and activities], the novelist will find a means of overcoming this inherent difficulty. The narrator in the modern novel feels less and less obliged to justify each change of distance, angle, or location with an explicative phrase or with spatial or temporal transition. Instead, two or more separate narrative vantage points meet head on, causing a complex multiperspectivism and thus giving a particularly vivid impression of depth and colour to imaginary spaces.[[91]](#footnote-92)

Hence, the reality of film montage, of the seamlessness of editing, makes possible this advance in literary technique. This must be possible not just because it’s an experiment that can be ‘pulled off’ by the writer, but because the reader is able to adapt to the technique because they already have schemata of the ‘vocabulary’ of montage on which to draw.

Cohen has his own contribution to make to the debate on film ‘language’. His approach is essentially semiotic, in that he conceives of essential systems of signs and that underpin the communicative capacities of literature and film. However, rather than unify the sign and the signified across media at the level of discourse, he seeks to relate the meanings at the level of connotation. The confusion of comparative denotation in instances of adaptation is, thus, overcome. By placing the onus of comprehension in the connotative processes of the viewer/reader, Cohen is proposing a theory of reception that draws on cognitive, constructivist models:

Even though the writing sign *table* requires an extra mental step toward “visualization,” as compared to the filmic image of a table, the signs for *school desk*, *operating table*, or *banquet table* – whether written or visual signs – are each capable of triggering vastly different connotations for a given reader or viewer. The connotative process is really no more controllable in one art than the other. While the filmic image may seem to specify its image content with greater control and insistence, the immediate context of a given literary image similarly molds and determines the spectrum of possible connotations. Though the filmic image is *there* before the eyes, it soon disappears and eventually, blended with personal associations and connotations, occupies the same domain as the literary image: the memory. Thus, the syntagmatic process of perception may be more immediate in the cinema, but the paradigmatic process of mental linkage and recollection is the same for both the cinema and the novel. [Cohen’s italics][[92]](#footnote-93)

Here he is making a case for schematised knowledge stores, even if he doesn’t specify the argument in these terms. This narratological basis for the essence of the communication at a level of abstraction in which the two forms bear commonality: the way in which they operate in reception as parts of whole narratives in accumulation:

If cinema lacks the precise syntax of literary language, it nonetheless shares with phonological language in general a temporal succession. Over and above the specific problem of cataloguing syntagmatic possibilities, novel and cinema are similar in their sequentialization of discrete units. The randomness common to the Kuleshov and surrealist experiments points to the fundamental and seemingly inevitable *narrativity* of cinematic and literary language. In each case a little story is told, or at least begun: [Cohen’s italics][[93]](#footnote-94)

In terms of inter-art influence, film thus finds its analogues in literature both in terms of its discourse level of communication, including its management of viewpoint and perspective, and in structural compositions. Both can manifest as narrative forms, and narrative forms have factors in common, even if those commonalities are sometimes at elementary levels. In this context, one of my approaches to this study, that common ground is discernible if one draws away from strict analogues of signs, will echo some of Cohen’s observations. Where Spiegel argues against direct influence, Packard for, and Elliott as a mediator between signifier and signified , Cohen’s tentatively cognitive conclusion here finds ground for the pursuit of an inter-art influence that is mediated by processes of thought and representation. Cohen, though aware of the possibilities of independent evolution in the novel, remains convinced of the power of the presence of cinema. As he concludes:

The cinematic precedence for the classic modern novel, therefore, deserves prominence as a primary example of one art technologically ahead of its time that shocked another art into the realization of how it could align itself with the times. It was as though the cinema had become a huge magnet whose field exerted on other arts like the novel an attraction as powerful and as ineluctable as gravity.[[94]](#footnote-95)

I will return to Cohen’s idea of cinema language and ‘discrete units’ in my conclusion, in reference to theories of adaptation and ‘transmedia narrative’. Suffice to say at this stage that my view will follow from Cohen’s in some measure and from Chatman.

## Intro. 6: Summary of Chapters

**1, *Double Indemnity*: Frame; Act; Scene**

This chapter examines my first set of texts, with particular reference to macrostructural and superstructural elements. Cain’s novel and its film adaptation are broken down into segments and similarities and divergences between the two analysed in terms of structure and effect. The process of segmentation here introduces the principle of narrative ‘disassembly’, which will also be pursued in the following chapter.

**2, *No Country for Old Men*: Script; Scene; Shot**

Here I will look at a more complex set of adaptations, from McCarthy’s unproduced original screenplay to the Coen brothers’ Oscar-winning film. The research paradigm encompasses a combined archival and text-analytical methodology in an attempt to uncover the creative impetuses and processes from which the texts derive. The focus of attention therefore permits not only a broad study of macrostructural considerations, but also microstructural elements down to the level of individual shots. I also introduce examples of my own work to underline certain points.

**3, *Jacks*: The Novel; Narrative Tracking**

This thesis is an interdisciplinary critical/creative project. The research proposal includes a design for a full-length novel, *Jacks*, which should be viewed as integral to the overall programme. The novel itself is a research undertaking designed to reflect and adopt filmic practices as part of its method of production. Film is thus integrated at structural levels, and as elements of the subject matter, in ways which are intended to illustrate and elucidate elements of the theoretical discussion. The chapter provides a background to my methods of composition and a thorough rationale for the creative choices evinced in the finished product. I will also consider ways in which entire narratives may be received, in relation to theories of narrative ‘tracking’ and, by extension, describe strategies by which they can be produced. For those reading the novel I would recommend that this is completed prior to reading this chapter for optimum effect.

# Chapter 1, *Double Indemnity*: Frame; Act; Scene

## 1.1: Introduction

My first set of texts emerges from the period after the advent of the talking picture in 1927, when I suggest that the effect of moving pictures on a film-literate audience and, in particular, film-literate authors was already thoroughly established. Because film had become a mass medium during the period between the two world wars, and the Hollywood picture had become the dominant form of narrative film in much of the Western world, then one could feasibly contend that its greatest influence might be detected within popular fiction: those works that attempted to appeal to the same mass audience that filled film theatres, hungry for the escapism and excitement of the Hollywood product. The choice of texts, then, reflects the closest links to the system: a novel written in, and set in, Southern California in the mid-1930s (written by an author working on scripts for the studios) and its Hollywood adaptation (albeit directed by an immigrant director and co-scripted by an English-educated American).

Because both texts present what is ostensibly the same narrative at a story level, they afford the possibility of teasing out aspects of the structural and semantic effects that make the narratives ‘work’ at a discourse level. If film has made its presence felt in the writing of the novel version of *Double Indemnity*, then an examination of corresponding scenes in its screen adaptation should demonstrate whether or not the written text has been created with some degree of filmic influence at the level of its narrative structure. As the chapter heading suggests, the interest here is mainly interscenic, with some close examination of individual scenes to see how information is represented in the different versions in an attempt to examine the operation of film at on its own terms and as an influence on the written text.

## 1.2: Methodology

The study will adopt an analytical framework using elements of Text World Theory and the ‘Theory of Mind’ nexus of approaches, both to make close readings at discourse level and to examine how the discourse in each of the texts represents its story world to receivers of text.[[95]](#footnote-96) The text-world apparatus has been utilised as a means of demonstrating the often complex nature of introductory sequences, as they strive to establish the universe of the text quickly and economically. In the case of film, world shifts are easily signalled by cuts between locations, but dialogue and voiceover can easily increase the rate and depth of those shifts. This is particularly relevant in terms of introductory structure such as establishing shots, as the kind of immediate ‘pitch’ into action may be considered characteristic of evolved cinematic practices (and of the new types of writing developing concurrently). In representations of minds or mind-styles, I have, to some extent, included both characters within the narratives and the producers of those narratives.

In some ways, differentiation between these various modes of analysis is artificial. Text World Theory offers an explanation for the ways in which discourse worlds are modelled and how they are replaced and altered in the comprehension of texts. However, any discourse that relates information about characters and their actions necessarily provides cues for mental characteristics and mental states, which are also modelled in the mind of the receiver as part of the ongoing understanding of the ‘universe’ of the text that is being apprehended. Thus, the apprehension of a mind style or theory is derived ultimately from a mind-modelling process, one that is linked to the perceived locations and environmental influences of the modelled worlds.

Joanna Gavins outlines a number of world-switching cues, such as temporal or spatial shifts, those which are participant accessible (verifiable by discourse participants) and enactor accessible (the origins of their discourse is at a remove from the receiver of the text, such as in the case of a character relating the story of someone else not available directly to the receiver of the text). Of most relevance to this question of integration are those text worlds which are mediated by mental modalities: ‘epistemic’ (concerning knowledge and belief systems), ‘deontic’ (concerning notions of personal duty) and ‘boulomaic’ (concerning wishes and desires).[[96]](#footnote-97) Such worlds are then subject to, and derived from, manifestations of mental states and, thus, the mental and the spatiotemporal become intrinsically linked. Any thorough critique of the effects of literature would need to take all of these factors into account. In this study, concentrating mainly on structural concerns, I have used them ‘partially’ to the extent that is required to illustrate specific structural matters or initiating factors during the processes of production.

As part of the process of analysis both texts are segmented into scenes, and sets of scenes, along the lines of Bordwell and Thompson’s film segmentation technique, to allow a shorthand, written representation of the main narrative features for the purposes of ease of comprehension and assessment.[[97]](#footnote-98) With film, the process of scene segmentation is relatively straightforward. Scenes are generally signalled by cuts, changes of location, changes of time frame etc., though they may be complicated by sound bridges (in which voiceover or sound-effects/dialogue commencing in one scene hang over into the next). Film may also include written text in intertitles, in shots of letters and newspapers, street signs and labels, providing discourse evidence outside of the purely dramatic. Furthermore, voiceover, music or sound effects may be accompanied by breaks in the visual narrative, by abstract images or even periods of blank screen. In the final analysis, however, narrative film is invariably constructed around some variant of scene organisation and, thus, its scene structure may always be outlined and described using this shorthand technique (even where the narrative may be composed of a single scene or, indeed, a single take). My segmentation for the film version of *Double Indemnity* will stay closest to the system devised by Bordwell and Thompson. Their example in the ninth edition of *Film Art: An Introduction* is for Orson Welles’ 1941 film *Citizen Kane* which, with its framed narrative, provides a good prototype for the similarly framed discourse of Wilder’s film, so I have used an adaptation of their graphic system to represent this.[[98]](#footnote-99)

Segmentation is, in essence, an attempt to divide a specific narrative into smaller units that can be shown to have some individual identity or extent in the context of the whole. The act of a play could be said to be a segment, as could a specific scene from an act. The action of an actor coming onto stage and later leaving might constitute a segment, or it might not. Segments may be signalled by change to a new location or a different time, or a segment might show an elapse of many years or centuries. It is possible that certain discourses are comprised of just one segment. However, in the context of sustained narrative, it is usual for some subdivisions to be discernible. My segmentations will generally strive to delimit scenes as the individual unit (though my segmentations of novels also consider chapter divisions), particularly as this offers some of the best comparative potential in analysis of original and adapted texts. In film segmentation can be a relatively straightforward process, simply following the formula devised by the scriptwriter during the composition of the script (or its originating scenario) and analysing the connections between related scenes. Prose narrative presents greater problems. Not all material may be described as ‘scenic’. The concept of the scene derives, ultimately, from theatre. Where film, even in its nascent narrative manifestations, as Kamilla Elliot says, owed much of its processes to the stage (mise-en-scène, acting, dramaturgy etc.), written narrative fiction carries with it complications of written narration, digression, indirect and free indirect discourse and so on. What might start in a scenic way may suddenly devolve into authorial comment or character rumination, **prolepsis** or recollection, with consequent world shifts. What might resolve into a scene-ending may have started off in non-scenic ways; sometimes a sequence which requires a description in segmentation may contain little or no discourse evidence which might define it in scenic terms. Nevertheless, a concerted effort to delimit and describe sections within a general process of segmentation can help provide the analyst with an overview or pattern through which to examine the macrostructural qualities of the text in question.

On a more local level, narrative is processed by receivers in a segmented fashion. During text comprehension, processing operates through both bottom-up strategies (sentence parsing or image and sound processing) and those operating ‘top-down’ (the application and testing of context, potential macrorules and general-knowledge and macrostructural schemata). The result is a an active negotiation between the receiver and the text, in which the text is represented in the mind of the receiver in an ongoing process which applies and reapplies a constantly adapting series of mental models of what is being received, how it coheres and what is being communicated on semantic and textural levels.[[99]](#footnote-100) As sustained narrative requires numerous episodes or segments to create its effects, so its effects are assigned to the receiver’s mental representation of the text and understood in a segmented way, towards a general representation or ‘gist’ of what it is *perceived* the text is communicating. As episodes come to an end (are signalled by paragraphs, time spaces, cuts at the end of scenes), so the receiver assesses and allocates the evidence that has just been supplied and adds it into the general ongoing representation. Thus, a new set of information may supplement previously received information, may modify it or refute it. Episodes may connect with contiguous episodes or past or even future episodes (analepsis and prolepsis).[[100]](#footnote-101) This process is ongoing throughout the text, but I suggest that the greatest level of assessment takes place as receivers understand that an episode is coming to an end, or, immediately after its ending (as a new episode commences). It is no accident that the most effective texts will often follow an episode which requires a large amount of summation and assessment (because of fast-paced action or heavy narrative significance) with one that requires less processing. In the novel this may take place in the ‘pause’ between paragraphs, or time/space lines, or between chapters, or it may take place in ‘quieter’ or more reflective passages. In film, which is traditionally exhibited in a non-stop format (one may put a book down for a while, but cannot pause a film at the cinema), scriptwriting traditions often call for ‘action’ and ‘reaction’ scenes in alternation, at least until the ‘big’ ending, where the reaction takes place in the brief settling period in which the narrative threads are finally tied up or, in some cases, where the action proceeds right until the end, during the resonance period of the credits and the house lights coming up.

I will come back to, and develop, this idea later on. For the time being this is just to establish that boundaries are crucial to the reception of texts and have repercussions for the ways in which texts are created. The process of segmentation for the purposes of discourse analysis is, by its very nature, a process of establishing boundaries and I will have more to say about this in my overall conclusion.[[101]](#footnote-102)

In this study the individual texts will be further examined at a more local (down to microstructural) level by analysing and comparing two corresponding sequences of episodes: the two beginnings of the texts and the way in which the prosecution of the central crime is represented. Other sequences could have been used as exempla, but the choice here provides a range of narrative features from initial setup, through dialogue and decision, to action. Though both texts ostensibly tell the same tale at a story level, their different media of transmission, and their different producers, result in differing qualities at a discourse level.

Although the segmentation and detailed analysis of narrative components will necessarily attempt definitions, the ultimate purpose here is to examine the individual and cumulative effect of those components at a level of mental reception. Again, not so much what they are, but ‘what are they doing?’

## 1.3: *Double Indemnity*, by James M. Cain (1936)

**Context**

James M. Cain was born in 1892. He graduated from Washington College in 1910 (his father was president of the college) and went on to serve in the United States Army in World War I. After the war he worked variously as a teacher, an inspector of roads, an insurance salesman and a journalist. He reported for the *Baltimore American* and the *Baltimore Sun*, alongside H. L. Mencken, and later for the *New York World* (under Walter Lippman) and *American Mercury*, who published his editorial on the West Virginia coal strike. For a short period he was a managing editor of *The New Yorker* (1931). In between times he wrote short articles, fiction and a play based on his experience in the coal fields, *Crashing the Pearly Gates* (1926), which was produced but closed after a short run. By 1932 he had left for California with his second wife, on contract to Paramount studios as a screen writer.

Southern California since thenineteenth century had been undergoing a dramatic population increase and resulting urban development. The cities of Los Angeles and San Diego had expanded into huge metropolitan centres; the main industries of entertainment and aviation and intensive agricultural infrastructure attracted immigrants from abroad and nomads seeking escape from the effects of Depression and, later, the ‘Dust Bowl’ disasters of the mid-1930s. Alcohol remained under prohibition until 1933. The period of the early 1930s is sometimes referred to as the ‘Public Enemy Era’, when criminals such as John Dillinger, Ma Barker and Pretty Boy Floyd became household names.[[102]](#footnote-103) Bonnie Parker and Clyde Barrow escaped capture by driving huge distances in stolen cars, outranging the reach of the law by traversing sometimes more than one state in a single night. The immediate aftermath of the ambush which claimed their lives was filmed by a passerby.

Cain found limited success with screenwriting (he is credited on only four films), but turned his fortunes around with a brief novel of passion and misadventure, *The Postman Always Rings Twice* (1934).[[103]](#footnote-104) The commercial and popular success of this story of a drifter, who conspires with a woman to murder her husband, encouraged him to work on a new narrative with a similar theme: *Double Indemnity*.

The subject matter of both books echoes a notorious crime that had held the US public’s attention in the late 1920s: the Snyder-Gray case. New York resident Ruth Snyder had maintained an affair with salesman Judd Gray. Between them they worked out a rough plot to murder Ruth’s husband Albert. Ruth covertly took out insurance on Albert’s life. He was killed by being bludgeoned with a sash weight and garrotted with a length of picture wire. After a police investigation in which Snyder accidentally implicated Gray, the two parties blamed each other. Both were executed in 1928. Snyder’s electrocution was recorded on a concealed single-shot camera strapped to the ankle of reporter Tom Howard and the resulting photograph published in the *New York Daily News*.

Cain discussed the case at length with his screenwriting friend Vincent Lawrence, prior to writing ‘*Postman*’. It was alleged that Snyder had arranged for her postman to ring twice when he was delivering insurance statements, to conceal the existence of the policy from her husband. Though there are clear parallels between the content of both novels and the facts of the crime, it cannot be such a clear case for a straightforward analysis of Cain’s inspiration.[[104]](#footnote-105) Inspiration does not necessarily stem from an exact layout of facts or a single source (see Chapter 3) and Cain’s background in journalism, his penchant for riding around Southern Californian locations in his car, and countless other factors must have affected his creative decisions. Neither can simple economic factors be dismissed. Cain needed money and money was to be made by providing saleable product. *Double Indemnity* is a package with moneymaking potential and its design reflects this.

## 1.4: *Double Indemnity* in print

The novel was originally published as a serial of eight parts in *Liberty Magazine*. Liberty’s unique selling point was their strategy of providing estimated reading times for its articles, derived by editorial staff from a timed reading (which was then doubled) to enable readers to calculate how much time they needed to allot for any given piece. At the time of writing it was not possible to examine original, or obtain facsimile, copies of *Liberty*, so the original part structure can only be guessed at. As the novel is formed into fourteen chapters which don’t easily break down into eight similar extents, it is likely that the individual narrative arcs of the serial end at points that don’t necessarily correspond to the chapter divisions. There are a number of what one might term ‘high impact boundaries’ outside of the chapter endings which could conceivably mark the ends of the individual episodes, usually before a time/space line, but the actual subdivisions must remain a matter for speculation.[[105]](#footnote-106)

Despite Cain’s feeling that the novel should remain a part-work, it was laid out in full and published with two other magazine works as *Three of a Kind* in 1943.[[106]](#footnote-107)

The style is economical, with minimal speech attributions, spare prose and short paragraphs. The discourse is in the form of a confession to the police (which we discover only in the last chapters). In fact there is the main confession and a separate, final statement which makes up the last chapter. All the material is narrated in first person, past tense by insurance agent Walter Huff, except for the last few paragraphs, where he moves into present tense. Critics attributed the results to the so-called ‘hard-boiled’ style of fiction, though Cain denied belonging to any literary school. The conceit of the confession and formal statement does not carry through coherently on even a cursory examination: there is far more direct speech than indirect and, with the exception of some interjection from the narrator (some of which we will come to), the work reads like a first-person novel. Overall extent is under 35 000 words.[[107]](#footnote-108)

The following segmentation provides an overview of scene-to-scene development within the discourse and the opportunity to suggest patterns of discrete narrative arcs within the structure. In this adaptation of the segmentation process, *Double Indemnity* is divided into its chapters (shown by numerals) which are then subdivided into scenes (lower case letters) defined by shifts in location and/or time. Commonly, these follow the convention of a blank, time/space line in the text, though this is not true in all instances. ‘Scenes’ where Huff is reporting sequences in a deeper layer of analepsis, where he is, in essence, getting us ‘up to speed’ with events, are labelled ‘Exposition’. Scenes which involve movement between locations are labelled ‘Transit’, in which arrows (→) show the direction of movement. Where there is continued movement across chapter divisions, an arrow succeeds the letter of the chapter’s opening scene [a) →]. I suggest that the medium of motion within the narrative, the possibility of travel, and particularly the potential of the automobile, is crucial to Cain’s narrative design (as it was with *The Postman Always Rings Twice*):

In the hands of writers such as James M. Cain and Raymond Chandler, while the automobile may be used for the normal purposes of getting from Point A to Point B, it also becomes a tool for aiding and abetting escape, intimidation, gunplay, homicide, smuggling, and for torture. In this sense, the car is removed from its relatively innocent association with mobility and lent a darker connotation linked with danger, depravity and death.[[108]](#footnote-109)

The scheme of segmentation is not exhaustive. It would be possible to make further subdivisions (in particular with regard to deictic shifts) and because otherwise spatially and temporally located scenes may contain expositional sections that act to set up a scene, for example, or to finish and summarise one.[[109]](#footnote-110) As suggested, other divisions might accord to the original instalment pattern as published in *Liberty.* While the appended synopsis is intended to demonstrate the general flow and content of the narrative, the segmentation serves to table the ‘scene units’ from which the narrative is formed.

**Segmentation:**

**1 a)** Hollywoodland: Nirdlinger residence – Huff meets Phyllis.

**b)** Company office – Huff talks business with Keyes.

**2 a)** Nirdlinger residence – Alone with Phyllis.

**b)** Los Feliz: Huff’s bungalow – Phyllis talks accident insurance. They cement

their relationship.

**c)** Huff’s bungalow – The next night. Huff tells Phyllis he will help her murder

Nirdlinger.

**d)** Huff’s bungalow – Huff and Phyllis discuss the pitfalls of the project.

**3 a)** Nirdlinger residence – Mr Nirdlinger and the motor insurance. Lola’s first

appearance.

**b)** Transit – Nirdlinger residence → Drugstore → Hollywood and Vine: Huff drives

Lola, picks

up Sachetti and drops them. The meeting is secret.

**c)** Huff’s bungalow – Recriminations with Phyllis over the presence of Lola. Sachetti is *persona non grata.*

**d)** Nirdlinger’s office – Huff gets replacement cheque.

**e)** Company office – Lola and Sachetti call for the loan cheque.

**4 a)** Exposition – Huff talks trains and reports how he has worked overtime to help his

cover.

**b)** Unknown location (Huff’s bungalow or telephone conversation) – Phyllis tells

Huff about her husband’s Stanford reunion.

**c)** Huff’s bungalow – Telephone: Nirdlinger has broken his leg. Phyllis visits. Huff

states that Nirdlinger must go to Palo Alto on the train.

**5 a)** Huff’s bungalow – Huff sets up his alibi. Phyllis telephones to tell Huff which suit

to wear.

**b)** Transit – To Hollywoodland. Waiting for the Nirdlinger’s car → car journey: Huff

kills

Nirdlinger.

**6 a)** → Station – Huff impersonates Nirdlinger and gets on the train.

**b)** The observation platform – Huff diverts the witness and drops off the slow-

moving train.

**7 a)** Rail track – Phyllis brings Nirdlinger’s body to lay on the tracks.

**b)** Transit – In the car. Phyllis and Huff argue → Huff’s car.

**c)** → Huff’s bungalow – More alibi evidence. Huff begins to break down. He realises

he hates

Phyllis.

**8 a)** Huff’s bungalow – Newspaper report on Nirdlinger’s death.

**b)** Company office – Norton and Keyes discuss the case with Huff. Norton: suicide.

Keyes: murder.

**c)** Exposition – The inquest: ‘manner unknown.’

**d)** Norton’s office – Debriefing the inquest. Norton declares the case sunk.

**e)** Keyes office – Keyes begins to work out a sequence of events, “He was never on

the train!”

**f)** Huff’s bungalow – Phyllis telephones. Lola is hysterical with grief. Huff tells Phyllis she must sue. Huff prays.

**9 a)** Company office – Lola visits to impart suspicions based on the death of her

mother.

**b)** Company office – Keyes tells Huff they have a suspect, based on surveillance of

the

Nirdlinger residence.

**c)** Keye’s office – Huff listens to Keye’s recordings: Sachetti is the suspect.

**d)** Santa Monica – Huff takes Lola out for dinner. She won’t pursue her suspicions of

Phyllis.

Huff wants to know about Sachetti. He is seeing Phyllis now. Huff loves Lola.

**10 a)** Exposition – Phyllis files the suit. Huff detests Phyllis. He’s been seeing Lola.

**b)** Ocean road, Santa Monica – Lola reveals her distrust of Phyllis. She will reveal

everything no matter what.

**11 a)** Exposition – Huff will kill Phyllis. He will frame Sachetti. He holds Lola in high

esteem.

**b)** Huff’s loan office – He duplicates Sachetti’s car key.

**c)** Huff’s bungalow – Waiting three nights for a call from Phyllis. They arrange to

meet at

Griffith Park.

**d)** Movie theatre – Huff works on an alibi scheme.

**e)** Unknown location – Telephone call to actor Jack Christolf the actor to set up

second part of alibi.

**f)** Transit – Scouting locations at Griffith Park → dinner → office: more alibi

**g)** Movie theatre – last part of the alibi scheme.

**h)** Transit – Movie theatre → Sachetti’s house → Griffith Park: Huff steals Sachetti’s

car and gets ready for Phyllis. Phyllis shoots Huff.

**12 a)** Hospital – Huff comes round. The newspaper account. Keyes: ‘Lola and Sachetti

were at the Park’. Sachetti is suspected of the shooting and Nirdlinger’s murder.

Lola will be interrogated. Huff confesses to Keyes that *he* murdered Nirdlinger.

**13 a)** Hospital – Huff tells Keyes everything. Later: Norton brings Keswick and Shapiro. Keyes will make the deal. He tells Huff about Sachetti’s investigation and Phyllis’s unsavoury history.

They finalise the deal to let Huff get away. Lola visits. Keyes will not prosecute

Sachetti.

**14 a)** The ship – Phyllis is aboard. Lola and Sachetti are married. There is no future.

Phyllis wears her red shroud.

A two act analysis of the structure would split at a **hinge point** at the end of Chapter 7 (Huff realises that he never wants to see Phyllis again): the murder plan has been put into play and undertaken successfully. There are no viable witnesses and no clues. The narrative could end here except that Huff has realised that he detests Phyllis, despite the strong sexual attraction between them. The second act will involve the gradual unravelling of the truth and introduce the growing relationship between Huff and Lola, which will serve to undo Huff under the aegis of Keyes’ determined investigation. The solution to culpability for murder is also murder (reciprocal between Huff and Phyllis), which creates a strong narrative drive for the second act (how Huff can avoid detection and win Lola). The two acts are thus balanced thematically: the first the question of how to murder Nirdlinger and get away with it; the second of how to murder Phyllis and win the prize (Lola). It could be imagined that, were Phyllis to have her own first-person account, we could see her planning to rid herself of Huff and Lola and collect on the estate and the insurance payout. It could be argued that the plot-to-kill-Phyllis sequence might comprise a third act but, in a structurally-balanced sense, that would make for too short a central act. The extent of the text, and layout of narrative arcs across chapters, argues more completely for a two act structure.

Such a pattern might be represented so:

**Act One** – How to murder Nirdlinger and collect the insurance: the murder.

**Act Two** – How to get away with the murder through murder: the punishment.

**Textual analysis**

**Setup:**

This is the first paragraph and subsequent three lines of dialogue as they appear in the 2002 edition. The numbers in square brackets represent world shifts within the text:

I drove out to [**1**] Glendale to put three new truck drivers on a [**2**] brewery company bond, and then [**3**] I remembered this renewal over in [**4**] Hollywoodland.[**5**] I decided to run over there. That was how I came to this House of Death, that [**6**] you’ve been reading about in the papers. [**7**] It didn’t look like a House of Death when I saw it. It was just a Spanish house, like [**8**] all the rest of them in California, with white walls, red tile roof, and a patio out to one side. It was [**9**] built cock-eyed. [**10**] The garage was under the house, the first floor was over that, and the rest of it was spilled up the hill any way they could get it in. You climbed some stone steps to the front door, [**11**] so I parked the car and went up there. A servant poked her head out.

[**12**] ‘Is Mr Nirdlinger in?’

‘I don’t know, sir. Who wants to see him?’

‘Mr Huff.’

The discourse proceeds through a series of participant-accessible (**1**,**2**,**3**,**4**,**5**,**7**,**8**,**9**,**10**, **11** and **12**) and enactor-accessible (**6**) worlds. It is debatable whether the word ‘Spanish’ might solicit a world shift for some readers and whether **8** signals a shift at all, depending on individual inclinations to picture the building process or to accept ‘built’ as a kind of past-perfect. The initial ‘I drove out’ creates more of a modal world than a text world, before the first world shift rapidly establishes the action in greater Los Angeles. The generic then quickly resolves to the specific (the ‘House of Death’) and details of the setting.[[110]](#footnote-111) The preliminaries of the **1** and **2** can be quickly discarded, though readers may now be aware that the narrator sells insurance. The discourse establishes place, time and main enactors in just 110 words and reflects both Cain’s journalistic economy in getting through the initial ‘Ws’ quickly and, I suggest, the effects of screenwriting technique.[[111]](#footnote-112) With minimal adaptation the description of the house could be easily translated into a script description, which might read something like:

Hollywoodland. A Spanish-style house, with white walls, red tile roof, and a patio out to one side.The garage is beneath the house, the first floor over that, and the rest spills up the hill. There are stone steps to the front door.

Cain’s object is to get us through the expositional and onto the action as soon as he can. From ‘drove’ the description is visual and active. The description of the house follows the moving gaze of the eye as a camera would pan from a viewpoint near (or in) the car, to the whole house, before focussing on the steps and then leading to action: ascending the steps to the door. The motion then halts for dialogue with the maid, at the end of which readers have learnt the names of both the murderer and his victim. We know there will be death, because we have been told directly that it is a ‘House of Death’ in **6**, which directly implicates us in the narrative in a way which is not yet clear. The effect is proleptic and creates suspense, because then we want to understand the ‘What?’, ‘Whys’ and ‘hoWs?’. At this point readers will not know that the discourse is in the form of a confession, but it is clear that the setup has created the conditions for conflict, and thus drama, and that Huff will be our focaliser (for the time being, at least).

The use of multiple worlds, some of which can be discarded as soon as they have provided context, takes readers through a series of stages to establish setting and some sense of character (‘built cock-eyed’ is not a neutral description). In the subsequent sequence Huff is invited into the house, he imparts some of his philosophy of ‘getting his foot in the door’ without losing face and ends, prior to the first time/space line, with ‘If I had used some of that juice trying to keep out, that might have got me somewhere.’ In the next section he supplements the ‘House of Death’ material with ‘blood-red drapes’, a return to the proleptic world of **5** and **6**. Inside the house he meets Phyllis, before returning to the office and discussing an insurance case with Keyes. Within the first chapter readers have imparted to them information about some of the main locations of the action and ‘met’ the principle players: Huff, Keyes, Phyllis and, by association, Nirdlinger. They also get a taste of the tone and style of the discourse and something of the structural progression.

**Action:**

‘Is Mr Nirdlinger in?’

‘I don’t know sir. Who wants to see him?’

‘Mr Huff.’

‘And what’s the business?’

‘Personal.’

It is the *most* personal business, because Huff will kill Nirdlinger with his own hands. He’s been waiting for an opportunity to pull a scam:

And then one night I think up a trick, and get to thinking I could crook the wheel myself if only I could put a plant out there to put down my bet. That’s all. When I met Phyllis I met my plant. If that seems funny to you, that I would kill a man just to pick up a stack of chips, it might not seem so funny if you were back of that wheel [roulette wheel], instead of out front. I had seen so many houses burnt down, so many cars wrecked, so many corpses with blue holes in their temples, so many awful things that people had pulled to crook the wheel, that stuff didn’t seem real to me any more.[[112]](#footnote-113)

To make the prosecution of the crime possible, Huff must create his own, putative narrative that plays out to a conclusion where he gains possession of both the insurance payout and Phyllis. It’s a fantasy world in which taking the correct, meticulously conceived steps will result in the realisation of this world view. Cain’s deployment of Huff’s backstory through expositional sequences in free indirect discourse (as above and others) creates a story world in which all the mental preparation has gone on before the commencement of the discourse. It’s the old stage-writing dictum that the curtain should open when the discourse is right on the cusp of the action, when all the preamble and preparation has played out. But Phyllis has her own backstory. She is a serial killer with her own projected narrative, one that includes getting rid of Lola and inheriting everything and, when it comes to it, ridding herself of her only living witness. When Huff’s fantasy of winning Phyllis devolves into a complex mental position where his continuing desire for the physical Phyllis runs concurrently with a deep moral detestation, he is forced to create a new world view in which Lola is the prize. Lola represents innocence and, therefore, the moral centre which Huff has abandoned. Lola is the way back to the centre, but it’s a fantasy that cannot be sustainable: Huff has killed Lola’s father. His fantasy is a Hollywood fantasy, that everything will resolve in his favour, by the end of the last reel, with his arms around the girl and the money (via inheritance) in his possession.

In effect, the first half of the novel, prior to Chapter 5, is a setup for the murder. Huff’s world view has been corrupted by his experience in the insurance business, but it has been a *process* of corruption. Phyllis is a monster with shades of the supernatural (the demonic red dress in which she poses for herself in the mirror; the unnatural strength she demonstrates carrying Nirdlinger’s body to the tracks) and is corrupt by *nature*.

The murder and cover-up proceed over three chapters:

**5 a)** Huff’s bungalow – Huff sets up his alibi. Phyllis telephones to tell Huff which suit

to wear.

**b)** Transit – To Hollywoodland. Waiting for the Nirdlinger’s car → car journey: Huff

kills Nirdlinger.

**6 a)** → Station – Huff impersonates Nirdlinger and gets on the train.

**b)** The observation platform – Huff diverts the witness and drops off the slow-

moving train.

**7 a)** Rail track – Phyllis brings Nirdlinger’s body to lay on the tracks.

**b)** Transit – In the car. Phyllis and Huff argue → Huff’s car.

**c)** → Huff’s bungalow – More alibi evidence. Huff begins to break down. He realises

he hates Phyllis.

The three chapters contain fourteen boundaries: 11 time/space lines and 3 chapter endings. Not all of the time/space lines have significant effects: they are there just to show an elapse of time. I tabulate the important boundaries and their semantic contributions (underlined) as follows:

Chapter 5

p. 47 (i) – Huff is at home and has established the first part of his alibi: dinner served by

the house boy; the call to create a phone record. 7:38pm. Suspense.

p. 47 (ii) – Huff’s house. Phyllis calls to tell Huff what colour suit to wear. Huff is

disguised as Nirdlinger. He has tools to carry the body. Suspense.

p. 48 – Huff’s house. Another phone call strengthens the alibi (refers back to, and

supplements, boundary information at p47 (i)). 8:40pm.

p. 51 – Transit. Nirdlinger and Phyllis in the front of their car; Huff hiding in the back. ‘A

woman is a funny animal’. Suspense.

p. 52 – Chapter ending. Car interior. Huff has broken Nirdlinger’s neck. Horror/Jeopardy.

Chapter 6

p. 57 – Transit to station. Car to train, to observation platform. Possible witness.

Suspense.

p. 58 (i) – Observation platform. Getting rid of the witness on an errand. Suspense.

p. 58 (ii) – Chapter ending. Huff drops off the back of the observation platform.

Chapter 7

p. 62 – Transit: railway line to car. Nirdlinger dumped on the tracks. Phyllis is a

monster.[[113]](#footnote-114) Friction between Phyllis and Huff. ‘Drive on, or I’ll sock you.’ Horror.

p. 63 – Huff’s home. 10:25pm. Huff thinks of God. Beginning to break down.

p. 64 – Chapter ending. 10:48pm. Breaking down. Finalising alibi. ‘Everything cracked’.

Huff is physically sick. The point of no return.[[114]](#footnote-115)

The sequence requires readers to track through a series of changes of locus, through a catalogue of practical actions enabling murder and cover-up and through a mental change in Huff’s outlook. Huff’s quotidian description of the practicalities of establishing his alibi gives way to an admission of nerves, to horror and then to desolation. It’s a psychological arc, but it is also represented visually, through a course of actions that were scripted by Huff and Phyllis and which are played out in small scenes of, generally, a few hundred words at a time. The visual report of the murder and the handling of the body are presented to readers as a set of images in transit, together with Huff’s account of the psychological consequences. The complex of phone calls, inducing remote-controlled actions in those being called, and the separate qualities of the modes of transportation, create the possibilities by which the script for the murder may be made real. Huff is, in turn, on foot, motorised (but driven), on crutches (the mechanism of murder) in a performance of Nirdlinger the still-living, on the train (and then the train’s observation platform, its boundary between the motivated and the static) and then back in the car (though Phyllis is still in the driving seat). Only when he fulfils the arc, and is back on foot, does the effect of his actions have time to catch up with him. What the mechanics of the modern world make possible, the mind does not necessarily have the capacity to contemplate to the full.

The drama plays through and, at the end of Chapter 7, readers are presented with an act boundary. Though we know of the ‘House of Death’ and the ‘blood-red drapes’ that have been talked about in the papers, there has been little prolepsis to hint at what happens next. The majority of discourse evidence has been given over to the build up to the murder and the clandestine relationship with Phyllis. Now that the murder has taken place and new narrative potential for conflict has been established, readers must sum up the gist of the first act and prepare for what comes next: how that conflict plays out or, possibly, how Huff gets away with it.

**1.5: *Double Indemnity*, directed by Billy Wilder (1944)**

**Context**

The United States had been at war for three years. Los Angeles was geared up for conflict. Although the USA never suffered the privations of parts of Europe, there was still extensive rationing of food, non-essential goods, fuel and, especially, rubber.[[115]](#footnote-116) The latter two essentially put an end to unfettered automobile travel and the private car culture of Southern California. The state now concentrated on food production and industrial output: oil, ships and aircraft. With thousands of men in uniform overseas, women were employed in traditionally male jobs, finding some new freedoms outside the home, although at the expense of long hours and controlled wages. With its geographical location on the Pacific Coast, Los Angeles was, in one sense, on the front line of the conflict, though this never manifested itself further than a (probably phantom) air raid in February 1942, some ineffective shelling from a single Japanese submarine and the overflying of an unknown number of *Fu-Go* tactical balloon bombs.

Hollywood too had been on a war footing and was responsible for countless propaganda films and either escapist fare or, often, sentimental movies in support of the war effort.[[116]](#footnote-117) So it is perhaps surprising that the early 1940s also gave rise to what the correspondents of *Cahiers du Cinema* would later refer to as *Film Noir*, not so much a movement as a set of stylistic, production and narrative values from which filmmakers created a range of films that somehow inhabited their own world of base human experience, chiaroscuro lighting and desperate characters.[[117]](#footnote-118)

The screenwriter, director and critic Paul Schrader splits the *Film Noir* period into three phases (with some overlap): 1) a wartime period (approximately 1941-46), characterised by a predominance of dialogue, the era of the private detective and the ‘lone wolf’; 2) a post-war period (1945-49), urban, crime-orientated , procedural and less glamorous than the previous phase; 3) the ‘B’ *noir* film era (1949 -53), concentrating on ‘psychotic action and [the] suicidal impulse’. He states that *Double Indemnity*, with its ‘unflinching *noir* vision’, provides the bridge between phases 1 and 2.[[118]](#footnote-119)

The extent to which war influenced filmmaking in Hollywood is debatable. Schrader maintains that the move towards a bleaker outlook in the 1940s was a delayed reaction to the Depression. Certainly, many of the source texts were Depression-era stories and novels, though there had been some evidence of this more pessimistic vision in the late 1930s.[[119]](#footnote-120)

The need to produce Allied propaganda abroad and promote patriotism at home blunted the fledging moves towards a dark cinema, and the *film noir* thrashed about in the studio system, not quite able to come into full prominence. During the War the first uniquely *film noir* appeared: *The Maltese Falcon*, *The Glass Key*, *This Gun for Hire*, *Laura*, but these films lacked the distinctly noir bite the end of the war would bring.

As soon as the War was over, however, American films became markedly more sardonic – and there was a boom in the crime film. For fifteen years the pressures against America’s amelioristic cinema had been building up and, given the freedom, audiences and artists were now eager to take a less optimistic view of things. The disillusionment many soldiers, small businessmen and house-wife/factory employees felt in returning to a peacetime economy was directly mirrored in the sordidness of the urban crime film.[[120]](#footnote-121)

No filmmaker was, of course, setting out to make *noir*. The title hadn’t been applied and, even now, its application might be more a matter of critical convenience than an effective method of categorisation: at what point does a police procedural become *noir*, and, is there some cut-off date after which all contenders must be described as neo-*noir*?

Billy Wilder and his producers at Paramount were engaged in creating a sensational thriller in a contemporary style (tagline: ‘the Moment they met it was Murder!’) and also a star vehicle. Whilst a retrospective categorisation might help to tease out thematic and stylistic elements which are common to other films in the *noir* canon, and enable specific analyses of effects of production strategies in the final artefact, there is less scope for making superstructural comparisons. There is no distinct *noir* structure. At best there may be macrosemantic expectations which, in turn, might lead to some convergence in macrostructural and supestructural patterns but, as with human genetics, there is likely to be more variation between individuals than between genre.

## 1.6: *Double Indemnity* on film

Cain’s novel (like ‘*Postman*’) had been widely thought of as unfilmable.[[121]](#footnote-122) The Breen office considered its material unsuitable for the big screen in anything like its original form. By 1944 interpretations of the code were (slightly) more relaxed and producers and directors familiar with what they were likely to get away with. In any case Wilder was keen to make the film and enlisted the help of Raymond Chandler in developing the script.[[122]](#footnote-123)

Billy Wilder (born Samuel Wilder, 1906) was a director and writer who had emigrated from Germany, via Paris, in 1933 in the face of Nazi anti-Semitism (Wilder was Jewish). *Double Indemnity* marked the beginning of a hiatus in long writing partnership with Charles Brackett.[[123]](#footnote-124) Brackett thought the novel ‘disgusting’, so Wilder looked elsewhere.

Raymond Chandler (born 1888 and, so, a rough contemporary of Cain’s) had, over the previous few years, been through the period of highly productive writing that would cement his reputation.[[124]](#footnote-125) He also had screenwriting experience, though not much success (he would later be Oscar nominated for his script for *The Blue Dahlia* [1946] as well as for *Double Indemnity*). Chandler had been educated at Dulwich College, like Cain had worked as a journalist (briefly and unsuccessfully) and fought in the First World War (in the Canadian Army), before becoming an oil executive in California. Although both he and Cain would be bracketed together under the ‘hard-boiled’ heading, Chandler had a low opinion of Cain’s work:

Faugh. Everything he touched smells like billygoat. He is every kind of writer I detest, a faux naïf, a Proust in overalls, a dirty little boy with a piece of chalk and a board fence and nobody looking. Such people are the offal of literature, not because they write about dirty things, but because they do it in a dirty way. Nothing hard and clean and ventilated. A brothel with a smell of cheap scent in the front parlor and a bucket of slops at the back door.[[125]](#footnote-126)

In the event Cain and Chandler corresponded pleasantly about the commission of the script and Cain admitted, rather generously, that his pared-down dialogue didn’t necessarily translate to the screen effectively. The final dialogue ended up being ‘Chandlerised’, taking Cain’s denotative and understated exchanges and adding some of Chandler’s wit and metaphoric figuration. Both Wilder and Chandler felt that Cain’s dialogue didn’t live off the page and into the mouths of actors. None of Cain’s dialogue survives intact, though some of Huff’s confession changes into dialogue (for example, in a short sequence in which Neff teases Keyes about his checking-and-double-checking nature).

The script was worked up by Wilder and co-writer Chandler in an uneasy alliance that nevertheless resulted in a streamlined scheme that ditched many of Cain’s plot intricacies. The names Nirdlinger and Huff were changed to the less comical Dietrichson (Tom Powers) and Neff (Fred MacMurray). Sachetti becomes Zachette (Byron Barr). Instead of the written confession of the novel, the action of the film is framed by a recorded confession. Neff sits at his office desk and narrates into his Dictaphone, invoking the backstory. At the end we revert to the frame as the backstory catches up with it and the discourse works towards its conclusion.

There are thematic changes. The Dietrichson character is made less sympathetic. He is shown as impatient. Phyllis says that he is violent towards her. Sachetti’s academic struggles and history are omitted in the Zachette version and he is, also, aggressive and unsympathetic. Relationships with male characters are unsatisfactory, except for the much more developed relationship between Neff and Keyes. Now Keyes is a father figure and comic foil. The part is expanded into a series of quick-fire exchanges usually finalised by the trick of Neff finding Keyes a match for his cigar and striking it alight with his thumbnail. Keyes reciprocates this favour in the final scene. Where Neff’s relationship with Phyllis (Barbara Stanwyck) is built on lust and greed and is thus doomed, that with Keyes relies on mutual trust and a certain personal admiration. This is a major departure from the original text and foregrounds Keyes as a major player in the sets of character interrelationships. As the Lola (Jean Heather) part is reduced, Keyes takes over to form a triangle with Neff and Phyllis (with the awareness that both Keyes and Phyllis can cause Neff’s downfall). The Lola and Zachette parts become more vestigial. Lola can make noises and threaten to bring out the truth (though she also serves to elicit the manifestation of Neff’s conscience), while Zachette, with minimal screen time, only really functions as a patsy for the killing of Phyllis and, finally, as someone who might be able to take care of Lola in the wake of all her tragedy.

Whole passages of alibi for the proposed murder of Phyllis in the novel are thrown out, as is the meeting at Griffith Park. Huff’s separate loan business is dispensed with and so is its consequences for the Sachetti/Zachette strand. Neff will finally simply go and murder Phyllis at her house. In the script this obviates much of the ending of the novel. In reference to my segmentation, chapters **11** (**b-h**), **12**, **13** and **14** disappear. Neff is shot at the end of the backstory and only needs to be shown to have got to the office to make his confession (though this raises the question as to why he didn’t simply drive to the border and make his confession once safely in Mexico).

The film was shot between September and November 1943, was produced by Paramount Pictures Inc., was released in 1944 and has a running time of 103 minutes.[[126]](#footnote-127)

**Segmentation**

The segmentation follows the Bordwell/Thompson method as discussed above, though with perhaps greater than necessary descriptive embellishments. The aim is to provide some sense of the discourse beyond merely mechanical notes. I also employ my ‘transit scene’ conceit and arrows to demonstrate movement. The segmentation is derived from the motion picture *as viewed* as well as with reference to a facsimile edition of the original script. This is to provide as accurate a breakdown of the discourse as possible, without reference to some variations from the script-in-production, and to create an independent view of the completed film as an entity. In fact, the Wilder/Chandler script originally broke down into five sequences (**A**-**E**) and further into numbers (**A** divides into 48, **B** into 76, **C** into 12, **D** into 22 and **E** into 12). The numbers seem to be original shot compositions based on who is being shown at any given time (or whether there might be a change of camera setup). Sequence **E** was a gas-chamber scene depicting Neff’s execution. This was filmed at great expense (purportedly $150 000), but edited from the film by Wilder, as he thought the ending finalising sequence **D** made the narrative stronger (sequence **E** has never been screened beyond the film’s final production).[[127]](#footnote-128) I place the title letters of the sequences in the synopsis (Appendix C) to demonstrate how it breaks down in respect of the finished film.

**C.** Credit sequence

**1.** Framing narrative

┌ **a.** Neff’s car careers down the street. Neff stops and gets out.

│ **b.** Transit. Neff goes into building; talks to lift operator →

└ **c.** Neff’s office: Dictaphone. He begins his confession to Keyes.

**2.** Back story: the beginning of the affair.

┌ **a.** Neff arrives at the Dietrichson house. Narration. He meets Phyllis. They flirt and talk

│ insurance (accident insurance?). Neff will meet Mr Dietrichson the next night.

│ **b.** Neff drives off. Narration (honeysuckle and murder).

│ **c.** The insurance office. Neff and Keyes. Keyes rejects a claim scam. →

│ **d.** Neff’s office. Narration: Phyllis calls to make a new appointment.

│ **e.** Dietrichson house. Phyllis and Neff. Phyllis brings up the subject of accident

│ insurance (Dietrichson need not know). Neff leaves in a hurry.

│ **f.** Transit. Narration (“got hold of a red hot poker). Neff’s car → drive-in → bowling

│ alley →

│ **g.** Neff’s apartment. Narration (Neff knows that the ‘business’ is not over). Phyllis

│ visits. They kiss. They talk about killing Dietrichson. It can’t be done (and get away

│ with it). She says that Dietrichson is violent.

│ **h.** Intercut to Neff’s Dictaphone confession (Frame **1**). How to ‘crook’ the house.

└ **i.** Back to Neff’s apartment. Later. He will help her to murder Dietrichson.

**3.** Working up to Murder.

┌ **a.** Neff’s confession (Frame **1**). How to set up the scam.

│ **b.** Dietrichson house. Dietrichson; Phyllis; Neff. Lola is witness. Neff gets

│ Dietrichsonto sign the accident insurance form, thinking it is a second copy of the auto │ policy. Neff leaves, discussing details with Phyllis (Dietrichson must die in a train

│ accident for her to receive double indemnity) →

│ **c.** Neff’s car. Lola is waiting. Transit. She is going to meet the undesirable, Zachette →

│ **d.** Corner of Vermont and Franklin. Lola meets Zachette. He is rude to Neff.

│ **e.** Transit. Neff in the car. Narration (Lola and the scam).

│ **f.** Phyllis and Neff meet at a market. Dietrichson has broken his leg and will go to his

│ Stanford reunion by train. They talk love.

│ **g.** Neff’s office. Narration (he hasn’t seen Phyllis for a week). Keyes enters. He invites

│ Neff to become a claims manager. He declines. Phyllis calls to tell Neff which train

│ Dietrichson is getting on (and what colour suit he is wearing).

**│ h**. Transit. Narration: Neff drives into his apartment garage to fix his alibi with the

│ garage attendant → his apartment to continue with the alibi (rigs bells etc.) → walks

│ to Dietrichson house and gets into back of car. Phyllis and Dietrichson get into car →

│ drive away → Neff murders Dietrichson →

│ **i.** Station. Transit. Onto platform → onto train → onto observation platform. Meeting

│ and getting rid of the witness, Jackson. Dropping off the back of the train →

│ **j.** Phyllis meets Neff and they dispose of the body on the track. After car problems they

│ drive off. Narration (rehearsing statements etc.) → Neff’s locale. Stiff farewell →

│ Neff’s apartment → garage to cement alibi → to street. Narration (“the walk of a

└ dead man”).

**4.** Aftermath of murder

┌ **a.** Neff’s confession (Frame **1**). Neff narrates the beginning of breakdown.

│ **b.** The insurance office. Keyes tells Neff about the Dietrichson death and the summary

│ inquest (accidental death) →

│ **c.** Norton’s office. Norton declares it suicide and they will not pay out. Phyllis enters to

│ play the grieving widow. Norton tries to make a deal. Phyllis storms out. Keyes’s

│ speech on accident statistics. Narration: (to Keyes) “I could have hugged you right

│ then...” →

│ **d.** Neff’s apartment. Phyllis phones to say she is coming round. Keyes visits. He is

│ suspicious. He will pressure Phyllis. Phyllis arrives but hears Keyes. She hides behind

│ the door when he leaves: ‘We’re not the same any more.”

│ **e.** Neff’s office. Lola calls. She is suspicious and tells Neff about Phyllis’s

│ ‘involvement’ in her mother’s death at Lake Arrowhead.

│ **f.** Neff takes Lola to dinner. Narration (Other outings: Neff has to keep Lola quiet).

│ **g.** Keyes’s office. Keyes is working out how it happened. “It’s murder”. The witness

│ Jackson confirms that the man he saw was not the same one as in Dietrichson’s

│ photographs. Keyes reckons there must be another man. They will give themselves

│ away.

│ **h.** Phyllis and Neff meet at the market. She wants to sue for the claim money. For him

│ the issue is survival.

│ **i.** Neff’s confession (Frame **1**). Feelings of doom. Thinking about Phyllis dead.

│ **j.** Neff and Lola above the Hollywood Bowl. Zachette has been seeing Phyllis. She

│ suspects them both of murder. She still loves Zachette. Narration (what is Zachette up

│ to?)

│ **k.** Transit. Neff meets Keyes at the building reception. The ‘other man’ has been

│ spotted under surveillance. Keyes leaves. Neff is scared → to Keyes office. Listens to

│ his Dictaphone recordings: Neff is in the clear; Zachette is the suspect → Neff’s

│ office. He arranges to meet Phyllis at her house. Narration (Neff implies that he has a

│ fate in mind for Phyllis).

│ **l.** The Dietrichson house. Neff and Phyllis. Neff will frame Zachette for murdering

│ Phyllis. Phyllis was leading Zachette on, winding him up to kill Lola. Phyllis shoots

│ Neff. Neff takes the gun from her, shoots her twice and kills her. He leaves, putting off

└ Zachette at the door (he should run to Lola).

**5.** Continuation of Frame **1**.

┌ **a.** Keyes arrives at the office to hear the last of Neff’s confession. Neff wants a head

└ start of four hours to get to Mexico. Neff gets as far as the elevator lobby and collapses.

**E.** End credit.

My segmentation differs from Wilder’s scheme. **A** splits into **1** and **2** (though it ends at the same point). **3** replaces **B** and **C**, and **4** corresponds with the beginning of **D**, except for the final part (returning to the framing narrative) that I have called **5**. The judgements are not final. As with the novel, further subdivisions could be made (especially in respect of transit scenes) and sections could be sequenced in other ways (**4a** could easily become **3k** for example). It might also be possible to run the framing narrative (**1**) through the entirety of the discourse, where shooting returns the viewer to Neff’s office as he adds a bit to the story and then to continue it in place of **5**, but it was felt that this might ‘maroon’ sections of narration that are detached from office footage and instead narrate over scenes of back story.

The segmentation gives the impression of a three act structure with a prologue and return in the last act: a cyclical element. Wilder and Chandler clearly had a five act structure in mind with their **A**-**E** sequencing. However, something of the two act structure of the novel remains. Taking a central hinge point at the murder would place it near the mid-point of the film (at 49 minutes 28 seconds of a 103.15 total), although there is a better candidate for this which I describe below. After the first act, with its relatively setback-free progress through planning to the execution of the murder, there is nowhere to go but down, through the unravelling of the truth and the realisation that Phyllis and Neff have each left a living witness. The solution is more murder. For Phyllis, both Neff and Lola; for Neff, Phyllis and Zachette (through state execution). Broadly speaking (though with detail variations) the same overall structure of the novel may be said to persist:

**Act One** – How to murder Dietrichson and collect the insurance: the murder.

**Act Two** – How to get away with the murder through murder: the punishment.

In my scheme **Act One** is formed from **1**, **2** and **3**; **Act Two** from **4** and **5**. The subdivisions provide **plot points** and setups:

**1** – Frame and establishing material

**2** – Meeting Phyllis and succumbing to temptation. Plot point: we will kill Dietrichson (**2i**).

**3** – The preparations for murder. Plot point: they kill Dietrichson (**3h**: hinge) causing Neff’s character to start to break down (**3j**).

**4** – The realities of the crime and the threat of the consequences (through the agency of Keyes and, later, Phyllis). Plot points: Keyes works out the course of events (**4g**) leading to a stand-off between Phyllis and Neff over whether to sue for the money (**4h**) and to Neff thinking about Phyllis dead (**41**); Neff kills Phyllis and is injured (**4L**)

**5** – Truth and consequences for Neff (**5a**).

It can be seen here that a final act could be said to start at **4g** when it looks increasingly as if Neff might be found out, which then precipitates his inexorable progress towards murder and, hence, punishment for both of them. The Production Code created an obstacle to storylines in which villains got away with their crimes, which is why Neff can’t escape to Mexico, and completes the cycle in a ‘morally balanced’ fashion. In terms of audience reception, the film moves smoothly through its parts, and its main structural elements, with the exception of the framing narrative, are only fully observable retrospectively.

**Textual analysis**

**Setup:**

The opening credits are backgrounded by the silhouetted form of a man on crutches walking towards the camera until the frame is almost blacked out. The most ponderous element of Miklos Rozca’s effective score accompanies the images.[[128]](#footnote-129) From the credits we cut to a {**1**} city street at night, a car careening down a hill past road works [fast-paced music]. Cut to a stoplight which changes from ‘GO’ to ‘STOP’. The car carries on. Cut to an intersection. The car swerves to avoid a truck, which brakes suddenly to avoid a collision. Boxes spill from its load. Cut to a street – rear view of the car coming to a halt. Cut to left side of car, backgrounded glass doors to a building. A man in overcoat and hat gets out of the car [music slows]. His features are concealed. He walks to the door [follow shot], signwritten ‘PACIFIC BUILDING’ and knocks on the glass. Backgrounded lobby interior with a lit doorway, right. Continued knocking. A man appears from the lit doorway folding a newspaper and comes to open the door. Dialogue:

MAN: Why, hello there Mr Neff.

Cut to lift interior.

MAN: Working pretty late, aren’t you, Mr Neff?

NEFF: [*wearily*] Late enough. Let’s ride.

Lift door closes.

MAN: You look kinda all in, at that.

NEFF: I’m fine.

MAN: How’s the {**2**} insurance business Mr Neff?

NEFF: Okay

MAN: {**3**}They wouldn’t ever sell me any: they said I had something loose in my heart.{**4**} Ha ha, I say it’s rheumatism.

NEFF: Yeah?

MAN: Twelve.

Lift doors open. Backgrounded glass door, signwritten ‘PACIFIC ALL RISK INSURANCE CO’.[[129]](#footnote-130) Follow shot of Neff [rear view] leaving the elevator, through the doors and onto a peripheral mezzanine. On the floor beneath, rows of desks, subdued lighting. Viewpoint passes Neff to show three cleaners tidying. Cut to view from the floor [cleaner subjective?] tracking shot of Neff, walking awkwardly around a corner of the mezzanine. His shadow follows him to a doorway. Cut to office interior. Dark. A figure opens the door, shuts it, takes of his overcoat, walks to a desk, turns on a desk light and sits down. Cut to front view of Neff, seated, wearing a light coloured suit with a small dark stain on his left shoulder. Loosens his tie, pushes his hat back, gets out a cigarette, wipe his hand on his jacket, lights it on a second attempt using a trick with his thumbnail, pitches the match towards an ashtray and misses, then rolls his chair left [screen left] to a small table on which sits a cylinder Dictaphone machine. He puts in a new cylinder, starts the machine and sets aside the cigarette. Cut to close up, Neff [perspiring]. He picks up the speaking horn and starts to record. Dialogue:

NEFF: Office memorandum: [music fades out] Walter Neff to Barton Keyes, Claims Manager. Los Angeles July 16th 1938. Dear Keyes, suppose {**5**}you’ll call this a confession when you hear it. {**6**} Well, I don’t like the word ‘confession’. I just wanted to set you right about something you {**7**} couldn’t see because it was smack up against your nose. You think you’re such a hot potato as a claims manager, such a wolf on a phoney claim. Maybe y’are, but let’s take a look at that {**8**} Dietrichson claim: accident and double indemnity. You were pretty good in there for a while, Keyes... you said it wasn’t an accident: check. You said it wasn’t suicide: check. You said it was murder... check. You thought you had it cold, didn’t you? All wrapped up in tissue paper with pink ribbons around it. It was perfect, except it wasn’t because you made one mistake, just one ‘little’ mistake: when it came to picking the killer you picked the wrong guy. {**9**} You want to know who killed Dietrichson? Hold tight to that cheap cigar of yours, Keyes,{**10**} I killed Dietrichson, {**11**} me, Walter Neff, insurance salesman, thirty-five years old, unmarried, no visible scars... [glances at shoulder] {**12**} until a while ago, that is. Yes,{**13**} I killed him. I killed him for money and for a woman. And I didn’t get the money and... I didn’t get the woman. {**14**}Pretty, isn’t it? [pauses, picks up cigarette, which is out, discards it and continues the recording]. {**15**} It all began last May... {**16**} [dissolves to street to scene, daytime, sunlit view over a city, music recommences at increasesd tempo].

Voiceover:

NEFF: ... around the end of May, it was. I’d been out to {**17**} Glendale to deliver a policy on some dairy trucks. On the way back I remembered this auto renewal near {**18**) Los Feliz Boulevard, so I drove over there [tracking shot (left to right) of a car passing some children playing baseball. Another car passes in the opposite as the first pulls into a parking spot in front of the garage of a house. Music calms]. It was one of those California Spanish houses {**19**} everyone was nuts about ten or fifteen years ago. [track right, Neff gets out of the car and ascends steps to the front door].This one must {**20**} have cost someone about thirty thousand bucks... that is, if he ever finished paying for it. [dissolve to front door].

After this, Neff inveigles his way into the house and, after some badinage with the maid, sees Phyllis for the first time, at the top of the stairs dressed only in a towel. From the end of the credit sequence to the front door takes 5 minutes and 50 seconds (7:16 including credits). There are a number of world shifts, enumerated in curly brackets in the above account. Those occasioned by the man (described as ‘Watchman’ in the script) are brief expositions to supply information to viewers on the nature of Neff’s business and to locate the time (it’s late), but also hint at one of the possible themes of the narrative (‘they said I had something loose in my heart’). Most of the other shifts are temporal, moving the deictic centre from Neff to Keyes and back and from the framing narrative, in both current form and proleptic (Keyes will receive the confession), as well as the analeptic (the discourse that is being framed). The analepsis in the recorded account commences properly via two stages at **7** and **8**, through Keyes to the actual case, though it is suggested visually by the figure in the opening credits and the headlong rush of the car, followed by Neff’s faltering footsteps. The stain on the jacket then creates concrete evidence of some misadventure that viewers will expect to be revealed through the subsequent discourse.

The setup, then, differs from the novel in that it addresses the confession to Keyes and not to the Police. As a framing device this works perhaps more effectively than the novel, as it reflects a personal communication to a friend and colleague but, like the novel, it soon devolves to orthodox discourse, with an incomplete voiceover (sometimes with images of Neff recording into the Dictaphone) occasionally reminding us that this is a representation of the text-worlds of the confession (or, in the normal filmic suspension of disbelief, that these are actual, physical records of events). Like the mechanisms of the modern world which enable a murder to be enacted, the voice recorder allows Neff to tell the story of it to be represented, both to his narratee, Keyes, and to his viewers in the audience. In his book *Voices in the Dark: The Narrative Patterns of Film Noir*, J. P. Telotte makes this point about the dynamics of the voiceover in *noir*:

The narration consists of a voice, but it indicates and individual’s presence and consciousness, which together motivate all that we see, move our vantage freely around in time and space. That voice, though, stands “over” all else, signalling its proprietary nature. Even if the voice disappears after introducing us or moving us into flashback, it maintains proprietary control over the narrative. For this reason, we are not surprised, our narrative expectations are not violated, when, from time to time, it reappears. Having already announced its “possession” of all that we see, proved that *it* is the key to this other realm, the voice assumes a kind of liberty to come and go. [Telotte’s italics][[130]](#footnote-131)

The frame then, both disappears and remains in charge. By this stage, audiences would have been well acquainted with the idea of voiceover from countless cinematic examples, but also, ultimately, from the typical ‘voice of god’ narrations of the newsreels. Telotte feels that the voiceover provides an existential key to the narrative, an attempt by the character at structuring or re-ordering of events in an effort to provide a version of the truth:

The narrator, we gather, is trying to sort out, order and locate some meaning in these prior events, although as he does so they seem to display a life of their own, as if possessing his voice and consciousness even as he seems to be, at his temporal remove, the source of their continued existence.[[131]](#footnote-132)

Shift **10** instructs viewers that this is the account of a murder, who is the victim and who is the killer but, unlike the novel, the initial relationship is not with Phyllis, but with Keyes. Phyllis is the first personal meeting in the written discourse, and also in the film, but the first significant dialogue and, therefore, communicating relationship, is with Keyes. It will also be the last, once Neff has killed Phyllis and is bleeding out on the mezzanine where we first saw him come into the office. Thus, the film setup establishes a different interpersonal dynamic to that in the novel.

The setup is achieved neatly, in a textbook film opening, moving as a series of establishing shots from the general (the city), to the specific (the office and the main character, Neff) in only a few seconds; from Neff to the crux of the narrative in only a few minutes. Nevertheless, regardless of the economies of communication afforded by images and incidental music, it still requires a substantial voiceover to get us to the point. What Wilder required a frame with confessional dialogue to achieve, Cain managed with a brief introductory description, some narrational asides and a meeting with Phyllis by page 3. In a reversal of expectations, then, to an extent the written discourse reflects some elements of the cinematic, where the film resorts to a more novelistic commentary to provide an initial entry point into the narrative. In essence, the film requires words to create some of its worlds, as if the Chandler/Wilder combination needed a verbal commentary to refine their representation. Cain only has words and blank spaces but, often, the quasi-visual images he creates or the actions he describes are commentary-neutral: they appear to strive towards pure representation.

**Action:**

Although Neff makes his speech about the long-running thoughts he has had about how he might ‘crook the house’, it’s the physical representation on screen of Phyllis in her bright gold wig and Cupid’s bow lipstick that provides the impetus for murder. Her entrance down the stairs (in **2a**), close-up on ankle bracelet (just a little low-class), makes her form tantamount to a fetish object. Neff’s mindset becomes Phyllis’s province and his agenda is constructed around a similar fantasy narrative to the one in the novel. The novel represents the ordinary, everyday characters in extraordinary situations (except that Phyllis might be a serial killer), but the film must make returns at the box office and so plays on star quality (in 1943 Barbara Stanwyck had appeared in the thriller *Lady of Burlesque*, in some of the most alluring costumes allowable under the strictures of the Code). Both MacMurray and Robinson also had currency, the former as an actor in light comedies, the latter with a long history of tough-guy roles. When Stanwyck is on screen, even in shadow, the lighting skilfully captures the glow of her visage and the cold stillness of her features. Neff is caught in this light and the consummation of his desire becomes entangled with his greed and his notion to outwit the system which he knows from the inside out.

The film makes exacting use of the quotidian nature of the crime. It’s a ‘procedural’ from the criminal’s point of view, accounted for in part by Neff’s voiceover. The following expands the film segmentation with synopsising elements to show something of the movement of the crime sequence. This is to avoid an exhaustive description of dialogue and individual cuts in favour of a more succinct summation of gist-generating factors:

**3**

**g.** Neff’s office. Phyllis calls to tell Neff that Dietrichson is definitely going to the reunion, which train he is getting on and what colour suit he is wearing [intercuts between office and phone booth]. Keyes leaves office [music commences]. Voiceover. Neff leaves rate book as part of alibi.

**h**. Transit. [voiceover throughout] Neff drives into his apartment garage to fix his alibi with the garage attendant, Charlie (who is to wash Neff’s car) → his apartment to continue with the alibi, rings Lou Schwartz to inquire about insurance rates, changes into blue suit, takes return phone call from Lou to cement alibi, rigs phone and door bells with drop cards to indicate visitors and callers, pockets towel and tape to imitate cast → walks to Dietrichson house, gets into back of his car, parked in the garage, and waits. Anticipation [voiceover stops]. Phyllis and Dietrichson get into car. Dietrichson is disagreeable → drive towards station, Phyllis takes a detour, stops in a quiet street, three hoots on the horn . Neff murders Dietrichson [off camera] →

**i.** Station. Transit. → Onto platform. Neff harasses Phyllis about the details of the plan (prolepsis) [music fades out] → onto train → onto observation platform. Meeting, talking to and getting rid of the witness Jackson (by feigning leaving his cigars in his booth). [music recommences] Neff drops off the back of the train at the agreed rendezvous →

**j.** Phyllis meets Neff and they dispose of the body on the track, along with the crutches and hat. The car won’t start. Neff eventually gets it started [music pauses] and they drive off [music recommences]. → [voiceover recommences] Neff’s locale. Phyllis is calm, ‘no nerves, no tears, not even a blink of the eyes. They manage a stiff farewell, ‘I love you, Walter.’; ‘I love you, Baby.’. Phyllis leaves → Neff’s apartment. He checks the drop cards and changes out of the suit in which he has imitated Dietrichson [music pauses] → garage to cement alibi (Charlie is still washing car, Neff will go to drugstore ‘for something to eat’ [music recommences] → to street on foot towards drugstore. Voiceover: ‘That was all there was to it. Nothing had slipped; nothing had been overlooked: there was nothing to give us away. And yet, Keyes, as I was walking down the street to the drugstore, suddenly it came over me that *everything* would go wrong. It sounds crazy, Keyes, but it’s true, so help me: I couldn’t hear my own footsteps. It was the walk of a dead man.’

We then return to the frame narrative and Neff recording his confession. The procedure of the murder in the script pays close attention to the novel, but the possibility of real time, moving images and sound effects necessitates a different treatment. Phyllis as the monster carrying her husband’s corpse is most effective if imagined (plus the Code might not favour anything that might demonstrate any useful practicalities such as a rope harness), so Phyllis is created monster by showing her cool pleasure as the camera lingers on her face during Dietrichson’s murder, which is indicated only by the prior shot of Neff rising from the rear floor and some attenuated vocal sound effects simulating the victim’s demise. The same satisfaction is shown, briefly, both when she opens the car door at the station and also at the rendezvous, waiting for Neff to collect the body. When they struggle to start the car, real time and the musical soundtrack create real-time suspense (even a ‘hold-one’s-breath moment). ‘Night for night’ shooting provides the opportunity for oppressive black skies and individually lit features. The murder scenes are neatly executed, with smooth transitions sometimes facilitated by dissolves. The omissions from the novel (such as getting into the car in the garage, rather than awkwardly at a contrived stop) help to simplify the discourse representation of the murder. Neff’s voiceover rarely intrudes, though it would be possible to do without it altogether with careful shot selection and editing. Facial expressions, body language and close-ups on objects and physical procedures could substitute for commentary; musical and lighting choices might communicate meaning.

The boundary contributions are tabulated below. The letter denotes the end point of its segment. Running times are rounded up to the nearest minute:

**g. –** 46 minutes. They are going through with the murder. Neff’s rate book has

significance. Suspense.

**h.** – 50 minutes. Transit. The practicalities of Neff’s alibi. Dietrichson is dead. Phyllis is

cold. Suspense.

**i.** – 54 minutes. Jackson is a witness. Neff has made it off the train successfully.

Suspense.

**j.** – 58 minutes. They have got away from the scene. Phyllis is a monster. Plans

(prolepsis). Neff’s alibi could work. Neff is beginning to break down. ‘Dead man’.

The end of scene at **j** forms the act boundary at something over 55% of the running time. As with the novel, I suggest that this provides the hinge point, which establishes the potential for the second act. Neff would appear to have won (though the money is not yet secure), but he is already beginning to consume himself with doubt. These doubts will lead to disaster and, once again, murder. Receivers will anticipate this narrative potential. We already know that Neff will make a confession, and we also know that he will be injured. Neff feels that he is a ‘dead man walking’ (slang for an inmate on death row). The mental breakdown begun in **j** will be supplemented by a physical breakdown by the time we return to the final phase of the framing narrative. The details are different, but the main gist, that Neff/Huff is now somehow doomed as a consequence of his actions, carries through in both the novel and the film.

## 1.7: Conclusion

The film adaptation provides an interesting counterpart to the novel. Eight years pass between the publication of the source text and the release of the film (though the film sets its action in 1938). There are questions raised by the intervening war years. How do men returning from service, who may have seen wholesale death, react to representations of killing? Would elements of a female audience, used to going out to work in the place of their men, sympathise with Phyllis’s apparent desire simply to get out if the house?

PHYLLIS: [of Dietrichson] sometimes we sit all night without saying a word

to each other.

NEFF: Sounds pretty dull.

*Phyllis shrugs.*

PHYLLIS: So I just sit and knit.

NEFF: Is that what you married him for?

PHYLLIS: Maybe I like the way his thumbs hold up the wool.

NEFF: Anytime his thumbs get tired ---

(*pause*)

...only with me around you wouldn’t have to knit.

PHYLLIS: Wouldn’t I?

NEFF: Bet your life you wouldn’t. [*looking at his iced tea*] I wonder if a little

rum would get this up on its feet?[[132]](#footnote-133)

The movie dismantles Cain’s discourse and rebuilds it from story world upwards to make its own product. In the process, though fundamental elements of the story structure remain, the film becomes a new product with its own discourse treatment adapted for its own medium. Some of the novel’s characters are reduced in significance and others, particularly Keyes, are expanded. The film script favours pace above fidelity and clarity above machination. A faithful, scene-by-scene adaptation, with a substitution of the death row scene for the one on board ship, would have resulted in a film with excessive running time for its markets. The novel’s alibi sequences, in the second act, also introduce new characters (for example Jack Christolf, the actor) and set up a level of narrative complexity which would play against the lightness of touch which Wilder brings to the adaptation. Wilder makes the narrative his own (with acknowledgements to Chandler) but, in doing so, loses some of the weight of Cain’s existential desperation. The final scene, with Neff bleeding to death on the mezzanine, even includes some light-hearted repartee. Nevertheless, the film makes its own impact (despite the strictures of the Production Code) and maintains currency as a significant *film noir*. Cain was impressed with the result:

It’s the only picture I ever saw made from my books that had things in it I wish I had thought of. Wilder’s ending was much better than my ending, and his device for letting the guy tell the story by taking out the office dictating machine – I would have done that if I had thought of it...

My story was done very slapdash and very quick – I had to have money. I had made a lot of money, but I had to pay it all out to liquidate something that was hanging over my head. I was flat broke... and the idea for this thing popped into my head. At the end I had the problem of how he and the woman could go off the deep end at the same time and he would leave a diary or something. But the end was not done over enough.[[133]](#footnote-134)

However, although Cain’s original ending is slightly unlikely (that the insurance office would conspire to let Huff escape to avoid embarrassment for the company), there is a tragic, doom-laden atmosphere to the sequence on the ship that fails to find its analogue in the film version (though it might have, to some extent, if the released version had included the death chamber scene). Cain’s dialogue too, which might not have translated well for an audience 1940s’ expectations, might play better with twenty-first century viewers familiar with minimalist exchanges and the ‘staying on the surface’ of such writers as Raymond Carver.[[134]](#footnote-135)

But there is also this relationship to an actual instance of murder and its representation in the media. In their article ‘Multiple Indemnity: Film Noir, James M. Cain, and Adaptations of a Tabloid Case’, V. Penelope Pelizzon and Nancy Martha West make a case for a circularity of cross-pollination that includes not just film and fiction, but the world of sensational journalism: ‘Not only can *Postman* and *Double Indemnity* be read as adaptations of tabloid coverage, then, but *Double Indemnity* can be read as an adaptation, or more precisely, a “remake” of *Postman*,’.[[135]](#footnote-136) The tabloids were involved in their own processes of inter-art co-operation, particularly because of the accessibility of the prototypes for their audience and extra capacity for sales: ‘Like Hollywood films, whose success has depended on recasting narratives to fit generic conventions, the New York tabloids constantly revised the news so that it would conform to familiarized plots, settings, themes, conflicts and characters.’ (‘Multiple Indemnity’, p. 216). The Snyder-Gray case was heard in New York, but the coverage became national and its treatment not unlike that in the Hollywood gossip and fan magazines: ‘[Snyder and Gray] were immediately reconstructed into dramatis personae made to resemble specific tabloid types, which were themselves recycled products from literature, theatre and film.’ (p. 216). In effect, the New York tabloids ran the story as if it were a play or a film, with stock characters, the innocent victim and the duplicitous killers, motivated by unbridled lust and desire for money. The tabloid papers are already, in a way, adapting the material for screen, through the medium of writing and the careful selection and reproduction of photography. All three of the main tabloids that covered the case (the *New York Daily News*, the *New York Daily Mirror* and the *Evening Graphic*) made predominant use of photography in a way that made them highly visual. The *Daily Mirror* even placed sequences of photos of Ruth Snyder into frames that made them look like a section of movie footage:

An obvious device that violates the supposed authenticity of news photography, the strip cinematicizes the images and insists on the celebrity status of its subject, the theatrical nature of her trial, and the story’s potential conversion for the movies. The heavy-handed use of the film strip, in other words, announces the *adaptability* of the photographs. [italics as original][[136]](#footnote-137)

As Pelizzon and West maintain, the special strategy of the papers in representing themselves as a medium intimately associated with the worlds of theatre, of cinema, of the precincts of the contained narrative of the mass entertainments, breaks down the pre-existing structures that placed the press in a position where they are there to convey the truth, and aligns them with the world of fantasy, fiction and popular narrative:

If we flash back to the *New York Daily News*, the *New York Daily Mirror*, and the *Evening Graphic*, the three tabloids that extensively covered the Snyder-Gray case, we discover a trove of adaptation-ready tropes. These papers provided narrative material and tactics that Cain appears to have reworked, and that film noir later revamped. Daily throughout the 1920s and 30s, the tabloids familiarized an enormous readership with character and narrative patterns that we now see as quintessentially noir: the femme fatale, the psychological portrait of the criminal, the first-person killer confession, and a determinedly fatalistic point of view. Moreover, these tabloids were constantly adapting material themselves, employing a remarkable range of discursive strategies for *re*casting, *re*making, and *re*vising current events into popular amusement. To emphasize their status as adaptation-ready sites, tabloids borrowed from the stage, cinema and fiction while simultaneously suggesting that their stories – gripping tales plucked right from the street – were simply waiting to be recycled in turn by these other forms [italics as original][[137]](#footnote-138)

And this, then, places Cain, with his journalistic background and his eye for a story, in a nexus of cross-pollination that operates right down to the level of words: ‘Hard-boiled writing’s terse, dry language might read as a modernist adaptation of the tabloid’s gossipy hyperbole and garrulous prose’ (p. 231). That the stories originate in the real world merely establishes their veracity; their currency has already been established by the press in making so much mileage out of them. Cain himself was described as ‘tabloidish’ as much because of his material as for his treatment of it. Ruth Snyder becomes the archetypal femme fatale and is reworked in numerous ways through the *noir* period. The trope features again and again in Cain’s work. The cycles of influence, then, include the press, but the press references cinema, so the cycles become accumulating spirals that wind up at the same destination:

All three papers were constantly deconstructing, reconstructing and multiplying narrative tropes and images. And while this observation is true of tabloid media in general, one key distinguishing feature of the New York papers is that they constantly gestured toward Broadway theatre, hard-boiled literature, and Hollywood in their textual operations, as if announcing that their coverage of the Snyder-Gray case not only resembles the entertainment value of these other media, but more importantly, stood as ready source material for them.[[138]](#footnote-139)

The proposition that Pelizzon and West seem to be putting forward is that this version of cross-pollination is founded upon its desirability. It’s an overt borrowing that incorporates the values of one media in another, because the audience for both is the same and can accommodate the same values easily. Film values, the values of Hollywood, and of easy typification of character, setting and moral certitude, play equally well across the world of the real, of actual trials and executions. In fact, the tabloids pursued this route as their default. As Pelizzon and West say: ‘This narrow focus meant that the tabloid world, relative to the straight news, was a closed system similar to a film or novel.’ (p. 215). So too its narratives, with their convenient closures. After the many months of extensive exposure, the state executions of Snyder and Gray quickly brought interest to an end. Regardless of various extemporised stories concerning the grief of relatives, the exceptionally boosted circulation figures of the trial months died off suddenly.[[139]](#footnote-140) The tale had come to an end and the house lights gone up. The influence of tabloid press, of the sensational, is pertinent, but mostly in the sense of subject and content. This operates throughout the systems of production and adaptation right up to the finished film. As Pellizzon and West conclude:

[…] bringing Wilder’s *Double Indemnity* back together with all its precedent texts demonstrates two points that challenge current perceptions of film noir, hardboiled fiction, the tabloids, and adaptation practice itself. First, though critics often valorize hard-boiled fiction and film noir as Modernist art forms by positioning them *in opposition to* the popular entertainment represented by the tabloids, these novels and films actually adapted specific narrative strategies from their “trashy” counterparts. Second, tabloids of the 1920s provided ideal models for adaptation not only, as we might expect, because their material was sensational; more significantly, these newspapers themselves were characterized by a multifaceted, systemized practice of adaptation. Tabloids functioned, in effect, as what we might call “adaptation-ready” sites. [italics as original][[140]](#footnote-141)

So, it is the cinematic influence that is paramount. It’s a tripartite system in which the popular press, popular fiction and film feed off each other, generating and regenerating the forms and styles, but always towards the cinematic, because that, ultimately, sells.[[141]](#footnote-142)

Although the novel and film versions of *Double Indemnity* are composed in different media, their story worlds reflect similar themes and, although their tonal characteristics may diverge (between the so called ‘hard-boiled’ and the gloss of Hollywood), there is a sense that much of the substance of the characters and their fantasy worlds remains. The film was, first and foremost, written. Its production was contingent upon the creation, and approval, of a viable continuity script. Wilder’s primary process would have to be his own representation of the narrative in reception, when he read the novel for the first time, with provisos for any preconceptions he had about it or any narrative schemata he brought to the act. The next would be to project his own version of the story world into a new discourse, in negotiation with Chandler’s projection from *his* own reception and representation of the source. The form and basic structure of the film exist, therefore, at the script level before they are expressed in images and sounds. The two media (the printed novel and the replayed film) cannot possibly convey the same discourse characteristics, yet they have related story world manifestations. And, in one respect, the processes are nearly identical. Both forms are elliptical, and their discourses miss out sections of story. These sections must be reconstructed in the mental representations of receivers in similar ways (the main departure would be that the film has presented images with which to populate some aspects of such material, whereas the reader must supply these from the imagination).

Cain’s novel displays some of the influence of psychoanalysis (that we receive indications of the protagonists’ mental processes rather than their actions simply being manifestations of their personality types), and perhaps of some areas of journalism, but its structure – on intrascenic and interscenic levels – betrays, predominantly, the influence of cinema. I suggest that, by this point in history, the superstructural expectations of both writers and readers have been modified by exposure to audio-visual media. Walter Schickel talks of Cain’s ‘cinematic writing’ and makes this comment in respect of his oeuvre: ‘The other literary form these works resemble is the movie treatment – pellmell, but very logical in its statement of a narrative line.’[[142]](#footnote-143) Cain’s work invites adaptation and it has been, on numerous occasions (his novel *Mildred Pierce* as recently as 2011, for television). Albert Van Nostrand makes a similar point:

If a novel emphasizes only ‘what’ and ‘how’ to begin with , and its conflict already resolves by a ‘switcheroo’, then making a scenario is no trouble at all […] *Postman* [is] like a movie ‘continuity’. Its sixteen chapters are comprised of scenes , short units – sometimes only eight or ten lines – approximate camera shots […]. In all its formal aspects *The Postman* was a scenario the moment it was published.[[143]](#footnote-144)

Though any new adaptation of *Double Indemnity* would, once again, need to ‘disassemble’ the narrative down to story level to build up a new discourse, such a discourse need not stray too far from Cain’s structure. The second act may be slightly too convoluted for easy pacing, but it could still be realised in the pattern he lays out. At a more fundamental level, the novel displays characteristics that suit film adaptation. It is short, so that its narrative elements can be marshalled into the sort of running time normal to mainstream cinema: the 2002 edition runs to 135 pages with assorted spaces for chapter heading and endings. Full pages tend to contain something like 300 words or a little under. Clearly, prose writing doesn’t exactly correspond to screenwriting but, in Cain, with his economies of description and dialogue, the distance between the two is not as great as it might be. It’s axiomatic that a page of screenplay translates to around a minute of screen time so, if the novel loses some of its free indirect discourse and a page *could* correspond to a page of script, then it might make it a kind of proto-script or description of how a script might be derived. Again, though it is hardly an empirical analysis, examining the novel’s divisions in segmentation demonstrates the sort of quantifying of intra-scenic material that could adapt quite easily into scenes of the sort of length (of a few minutes duration) commonly employed during the so-called ‘Golden Age’ of Hollywood. The novel reads ‘filmically’. The frequency of its narrative boundaries and its treatment of description mimic those of film on the level of reception; its focalisation through the perceptions of Huff as he receives images often create strong filmic resonances. Theories of the camera as a privileged eye are somewhat discredited but, in Cain’s case as a writer, I suggest, the creation of his discourse reflects the possibility that, through his focaliser Huff, he has ‘framed’ some of his action as if the camera shots were implicit. In the next chapter I will follow this idea through in my exploration of another set of texts.

Whether Cain had an eye on adaptation (he was a screenwriter, after all), and structured his work accordingly, is immaterial. Regardless of intentions, it was still clearly possible, by 1936, to write a novel that betrays the influence of cinema right to the core of its structure.

# Chapter 2, No *Country for Old Men*: Script; Scene; Shot

## 2.1: Introduction

In Chapter 1 I looked at how certain narrative structures in the novel *Double Indemnity* seemed to suggest the possibility of its own adaptation into the medium of film. I then looked at Billy Wilder’s film adaptation to examine whether some of the filmic characteristics of the book had passed through intact into the film. Using segmentation of both narratives in their entirety, and more detailed analysis of corresponding scenes in both the book and the film, I demonstrated that the influence of the moving image was inherent within the novel, probably at the level of production and certainly at the level of its completed design. The process of analysis operated at both an interscenic level and, to a lesser extent, at an intrascenic level to try and describe some of the outcomes of this possible audio-visual influence on the structures of the source text and its adaptation.

In this chapter, I will look at a set of more recent texts, Cormac McCarthy’s *No Country for Old Men* (2005) and its film adaptation by the Coen brothers (2007). This analysis will focus more specifically on the intrascenic level to examine the possibility that not only is the source novel influenced by the audio-visual, but that parts of it can be said to offer a prototype or ‘instructions’ for an adaptation to the extent of details such as shot compositions, editing, action-pacing and cuts.

*No Country for Old Men* is perhaps unusual for a novel, in that owes its existence to an original screenplay devised by the author during a period some twenty years before its publication (various versions commencing summer 1987). This creates a minimum of five ‘layers’ of narrative realisations from the original script to the film as released for public screening. These are: the original McCarthy script, or whatever version(s) most informed the writing of the novel; the novel itself, as used as a source text by the Coens; the Coen’s adapted screenplay; the storyboarded narrative derived from the screenplay; the film as released for distribution.[[144]](#footnote-145) It could be argued that there may be sub levels extant between these five levels, and particularly during the collaborative processes of film production. For example: any independent ideas that the two brothers brought to the adapted screenplay; variations in versions of the adapted screenplay (from first draft to shooting or continuity script); independent input from J. Todd Anderson during the finalisation of the storyboards from the initial sketches; deviations from the adapted screenplay/storyboards during production (possibly because of new/better ideas for shooting or adaptations to the vicissitudes of the filming process); creative decisions made in post-production resulting in deviations from intended outcomes. For the purposes of this study, my analysis will concentrate on the four available texts outlined above and will only consider such interlevel deviations where they are relevant.

The fundamental research question undertaken for this chapter is, thus, are there detailed structural elements of the novel that have come through the process of adaptation more or less intact (with provisos for the differing media)? To this end, subsidiary or supporting questions will include: are there detailed structural elements that have survived from McCarthy’s original screenplay?; what does the survival of such elements say about the filmic nature of the novel (the influence of the audio-visual on the written narrative)? As stated, this study is essentially intrascenic: it will analyse a selection of scenes at a microstructural to examine the continuity and similarity of elements across versions. To this end, as far as is possible, I will attempt some definition of what, in the written, may be said to be filmic (influenced by the audio-visual at the level of production and perhaps as intentional creative choices). Some of the analytical processes will be experimental, and certainly may not be definitive, but I believe that useful statements on some specifics of this intermedia crosspollination are possible (if not desirable as a methodology of critical analysis).

## 2.2: Audio-visual influence in the production process

If it is possible that structural details down to the level of analogous shot compositions and cuts can be derived during the processes of written text production (either consciously or unconsciously), can anything be said about those processes and the effects they may have on the finished text? As a producer of written texts, I have access to some components of my creative processes (i.e. some of those that are conscious or driven by conscious processes of will). To further the scope of this study, I will provide examples from my own creative work in an attempt to describe how I have internally visualised certain descriptive passages as part of (sometimes the very kernel of) the creative process. Not all narrative writing is, of course predominantly visual (that it promotes quasi-visual representations in the mind of the reader). Much of written narrative is abstract, or provides figurative or emotional cues; indirect and free indirect discourse might provide ‘evidence’ for representations of other minds. But most written narratives, by their nature, provide visualisations or promote them deliberately as part of their discourse compositions.

In the case of my own strategies for discourse development, I believe that the visual (indeed the audio-visual) is integral to much, if not the majority of, my processes leading up to, and during, the act of production. The examples that I select, I hope, will enable me to describe some of these processes and evaluate the effects that they have on the finished text. I hope also, in the knowledge that mental visualisation or modelling is at the centre of much of how the mind operates, that I might offer indications of how some of those mental visualisations leading to the production of text are themselves products of an imagination informed by the experiencing of countless audio-visual texts. Further, if there are there is a possibility of providing examples to allow indications of my own processes, then it opens up the possibility of examining elements of the various versions of *No Country for Old Men* to allow speculation on those of Cormac McCarthy. In this respect, I will be at times segmenting my texts down to a level of individual images and shots to offer direct comparisons and to analyse their narrative effects.

## 2.3 History and Context

*No Country for Old Men* was first developed as an original screenplay by Cormac McCarthy through the course of 1987.[[145]](#footnote-146) Versions of this screenplay are archived amongst The Witliff Collections at Texas State University in San Marcos, Texas as part of their South Western Writers Collections. The screenplay is catalogued in one storage box comprised of seven folders, a detailed examination of which forms the basis of the study of this original script.[[146]](#footnote-147) The remainder of the *No Country for Old Men* material is comprised of seven further boxes containing scripts, notes and development work for the novel version, which I refer to also.[[147]](#footnote-148)

The earliest typescript available (in Folder 1), which commences on Sunday July 12th 1987 has a cover which defines it as a ‘LATE DRAFT’ and is incomplete inasmuch as it stops before completing the narrative. This draft is a photocopy with corrections. Some original pages from this draft are archived in other folders from this box (particularly Folder 6) and it would appear that some of this material predates that in Folder 1. Much of it pertains to the beginning of the narrative and includes an alternative scene in which a woman is carjacked. Later versions commence not with the carjacking, but with two Police officers at the crime scene where the woman has been found dead. Other than a very few handwritten notes, there can only be speculation about McCarthy’s creative intent and the evolution of the narrative before these typed sequences, but the systematic way in which the scripts develop (which can be deduced from looking at the writer’s daily output, indicated by dates on the typescripts), and the confidence with which the material is handled (there are relatively few corrections and much material survives intact into the latest versions), suggest that some ‘profile’ or general scheme for the narrative had been established prior to committing the archived words to paper.

From the outset, the setting is Texas and the chronology is contemporaneous with the time of writing. The dead woman, it turns out, is Sheriff Bell’s daughter, although this version fails to establish the killer. The main protagonists are Bell and Llewelyn Moss. The action of all versions, from the earliest to the Coen brothers’ film, is predicated upon Moss’s discovery of the aftermath of a drug deal in the desert, where the trade has descended into gunfire, enabling Moss to accidentally discover and collect the transaction money and to try and keep it for himself. In effect, the establishing or causal event takes place in a narrative that has played out before the action in the putative film, leaving the characters in position to play out their roles in the ensuing recriminations.

Moss becomes a fugitive and Bell the detective who must pursue him, at the same time that he is being pursued by what McCarthy (and Bell) terms Team A (the Mexican cartel involved in the drug deal) and Team B (the Americans who have put up the money). It’s a chase film with varying elements in which characters get ahead of each other and sometimes coincide, often with fatal consequences. At this point Moss is an effective and taciturn operator with access to both local knowledge and a high level of personal resilience and, other than the brief intervention of a hoodlum calling himself ‘Hoot Gibson’, the screenplay is effectively a two-hander pitching Moss trying to get away and Bell trying to put things right whilst sinister forces threaten to overtake him.

At a later stage of working (evinced by McCarthy’s notation of his daily output), the writer commences on a more complete version of the screenplay which introduces members of Team A and Team B. Although the Mexicans are rarely named, the principle Americans are established early on. There is a ‘big boss’, Edward Ralston, and a brutal henchman, Milo Jones. There’s a hint that Milo is responsible for the death of Bell’s daughter (though someone else takes the punishment for it) and, deploying the device of a slaughterhouse as a covering business, the idea of the portable bolt gun or cattle-slaughtering weapon is established. The characteristics of Moss have effectively been split into opposing characters: he now becomes the opportunistic cowboy and Vietnam veeran and Team B, personified by Ralston and Milo, become the engines of ruthless efficiency and originators of violence.

Bell is the epitome of the old-fashioned cowboy: morally upstanding and phlegmatic, but with the accumulated knowledge of a lifetime of practical experience. He is both effective in reaching accurate conclusions about crime scenes and usually close in making judgement on actions, although the new type of (violent, drug-orientated) crime is beginning to fox him. He has a way of retrieving his horse with a kind of ‘kissing noise’ that links him directly to the heroes of countless Western films, whilst his moral code is somewhat at odds with the exigencies of the modern world. He is a widower who has now lost his daughter and been left in charge of a teenage granddaughter with plans of her own; he is also the figurehead of a system of dying values which originates with the settlers and the frontier spirit of fading times. He voices his concerns in dialogue with his two confessors, the veterinarian ‘Doc’ Harlan White and the Reverend Don Mullins, in scenes which serve to demonstrate the inner workings of Bell’s psychology, his world view and some background to the situations confronting contemporaneous Texas.

This version contains a fully realised narrative, with a series of shootouts and interlinking scenes leading to a final showdown. With minor alterations, a full range of the scenes that are in the final version have been established at this stage. The archive also contains an annotated version of the above (Folder 3) and two further versions (Folders 4 and 5) developed closely from Version 2. Folder 4 is what appears to be an evolutionary copy of Version 2 of a suitable standard for submission, heavily corrected and annotated, and Folder 5 a final, neat version of this including corrections.[[148]](#footnote-149) This is the latest and most developed of the screenplays in the archive and will be taken as the definitive version for the purposes of analysis. It consists of 145 segments described by time and location and follows traditional conventions for screenplays in the way in which it is set out, describes action and attributes dialogue. A full segmentation of this version is provided as Appendix E.

In structural terms the narrative proceeds from a series of establishing scenes (Bell’s dead daughter; Bell’s introduction; Ralston’s introduction [the slaughterhouse]; Moss discovers the scene of the shootout and the money) and becomes a chase after Moss and the cash amongst several parties, punctuated by three shootouts (Moss defeats the Mexicans; Ralston and Milo catch up with and try to kill Moss; Bell and Moss set a trap for, and prevail against, Ralston and his henchmen). It’s an orthodox action thriller set in motels, hotels and cars in which the good guys (just) come out on top, walk off with the money and get the girl (Moss is going to take Margie to Las Vegas; Bell’s granddaughter rethinks her unsuitable engagement). There is a presence of technology: automatic shotguns with drum magazines; a supercharged Chevy Nova; the hidden transponder; armour piercing rounds; the portable bolt gun; Ralston has armoured vehicles; Moss can rig up an automated firing mechanism, which creates thematic connections with action thrillers from the Seventies such as *The* *Dion Brothers*, *Dirty Harry*, the car chases of *Bullitt* and even *Smokey and the Bandit*, perhaps John Milius’s *Dillinger* (1973) and as far back as the bullet-riddled car and bodies of *Bonny and Clyde*.[[149]](#footnote-150) One might also trace the evolution of the special weapon in westerns from the 1930s to *Valdez is Coming* (1971, dir. by Edwin Sherin, adapted from a book by the novelist and screenwriter Elmore Leonard).[[150]](#footnote-151)

It would seem that the screenplay was developed as a potential commercial venture. Although nothing can be gleaned about McCarthy’s attempts to produce or sell the rights to the screenplay, it is clear that there is a sense that the style and content are marketable in terms of 1980s Hollywood output and that the work is a fully realised narrative that would be straightforward to translate into a viable shooting script, storyboards and film. It’s a kind of updated Western in which the cowboys (Bell and Moss) shoot it out with the bad guys who all go down dead, Milo in an ironic fashion in which Bell’s shooting explodes his gas canister and peppers him with shrapnel, before Ralston performs the coup de grâce (Segment 142).

Whatever the outcome of the process, the film was not produced and the story would wait until the next millennium before it was realised in another medium.

## 2.4 Novelisation

For whatever reason, McCarthy felt obliged to revisit the world of *No Country for Old Men* in the early part of the new century. Tellingly, on an early page of the first draft of the screenplay, he writes: ‘MON JULY 20 54th BIRTHDAY’. Based on archived notes, concerted work towards a viable typescript of the novel commences in the middle of 2003. By this time McCarthy is approaching 70. The chronology of the novel is no longer contemporaneous, but historic. There is a marginal note that suggests the year 1984, but this resolves to 1980 by the final version.[[151]](#footnote-152) The timbre of the work has begun a process of change, from a violent and stylish action thriller, to a more meditative exposition on the nature of violence and fate. In a note on a loose leaf, simply marked ‘Journal’ in one the folders of working notes which is not text from the script, McCarthy writes:

Renoir in his last seven years painting with his brush taped to the claw his hand had become. My age. Creating things from the materials at hand in the simple hope that hearts might be thereby somewhat restored. Blessed man

That the horrors of the modern world have taken us by surprise is simply not true. Every atrocity was predicted somewhere. Every disaster and none of it heralded by the expectation for some imagined good.

Before quoting Goethe: ‘I have not for years heard of the death of a friend but that I envied him.’[[152]](#footnote-153)

Bell remains something of a constant, although most of his confessions are now to some unknown narratee in the form of free indirect discourse, italicised, which preface the first twelve of the thirteen chapters and forms the text of the last.[[153]](#footnote-154) In each of these, Bell expounds his world view and his concern for the expansion of this new type of violence that is evolving in his territory. These meditative excursions offer a change of pace between the violent scenes and the energetic chase and fight sequences. Bell is still a conduit to the old West, exemplified particularly in an extended third person scene where he goes to visit his grandfather’s old deputy, Ellis, and confesses his inadequacy, both in terms of his current shortfalls in the face of this new type of enemy and his war service, where he was awarded a medal basically for saving his own skin. Bell’s daughter is still dead before her time, though now his wife Loretta is still alive. In early notes she is even six months pregnant (at the age of 49), although there is now no granddaughter. McCarthy is economical with ideas and scenarios and, rather than waste them, he tends to reinvent them with new protagonists, or to put words into different mouths. I suggest that the characteristics of the granddaughter are now divided between (and developed in) the characters of Moss’s wife Carla Jean (no longer Margie and around thirty, but just nineteen years old) and the hitchhiker that Moss picks up as he travels to El Paso and who perishes in his last gunfight. In the same way that the Milo and Ralston combination personify characteristics that originally belonged to Moss, so McCarthy personifies the characteristics and ideas he wants to explore in characters that are designed to serve such a purpose. Bell and Moss are the old and new type of cowboys, Bell serving in the morally unambiguous Second World War, Moss in the less-so Vietnamese conflict. There is still the potential also for the old type of narrative, in which the cowboys join up to defeat the bad guys, but now there is a new type of villain, one who is more suited to the ‘warfare’ of drug deals and double-crosses.

Chigurh, then, is a new Milo, emanating from an unfamiliar landscape. McCarthy takes care over the name, trying Chigoreon, Chiguron, and Chignon before settling on Anton Chigurh.[[154]](#footnote-155) Chigurh is the implacable killer, as prone to discursing extensively on his twisted logic of fate and his strange moral code as he is to killing enemies and witnesses without compunction, often by shooting them in the face, destroying the very means of witness. To Bell he is ‘a true and living prophet of destruction’ and ‘pretty much a ghost’ and one of the forces to whom he finds that he will ‘not be equal to’.[[155]](#footnote-156)

With few exceptions, those who see Chigurh do not survive the experience. McCarthy finds interest in the moment when fate calls. In the original screenplay, an old man that serves Moss at a gas station after he returns from his second visit to the caldera (scene of the failed drug deal) is killed by unknown forces after presumably being interrogated for information. This is reported, as Bell finds the body and later comments on the unnecessary nature of the killing. McCarthy now examines the moment of threat, though the outcome is different. This is the famous ‘coin toss’ scene, where Chigurh bullies the storekeeper into taking a gamble on his own life. The writer is interested in the role of fate and of the mechanics of killing, as well as the consequences and the mechanisms through which death occurs, often when it is unexpected and usually when it is undeserved.[[156]](#footnote-157) In an isolated note in a folder marked ‘BELL MARCH ‘07’ McCarthy writes this unattributed passage:

I had no say in the matter. Every moment in your life is a turning and everyone a choosing. Somewhere you made a choice. All ~~then~~ followed to this. This accounting is scrupulous. The shape is drawn. No line can ~~ever~~ be erased. (091/80/5)

This appears to be working material for ideas that end up in Chigurh’s ‘death speeches’ to Wells and Carla Jean. It’s a kind of philosophy for the novel, notions of fate bringing you to the moment (and the instrument) of death. Where the original screenplay neatly crafts its narrative into the familiar form of heroes overcoming foes, the novel keeps the principle antagonists apart. Bell follows, but doesn’t catch up with, Moss until he is dead (dying in early versions). When Moss confronts Chigurh in the Eagle Pass Hotel, he fails to take the advantage and kill him, which will precipitate his wife’s death sometime after his own. Chigurh and Moss have a somewhat inconclusive shootout in which they injure each other, though Chigurh survives this on his own terms, as he does all of his setbacks. Moss has to be patched up in Mexico, though his developing reality is a series of injuries that diminish him gradually until he dies at the hands of his Mexican pursuers. Bell is always at least one step behind. When he thinks he might have an opportunity to shoot it out with Chigurh, in chord with his wartime experience, he demurs and this time calls in the cavalry, though Chigurh is long gone. Chigurh gets the money, though he hands it over to its owner in another peculiar scene. Those that would be the main heroes in a more conventional narrative either find that fate kills them or, in the case of Bell, that he fails to fulfil his perceived role as the bringer of justice: ‘It was defeat. It was being beaten. More bitter to him than death.’ (*No Country*, p. 306). The standard action tropes of the original screenplay are subverted. Though the action remains visceral and engaging, the results are now more fatalistic. The hero is tested and is not quite up to the task; the forces of the dark side, of death, triumph without mercy.

Chigurh survives, though there is some tantalising trial material in the archive for a potential different ending. Moss still appears to be dead, but Bell has captured and imprisoned Chigurh, who is on Death Row. He is either executed (and there is a short passage describing the light fading from his eyes) or commits suicide or dies in uncertain circumstances. In this scenario, Carla Jean has also survived, to attend Chigurh’s execution. The conclusions here are more supernatural: Chigurh seems to be able to die by an act of will, and there are hints that he is some kind of demon or possessive spirit. The warders who carry out the body state that ‘he didnt weigh nothin.’.[[157]](#footnote-158) Bell examines the body:

He thumbed the eyelid shut and looked at the body. There wasnt much to look at. The newly healed scar that Bell had caused to be there which would never heal further. His head secured in a black composition neckchock. His hands palm up at his sides. His scarred leg. The feet that looked manicured. There was something strange about the corpse even as a corpse, some thing wanting substance or even the suggestion of it. Even the memory. It looked like something that had been sloughed off. It looked like something that had been inhabited and then abandoned. By what he could not say.[[158]](#footnote-159)

McCarthy eventually eschews these ideas for the more conventional. Bell believes that Chigurh is some kind of devil incarnate, but the reader can conclude that he is simply good at his job (and incredibly hard to kill). Chigurh becomes Fate itself or Fate’s deadly messenger, and the published novel becomes an existential meditation on death and inevitability.

## 2.5: Adaptation

It is clear that film rights for the novel had been negotiated even before it was finalised for publication. Box 80 in the collection contains copies of an invoice for the two year option on the property, dated 22nd March 2005 (the novel was published in July). Draft copies were in the possession of producer Scott Rudin and the Coens some time before publication. The relatively high cost of the option ($275 000) and its short duration suggest that a production schedule was already in place. The source script (Blue Revised Draft) used for this analysis is dated May 18th 2006, developed from the White Production Draft (March 20th 2006). I was not able to ascertain whether there are any subsequent versions, but the Blue Revised Draft is very close to the film as released (with a few minor additions and some omissions, apparently to streamline production processes, although some omissions may have been lost in editing).[[159]](#footnote-160) Joel and Ethan Coen described the adaptation process, perhaps a little tongue in cheek, as extremely straightforward:

**At what point did you become aware of the Cormac McCarthy novel and feel that you wanted to adapt it?**

**Ethan Coen:** It was sent to us before it was even published by the producer, Scott Rudin. He sent it to us and asked us if we’d be interested. And we were; we’d read other of Cormac’s books, we knew well who he was and I think we both like him immensely. But none of the other ones were movie material in the kind of obvious way that this one is.

**How easy was it to adapt?**

**Joel Coen:** Well, Ethan pointed out that it’s really not that difficult but it takes two people – I hold the book open while he types the text into the computer. It’s almost not an exaggeration in this case to say that we took much of the dialogue directly from the book [laughs]. It’s more a process of editing, condensing and then having to find a solution to a specific problem in terms of how you handle something in the novel that may be more literary than cinematic and finding a way to either include it in the movie or get rid of it and move without it. So it’s that kind of problem solving really more than the invention or the plot or the characters like we do with our own stories. The characters are usually the major element but here they’re given.

**Was it always your intention to stay so close to the source material right through to the end?**

**Ethan Coen:** Well yes. It wasn’t even so much an intention more than it was just clear to us that, yes, we could. We have actually done other work for hire as writers adapting a couple of other books where we had to supply a lot because the source material didn’t offer what this did. But it was clear to us from reading this that the adaptation was going to be mostly what Joel was saying, a process of kind of editing as opposed to inventing, supplying and adding things.[[160]](#footnote-161)

Much of the dialogue is indeed retained verbatim from the novel and the basic scene structure persists. Major losses include much of Bell’s first person ruminations, which now act mostly as voice-over and introduction (some is recycled into dialogue) and, in combination with his final ‘dream’ scene, act as a framing device for the narrative. Bell’s history in the Second World War, and his act of bravery undercut by self-preservation, is excised. His father is said to have been a Sheriff as well as his grandfather (in the novel he is a horse trader). Also gone is the strand where Moss picks up a teenage hitchhiker, to share the driving, eventually sacrificing himself to the Mexican gunmen ostensibly to save her (they kill her anyway). A brief exchange with a flirtatious young woman at the pool in the El Paso motel is substituted, thus obviating the possibility of Moss’s redemption in what might classify as a prototypical Western shootout updated for the Eighties.

All of Bell’s investigations after the murder of Carla Jean are also lost and the order of scenes is changed so that his visit to Uncle Ellis precedes her death (in which some dialogue and the result of the coin toss are cut), leaving him just the final ‘dream’ scene to close the narrative. Bell also arrives at the El Paso motel prior to the local police arriving (a reverse of the sequence in the novel). Without Bell’s visit to Moss’s father, Moss’s history as a sniper in Vietnam is also excised, though perhaps his pocketing of his spent cartridge case after wounding the antelope (collecting his ‘brass’) serves as a clue. There is also no exchange with the DEA agent McIntyre at the caldera and it is never made explicit that the body of the ‘last man standing’ has been discovered. Perhaps most tellingly for the realm of meanings, the peculiar scene where Chigurh returns the money to its original owner (minus some expenses) is also cut. In the finished film, the result is the loss of some of the novel’s depth of characterisation, of background and some of its exposition, resulting in perhaps an even more austere and bleak narrative texture: ‘the movie manages to be very different from Cormac McCarthy’s novel through an extravagant literal fidelity to a great deal of it’.[[161]](#footnote-162)

There are also some additions: Chigurh’s interrogation of the chicken farmer prior to taking his pickup truck, an extra character at the shooting of the ‘money man’ plus, as Dennis Rothermel puts it:

Aside from eliciting the nuances of the actors’ performances, the Coens’ invent these purely cinematic touches: the wavering image of the wounded pit bull in the desert turning back to look at Moss, the raucous roar of the truck chasing Moss, the crinkling wrapper on the counter, Chigurh drinking milk and staring at his reflection in the TV and set and Bell repeating the same later, Moss pulling at the tag on his new shirt as he emerges from the riverbank weeds, the color of Bell’s uniform bleeding into the glint of light on the inside of the empty lock cylinder in the El Paso Motel, Chigurh waiting inside in the darkness, Moss’s embrace with the dead pit bull, the playing cards in the spokes of the boys bicycles, the ironic supplicant gesture of Chigurh to the two boys, Moss’s ironic supplicant gesture to the mariarchi band, the crow flying upward into the dark night, the long dusty road to Ellis’s cabin in the desert, and the last instance of overlap sound in the film – the ticking of the clock after Bell finishes the recitation of his dreams to Loretta. The Coens layer cinema onto the distilled structure of story, character and meaning extracted from the novel.[[162]](#footnote-163)

There is very little non-diegetic music, just a few instances of subtle swell to underline the tension in scenes such as Chigurh’s first coin-toss scene with the gas station proprietor in Sheffield. In line with most of the Coens’ output, this is provided by Carter Burwell. Cinematography was undertaken by another long-time collaborator: Roger Deakins.

With the evidence of the developed script to hand, it is reasonable to conclude that no reference was made during its production to the McCarthy’s original screenplay from the 1980s. It’s a straightforward adaptation from the novel, perhaps with the novel to hand for reference.[[163]](#footnote-164) This is a more streamlined product which, without the diversions of Bell’s personal discourse, allows the action scenes to supersede each other and maintain pace through action and tension through suspense. The various cuts also allow for a reasonable running time (122 minutes in the original theatrical release) and the efficacy of the finished product is demonstrated by its success at the 2007 Oscars (Best Picture; Best Director; Best Adapted Screenplay, as well as Best Supporting Actor for Javier Bardem’s portrayal of Anton Chigurh).[[164]](#footnote-165)

With respect to the above analysis of the range of stages of development commencing with the original and unproduced screenplay, then, what elements can be said to carry through all the way through to the completed film? On a sliding scale, these are the material elements which I think persist:

There are several scenes which have exact analogues, even if they differ in structure and detail:

**11-16**, Moss sighting and stalking the antelope, discovering the aftermath of the shootout (though he hears gunfire, so the shootout must still be underway), discovering the last man standing and the cash.[[165]](#footnote-166)

**19**, Moss returning to the trailer and talking to his partner (initially ‘Margie’).

**61-63**, Moss getting a motel room, seeing to wound and hiding case.

**72**, Moss buying shotgun and tent poles.

**77-81**, Moss retrieving case from the duct.

Interestingly, the retrieval of the case is scripted with intercutting from the adjacent room where one of the Mexicans is waiting with a shotgun. In the novel, each strand (Moss retrieving the case; Chigurh killing the Mexicans) is relayed in sequence. In the film the action is once again intercut, suggesting that, in filmic terms at least, the material gains from being handled in this way.

To a lesser extent, scenes which have counterparts in later discourses, but significant differences in structure, content and outcome:

**23-27**, Moss returning to the caldera and shooting it out with various attackers.

**33-38**, Bell examining the aftermath of the various gun battles.

**69**, Three Mexicans search Moss’s room (in ellipsis in the film).

**124-128**, Moss getting medical treatment in Mexico and returning to the USA.

Beyond this, segments where dialogue is preserved, even if spoken by other characters:

**41**, Bell’s daughter Melinda seeing him off to work and telling him to be careful (wife Loretta in film).

**59**, Bell’s response to the Val Verde Sheriff about the threat to Moss, “sure made a(n) impression on me.” (to Deputy Wendell in novel and film).

With numerous small fragments elsewhere.

Finally, radically different, though prototypical, scenes which inform later inclusions in the novel:

**89-105**, Moss finding the transponder and shootouts at the hotel and motel (including exchanges with desk clerk and the recurring motif of death via agency of the bolt gun, albeit addressed to the occiput, and not the forehead in this version). All very different in form, but providing locations and models of action adapted for the novel.

And, most distantly related, segment **55**, Bell finding the dead filling station attendant, presumably killed by one of those tracking Moss and the money during, or after, an interrogation. This must inform the famous coin-tossing scene with the filling station proprietor in Sheffield, although what derives could be described as a ‘negative image’ (what was once in ellipsis is now represented, and its outcome is now reversed).

To this effect there is also the possibility of a ‘ghost scene’. Many viewers, particularly on an initial reception of the film are disappointed or feel ‘short changed’ that there is no final shootout between the perceived forces of good and those of evil. Both the novel and film deny the possibility of this traditional Hollywood (and perhaps prototypical fictional Western) mode of resolution. The novel and film simply end ‘too soon’, before Chigurh is made to pay the price for his deeds. Yet, as stated, that ending already exists, if only in the unproduced typescript of the original screenplay. If so, is this the negative image of the ending which we actually receive, where there is no such resolution? And does its presence expressly inform McCarthy’s choice in making it unavailable when he comes to recompose the narrative into a novel?

## 2.6: Scene Analysis

For the remainder of this analysis, I will be concentrating on two scenes: Moss’s first appearance, stalking the antelope, and Chigurh’s murder of Lamar’s deputy. The former is one of those scenes which has a material presence from the earliest versions of McCarthy’s screenplay; the latter makes its first appearance in the novel. The intention is to examine whether the texts contain language that is prototypical for shot compositions and if, and how, this prototypicality translates to the completed film.

## 2.7: Original Screenplay

This is the first appearance of Moss and is section numbered **11** in my segmentation (Appendix E):

EXT - THE DESERT - MORNING

A hunter is glassing the desert from a low rise with a pair of binoculars. He is Llewelyn Moss. He is tall and lean, about 35 years old. A highpowered bold [sic] action rifle is at his elbow. In the distance a band of antelope. He watches them and then eases back down from the rise and takes the rifle and begins to walk quickly along the desert floor. The sky is very blue, his shadow long. Now he is crouching along the edge of a shallow arroyo. He checks the sun that it will not reflect off the glass of the binoculars and then studies the antelope again. They are grazing a quarter of a mile away. He studies the terrain and then takes the rifle and continues along the arroyo

CREDITS ROLL

Moss crawls to the edge of a bunch of creosote bush and lies watching the animals. They are closer. He studies the terrain and then sets the binoculars aside and takes the rifle and sights with it. He spreads his legs in the prone shooting position and puts the stock to his cheek and sights through the telescope of the rifle.The antelope are grazing. Several raise their heads to look about, their tails whisking. He slides the safety off the rifle. He shoots. The rifle jerks and roars. The shot echoes out over the emptiness. The antelope run away over the plain. Moss stands quickly and watches them through the binoculars. Then he lowers the binoculars and stands watching.

This followed immediately by Moss ejecting and catching the spent cartridge case, pocketing it and making the gun safe, whereupon he hears a shot in the distance, which will eventually transpire to be from the shootout at the caldera.

Below is my assessment of the most likely range of shot distances that are suggested by this segment.[[166]](#footnote-167) Everything could, of course, be framed simply in long shot or medium long shot, but I feel that the text more strongly suggests certain framing combinations which would best provide the visual evidence outlined in the discourse (the implied mise en scène). I have used Bordwell and Thompson’s descriptions of shot types based on distance for this analysis, with acknowledgment that there are no absolute definitions for where, for instance, long shots might become medium shots etc. (note on *Film Art*)

I’ve split the discourse into segments, some of which are edit points for cuts between shots where there are changes of point of view. For others (such as **1**), I describe transitional shot sequences where the same viewpoint may be best served by varying distances of shot. In most instances I suggest the possibility of alternative viewpoints:

**1** A hunter is glassing the desert from a low rise with a pair of binoculars. He is Llewelyn Moss. He is tall and lean, about 35 years old. A highpowered bold action rifle is at his elbow.

*(combination medium close-up; medium; medium long)*

**2** In the distance a band of antelope. *(long or extreme long shot)*

**3** He watches them and then eases back down from the rise and takes the rifle and begins to walk quickly along the desert floor. *(from close-up to medium to long shot, possibly tracking or follow shot)*

**4** The sky is very blue, his shadow long. *(long shot)*

**5** Now he is crouching along the edge of a shallow arroyo. *(medium long or long shot)*

**6** He checks the sun that it will not reflect off the glass of the binoculars and then studies the antelope again. *(medium long or medium shot)*

**7** They are grazing a quarter of a mile away. *(moves to long shot subjective viewpoint)*

**8** He studies the terrain … (*long shot subjective viewpoint or medium long shot)*

**9** and then takes the rifle and continues along the arroyo *(medium long or long shot)*

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Moss crawls to the edge of a bunch of creosote bush and lies … *(continuation of medium long or long shot)*

**10** watching the animals. They are closer. He studies the terrain and then sets the binoculars aside … *(subjective long shot to medium shot)*

**11** and takes the rifle and sights with it. *(medium shot to possible subjective long shot)*

**12** He spreads his legs in the prone shooting position and puts the stock to his cheek and sights through the telescope of the rifle. *(medium shot)*

**13** The antelope are grazing. Several raise their heads to look about, their tails whisking. *(subjective long shot through sight)*

**14** He slides the safety off the rifle. *(close-up or extreme close-up)*

**15** He shoots. The rifle jerks and roars. *(medium or medium long shot)*

**16** The shot echoes out over the emptiness. *(continuation of previous shot or new long shot)*

**17** The antelope run away over the plain. *(long shot, possibly subjective through telescopic sight)*

**18** Moss stands quickly and watches them through the binoculars. *(medium long shot with the possibility of moving to a subjective long shot)*

**19** Then he lowers the binoculars and stands watching. *(medium or medium long shot)*

The action in this sequence is continuous except for a possible elision between **4** and **5**. In the next few scenes Moss investigates the origin of the shooting and finds the (in this version recent) aftermath of the shootout. The function of this continuous motion, as Moss manoeuvres himself to a position where he is ready to shoot, must serve a function as a backdrop to, and provide time for, the credits to complete. I suggest that McCarthy conceives that the credits will complete in time for the rifle shot to be fired and that this is conception is a clear indicator that the visual and chronological aspects of a film version of this script have been mentally represented at the point of production. In effect, McCarthy is creating a visual representation of how he sees the film being shot in order to produce the discourse of the script. Even the very earliest available version of this scene incorporates these qualities, as well as providing cues for sound and colour compositions.

## 2.8: Novel

Again, Moss’s first appearance:

Moss sat with the heels of his boots dug into the volcanic gravel of the ridge and glassed the desert below him with a pair of twelve power german binoculars. His hat pushed back on his head. Elbows propped on his knees. The rifle strapped over his shoulder with a harness leather sling was a heavybarreled .270 on a ’98 Mauser action with a laminated stock of maple and walnut. It carried a Unertl telescopic sight of the same power as the binoculars. The antelope were a little under a mile away. The sun was up less than an hour and the shadow of the ridge and the datilla and the rocks fell far out across the floodplain below him. Somewhere out there was the shadow of Moss himself. He lowered the binoculars and sat studying the land. Far to the south the raw mountains of Mexico. The breaks of the river. To the west the baked terracotta terrain of the running borderlands. He spat dryly and wiped his mouth on the shoulder of his cotton workshirt.

The rifle would shoot half minute of angle groups. Five inch groups at one thousand yards. The spot he’d picked to shoot from lay just below a long talus of lava scree and it would put him well within that distance. Except that it would take the better part of an hour to get there and the antelope were grazing away from him. The best he could say about any of it was that there was no wind.

When he got to the foot of the talus he raised himself slowly and looked for the antelope. They’d not moved far from where he last saw them but the shot was still a good seven hundred yards. He studied the animals through the binoculars. In the compressed air motes and heat distortion. A low haze of shimmering dust and pollen. There was no other cover and there wasnt going to be any other shot.

He wallowed down in the scree and pulled off one boot and laid it over the rocks and lowered the forearm of the rifle down into the leather and pushed off the safety with his thumb and sighted through the scope.

They stood with their heads up, all of them, looking at him.

Damn, he whispered. The sun was behind him so they couldn’t very well have seen the light reflect off the glass of the scope. They had just flat seen him.

The rifle had a Canjar trigger set to nine ounces and he pulled the rifle and the boot toward him with great care and sighted again and jacked the crosshairs slightly up the back of the animal standing most broadly to him. He knew the exact drop of the bullet in hundred yard increments. It was the distance that was uncertain. He laid his finger into the curve of the trigger. The boar’s tooth he wore on a gold chain spooled onto the rocks inside his elbow.

Even with the heavy barrel and the muzzlebrake the rifle bucked up off the rest. When he pulled the animals back into the scope he could see them all standing as before. It took the 150 grain bullet the better part of a second to get there but it took the sound twice that. They were standing looking at the plume of dust where the bullet had hit. Then they bolted. Running almost immediately at top speed out upon the barrial with the long whaang of the rifleshot rolling after them and caroming off the rocks and yawing back across the open country in the early morning solitude.

He stood and watched them go. He raised the glasses.[[167]](#footnote-168)

The novel version of the scene expands expositional and background elements of the world of the novel. In text world terms there are extra world building elements explicitly to do with Moss and his equipment (and therefore his background, nature and intentions). One could also maintain that there are greater indications of possible theory of mind aspects with respect to the nature and thought processes of Moss himself. The technical details of the rifle and the binoculars would not be obvious from straightforward observation. Where there is the possibility here of omniscient narration, that the narrator is relating knowledge that is absolute in terms of the universe of the text, I suggest that this is more exactly figural knowledge. The narration needs to be no wider than third person figural here: all that is narrated, from the calibre of the rifle to the grouping of the shots, is known to Moss.[[168]](#footnote-169) In my segmented version of this scene I have attempted to suggest the most appropriate shots for the discourse material (actually the shots that I visualise when reading for each image or combination of images). The underlined sections indicate where McCarthy provides this figural or personal knowledge. Though there may be visual representations forthcoming from this type of material, I believe that it does not generally provide discourse cues for specific camera shots.

**1** Moss sat with the heels of his boots dug into the volcanic gravel of the ridge and glassed the desert below him with a pair of twelve power german binoculars. His hat pushed back on his head. Elbows propped on his knees. The rifle strapped over his shoulder with a harness leather sling was a heavybarreled .270 on a ’98 Mauser action with a laminated stock of maple and walnut. It carried a Unertl telescopic sight of the same power as the binoculars. *(medium long cutting to medium close-up)*

**2** The antelope were a little under a mile away. The sun was up less than an hour and the shadow of the ridge and the datilla and the rocks fell far out across the floodplain below him. *(long shot subjective, probably through binoculars)*

Somewhere out there was the shadow of Moss himself.

**3** He lowered the binoculars and sat studying the land. *(medium)*

**4** Far to the south the raw mountains of Mexico. The breaks of the river. To the west the baked terracotta terrain of the running borderlands. *(extreme long shot)*

**5** He spat dryly and wiped his mouth on the shoulder of his cotton workshirt. *(medium/ medium close)*

The rifle would shoot half minute of angle groups. Five inch groups at one thousand yards. The spot he’d picked to shoot from lay just below a long talus of lava scree and it would put him well within that distance. Except that it would take the better part of an hour to get there and the antelope were grazing away from him. The best he could say about any of it was that there was no wind. *(with the possibility of including a subjective long shot)*

**6** When he got to the foot of the talus he raised himself slowly and looked for the antelope. *(medium/ medium long)*

**7** They’d not moved far from where he last saw them but the shot was still a good seven hundred yards. He studied the animals through the binoculars. *(long shot)*

**8** In the compressed air motes and heat distortion. A low haze of shimmering dust and pollen. *(subjective long shot)*

There was no other cover and there wasnt going to be any other shot.

**9** He wallowed down in the scree and pulled off one boot and laid it over the rocks and lowered the forearm of the rifle down into the leather and pushed off the safety with his thumb and sighted through the scope. *(long/medium long, with the option to intercut a close-up/extreme close-up)*

**10** They stood with their heads up, all of them, looking at him. Damn, he whispered. The sun was behind him so they couldn’t very well have seen the light reflect off the glass of the scope. They had just flat seen him. *(subjective long shot)*

**11** The rifle had a Canjar trigger set to nine ounces and he pulled the rifle and the boot toward him with great care and sighted again … *(medium)*

**12** and jacked the crosshairs slightly up the back of the animal standing most broadly to him. *(subjective long shot)*

He knew the exact drop of the bullet in hundred yard increments. It was the distance that was uncertain.

**13** He laid his finger into the curve of the trigger. The boar’s tooth he wore on a gold chain spooled onto the rocks inside his elbow. *(possible combination of close-ups and extreme close-ups)*

**14** Even with the heavy barrel and the muzzlebrake the rifle bucked up off the rest. When he pulled the animals back into the scope he could see them all standing as before. It took the 150 grain bullet the better part of a second to get there but it took the sound twice that. They were standing looking at the plume of dust where the bullet had hit. Then they bolted. Running almost immediately at top speed out upon the barrial with the long whaang of the rifleshot rolling after them and caroming off the rocks and yawing back across the open country in the early morning solitude. *(subjective long shot through sight)*

**15** He stood and watched them go. He raised the glasses. *(medium/medium long)*

Again the action is continuous, except for the elision between **5** and **6**, the hour it takes to get to the new location. During the action, the discourse deals with Moss’s activities, and those of the antelope, in a sequential and consequential manner (that there is a clear chronological sequence in which activities follow each other and there are logical links between cause and effect). Only the figural knowledge is asynchronous in this context in that it is comprised of information that Moss possesses before the onset of the scene.

Much of the action is also close to unfolding in real time, in that it can be read at about the same rate required to undertake the activities described, although sometimes the duration is stretched (for instance, when Moss is observing the antelope from the new position, where the description of ‘air motes and heat distortion, a low haze of shimmering dust and pollen.’ seems to decelerate the discourse, if not render it into a kind of slow motion). I will return to this idea of reading activities in real time when I look at Chigurh’s opening scene.

## 2.9: Adapted Screenplay

A near facsimile reproduction from the Blue Revised Version, with added numbers as enumerations of the shots described:

8 EXT. ARID PLAIN – DAY

**1** Seen through an extreme telephoto lens. Heat shimmer rises from the desert floor.

**2** A pan of the horizon discovers a distant herd of antelope. The animals are grazing.

**3** Reverse on a man in blue jeans and cowboy boots sitting on his heels, elbows on knees, peering through a pair of

binoculars. A heavy-barreled rifle is slung across his back. This is Moss.

**4** He lowers the binoculars, slowly unslings the rifle and looks through its sight.

**5** The view through the sight swims for a moment to refind the herd. One animal is staring directly at us, its motion arrested as if it’s heard or seen something.

**6** Close on Moss’s eyes, one at the sight, the other closed.

He mutters:

MOSS

Hold still.

**7** He opens the free eye and rolls his head off the sight to give himself stereo.

**8** Close on the hatch-marked range dial on the sight. Moss

delicately thumbs it.

**9** He eases the one eye back onto the sight.

**10** Moss’s finger tightens on the trigger.

**11** Shot: gunbuck swishes the point of view upward.

**12** Moss fights it back down.

**13** The point-of-view through the sight finds the beast again,still staring at us.

**14** The sound of the gunshot rings out across the barial.

Short beat.

**15** The bullet hits the antelope; not a kill. The animal recoils and runs, packing one leg.

**16** The other animals are off with it.

MOSS (CONT’D)

Shit.

**17** He stands and jacks out the spent casing which jangles

against the rocks. He stoops for it and puts it in his shirt pocket.

This scene is clearly comprised of a number of subjective point of shots ostensibly through the lenses of the binoculars and telescopic sight (**1**, **2**, **5**, **11**, **13**, **16** and **17**, though the last could be composed as a long shot without recreating the view through the sight); a series of reverse, approximately medium shots of Moss watching the antelope and going through the firing process (**3**, **4**, **12**, and **17**, though **12** could debatably be subjective through the sight); and close ups of Moss’s preparations for, and firing of the shot (**6**, **7**, **8**, **9**, **10** and **14**, though there is an additional opportunity for a close-up or extreme close-up on the spent casing in **17**).

This design creates an establishing pattern based on the subject of the task in hand (the antelope, strictly ‘pronghorn’), the nature of the observer (the hunter, Moss), moving to close attention of the processes of concentration and firing, and then the end result for both the subject and for Moss. Here the entirety of that which the discourse is describing is translatable to real time, with possible exceptions for minor elisions between shots (between **9** and **10**, for instance, Moss may be observing the target for a time before addressing the trigger)

## 2.10: The Film

For the film version of the scene I will describe the individual shot compositions. In the absence of the storyboards it is not possible to analyse the transitional phase between the adapted screenplay and the film as released and no definitive conclusions can be made, therefore, about which changes were made at the time of filming either as creative decisions or to adapt to the environment and conditions of the filming process itself. Enumerations are once again my own, but directly represent the actual shots as edited.

**1** Subjective long shot view of antelope through telescopic sight (as evinced by presence of a reticule effect in the frame). Single animal centred.

**2** Reverse shot, extreme close-up on Moss sighting through the scope. He rolls his eye off.

**3** Extreme long shot, subjective view on grazing herd.

**4** Reverse, extreme close up rolling back onto sight. Adjusting range thumbwheel. “You hold still.”

**5** Subjective long shot through sight on single target.

**6** Medium shot of Moss preparing to fire, rifle resting on boot on rock, then firing.

**7** Subjective view of rifle shot through sight, bringing rifle back down from recoil. Arrival of bullet.

**8** Medium shot of Moss rising off sight and watching aftermath of rifle shot. “Shit.”

**9** Extreme long shot of herd fleeing into distance.

**10** Medium shot of Moss ejecting spent cartridge and looking for it on ground. (pans to keep him in shot)

**11** Close-up on Moss’s hand, retrieving spent cartridge.

**12** Close-up on Moss putting spent cartridge in shirt pocket.

**13** Medium shot of Moss collecting boot from rock.

The film then cuts to a new scene of Moss in the landscape, commencing with an extreme long shot of him to walking from the left of the screen. The entire sequence uses up 45 seconds of screen time and is exactly, or very close to being, synchronous with the amount of real time that would be required to undertake these activities. It is clear that the order of shots, with particular respect to the establishing shot through the telescopic sight, is different from the screenplay. Whether the establishing shot described in the adapted screenplay (of Moss squatting and observing the herd through the binoculars) was filmed and not used is unknown, although a shot of exactly this nature is used when he is observing the now dead ‘last man standing’ shortly afterwards, to see if it is safe to proceed. Whether this shot is the former ‘relocated’ is also unknown, though this is unlikely considering the differing terrains (a grassy plain, as opposed to a rocky outcrop). It is more likely that the image has been relocated, prior to filming, because it pre-exists as part of the repertoire of images of Moss in both the novel and adapted screenplay.

The information conveyed by all variants is very similar: the nature of the location; the nature of Moss; his reason for being there (which means he can find the money). The loneliness and remoteness of the setting are, of course, the reasons why the trade is set to take place there. It means that Moss has no initial competitors for the money. He has gone hunting, but come back with a different prize. In the earliest version Moss isn’t even given a name. He is just the ‘hunter’. All versions convey his procedural and professional application to the task in hand, and therefore aspects of his qualities as a human being, but the outcomes of the scene are at variance. In the original screenplay he shoots and misses, in the novel, script and film, he fires and wounds the antelope, in an echo of his own later wounding by Chigurh. Where *he* fails to follow up and finish the job, eventually he will be hunted down himself and finished off. Ultimately, regardless of his professionalism, Moss fails to achieve his goal in this scene, which becomes emblematic of his eventual failure to keep the money, keep his own life and even protect that of his wife.

The novel has greater scope to add information, but maintains the feed of action. The film adaptation has to forego this background to concentrate on visual cues, but has the advantage of the aural and adds the “You hold still” in an echo of Chigurh’s instruction to the doomed motorist in the prior scene: “Would you hold still please, sir.”, before he is dispatched (both lines are inventions of the Coen’s).

The essential information is basic to all versions and is, I suggest, delivered in similar ways that privilege the visual aspects of his actions, the continuity and development of the action, to effect this delivery. In my analysis of the possible and actual shot combinations to convey this information (Moss is hunting antelope; he sets himself up for the shot; he misses; he is in remote country and so is available to find the money) there is even a limited range in the number of shots required (original screenplay 19; novel 15; adapted screenplay 17; film 13). Though this may not be a particularly rigorous comparison, I believe it adds weight to the argument that the novel developed to reflect, and include, the possibility of its own adaptation during the process of production. To further this argument, the second scene I will look at has no counterpart in the original screenplay and appears first in the novel.

## 2.11: Chigurh’s opening scene

This is Chigurh’s opening scene in the novel, although the adapted screenplay and film pre-empts this with a scene in which Lamar’s deputy is arresting Chigurh and placing him in a patrol car. This is accompanied by a modified voiceover from Bell’s introductory monologue and serves as principle establishing material for the film, from broad landscapes resolving to specific characters. Chigurh’s features are never clear in this preparatory scene. He is seen from behind, occluded by the roof of the car or shaded in the interior. The reason for the arrest is lost in the adapted screenplay and the film, but related by Chigurh to Wells shortly before he kills him.

**The novel**

The deputy left Chigurh standing in the corner of the office with his hands cuffed behind him while he sat in the swivelchair and took off his hat and put his feet up and called Lamar on the mobile.

Just walked in the door. Sheriff he had some sort of thing on him like one of them oxygen tanks for emphysema or whatever. Then he had a hose that run down the inside of his sleeve and went to one of them stunguns like they use at the slaughterhouse. Yessir. Well that’s what it looks like. You can see it when you get in. Yessir. I got it covered. Yessir.

When he stood up out of the chair he swung the keys off his belt and opened the locked desk drawer to get the keys to the jail. He was slightly bent over when Chigurh squatted and scooted his manacled hands beneath him to the back of his knees. In the same motion he sat and rocked backward and passed the chain under his feet and then stood instantly and effortlessly. If it looked like a thing he’d practiced many times it was. He dropped his cuffed hands over the deputy’s head and leaped into the air and slammed both knees against the back of the deputy’s neck and hauled back on the chain.

They went to the floor. The deputy was trying to get his hands inside the chain but he could not. Chigurh lay there pulling back on the bracelets with his knees between his arms and his face averted. The deputy was flailing wildly and he’d begun to walk sideways over the floor in a circle, kicking over the wastebasket, kicking the chair across the room. He kicked shut the door and he wrapped the throwrug in a wad about them. He was gurgling and bleeding from the mouth. He was strangling on his own blood. Chigurh only hauled the harder. The nickelplated cuffs bit to the bone. The deputy’s right carotid artery burst and a jet of blood shot across the wall and ran down it. The deputy’s legs slowed and then stopped. He lay jerking. Then he stopped moving altogether. Chigurh lay breathing quietly, holding him. When he got up he took the keys from the deputy’s belt and released himself and put the deputy’s revolver in the waistband of his trousers and went into the bathroom.[[169]](#footnote-170)

Instead of suggesting specific shot types, my method here is to split the scene into segments which supply the discourse cues for mental representation of specific images or sequences of images. A combination of medium, medium close-up and various close-up shots could accomplish the transmission of this material in a variety of ways. The segments I have described I believe provide the best basis for considering how the scene might be divided into shots and shot sequences.

The scene as it runs is once again sequential and communicates continuous action except for one anomaly which I have underlined. This is knowledge that could, once again, be described as figural, but could also be categorised as ‘omniscient narration’. McCarthy occasionally here, and in other works, observes a ‘looseness’ of form or inconsistency in his management of point of view, occasionally slipping into first person unexpectedly during a third person passage (examples can be found in *Blood Meridian* [1985] and *The Road* [2006]). The underlined section invites readers to refocalise the representation of the narrative for a moment before returning to the sequentiality of the flow of action. It is asynchronous, in that it requires us to represent a former action or actions, but is brief enough to be passed over in favour of the dominant trajectory. Again, sections are numbered in bold numerals:

**1** The deputy left Chigurh standing in the corner of the office with his hands cuffed behind him while he sat in the swivelchair and took off his hat and put his feet up and called Lamar on the mobile.

Just walked in the door. Sheriff he had some sort of thing on him like one of them oxygen tanks for emphysema or whatever. Then he had a hose that run down the inside of his sleeve and went to one of them stunguns like they use at the slaughterhouse. Yessir. Well that’s what it looks like. You can see it when you get in. Yessir. I got it covered. Yessir.

**2** When he stood up out of the chair he swung the keys off his belt and opened the locked desk drawer to get the keys to the jail. He was slightly bent over when…

**3** Chigurh squatted and scooted his manacled hands beneath him to the back of his knees. In the same motion he sat and rocked backward and passed the chain under his feet and then stood instantly and effortlessly. If it looked like a thing he’d practiced many times it was. He dropped his cuffed hands over the deputy’s head and leaped into the air and slammed both knees against the back of the deputy’s neck and hauled back on the chain.

**4** They went to the floor.

**5** The deputy was trying to get his hands inside the chain but he could not. Chigurh lay there pulling back on the bracelets with his knees between his arms and his face averted. The deputy was flailing wildly and he’d begun to walk sideways over the floor in a circle, kicking over the wastebasket, kicking the chair across the room. He kicked shut the door and he wrapped the throwrug in a wad about them.

**6** He was gurgling and bleeding from the mouth. He was strangling on his own blood. Chigurh only hauled the harder.

**7** The nickelplated cuffs bit to the bone. The deputy’s right carotid artery burst and a jet of blood…

**8**  shot across the wall and ran down it.

**9** The deputy’s legs slowed and then stopped. He lay jerking. Then he stopped moving altogether. Chigurh lay breathing quietly, holding him.

**10** When he got up he took the keys from the deputy’s belt and released himself and put the deputy’s revolver in the waistband of his trousers and…

**11** went into the bathroom.

Some of these changes occur at McCarthy’s paragraph breaks; others in between. There might be other ways to segment, depending on how readers represent the images and actions in their imaginations, and there is certainly the possibility of greater granularity (and hence more subdivisions) but, at a normal rate of reading, on a broadly deictic basis considering the placement of a putative origo, this segmentation should serve for the purposes of this analysis.

I will move straight onto the adapted screenplay as a comparison.

**Adapted screenplay**

Numbers in bold are my enumerations of shots or shot combinations suggested to me by the discourse:

4 INT. SHERIFF LAMAR’S OFFICE - DAY

THE DEPUTY

**1** Seated in the sheriff’s office, on the phone.

The prisoner stands in the background. Focus is too soft for us to see his features, but his posture shows that his arms are still behind his back.

DEPUTY

Yessir, just walked in the door.

Sheriff he had some sort of thing on

him like one of them oxygen tanks for

emphysema or somethin’. And a hose

from it run down his sleeve...

Behind him we see the prisoner seat himself on the floor

without making a sound and scoot his manacled hands out under his legs. Hands in front of him now, he stands.

DEPUTY (CONT’D)

...Well you got me, sir. You can see

It when you get in...

The prisoner approaches. As he nears the deputy’s back he

grows sharper but begins to crop out the top of the frame.

DEPUTY (CONT’D)

...Yessir I got it covered.

As the deputy reaches forward to hang up, the prisoner is

raising his hands out of the frame just behind him. The manacled hands drop back into frame in front of the deputy’s throat and jerk back and up.

**2** Wider: the prisoner’s momentum brings both men crashing

backward to the floor, face up, deputy on top.

**3** The deputy reaches up to try to get his hands under the

strangling chain.

The prisoner brings pressure. His wrists whiten around the manacles.

**4** The deputy’s legs writhe and stamp. He moves in a clumsy

circle, crabbing around the pivot-point of the other man’s back arched against the floor.

**5** The deputy’s flailing legs kick over a wastebasket, send

spinning the castored chair, slam at the desk.

**6** Blood creeps around the friction points where the cuffs bite the prisoner’s wrists. Blood is being spit by the deputy.

The prisoner feels with his thumb at the deputy’s neck and averts his own face. A yank on the chain ruptures the

carotid artery. It jets blood.

**7** The blood hits the office wall, drumming hollowly.

This version loses the foray into the desk for the keys to the jail and the presence of the throwrug. **1** is clearly intended to be a single take relatively close on the deputy and probably foregrounded (to create a centre of interest around him so that the fatal threat will approach from the outside, in this case behind, and move inwards).

**Film**

For the film version I will describe the individual shots briefly from the onset of the scene to its conclusion:

**1** Frontal medium close-up on deputy sitting at desk on telephone (dialogue), with Chigurh seated in background (out of focus), slow zoom in towards deputy’s face. Continues… Chigurh squats in background and stands with hands now in front of him, approaches deputy from behind. His head is cropped out of the top of the shot, which continues to zoom. Exactly at the moment that the deputy puts the phone down, Chigurh passes the chain of the manacles over his head to his neck. Cut to…

**2** Rear view of action, medium shot from slightly below, the ensuing struggle, Chigurh brings the deputy down onto the floor with him. Cut to…

**3** Low angle shot, side view, close-up, the deputy’s head centre of frame. Deputy writhes towards camera and then away. Cut to…

**4** Low angle shot of writhing legs along axis from feet. Cut back to…

**5** Low angle side view on Chigurh’s head. Cut to…

**6** Top view, extreme close-up on deputy’s neck as he tries to get his hands behind the chain. Cut back to…

**7** Low angle side view on Chigurh’s head. Cut back to…

**8** Previous top view. Cut to…

**9** Medium close-up oblique view from above. This is the first time we see Chigurh’s face (grinning manically with the effort). The camera rotates to keep Chigurh in the view; his face passes across the frame to top left, with the deputy moving out of the frame. Cut back to…

**10** Low angle shot of writhing legs, partially rotated out of view, they rotate back to the centre of the frame. Cut to…

**11** Close-up oblique view from above, Chigurh’s face top right of frame, deputy’s face passes through frame, blood jets from his neck. Cut to…

**12** Low angle side view close up on Chigurh’s head, left side as he averts his face towards the camera (and away from the blood). Cut to…

**13** Medium close-up, blood spurting from the deputy’s neck, writhes to left of frame, then across frame to the right, camera panning to keep Chigurh’s face in the frame. Cut back to…

**14** Low angle shot of legs along axis from feet. Deputy’s final kicks. Cut back to…

**15** Low angle side view of Chigurh’s head, still averted (probably a continuation of the previous similar shot). Chigurh’s expression relaxes. Cut to…

Close-up overhead view of sink, signalling end of sequence.

Total running time is around 57 seconds. The elaborations of the kicking of the furniture are lost in the film, as is the shot of the blood hitting the wall. As per the description, there is a high degree of intercutting which helps to enhance the pace and visceral impact of the scene. The quick succession of shots in the edit move the viewpoint around the action to foreground specific elements currently germane to the development of storyline: the information in the deputy’s phone call to Lamar; his ignorance of the threat of Chigurh; Chigurh’s facility in overcoming the hindrance of the handcuffs and using them as a weapon; the fact that it’s a violent struggle; that it’s a violent struggle to the death; the manner of the death; indicators of Chigurh’s character as a ruthless and effective killer (with particular reference to his peculiarly deranged demeanour and resolution in bringing the action to its conclusion). With provisos for the omitted parts, the details of the flow of action are almost exactly the same as in the original novel. To help illustrate this, below is a list mapping the shots from the film onto my numbered segmentation. Each shot corresponds to image-generating material in the discourse of the novel:

Novel Segment Film Shot

1. **1**
2. **Not used**
3. **1**
4. **2**
5. **3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10**
6. **8**
7. **11,12,13**
8. **Not used**
9. **14,15**

All of the material in the film corresponds to material in the novel, with exceptions for the excised parts of the latter (‘Not used’). The correlation is disturbed by the marked intercutting in the film and, of course, they are ultimately different media and deliver their discourse information in different ways (the film, for instance, affords us the knowledge that the murder of the deputy is taking place at 3pm, shown on a clock in the sheriff’s office).

In a somewhat unscientific experiment, for curiosity, I timed a small number of readers to see how long it took them to read the text of this scene in the novel. They were asked to read to themselves at a normal pace until the end of the section indicated by a dart symbol in the margin and then tell me that they had finished. I included myself in this as the likely shortest reading time (having recently typed the section out and having, of course, studied it extensively) and came up with a time of 62 seconds. The three other participants recorded times of 76, 77 and 112 seconds. All readings were done individually without the presence of the other participants and without foreknowledge of the other results. While hardly definitive, and taking into account those elements from the novel missing from the adapted screenplay and the film, this gives rise to the intriguing possibility that the scene in the book can be read in real time to correspond to the running time of the scene in the film, that one can almost read the actions in the novel at the frequency they appear on the screen. Because of this factor, plus the sequentiality of the description of action in the prose I suggest that McCarthy’s writing forms a prototype for its own adaptation to the screen and that this adaptation is essentially no more than straightforward. Even with the Coen brothers’ well-practiced and preferred methods of shot sequencing and editing, the general flow and representation of the discourse reflects the frequencies of the flow of discourse in the novel to a very high level of verisimilitude. How is this possible?

## 2.12: Conclusions

If McCarthy was aware, at the outset of adapting his ‘bottom drawer’ screenplay into a novel, that its film rights were going to acquired and acted upon, then there is the possibility that this is a ‘film novel’ a discourse that exists primarily to inform its film adaptation. It is clear from the above analysis of just a couple of scenes that the sequentiality and rhythm of the prose lends itself to forming a flow of images that is easily transalatable or, indeed, easily possible to visualise in filmic ways. When Moss returns to his truck after finding the money, McCarthy again deploys a discourse strategy that privileges this type of treatment:

He opened the door and stood the rifle on the floor. He went around and opened the driver door and pushed the lever and slid the seat forward and set the case and the machine-pistol behind it. He laid the .45 and the binoculars in the seat and climbed in and pushed the seat back as far as it would go and put the key in the ignition. Then he took off his hat and leaned back and just rested his head against the cold glass behind him and closed his eyes.[[170]](#footnote-171)

The amount of detail and the exactness of the sequencing would seem to be unnecessarily elaborate for the information being communicated. Why not say, simply, ‘Moss loaded the truck and sat for a moment cooling his head on the glass of the rear window.’ or ‘Moss finally got back to his truck and sat and thought about what had just happened, what was going to happen.’? McCarthy has already entered Moss’s consciousness on a number of occasions, so why the detailed stage directions? This small scene is also new to the novel. In the original screenplay the action jumps from Moss finding the money to testing one of the hundred dollar bills at a grocers (**16** and **17** in my segmentation) and yet this scene has as much visual resonance, if not drama, as some of the more exactingly cinematic instructions in the original screenplay (Moss changing into fourth gear at 130MPH in his supercharged Nova): ‘Two jets of red raw flame burn from the tailpipes behind him’ (segment **119**). And this scene in the novel is not unique. Much of the prose demonstrates this filmic sequentiality. Yet there are elements that are clearly novelistic. Any adaptation that included all of Bell’s monologues would either be overlong to dramatise his anecdotes or tend to drag somewhat through the exposition, leaving off the action while he treats us to his personal history and philosophy, presumably over some more scenic footage (or both, if such an adaptation was verbatim).

Perhaps this filmic tendency is in the nature of McCarthy’s writing in general, as Sarah L. Spurgeon argues:

McCarthy’s work also shows the strong influence of film as a narrative form. His novels are laced with an intertextuality that references both the scene structure and visual quality of film (where, generally, lacking an omniscient narrator, we must infer a character’s inner thoughts from his or her actions, as is the case in nearly all of McCarthy’s published work), with nods to various directors and famous scenes, as well as other novelists and their works.[[171]](#footnote-172)

Spurgeon doesn’t elaborate on any specific intertexts, but in the many scenes in which the riders of McCarthy’s *Blood Meridian* are backdropped by thunderstorms, it’s easy to see the echo of John Ford’s column of cavalry riding through Monument Valley in an electrical storm in *She Wore a Yellow Ribbon* (1949). The Coen brothers also detect hints of ‘cross-pollination’: when Moss first returns to Carla Jean in the trailer, she is watching the film *Flight to Tangier* (1953, dir. by Charles Marquis Warren), a cold war adventure in which various parties pursue three million dollars in cash which has gone missing along with its courier.

McCarthy is certainly intertextual with himself. As I’ve said, he has a tendency to recycle scenes he likes, rather than discarding them, and he returns to similar material in all of his later works: fate; the inevitability of death; the nature of hard environments and the people that inhabit them; often doomed characters and their nemeses (Chigurh in *No Country for Old Men*; Judge Holden in *Blood Meridian*).[[172]](#footnote-173) McCarthy is also notorious for pursuing more than one project at a time. Work on the original screenplay of *No Country for Old Men* seems to closely follow or partly overlap the five years it took to complete *Blood* Meridian; the novel version of the former seems to be followed closely by his post-apocalyptic novel *The Road* (2006), also adapted into a film version.[[173]](#footnote-174) He is also flexible in his choice of media: operating with the economies of script writing directly after the five years of *Blood Meridian* (allegedly reading 300 books for research) may have seemed like light relief. Certainly the next published work was formulated as a screenplay (*Cities of the Plain*), before being developed into the thematically themed ‘Border Trilogy’ of novels (*All the Pretty Horses*, 1992; *The Crossing*, 1994; *Cities of the Plain*, 1998). This period also sees the production of two plays: *The Stonemason* (1995) and *The Sunset Limited* (2006). With the stage production and publication of the latter coinciding with that of *The Road*, and its subtitle (‘A Novel in Dramatic Form’), it is clear that, for McCarthy, the distinctions between (and creative decisions about which) the eventual medium of transmission of different elements of his oeuvre will be are neither clear cut nor necessarily discrete. It is apparent that his dialogue will serve for page, stage and screen, and much of his description of location, character and action will translate across media. Where his descriptive prose in the original screenplay for no *Country for Old Men* may be said to be novelistic, its counterpart in the novel may be thought of as filmic. Where the latter is known to be destined to become a film, the former is not, yet both the potential film and the actual one based on the novel have their genesis in written documents from the same hand.

In his introduction to *No Country for Old Men: From Novel to Film*, Rick Wallach attempts to pin down the essential filmic resonances of McCarthy’s prose:

Aside from McCarthy’s dramatic texts, any number of critical studies and reviews regard his novels – in their scenaristic grandeur, intricate descriptions of places and settings, and schematized melodramatic excesses – as “cinematic”. How so? Certainly his descriptions of terrain are carefully plotted to enhance the reader’s visualization of the landscape.[[174]](#footnote-175)

He follows this with one of the more baroque descriptive passages from *Blood Meridian* (of which there are many) and later with a more specific assessment of *No Country for Old M*en:

Indeed, much of the text of *No Country for Old Men* has a cinematic, rather than strictly literary, quality. Of its two dominant narrative voices – that of the third-person narrator of the “action” passages and the interior monologues of Sheriff Bell – the former, albeit flatter and more formal, is distinctly eidetic, or visual. Thus, the eidetic form is ideally suited to an intertextuality more cinematic than literary.[[175]](#footnote-176)

This might suggest a deliberate and considered effort on McCarthy’s part to pursue these cinematic policies in his writing and/or that this is simply sometimes the way that these things come out (which I will discuss shortly).

Regardless of intent, any film adaptation is a production by committee. Notwithstanding that there are two Coen brothers involved in the production process, the relative independence of stylistic value in their films, and that they produced the adapted screenplay themselves, there are also inputs from those with financial interests, those engaged in production processes from storyboarding, design, acquisition of props and costuming, location scouts, cinematographers, lighting, sound, incidental music (amongst others) and, of course, the personal contributions from the actors playing the parts. Where the most responsibility for the product is vested in the director (directors here), there is nevertheless some variation, compromise and conformance to realities necessary to the completion of any film. Yet the Coens, in their long history of collaboration, have managed to maintain something of a consistency of form particularly in the visual aspect of their productions, not always to everyone’s taste:

What makes the Coen’s body of work feel so alarmingly coherent is their monotonous syntax, the sense that any given film has been fed through some hitherto unknown image/sound processor, which pre-sets for shot duration, centered framing, emotional tone and visual handsomeness [ …] You can set your watch by their remarkably uniform editing rhythm, which features a percussive yet deadpan one-two combination: probably intended to surprise, it’s become as predictable as the rising sun.[[176]](#footnote-177)

This then begs the question about whether there is some kind of ‘Coenisation’ at work in their restructuring at a discourse level. It might be that there is a particular artistic aesthetic at work or a variant of one of Bordwell’s styles of narration. Of these, one might deduce a possible combination of Classical Hollywood and Art Cinema, though, in the case of the Coens’ highly identifiable stylistic tics (at times), their work might be a candidate for most uncommon of his modes: Parametric Narration. In this version, the discourse style, its parameters, are so peculiar to the director that the story becomes dominated by the style of the discourse: ‘Ozu, Bresson, and other directors possess virtually preexistent stylistic systems which can reduce almost any subject to their own terms.’ (Bordwell, *Narration in the Fiction Film*, p. 285). With experience, one can generally tell a Coen film from those of others, even with their forays into *film noir* pastiche (*The Man Who Wasn’t There*) and screwball comedy (*Intolerable Cruelty*).[[177]](#footnote-178) Even so, I don’t think that this is of paramount importance to the questions of structure addressed here. If they decide on certain shot constructions, they are still, in some measure, informed by the visual management of the source text, if that text has particularly overt visual qualities. The style affects elements of the surface, but the structural influence remains and the subject reflects its origin inasmuch as it can, transferred as it is across media. In any case, I would suggest that much of what characterises the framing elements of their style and the consistency between films is to do with the Coens’ dominant aesthetic, realised through their long-time collaborations. In an interview with Roger Deakins, Lynnea Chapman King asks *No Country’s* cinematographer about the shooting process:

**LCK**: Did you read the Cormac McCarthy novel prior to production? How did your reading of the text affect your perspective of the film?

**RD**:I read the book before it was published. Joel told me they were adapting it and would, maybe, direct the film. I like Cormac McCarthy’s writing, and I was very keen to shoot anything based on his work and especially so with Joel and Ethan attached. I don’t know how that “changed my perspective” at all. The script is close to the book. The book certainly gave me ideas about the visuals, but when you are shooting a film it is the director who is most influential in the way you see something. It is first and foremost the director’s interpretation of a story you are helping bring to life.[[178]](#footnote-179)

He makes a few comments about the evocation of landscape in the novel in answer to a query on locations before Chapman follows up with a subsidiary question:

**LCK**: The Coen brothers’ approach to storyboarding is well documented; were there any significant spontaneous moments you would like to share, instances in which the film departed from the storyboards?

**RD**: The storyboards are continually developed as we prep a film and usually incorporate what the locations have to offer by the time we get to shooting. There were some spontaneous changes to the storyboards based on the light and so on, but not many. Quite often we shoot fewer shots than are boarded as we see how one shot can work for more than might have been intended. We played a shot between the two sheriffs in a different shot to the ones boarded. [ … ] I think that if and when something changes it is, most often, to connect or simplify the coverage.[[179]](#footnote-180)

So, even if there is co-operation and flexibility in the arrangements of the filming process, there is also a distinct directorial management with a specific view on the nature and composition of the shots in a pre-imagined and systematically considered fashion. In regard to the Kent Jones quote on ‘monotonous syntax’, one could respond that the Coen’s vision for *No Country for Old Men* somewhat counteracts their previous editing strategy, particularly for a more leisurely and reserved presentation that, the excitement of the more kinetic action scenes apart, is a new development in their repertoire of cinematic techniques. If this is so, then might it not be, in this, their first adaptation, that the film ‘syntax’ has been influenced by the rhythms and patterns of McCarthy’s prose in the novel? Any adaptation from a novelistic source starts first of all with representational models cued by its discourse in the mind of the adapting reader (even if that reader is providing a treatment for someone else to convert into a screenplay). In this case, where both directors and cinematographer have early access to the discourse of the novel, then this must be the primary source document and basis of primary representation, where in the Coen’s earlier work, the primary representation takes place in their minds during the production process. Representation leads to document, where here document leads to representation and then to further documents in adaptation. If so, then I suggest that the trajectories of image, frequency, rhythm and change are primarily McCarthy’s, filtered through adaptation, and not the Coens’ initialised through mental representation and filtered through documents (their original screenplays, storyboarding, production decisions etc.).

So, what are the qualities that make Cormac McCarthy’s prose in his novel *No Country for Old Men* filmic? I’m not sure that there can be a definitive answer to quantify this empirically, but I have argued above that there is much in the visual evocations of his language, the kinds of representations that are formed and the way that these are delivered sequentially that is informed by film. The very genesis of the project was to provide the source material for a motion picture and even the novel version has discourse elements that provide not only detailed cues for composing these shots, but do so in a way that makes such mental representations of shots straightforward and, often, the easiest solution for readers mapping image schemata onto them.[[180]](#footnote-181) I suggest that this is because that is exactly what McCarthy is doing during his production process. While not every element in such fictional prose necessarily gives rise to image schemata (as stated, in the case of some varieties of indirect discourse, the delivery of sentiment etc.), much of description of character, location, action and mise-en-scène is highly liable to this, precisely because film has such an influence on the very way we mentally represent certain categories of visual and kinetic material that we know best from filmic examples. ‘He raised the glasses. One of the animals had dropped back and was packing a leg…’ from the novel is just as filmic in its own way as ‘Two jets of red raw flame burn from the tailpipes behind him’ from the original screenplay. I will discuss the nature of this representation more fully in my overall conclusion, but to finish here I will describe how this mechanism operates in examples from my own production processes.

This is from my accompanying novel *Jacks*, and shows the transition between the fourth and fifth chapters:

‘My advice would be to get the gable end sorted out, it’s unstable, reroof the lot, repoint where the damp is, make the whole lot watertight and sit on it ‘til the market picks up. Get on with one of your other jobs.’

Carl gave it a moment. ‘Be all right, with what I paid for them. I’ll get the interiors stripped out.’

‘They’re lath and plaster. You need to take it right back to the brick. It’ll be a hell of a mess for anyone that has to do that.’

‘It’s all right,’ said Carl, ‘I know just the boys.’

**ROLLIN’**

Danny sat on the garden wall and watched Rod and Mike roll out the last bit of tarmac. A hundred and forty quid each, a hundred and seventy for him for sorting out the deal and a few notes to the wagon driver for diverting some of the load. It was sweet too, just a small drive. Five hundred quid for no outlay: nothing sweeter than a foreigner.

The end of the previous chapter, BRICKS AND MORTAR, sees the employer, Carl, visiting a dilapidated terrace he owns to hear an assessment from a surveyor on what major work he thinks is required to renovate the houses to a saleable state. The following chapter, ROLLIN’, introduces his employee Danny for the first time, engaged with his team in laying out some tarmac that they have essentially stolen from Carl in order to make some money on the side.

During the writing process, paying particular attention to the structural aspects of pacing the beginning of the novel, I decided that the introduction of Danny should be moved from its incorporation in an earlier chapter that changed point of view between several different characters to its own chapter, exclusively from his point of view.[[181]](#footnote-182) I considered that this would create a better introductory profile that allowed a more satisfactory rhythm to the changes of viewpoint between the three other main characters in the earlier chapters, and offer a less ‘congested’ route through the discourse. The Danny tarmac material was produced very early in the writing process; the BRICKS AND MORTAR chapter later. The nature of the transition, and the fact that this is establishing material for the Danny character, directly informed the writing of the end of the previous chapter, which was always visualised as a ‘cut’ from Carl, talking about who he was going to set on to the unpleasant job, to the central character who was going to undertake the task. My transitional material then becomes a written version of this filmic cut in an attempt to manage the discourse in a way that I think creates the best impact and economically engenders rapid judgements in the reader regarding how the relationship between Carl and Danny works, and to set up potentialities for conflict and drama in the ensuing chapters.

Of course, the idea of the film editing cut cannot directly be replicated by the language of the novel, and a cut in a film version (particularly with a brief moment of black screen) would have greater impact, but the point here is that I had mentally represented this transition intrinsically as a cut at the earliest conscious stage of production.

Here is a short extract from my young adult novel *Climbers*. The setting is a future Britain largely depopulated and covered in forest. The central character, Japh, is injured in a remote area and the itinerant vendor, to whom he has been apprenticed, Carter, has detached the trailer of their electric-powered delivery vehicle and is speeding the cab unit towards aid:

The wheels splashed through the water and threw around the stones. A tight bend took them steeply up, between two giant rocks. The wheels skidded and took purchase and skidded again. They began to slip back. Carter grunted and flipped over caps on top of the levers. What was this? The caps revealed buttons. Carter pressed the buttons and pushed the levers forward to their endstops. The motor shouted at them, the wheels spun on the track, then bit, and they shot up the rise and onto a straight stretch.

The genesis of this passage, and the material leading up to it, was always based on the visualisation of a camera shot. A long shot of the cab speeding uphill into a hairpin would cut to a close-up from road level at the side of the track at the apex of the bend. As the wheels slipped, spun and regained grip under the application of the emergency power, stones from the track would spit out towards the camera, emphasising the energy, dynamism and jeopardy of the sequence. [[182]](#footnote-183) All the prior description of the headlong journey is predicated on getting to this image, even though it is not explicitly described in the text, leading eventually to a consequential establishing image showing the inhabitants of High Camp, visualised as a subjective long shot from the cab, of the ‘campers’ coming into view, followed by high level panning shot at long distance to encompass all of them from a separate viewpoint, then a return to a subjective shot, close-up, of Carter, before returning to the villagers:

They rose up a round knoll. Carter brought the cab to a halt and released the levers. The change brought Japh back to the world. He shuffled around in his seat to look. Ranged around the hillside, across the track, were dozens of figures. The long shafts of their glaives stood upright in rows, the long steel blades at their tips catching the late sun. The faces stared expressionlessly into the cab. No one moved. Carter breathed in through his nose and out, slowly. He looked at Japh. Still no movement from the figures.

Much, if not all, of the descriptive material in my work is developed in this way. New chapters or introductions of characters or places are conceived specifically along the lines of establishing shots in cinema. The same goes for the management of action scenes and exchanges of dialogue, sometimes even vistas being viewed by characters, as if the shots are being visualised at a remove, focalised from the new origo of the created character. Why this methodology is so fundamental to my creative process is something I will try to describe in my overall conclusion, but I suggest that, because it is evident in my own processes, I believe it is evident in those of Cormac McCarthy. I can re-represent the shot of the spinning wheels in my novel *Climbers* easily, partly because it is at the heart of the generating processes of production but also, some years after the writing, because the cue for mentally representing the shot is there in the text. I only have to read the short passage where Japh sees the ‘Campers’ for the first time from the cab to recreate the shot in my head. I believe that McCarthy is also doing this, and not always because he is anticipating the film adaptation. As writers we are also viewers, so the influence of that viewing is present at the very point of production. McCarthy’s next published novel after *No Country for Old Men* is *The Road*, which was itself adapted into a film (2009). The novel’s episodic structure, without chapter divisions, and a kind of ‘voiceover’ method of narration seems even better suited to adaptation than *No Country for Old Men*, and its film adaptation is able to recreate this with just a few changes and omissions (though some critics have claimed that its impact is compromised in comparison to its Pullitzer Prize winning source by the excision of some of the most harrowing post-apocalyptic horrors).

In 2013, more than twenty-five years after completing his screenplay for *No Country for Old Men*, Ridley Scott releases a film *The Counselor*, based on a McCarthy script. This is not his first produced screenplay (ref. *The Gardener’s Son*, 1976), but could be seen to vindicate his efforts in writing specifically for the screen. To the question of whether *No Country for Old Men* is a film novel, a prototype that exists principally to inform its own adaptation, I think the answer is probably ‘no’. Even if the film rights were secured before the book was finished, I believe that McCarthy is most interested in creating a work that stands up successfully in its own medium. That its genesis is in a bottom-drawer screenplay completed nearly two decades earlier certainly informs the novel in a way that means that parts of it can persist at the level of shot right through to the finished film, but this is not the only factor at work here. *The Road* which, as far as I am aware, was conceived as a novel from the outset, is also structured in a way in which cues for specific shots and shot sequences that can be discerned at a discourse level. As I can see from my own production processes, ideas of the shot, editing and mise-en-scène drawn from film can operate as convenient resources for driving the mechanisms of representation that are the progenitors of written discourse. However, I would suggest that there is something even more fundamental going on here, on which I will expand in the overall conclusion to this thesis.

# Chapter 3,*Jacks*: The Novel; Narrative Tracking

## 3.1: Introduction

This chapter is perhaps a little more speculative in nature. In the first part I will explain and examine elements of my own creative processes in writing fictional narratives, from the inciting ideas and creative choices in composition to the strategies deployed in resolving works into their final structures. I will discuss some previous work for context, before concentrating on my novel *Jacks*, which forms a major component of this thesis submission. In the second part, I will briefly describe one model of how readers keep track of events when processing narratives and then respond with some of my own interim conclusions. Finally, I will consider the repercussions of narrative tracking models in comprehension and how these might relate to the processes of imagining and producing fictional texts, with particular reference to the production of my integrated creative project, *Jacks*.

## 3.2: Novel and reasoning

The original design for the novel derives from just a couple of principal thoughts or associations. In my case the work often finds its basis in quite broad conceptualisations that might be no more than a textural ‘tone’ or contextualised feeling. This is then explored imaginatively in terms of character, which is developed through placing the character(s) in an environment or scenario.[[183]](#footnote-184)

Sometimes the scenario comes first, which is the case with my aforementioned young adult novel, *Climbers*, set in a depopulated future Britain (more or less) completely covered in trees. Here the establishing ideas emerge from a personal history of numerous walks in Forestry Commission plantations such as Hamsterley (County Durham) and Grizedale (Cumbria), landscapes typically criss-crossed with wide tracks between the trees constructed to allow access for heavy machinery. The formative questions here are: ‘what would it be like if this environment just went on and on?’ and ‘what kind of conditions would be required for this to be the case?’ Usually, these ‘what if?’ questions lead to subsidiary or logically consequent questions which one can qualify as ‘if *so*, then *what*?’ Seeking answers to these questions provides material for composition. In the case of *Climbers*, upon deciding that this setup demanded a future-fictional setting, and that the action and proposed tone most suited a young adult target audience (reading age 12-18 years), it then seemed desirable to cast a young adult as the central character. Revealing this unfamiliar environment to readers would then result from the action of describing my main protagonist’s interaction with this environment. In time-honoured fashion, having the hero discover and react to new and unfamiliar aspects of this environment himself seemed a sensible way to proceed. In effect, the reader learns as the character learns. Having the character travel through the environment facilitates this type of observation and learning, so the answer to one of the ‘then what?’ questions is to set my character out on a journey, with the usual ramifications of an external journey through physical space and an internal journey through nascent knowledge and personal discovery. With this in mind, then all one needs is an inciting incident to initiate the journey and, possibly, a goal, although in this instance the journey itself is the goal: the hero has spent all his childhood years in the same locale, haunted by burning questions about his own origins and of the mysteries of the wider world and is looking for an excuse to go out and seek the answers. The two main options for the nature of the journey in my scenario were to simply set him adrift to see what happened or to furnish him with a guide or mentor. In the finished novel, in fact, there was opportunity to pursue both options.[[184]](#footnote-185)

As I have found with both myself and many of the writers with whom I’ve had contact, a single idea or scenario often isn’t quite enough to ‘carry’ a narrative of novel extent. One or more supporting or contrary ideas might be required to establish a dynamic which will provide potential for sufficient conflict, action, exposition etc. In my mind, some of the questions raised by the exigencies of this endless forest were: ‘what kinds of things can happen in it?’; ‘what threats are there (to provide obstacles for the characters which they may or may not be able to overcome)?’, and then, ‘what kinds of entities might be responsible for the threats?’ In answer to these, I made a connection between this basic ‘future forests’ proposal and a much older piece of short fiction I had written as part of a creative writing workshop task, in which a character is chased through woods and up a tree by unspecified pursuers, only to be surprised to learn that they can climb.

Both ideas existed independently for years before this connection was made, and it was only then that the project could commence, enabling both a right-of-passage narrative, with themes of coming-of-age and discovering the truth about oneself and one’s world (the ‘quest’), and a murder mystery, with elements of suspense and horror (‘there’s something in the woods’).

In other projects I have proceeded from a basis of expressing an emotional state of mind of a character. This is most true of my second and third novels, *The Route* and *Contracts*, where the (same) main protagonist is undergoing a personal crisis of identity and operating under a *nom de guerre*, initially for purposes of self-enrichment and escape from an actual self with whom he feels disappointed and disassociated and, later, to try and avoid the possibility recriminations. Though the circumstances of this personal disassociation are at first accidental, the maintenance of the deception becomes habitual and then necessary. Again, for the first book in this sequence (the second is a sequel), the framing narrative is a journey, basically a three day circular route, interleaving two backstories, one of the protagonist’s last few weeks at university in his early twenties and the other a history of the last couple of years of activity leading up to what is now apparently a final trip. John (whose real name is Ben) is involved in some kind of illegal trade delivering packages of something which he refers to only as ‘the stuff’ and has now reached a point in his life where he sees no future for himself and cares little whether he has one or not.[[185]](#footnote-186) Essentially, he has become so disappointed with everything that he is no longer bothered about continuing to live. In the sequel he is still alive, so that the narrative question becomes, ‘what happens to you after you’ve survived a point where you had no interest in surviving?’

These two novels, rather than being more scenario based, as with *Climbers*, might be considered to be adopting a mind-style approach, that is, that it’s the state of mind of the main protagonist is the presiding interest and catalyst for action as well as providing the sense of gist, even though these issues are framed in more conventional journey or crime-caper narratives. To effect what I felt might be the greatest impact on readers in this regard, at an early stage I decided to write in first-person, present tense to optimise the feeling of immediacy and presence, through this intimate mode of focalisation, and to maximise the type of ongoing tension concomitant with this style of treatment. This also restricts the discourse to the mind of the John/Ben character, to just what he can perceive, remember and imagine, adding to the sensation of being confined in the mind-set of the character and his troubled world picture.[[186]](#footnote-187) In fact, except for a present tense structural framework which tops and tails the narrative in *The Route*, the entire discourse is narrated by John in flashback (analepsis). The sequel is more predominantly present tense with some interleaved flashbacks (ostensibly to fill in the couple of years’ elapse between the time periods of the two novels and to explain why John has ended up living in flat above a motor house outside Motherwell engaged in another criminal enterprise owing to an accident of timing). Maintaining interest and momentum in this sequel, without the structural opportunities of an external journey to provide form, was the main creative challenge of this project (in the prosecution of which I may not have been sufficiently successful, though this may be for others to decide).

*Jacks* as a project may be considered conceptually from both structural and mindstyle viewpoints. Clearly, this is the case with all narrative discourses featuring characters in settings, that mental states are intrinsic, as are the settings in which those mental states manifest. Settings provide exigencies and events, to which mental states are subject; mental states are able to affect settings and other mental states through action. My argument here is simply to trace the predominant initialising considerations, essentially a set of mental states or mind styles made manifest in set of individual characters.

For *Jacks*, the initiating idea is particularly nebulous and derives from an apprehension that I’ve garnered from numerous newspaper articles and television news programmes, that perpetrators of crimes, terrorist atrocities or just personal misadventures often appear to be young men who have got some idea fixed in their heads which they will follow through regardless of the (sometimes obvious) consequences for themselves and others. They think it through, but they don’t necessarily think it through: the desirability of the goal excludes the possibility of a properly balanced prediction of the outcome. It’s an idea that I had already been thinking about in my third novel, *Contracts*, as John (Ben) narrates:

These are easy-going criminals [the gang with whom he is embroiled], not troubled by inconvenient notions of conscience. They’re not too hot on consequences either. I’ve wondered about this many times watching the news and reading the papers. These tragedies: a young woman abducted and raped, rotting in a ditch a month later. Doesn’t the perpetrator ever employ their imagination? An act like this adds nothing to anyone: a life is cut short, all its aspirations, history, present, future snatched away for nothing more than transient reasons; family, friends, acquaintances, their lives never quite the same again, always for the worse; the public purse suffers from the vast expense of investigating, prosecuting and accommodating the guilty in prison. Is the perpetrator better off? No, their quality of life has nosedived on every level from the minute to the global. I don’t care if you’re a sociopath or a psychopath, it’s not to do with an inability to empathise or overwhelming desires or whatever, if you can read or watch TV or listen to the radio, then you’ll have heard countless accounts of this sort of thing, turned over and analysed in the minutest detail. It’s simply a matter of imagination – take any one of these highly publicised scenarios, place yourself in the appropriate place in the picture and see how it would turn out for you. Then, when you’re ready to set out on your murder spree, don’t bother.[[187]](#footnote-188)

Added to this evocation of a particular mind-set or attitude is the second initiating concept, the structural. Driving down Whickam Bank one afternoon on the way to Gateshead (one can often remember the location and circumstances of such initiating ideas), a version of the song ‘Jack of Diamonds’ started playing on the radio (possibly the one recorded by Waylon Jennings as ‘Jack a Diamonds’). The exact wording of the lyric is unimportant, it’s the general idea of gambling and losing and not necessarily calculating the odds that has the resonance. There is the idea of playing cards and their values, particularly the jack or knave, with connotations of the ‘prince in waiting’ and the rogue or villain, the ‘jack-the-lad’, who has yet to prove himself, has yet to ‘arrive’.[[188]](#footnote-189)

Merging these two ideas creates an initiating concept of young men putting perhaps ill-conceived plans into motion, that there will be four of them (representing each of the jacks in a pack of cards) and that these four strands must intertwine or overlap in some way to unify the stories into a single novel. I would certainly concede that the structural conceit could be considered somewhat old fashioned, better suited perhaps to a project from the middle part of the twentieth century, but once the idea was established in my mind, it gave rise to enough ‘what if’s’ and ‘if so, what’s’ to give the impression that this idea would have sufficient potential to develop into a novel-length product. When the need arose to propose a novel as part of submission for a PhD looking at narrative structure, the complexity of this pitch seemed to provide the scope to demonstrate a variety of structural challenges and solutions and to (hopefully) advance my craft in managing an intrinsically problematic and demanding narrative discourse.

## 3.3: The challenges

With four main narrative strands, plus those of any subsidiary or supporting characters, maintaining momentum and interest for readers would require careful planning and execution. There was the possibility of providing the four narratives as sequential blocks, perhaps different viewpoints of the same set of events. There are numerous prior examples of this, including William Faulkner’s *The Sound and the Fury* (1931) and Kurosawa’s *Rashomon* (1950) – albeit the latter is framed within another narrative – and that this fact might permit some comparative criticism between my own and published work.[[189]](#footnote-190) However, I decided that my creative aims might best be served by interleaving the accounts and that this would provide the biggest challenge in maintaining the flow of discourse, particularly in respect of the cumulative pattern of the various strands managed into an overall macrostructure. There are also many examples of this, including Barbara Kingsolver’s *The Poisonwood Bible* (1998).[[190]](#footnote-191) In essence, the four main strands and supporting material in total has to form something of a narrative shape that will maintain a satisfactory pattern that exceeds the sum of its parts (otherwise the outcome would be overly episodic or, worse, something less than a novel).

In the case of sequential blocks of viewpoint, it may perhaps have been possible, with apposite establishing material at the onset of each block, to follow a first-person route but, with the interleaved plan, it seemed to me that there might have to be too much of this type of material, creating a repetitious or over-expository narration that would draw too much attention to its mechanisms of composition. So, with a likelihood of third-person point of view (second person would be an experiment too far in this context, as well as giving rise to the potential for ‘reflexive you’ first-person complications), there remained the decision of whether to narrate in so-called ‘omniscient’ third person or third-person figural. As I would be dealing with individuals who might be in some senses self-deluded, it seemed logical to treat them figurally, so that the reader is confined to what they are thinking and seeing and hearing (and can remember, imagine etc.) and that this would provide both an intimate portrayal of the central characters and obviate the possibility of overtly judgemental analysis by an omniscient narrator.

Thereafter, as a character-driven narrative, it became a matter of deciding upon identities, backgrounds, and (perhaps most decisively of all) the plans and ambitions of each of the four, which might then suggest what sort of person they were. Hearts and diamonds might hint at themes of love and money, but with both spades and clubs having their origins in weapons of war, some latitude was required in this respect. The eventual theme of the building trade was actually never meant to be a pun on ‘spades’, but derived from a desire to use some settings and scenarios from my personal employment history. Pairing two of the characters in the same trade reduced the number of locations and increased the potential for conflict through various machinations of power and resentment; making the other two close friends provided a contrast and the potential for conflict within the realm of care and support. Because all four strands needed to be related in some way, I placed the characters historically in the same school separated across three consecutive years, which also suggested possible backstory and thematic possibilities.

Nevertheless, the fundamental challenge, other than the standard one of making the material interesting and engaging, was to manage the switches between the strands, their duration, nature and cumulative effect upon the overall narrative progression. In the best theatrical tradition, action would commence, if not absolutely *in medias res*, then certainly when most of the preparatory situations had evolved and each of the strategies was about to come into play: accidentally, in the case of Julian, as a response to a perceived crisis (Carl) or as a result of long-held ambitions (Krite and Danny). Part of my rationale for discourse management was that the frequencies of change between viewpoint, and the nature of the material in the adjacent segments would, by necessity, have to provide the overall narrative cohesion and the cross-narrative pacing (including suspense, by ceasing a strand before a narrative arc was complete, and the effect of raising tension and relaxing it by sequencing active and more reactive scenes in alternation, until the moment came for sustained action building to the conclusion).[[191]](#footnote-192) As it happens, because I didn’t have a well-developed plan for this novel, creating this overall cohesion resulted in one or two forced compromises in marshalling the material into an acceptable form (for example, Carl has two adjacent scenes in which he loses his temper, which is not ideal, but became necessary when assembling the segments in a way that maintained the chronology). These compromises result from the creative process, in which the chapters weren’t written in sequence (as was the case with *Climbers*), but, with the exception of the first three and final four chapters, were composed as and when the ideas for their content came to me. In this process, nodes of known material were written to provide waypoints so that a modicum of overall form could be developed, which could then inform choices about what type of connective material might be required form subsections and, ultimately, a satisfactory macrostructural design. Whilst this strategy results in no small amount of effort, if not desperation, in imagining and producing material serving the simultaneous tasks of updating and maintaining the individual strand whilst contributing ‘seamlessly’ to the cohered narrative shape as a whole, it does at least facilitate the kinds of felicitous inspirational moments that can really add texture and impact to the writing (however occasional those moments of inspiration might be!).

Throughout this thesis I have provided segmentations of the subject texts in various forms, as encapsulated summations of their narrative contents. I have also segmented *Jacks* in a way that outlines what I think is the salient information or gist of the action for each of the chapters.[[192]](#footnote-193) This is part of my creative strategy. Any large scale task of production can be made more manageable by dividing it into smaller tasks with more immediately achievable goals.

In line with my other projects, a segmented plan has been useful in providing a shorthand overview of the narrative in macrostructural terms so that, to some extent, this structure can be accommodated and represented. Other writers use this technique, or variations thereof, perhaps pinning up patterns of written sheets around the room, each with brief scene descriptions, or creating diagrammatic ‘mind maps’ of interrelating connections and scenes. Vladimir Nabokov had his famous sequences of index cards; I tend to do brief summaries of chapters I have already written (I tend to write in chapter units, though my chapters are rarely very long). In a way, the form of the segmentation is immaterial, as long as it does its job in providing a representational template in a way that allows the mind to have some impression of the overall patterns. In my case, a tradition of writing first drafts in pencil for all my creative works resulted in a habit of composing varying series of ongoing handwritten segmentations. In the case of *Jacks*, I advanced to creating the segmentation series as Microsoft Word documents, the advantage here being that the format was easily editable, so that chapter segments could be shifted into new positions, items brought forward or delayed and any gaps in the narrative progressions made apparent. The possibility of easy ‘trial’ structures being creatable at will also meant that various structural possibilities could be understood and thought through before committing to work that might not end up in the final draft. Because of this flexibility, only four main working segmentations were required to work up the novel towards its final state.

At the very latest stages, with a few gaps of indeterminate size remaining, I physically laid out the typed and edited chapters in individual piles in the current working sequence, using the segmentation as a guide. Here the brief chapter summaries and ordering of the segmentation form both a plan for the physical layout and a mental model of the overall structure embodied in the spread-out piles of paper. The physical, visual pattern, with its actual gaps between existing chapters, also performs the task of demonstrating where gaps in the mental model of the discourse occur and, thus, leads to ideas about what kinds of solutions are required to fill those gaps.

Several of these trial layouts took place, eventually evolving into what seemed to be a viable scheme, and notes made on a printout of the latest segmentation to describe or suggest additional material that would need to be produced.[[193]](#footnote-194)

I suggest, then, that, as with segmentation, there is something in this physical laying out that creates a template or embodied pattern that can be recalled and mentally represented from memory (if it is not actually laid out at the time) and that a mental negotiation between this and its effects on the revised segmentation itself can dramatically improve the effectiveness of the writer during the process of production. In my experience, the success of a sustained work of fiction, in all media, (I reiterate my definition here that success is an outcome in which the finished communicates something of what it has been designed to communicate) will often hinge on the satisfactory nature of its overall structure, with reference to cohesion, momentum, interest and logical progression (with provisos for any of these that have been subverted as part of the creative design). Some writers will have an exact plan before they start, others might write hundreds of thousands of words and then rewrite and edit until they develop a final form. Regardless of technique, it is apparent to me that, at some point in the process, an impression of the entirety of the structure must be apprehendable to the cognitive processes in order to make possible this satisfactory form. Failure to do so would seem to result in an unsatisfactory product, at best, or delays or, indeed, the abandonment of the entire project (as has happened to me on more than one occasion).

Because the design of *Jacks* was, from the outset, supposed to have some measure of integration with a thesis concerning itself with matters of structure, and of this suspected cross-pollination between film and written fiction, it seemed necessary to include structural elements that might provide exempla for some of the theoretical arguments; also, to foreground certain aspects of creative processes to somehow connect the worlds of creative writing and film production in an overt form. This is one reason why I established Julian as a filmmaker and script writer, in a way which allows me to reference those creative processes (albeit through the avatar of a fictional character I have created myself) and to describe some of the constructive methodology of film production at a basic (basically amateur) level. In a sense, the ‘existential detective film’ that Julian is creating to fill a void in his life and give an impression of personal advancement in the absence of actual career development, becomes also an analogue of my own creative processes as writer and a streamlined account of the way in which film is designed, shot and assembled. In terms of writing, then, the two metafictional ‘reversions’ to film-script format (at the beginnings of chapters THE BRIDGE and SMOKES) are intended to momentarily interrupt the expected progression and draw specific attention to both the methodology of designing shot, setting and content, and to demonstrate continuities between filmic and written fictional modes and, also, possible discontinuities between them. In THE BRIDGE, the way the scene is described could be the way that Julian would script it, or perhaps the way in which a part of him is seeing the scene now, in a writerly way that is both immersed in the action and also apart from it.[[194]](#footnote-195) In SMOKES, the script section serves purpose as both the apparent, actual piece of writing that Julian has composed and that he has just filmed Krite enacting, and as a counterpoint to a section of discourse later in the narrative: the script version delivers the idealised white-knight detective going about his business in stereotypical Hollywood terms; the parallel account in CLUBS shows more the reality of Krite’s experience apparently coming back from the murder (although the drawing out of the hidden object in the script version more exactly echoes the drawing out of the nail bar when he would be *arriving* at Raymond’s – the two accounts have exchangeable components). Both accounts are, of course, fictional.

The idea of the possibilities, of editing and reconstruction, are also underlined by Julian at the end of the novel. As much as the novel has been assembled from a series of chapters, of scenes which have been created, selected and ordered in an attempt to create a certain effect, the storyworld of Krite can be evidenced in different ways according to how Julian selects and orientates his material. As he says:

‘I have hundreds of hours of footage going back years. I have countless images of him, sequences, conversations, background. I can make it what I want, I can edit it to tell the story of my friend and his quest to find what he had to do. I can make it a character study and documentary and narrative and take complete control of how it works out. It starts with a murder and ends with a killing and everything in between is the hows and whys and characteristics, fears and desires of my featured subject, Krite. With all the publicity, and there will be more when the trial comes up, national, international maybe, it would be easy to sell. It wouldn’t be hard to *make*, but should I?’[[195]](#footnote-196)

By drawing attention to the possibilities of the fictional narratives, I attempt to create a situation where the reader ‘pops up’ from an embedded text-world level to a discourse world level, in which the operations of the writer are brought into question (and is, hence, a metafictional or metaleptic effect). In essence, I can make the discourse evidence, by selection, do what I want to effect the apprehension or modelling of the storyworld and thus foreground that in a way which helps to link ideas of the created world of the novel with one of the theoretical investigations of the thesis: how narrative discourse is managed for effect in both the written and audio-visual. Segment ordering, gist management within the segment and cumulative management in ways that develop the desired macromeanings are the currency of narrative and, I suggest, of paramount interest to producers of narrative.[[196]](#footnote-197) Cumulative and ongoing management of meanings and conclusions is crucial to effective composition and an idea of how one’s text is likely to be received, to be processed and understood must provide advantages to that composition (if not, indeed, be somewhat essential).

## 3.4: Tracking in Narrative

To develop this theme, I will now provide a brief description of Catherine Emmott’s conception of the cognitive processes undertaken by readers during the reception of texts, from her 1997 work *Narrative Comprehension: A Discourse Perspective*.[[197]](#footnote-198) In this model, she uses the idea of ‘contextual frames’. These are narrative units, perhaps analogous to scenes, in which individual entities or sets of entities are present in various ways (‘contextually connected’). As the entities come and go, and locations change, these frames have to be updated or replaced in a process of ‘contextual monitoring’, in a similar way to how we keep track of who is present in our everyday lives: so, who is here now; who has just come in; who has left; who is active in the immediate sphere of our attention. Who is where, and in what capacity, is the fundamental basis of these narrative units. Thus, narrative comprehension is an extension of our natural mode of the way in which we attend to and understand our immediate environments, with certain provisos:

Contextual monitoring is, however, complicated for the reader of fictional narrative by the fact that the whole context may suddenly change. In everyday life, we cannot suddenly be transported back or forwards several years in time and we cannot be instantaneously relocated miles away. In fiction this does not usually happen to the characters themselves (except in science fiction), but the reader’s focus of attention may suddenly be shifted from context to context in this way. This means that although there is a general expectation of continuity within a context, there also has to be a readiness to respond to signals of total change[[198]](#footnote-199)

Contextual frames are, then, episodic units governed by combinations of entities in different locations and/or different times, with all the complexities of action, intentions, moods, textures and so on. The reader (or viewer in the case of film) has then to keep track of something of the nature of these frames (gists, outcomes for entities, potentialities for future outcomes etc.) as the narrative develops and more information is received and processed. The receiver of the text maintains a memory process that assumes a certain level of continuity (general assumptions that characters names and natures will usually remain the same) whilst looking out for cues that will modify existing apprehensions or replace them as necessary. Some information will therefore be tenuous or hypothetical: it’s maintained in the imagination as tentative until further information comes along to confirm, adapt or deny it.[[199]](#footnote-200) Besides the physical context frames, receivers of text maintain ‘belief frames’, propositional frames, of which more than one might apply to given situations or possibilities to allow for the range of variations prior to final outcomes being established.

To elaborate this scheme, Emmott deploys a number of terms to describe the qualities of these frames. When entities are present, they are ‘bound in’ to the context and ‘bound out’ when they leave (they will, of course, most likely enter another contextual frame elsewhere). Binding describes the status of the links between entities and the context. The current context, the frame that is being maintained during the current episode of reception is said to be ‘primed’. Entities in the current context are also primed by dint of being present, though they may be primed, but ‘textually covert’ (not being explicitly mentioned), as opposed to ‘textually overt’, although they will generally be tracked in the conscious processes regardless: ‘When characters are primed, the mind remains aware of characters whether or not the text mentions them in any particular sentence […] Mentally, readers are aware of primed characters, whether they are overt or covert.’[[200]](#footnote-201) The frames Emmott discusses are, in essence, mental representations, units of modelling that enable the processing of the text during the ongoing progression of comprehension. As such, they would seem to be a spatial metaphor for a particular type of short-term or working memory process, though I will suggest later that there is perhaps more going on than this might indicate.

Of course, not all information is specific to individual frames: factors such as names persist beyond frame boundaries. Emmott refers to these kinds of feature as ‘frame independent cues’, anaphoric cues that enable receivers to maintain and build effective representations of lengthy narratives.

Frames are also, by their nature, mutable. If an entity enters or leaves a frame then it has undergone a ‘frame modification’ (this can be true even of an unprimed frame, if information to that effect is received). Frames will also ‘switch’, either because other contexts are mentioned (and thus primed) or simply because they come to an end. The sense of modification here is important, because it has implications for the way in which receivers of text generically keep track of narratives. The notion of switching would appear to be crucial to the segmentary aspects of the theory but, in the case of the latter, it might be that Text World Theory, with its descriptions of different varieties of world switch, might provide a more complete description of this mechanism. ‘Frame recall’, then, becomes a particular type of switch which, in text world terms is a kind of ‘pop-up’ into a previously primed frame. These switches constitute those that are ‘instantaneous’; other switches are more ‘progressive’. In the examples I describe in Chapter 1 in my segmentation of *Double Indemnity*, instantaneous changes are exactly analagous to cuts between scenes in the film version (and similarly in the novel) and progressive ones to my ‘transit scenes’, where the scenes show entities travelling on foot or by vehicle.[[201]](#footnote-202) Frame recall is also often easy to initiate:

A frame switch generally leaves the context completely intact, so it may be reinstated at a later stage by a *frame recall*. The interesting thing about a frame recall is that a mention of one part of the context is often used as a cue to recall the whole context. If this cue is responded to, it provides evidence that the reader does monitor information about contextual configurations and indicates the extent to which this knowledge is required to supplement the words of the text. [[202]](#footnote-203)

The model offers an elegant solution to the question of how the processes of memory are marshalled to account for the accumulations of knowledge and the mental tracking of characters and events in narratives. There may be one or two problems here, however. In her ‘central directory’ of qualities, Emmott confines overt status to only those entities that are bound and primed.[[203]](#footnote-204) This raises the question of the status of an apparently overt mention of an entity that is being bound out of the current frame through the act of being bound into another (unless she intends that the reference creates a kind of ‘sub-switch’ into a short-term frame that is primed briefly before returning to a ‘framing’ frame).

The other consideration is not necessarily a problem as such, but an observation on the nature of long term and short term memory. Clearly, a short term or episodic memory process is essential to any comprehension of an ongoing situation, whether it be narrative or otherwise. The sort of recall and ongoing adaptation process that Emmott suggests here seems logically consistent with short term memory functions, which she discusses. However, I would like to suggest that much of the maintenance and development of ongoing mental models during discourse comprehension takes place in the long-term memory as well as the short term.

The evidence is perhaps circumstantial, but worthy of further attention. As a first example, I would cite the ability of individuals to remember details of films and books a long time after they have been received and, apparently, after those reception events have been forgotten. It’s that moment four minutes into a film where you remember that you have seen it before, you know how it turns out and you can even remember images, lines and dramatic effects. The onset of the new viewing provides a trigger or cue to a long-term memory store which provides broad patterns, plus details of the text. This is not to say that the entire text is stored in such a way that every line can be recalled, just that some salient details have been stored permanently and that these details include not only brief sections but also specific outcomes or arcs of the narrative structure.

As a purely anecdotal example, at a recent academic seminar, the presenter discussed Robert A. Heinlein’s short story ‘Waldo’.[[204]](#footnote-205) I could not have hitherto remembered having read that story, or found it easy to recall but, after a brief description of the scenario, I was able to remember elements of the plot, as well as quasi-visual representations of Waldo and his spacecraft that were not being discussed in the seminar. I cannot be certain that these are the exact images that I created at the time of reading, but the instantaneous nature of the recall without specific direction suggests that they were available from memory once prompted by the appropriate cue. I am certain that I read this story in the 1970s and have not done so since so, although this might not be a particularly scientific example, the frequency of this type of concurrence suggest to me that narrative information can have a great deal of persistence.

The reasons for this retention may be manifold, but I would contend that the interaction between episodic and long-term memory may be fundamental to the way in which narrative is received and comprehended. Van Dijk considers that operations of memory in the context of recollection are reliant on his idea of macrostructures as processing tools:

The full cognitive importance of macrostructures becomes apparent in the representation of discourse in EM [Episodic memory]. Whereas in STM [Short Term Memory] they merely function as tentative global coherence links between FACTS [chunks of related propositional information], their organizational power in EM is demonstrated by the assumption that long sequences of FACTS of the microlevel may be subsumed under MACROFACTS and that in turn MACROFACT sequences may be dominated by higher-level MACROFACTS. The representation of the discourse in EM thereby acquires a hierarchical structure, depending on the global interpretation operations of STM. [italics as original][[205]](#footnote-206)

Thus, detail and macrostructure are linked and contingent, at a level of comprehension, in which the macrostructure provides the mechanism that provides coherence and, I would say, allows the possibility of recall of pertinent details that have been operative in the macrostructural processing.

There is a counter argument that these long-term stores are created shortly after the text has been completed, when a recapitulation of the text is being undertaken to finalise a set of gist conclusions, during which one might review, identify and foreground elements as part of the process of making final sense of the text. Such an action of focusing might then make it more likely that these elements are committed to long-term memory, as evidence or justification for gist conclusions or because elements were particularly attractive or engaging, somehow relevant to us or simply piqued the interest. This might certainly be true of film, which even today is generally watched in a single sitting or limited number of sessions. However, it might take one a year to read a novel and, although one might have to ‘skip back’ to earlier chapters to recapitulate in order to re-establish the back story for the comprehension of current chapters, there must be a limit at which the short term, episodic patterns of retention are be replaced by long-term storage to make the possibility of comprehending the text a reality.

There is something of a rationale for this. During comprehension of texts, schematised knowledge is drawn down from memory to provide templates for understanding. This takes place at detail levels, from memorised examples of trees or hats, to specific trees or hats (a personal exemplary maple; a grey fedora), but also larger individual schemata for larger elements (a sunny afternoon in Trafalgar Square; police procedural narratives). Although one may have viewed or read many examples of police procedurals, and thus have a complex schema of multiple possibilities on which to draw, there might only be one experience of a sunny afternoon in Trafalgar Square. This is not to say that the schema for such an afternoon might not draw on many other sub-schemata, including sunny afternoons in general, ideas and experiences of London (from personal experience, books, films etc.), historic footage of Trafalgar Square, the Blue Peter episode in which workmen cleaned the statue of Nelson (circa 1971), but that the one personal experience may be the dominant source of the schema. In both cases (police procedurals; the sunny square) the schematised knowledge might be formed into what Keith Oatley describes as ‘chunks’. Where the procedural information has been formed from many experiences and over time, the personal experience was formed into a chunk in one go (with the provisos above). Therefore, I suggest, this is a natural part of memory formation and finds its counterpart in the way that texts can be allocated to memory for long-term retention. Because of human beings’ memory capacity (if not necessarily instant recall), such chunks may be very complex and increasingly deployable as we become more expert in developing and utilising them. Oatley uses the example of an experiment comparing expert chess players with novices, set a task of remembering layouts of pieces and replacing them once they had been cleared. The experts were much better at replacing the pieces, with many fewer mistakes:

Does [the] experiment mean that chess players have a working memory with larger capacity than chess novices? Not at all. Everybody’s short-term memory holds somewhere around seven items. The difference was that experts had learned so much about chess that when they saw a board position from a game that had been played, they recognized and could easily remember configurations of pieces, for instance “fianchetto on the King’s side.” This is part of a standard opening position in chess. It describes the position of six pieces in a particular part of the board. Psychologists call this a chunk. The chunks with which a novice works are single pieces in single positions. When a chess master looks at a 20-piece chess position, he or she has a schema for chess and remembers, as chunks four or five configurations each with certain developments or variations.[[206]](#footnote-207)

Most of us are experts at narrative. It is one of the basic ways in which we make sense of our environment and our experiences: ‘Narrative imagining – story – is the fundamental instrument of thought’.[[207]](#footnote-208) Or, as Branigan would have it: ‘*narrative is a perceptual activity that organizes data into a special pattern which represents and explains experience.*’[italics as original] (Branigan, *Narrative Comprehension and Film*, p. 3). If we have need of large chunks of schematised knowledge to comprehend narrative, we must be able to construct them. In the realm of the expert, short term memory can be backed up by larger and more long-lived storage. In discussing writers, Oatley makes this point:

Short-term working memory is verbal (for instance the contents of consciously verbalized thoughts as they go through our minds when writing), and also visual (for instance the layout of a scene). The idea of working memory is that it is the means by which we hold something in mind consciously while we think about it: a mental space for the manipulation of ideas.

The skill of writing depends on short term working memory. […] it becomes clear that the more experienced one is, the larger and more sophisticated the chunks (objects) that one can hold in mind and manipulate.[[208]](#footnote-209)

Enterprises such as writing therefore require a greater storage and ease of recall than typical episodic memory models allow. Oatley explains:

A recent psychological finding is of a type of long-term memory that has some characteristics of being rapidly cued and of enabling manipulation of concepts in a way that is comparable to short-term memory, but without short-term memory’s limitations of capacity. This kind of memory is constrained to the specific domain that an expert has developed. It takes a great deal of work to establish it, and it lasts only as long as the expert maintains his or her skills. An expert writer can read a draft he or she has written, load it up into this specialized long-term working memory which includes fluent language generation processes, so that ideas and the sentences that represent them can be manipulated.[[209]](#footnote-210)

Whilst this has obvious repercussions for the writing process, it may also hold for the comprehension and storage of texts, if we are to accept the notion of the possibility of widespread expertise (or perhaps, better, ‘sophistication’) in the general reception and processing of those texts. A working long-term memory must have a greater propensity to create long term stores, and I believe something of that nature is occurring during the processing of narrative texts. As such, though Emmott’s model offers a thorough template for the way episodic memory is updated during the reception of texts, it may be that something more permanent is going on in each instance of reading or viewing. However, whilst this may suggest a small limitation to the ways in which it can be applied to receiving texts, there would seem to be significant currency here for the way in which writers produce those texts, particularly in respect of frames and the way in which they switch and update.

As stated, the main challenge with *Jacks* was to manage the four character’s narrative strands both individually and as the cumulative whole that forms the macrostructural entirety of the novel. One way of thinking about this was to consider the whole as a series of scenes, some of them largely dialogue, others largely action. With four main characters and many others with whom they interact, one of the fundamental questions is ‘who is in the scene?’ and, as a subsidiary, ‘why?’. With the existing relationships, especially between Krite and Julian and Carl and Danny, clearly there will be numerous scenes in which the two pairings predominate. Except that Danny rarely sees Carl (he is more of an invisible threat, in a sense) and Julian will have to have scenes away from Krite and in the company of Serena if anything of the affair is to be shown rather than reported. In this way the various characters are to be, in Emmott’s terms, variously bound in and out of scenes (frames) for the intention of advancing the narrative(s). As well as this advancement, the various combinations allow for various textures. This is consequent on the potentiality of those mixtures according to the nature of the characters. In simplified terms, some of the basic potentialities for the main four characters might tabulate as such:

Julian and Krite = Friendship; Support; Humour; Comedy Disbelief at Krite’s actions.

Julian and Danny = Conflict, owing to the blackmail.

Julian and Carl = Resentment; the possibility of Real Violence.

Krite and Danny = Conflict, owing to the blackmail.

Krite and Carl = Conflict, owing to old animosities and loyalty to Julian.

Carl and Danny = Resentment (from Danny); Disrespect and Subjugation (from Carl).

In the event, I felt that a couple of the combinations should remain unused, owing to the threat of the potentiality being better than its realisation. A meeting between Julian and Carl is characterised by projected threat, which is obviated by the plot to achieve a certain positive resolution for this strand. Also with Krite and Carl, I thought that realising this combination was a step too far in terms of complication and the resolution of the Krite narrative.

There are, of course, other important combinations, especially those with Serena, who, although not permitted a figural viewpoint, is crucial as both a catalyst for action and a source of conflict, as well as possible positive resolution for Julian. Her potentialities might simplify so:

Serena and Carl = Resentment; Conflict; Emotional Complexity; Unhappiness.

Serena and Julian = Sense of Loss (backstory); Love; Emotional Complexity; Happiness.

Serena and Danny = Resentment (from Danny); Conflict, owing to the blackmail.

Serena and Krite = Humour (from backstory); Humorous Conflict; Support.

Then there are the individual strand combinations such as Krite with his sister, Danny with his workmates and Carl with Judy. The selection of the combinations, and how often they were repeated, was instrumental in the formation of the discourse and its outcomes and, so, the choices reflect this. However, part of the rationale for this stems from a visualisation of how the textures of these combinations might work on screen, as scenes in a film or television serial. Creating tension and release through combinations of conflicting and supportive characteristics, plus the visual potential of antagonistic and complimentary characters acting in individual set-piece scenarios, was integral to this creative processing. The novel forms not only a written text discourse, but also a kind of full-length treatment to facilitate its own adaptation into an audio-visual format. As such, the duration and nature of the scenes reflects this, which (I hope) both makes the work readily adaptable and also, as it happens, easier to visualise, conceive and write.[[210]](#footnote-211)

The criteria for each scene operate on a gist basis: what do I want the reader to understand and carry forward from the interplay? This strategy echoes very much Emmott’s idea of the frame updating and delivering its store of knowledge before the switch to another, perhaps for a similar frame to come up later and advance the level of knowledge, until the final resolutions and macromeanings can be ascribed. Each negotiation involved in the mental representation and construction of the scene is to do with this outcome: what does the reader find out and carry forward? As a consequence, there is also the question of what is held back. Posing questions by delivering certain information, and withholding that which provides the answers, creates suspense, which aids engagement and the desire in the reader to continue. Without suspense, the content of one’s prose must be utterly compelling on a line-by-line level. Hence, the strict management of the discourse information system is crucial to the success of the project. To make these kinds of individual scene gists available to the reader, it’s important to manage each scene or segment so that, towards its conclusion, there is either a deceleration in momentum, a plot point or something approximating a cliff-hanger (literally a suspense) to create a ‘beat’ which aids the reader in forming those gists. Readers generally know when a segment break is coming owing to graphic cues such as spaces, paragraph breaks, the end of chapters etc., and it is here that the segment gist will begin to be finalised (though perhaps tentatively, depending on how clear the revelations have been and whether the next segment continues the thread or not) and then maintained until it is justified, modified or negated. Therefore, the entire management of the discourse of the segment relies on this transitional state, from one segment to the next. I term this phenomenon **Boundary Effect**, the mental process that receivers of text undergo at each segmentary or scene boundary in order to summarise what they have processed before moving on to the next section (although, as I suggest, the development of gist conclusions may remain ongoing even when new information is being processed). Boundary effect occurs in all narrative texts of any duration. That is to say, all but the very shortest narratives, perhaps as short as just a few words or images. Boundaries create the possibility of moving onto new beginnings, and provide cyclical opportunities for imparting information. The recapitulation of data in a section that is ending and its assignment into memory stores to await full integration into the completed narrative is, I suggest, an extension of natural episodic behaviour, in which experiences are reviewed and assigned qualities according to the outcomes, in ways which may be beneficial to the future self (essentially, learning). Living a life of constant activity without the possibility of review or such assignment to the schematic stores of memory would be hugely disadvantageous, if not unnatural. Natural human cycles include periods of activity and experimentation, consideration and rest. The effect, then, is one of alternating periods of density (activity/experience) and decompression (consideration of the results of previous activity). The same is true of the transitional nature of textual boundaries. Writers will often manage this effect, so that scene setting gambits, such as descriptions of locations and characters, will diminish over the course of the section so that pure exposition (through action or dialogue for instance) takes over the discourse, lending an effect of ‘acceleration’ towards the boundary (whether because information is supplemental to that established in the setup, requiring less assimilation, even if greater impact because of conclusive effects, and/or because the pace of reading literally quickens with anticipation).[[211]](#footnote-212) Boundaries may also, however, appear as a surprise (a sudden cut in a film or halt mid-action in prose). Here the boundary effect is established post haste, without the luxury of anticipation. Clearly producers of texts can manage such effects to accommodate or fox the receiver in ways which can condition the reception. Rather than receptions being ‘smooth’ transfers of information, segment boundaries can, then, give rise to patterns of ‘surge’ and ‘release’ as information processing peaks in summarisation as one cycle finishes and another commences. To demonstrate boundary summations by way of practical example, I will use one of the chapters from *Jacks* to illustrate the ways in which information is managed both internally in a segment and in connection with related segments.

## 3.5: ‘PARROTS’: Frames and Updates

PARROTS is the sixteenth chapter of *Jacks*. My segmentation, which is really a basic aide-mémoire to assist with compositional tasks, describes it simply: ‘PARROTS – Location shooting, Serena.’ This is sufficient for me to place it in my macrostructural scheme. However, it contains much more material than this suggests.

In structural terms the narrative splits easily into two arcs: the first an account in which Julian is getting location shots for his ‘existential detective film’, which frames one in which he describes how he went on a trip to a shop to see if he could acquire a DVD copy of the film *Parrots*, which he scripted. The trip to the shop is archetypally a quest narrative, in which Julian is thwarted by a guardian and fails to secure the goal of the quest (analeptic to the framing narrative). This is likely to have taken place since the chapter ‘MACAW’, in which Julian is looking through his different stashes of memorabilia in an attempt to get to what is troubling him (the ramifications of seeing Serena again), although it may have occurred since Julian’s last appearance in the Krite-centred chapter ‘POST TEXACO’ . Ultimately it is unspecified and may have occurred even before the onset of the predominant timeframe of the novel, but I suggest this is less probable in the context of Julian’s emotional trajectory (although its placement in temporal terms is not crucial to its semantic contribution).

The framing narrative is also a version of the quest, in which Julian is seeking material for his film. Whether this is successful is not is unimportant, it serves only to make points about what kind of film he is aiming to make and about the nature of Julian himself, although the former links more broadly into the kinds of filmic qualities that I want to explore through the text. The irony is that Julian is successful in this quest, in that he accidentally locates Serena, even though his search for her was, at best, an internal one for resonance and memory and not an external on for her physical presence. To facilitate this success, I rather extend the boundaries of the suspension of disbelief by forcing a somewhat unlikely coincidence, although this is partly to be excused as an indicator of the possibilities of fate, which forms one of the themes of Julian’s strand of the narrative.[[212]](#footnote-213)

There are many more subdivisions in terms of text world shifts here but, for the purposes of this analysis, it is not necessary to elucidate further. I will synopsise what I consider the main elements here:

**1**) PARROTS – The title re-iterates the source of Julian’s one adult success (as he sees it).

**┌ 2**) Onset (proleptic): ‘It was only because Julian had gone out of his way scouting for

**│** locations that he saw her again.’

**⁞**

**┌ 3**) Setup for framing narrative: Julian is getting atmospheric film footage for his

**│** project.

│

**│ 4**) Setup for framed narrative (analeptic): Julian’s copy of *Parrots* is unplayable, so he

**│** decides to look for a new one.

│

**│ 5**) The journey to the film emporium and the failure of the quest, split into: **i**) a report

**│** of Julian’s └ journey and search; **ii**) the conversation with the guardian. Time/space

**│** line.

⁞

**│ 6**) Return to the framing narrative: setup. Develops to:

│

**│ 7**) Filming the play area.

│

**│ 8**) Moving on and filming the empty park.

│

│ **9**) The appearance of the running figure – continued filming.

│

**│ 10**) Denouement : the running figure is Serena (completes the cycle commenced by

**└** the onset).

In Emmott’s scheme the main contextual frames would group as **2** and **3** (instantaneous); **4** (instantaneous); **5** (progressive from **4**); **6** (a frame recall for **5**); **7**; **8**, **9** and **10** (sequentially progressive). This would make the chapter basically a set of five main contextual frames, with possibilities for others such as the switch into a historical context which makes the actor Julian Sands an overt entity.

In my analysis the ten sub-segments each carry gist loadings (some in common), which I will summarise below, along with suggestions of their dominant links to previous segments of the overall discourse:

**1** – The chapter will in some way concern Julian’s film or successful script. Links anaphorically to previous mentions of the film and thematically to the previous chapter MACAW.

**2** – Context, plus expectation that there will be the appearance of a female character (Serena on the balance of probabilities?). Thus links to the last meeting with Serena (in ‘NUPTIALS’) and as a school-time memory sought out in the attic (end boundary of ‘MACAW’).

**3** – Julian films alone. Updating the nature of the detective film and, by connection, the lonely nature of much of his existence. Links to previous filming activities and discussion (elements in all of Julian’s appearances thus far). Thematic links of ‘existential’ state of Julian’s loneliness (bus stop scene in ‘MACAW’).

**4** – *Parrots* DVD needs replacing (for the purposes of edifying Julian’s ego?). He no longer has access to the professional world of film (unhappiness). Direct links to previous mentions of Parrots (particularly in ‘NUPTIALS’), thematically to ‘MACAW’ (his one other success) and through the updating of his feelings of disappointment with his lot.

**5i** – The personal nature of Julian’s quest. Julian’s knowledge of film and film lore.

**5ii** – Any cultural value attached to *Parrots* has waned to the point where it is not academically significant. Julian will not get a copy. Julian has little cultural value (especially in comparison to his near namesake). Links to previous mentions of *Parrots* (as above), thematically to the world of the ‘underdog’ inhabited by Krite, Julian and Danny, and updating through the reinforcement of Julian’s character traits.

**6** – Return to framing narrative, setup to:

**7** – Filming a playground is suspicious. Thematic links to the emerging narrative of Natalie and her fate.

**8** – Film footage. Increasing the effect of loneliness. Camera operations. Links to previous filming activities and discussion. Updating camera technique and isolation of Julian.

**9** – There is a human object in the viewfinder. Julian as voyeur/spectator. Updates to character with links to Julian’s previous appearances.

**10** – It’s Serena! Links to her previous appearances in the Carl strand and in Julian’s in ‘NUPTIALS’ and ‘MACAW’, plus discussion of her in ‘POST TEXACO’. Retrospective update to Serena’s sportive nature. Update to Julian’s sense of loss at feeling he would never see her again.

Through this we can create a summation of the principle gists at this boundary:

Julian is continuing to make his film in his idiosyncratic way (the putative detective film may be somewhat pretentious, as is Julian?). The value of *Parrots* to the world is no longer of great significance (if it ever was). It is of great significance to Julian (whose disappointments are accumulating). He has met Serena again.

Of these, the dominant gist is (intended to be) that Serena has re-entered the picture despite the prediction to the contrary (a statement which now appears ironic or is updated as ‘false’). The confirmation of this gist is right at the end boundary (“Serra, you’re cold.”). This links directly to the end boundary of ‘NUPTIALS’: ‘[…] Serena had gone. Then he knew for certain that he would never see her again and that, for no reason he could fathom, the feeling was going to be unbearable.’ (p. 33). Thus, the dominant gists are both placed at the end boundaries – the segment builds up to and ends on them – and the two create a link or echo that connects them, in which the latter updates and adds to the significance of the first.

Much of this information management is, of course, deliberate, but some emanates from general feelings, that it might be time for some more of this quality or that. Each chapter or scene unit also has its internal structure which calls for certain qualities at certain points (such as beginnings or setups; conflicts arising from the setups; denouements). Denouements then give rise to boundary effects that can be neutral, positive, negative, create finalities, establish potentialities or any mix thereof. There can also be moments of spontaneous creativity outside of the plan, leading to minor or even major revisions of the overall narrative strategy. All of which have to be taken into account in the ongoing establishment of the intended macromeanings of the text. Where I have supplied links to previous segments of the text above, the process of composition also has to take account of links and updating activities that will occur in later segments. The result is a web of interconnectedness and narrative progression that builds into what is intended to be an integrated macrostructural design that fulfils its communicative potential. The derivation of this depends on the technique of the writer, but is *the* major consideration in the context of satisfactory outcomes. In screenwriting, the creation of the web or gist design is often the primary task prior to the adding of description, dialogue etc., which is why scripts can go through many treatment cycles and structural revisions before they are ‘worked up’ into fully fleshed-out artefacts, and why so many of the ‘how-to’ books reference screenwriting as an exemplum of thoroughly wrought structure. In this scheme, the gists predate the texture, even if the texture has been implicit in the selection of the gists.

Beyond the summary of boundary gists there are also subsidiary effects. As stated, the brief scene filming the playground develops themes from the Natalie subplot, although that is being established gradually to create suspense. The activities with the camera both supply a reason for Julian’s outing, an indicator of the nature of the film and of his personal nature, but also offer an opportunity for looking at ways of framing and viewing. The discourse describes the shots that Julian is making. They relocate the origo to a dual camera/eye position, which readers then realise in mental representation. The anticipation of this process is that it will foreground film-making and shots as a theme, to some extent divorced from narrative requirements, so that it creates a textural effect that resonates with the reader and offers the possibility of a metaleptic link to some of the theoretical aspects of this study. By placing the reader in a position where they are required to model the viewpoint of the Julian/camera gestalt, they can experience a greater sense of immersion in the scene and are also drawn into further speculative modelling of what Julian’s finished film might look like. The quasi-visual modelling of footage ‘running’ in the viewfinder during the recording of Julian’s film is a directly framed precursor to the footage running on screen at some later date. In this way, these elements of the film are afforded a sense of existence, with minimal cuing, and the non-existent film some sense of narrative structure which will chime with Julian’s later assertion that he can edit it anyway he likes to create whatever effect (to tell the story of Krite in the context of Natalie). However, because of the nature of the film footage, which might be associated with a type of European arthouse heritage, there are also textural correlates with the nature of Julian’s system of values for film discourse and the actualities of the quotidian existence he finds so disaffecting.[[213]](#footnote-214) The Julian/camera gestalt affords a Julian/Julian’s film gestalt, in which the latter part is a product and a realisation of the state of the former and the latter reinforces and realises the former’s potentialities. In a more tenuous way, the film is also a detective film. Where Krite’s MacGuffin is the realisation of justice for Natalie, Julian’s runs directly into his shot as he is filming, although he has not yet realised how significant this will be.

Because of the dominant gist, I have the potential here to create suspense by delaying a depiction of the outcome of the chance meeting. However, in an unusual juxtaposition for this novel, I chose to make impact out of duration by going directly on to another Julian chapter. This is accomplished by another ‘cut’, from “Serra, you’re cold.” to ‘Her house was large and modern.’ (the beginning of ‘STRAND’). The rapid motion between the outside and the inside permits quickly realised contrasts between the low rent world of Julian and the middle-class domesticity of Serena’s (and Carl’s); between Julian’s empty world picture and the object that he wishes to fill his view. The loneliness of the outside world is solved by the cosy comforts of the coffee and the company of Serena, which prefigures his nascent desire that she is the goal, although seemingly protected by an implacable guardian (Carl, in whose cave he now sits).

These kinds of considerations are necessary for all segments during composition though, as I have already said, some of these activities operate below conscious levels. The act of creation here calls on the type of expertise that deploys in the reception and comprehension of texts. Branigan has this to say about the prioritisation of memory functions in reception and comprehension:

In order to focus on mental processes working in real time, one must begin with the fact that there are rather sever capacity limitations both on an individual’s transient memory, which registers sensory information, and on his or her short-term memory, which is able to sort and classify only recent information. Short-term memory can manipulate only about five to nine “chunks” of data. (The word “red” will count as one chunk of data whereas the letters “rde” will count as three.) Thus it is primarily intermediate-term memory (sometimes called “working” memory) and long-term memory that must be carefully studied, for these are the sites of special mental operations that play decisive roles in redescribing data and recognizing global relationships, whether narrative or otherwise. Moreover, these special operations of working and long-term memory are not directly experienced by a perceiver, since “consciousness” has many of the limitations of short-term memory.[[214]](#footnote-215)

Notwithstanding Oatley’s assertion that writers, by dint of special expertise, have access to especially large chunks that can include macrostructural patterns in their output, it is unlikely that they will have consciously derived every nuance and narrative interconnection. Here the creative impetus must be intuitive at some level, that it draws on unconscious and schematised knowledge that mediates and adapts the discourse during the process of composition. The reason for this might be quite straightforward. Branigan again: ‘Since “consciousness” is a relatively high-level from of awareness with severe capacity limitations (similar to the restrictions on short-term memory), it cannot be a full measure of what we know or why we act.’[[215]](#footnote-216) (Branigan, p. 123) Until I looked closely at this chapter and its successor for the purposes of analysis here, I was not fully aware of the correlation between the two potential ‘guardians’, or of the direct associations of exteriority and interiority and their ramifications for Julian’s state of mind, but they appear as definite possibilities once that analysis is complete. Of course, one cannot remember all the details of creative thought processes that are undertaken over the course of several years (in this case) writing a book but, if these connections have been made consciously hitherto, then they should be open to recall with the appropriate cue (the text).

The composition of texts is thus a negotiation between conscious and unconscious processes. Nevertheless, without a conscious consideration of the boundary effects of all segments, and their accumulated macroeffect (at the final boundary), I would maintain that the creation of effective sustained works of fiction is compromised if not impossible.

Boundary effect is essentially the summary effect of sets of textual cues that give rise to propositions that result in gist conclusions that are then categorised and ordered hierarchically on an ongoing basis that proceeds towards the conclusion of the text. Whereas in written text, the cues may generally be to do with layouts of the printed word, in film they can be musical, visual, associated with performers’ dialogue and actions, or simply down to editing in ways that form part of the ‘lexicon’ of cinema techniques. When one sees a prolonged black screen after a scene, then a viewer might conclude that something important has happened (perhaps simply because they have been given extra time for it to ‘sink in’). This is demonstrably the case traditionally at the end of many films, as a particularly long black screen functions as the indicator that they have now reached their conclusion, and to act as a period of ‘resonance’ before the credits roll. These editing techniques are now conventions. The sudden cut away from Sheriff Bell at the end of the film version of *No Country for Old Men* is exactly a cut away into a boundary that the majority of first-time viewers seem to find unexpected, that the final act of the film has been suspended, against their schematised expectations of the perceived genre. Denial of a normal resolution then becomes a major part of the overall gist and response to the film. As I have said, film editing techniques have exactly influenced many aspects of my own creative writing and this kind of cut from a final image can be found at the end of many segments of my work, simply because it seems to work, most probably because readers visualise these things in ways which respond to their own comprehensive repertoire of tools for film interpretation.

## 3.6: Conclusion

I will look at the effect of boundaries again in the overall conclusion. There may be much more to be established about exactly how this is managed in the mental processes of receivers of text, particularly in respect of long-term memory stores but, for the writer, it would seem to me an essential part of effective discourse management. In this process, the reader must be accounted for in the imaginative model, otherwise there is too much chance that they will get ‘lost’ or fail to be able to properly mentally represent and receive information from the text. This is not to say that all texts have to be easy or facile, just that there needs to be a thorough attendance to what is available to the reader to create the effects that the writer is trying to achieve. Creative endeavours that fail to take into account the mental processes of their audience must be less likely to succeed on their own terms unless, as stated above, they are so vivid and compelling at a microstructural level that they carry themselves purely on their content.

A sense of what should be in each segment, what the receiver should ‘get’ from the segment is thus fundamental to the way in which texts are designed and composed. A feeling for boundary effects quantifies what should arrive before a boundary, informs how that boundary is to be structured (contingent on the structure of that segment plus the accumulated segments) and, indeed, why that boundary is positioned as it is. In the management of overall macrostructures, the final boundary effect is the cumulative effect of all the boundaries of the narrative, combined and negotiated by the receiver of the text into final macromeanings (its gists), and any ongoing resonance.[[216]](#footnote-217) This might be described as the intention of the piece or the overall effect that is being sought, to which all considerations such as style, content, characterisation, outcomes etc. are suborned.

In analysing structure in a specific text, with particular reference to the recall and assessment of that text (its ‘gist’) we move away from abstract notions of structure and towards an evaluation of meanings. In such an analysis, at a sentence-by-sentence, shot-by-shot level, we need to ask the question, *which information does, and which does not, ‘advance’ the narrative processes (communicative intent or effect) of the discourse?* This is also the process we have to undertake to produce texts, if we are to have any success in communicating something of what we intend. Each reader or viewer represents and provides their own versions of the text in reception, but they cannot do this effectively without appropriate cues. In film, the cues can be deployed in images, sound and motion; in written fiction, as purely linguistic effects, structured onto the page. In both cases the receiver of the text has to create mental models on an ongoing basis to negotiate meanings and effects from the text. Emmott’s frames offer a useful analogy for the way in which this process advances and updates the mental model in segmented order, which has repercussions for both the reception of texts and their production, even if her scheme does not, in my view, provide a completely comprehensive picture of that process. I will come back to the nature of segmentation in the overall conclusion.

As I have demonstrated in the above example, my novel *Jacks* is exactly a series of discourse segments pitching different combinations of characters into action ‘frames’ which play out a small sections of the overall narrative arc, the overarching macrostructure. My chapter ‘PARROTS’ contains just three characters/enactors, of which one (the shop assistant) is little more than a cypher to provide agency for another setback for Julian (I am not including a potential fourth here, the suspicious observer at the childrens’ play area, who is essentially just an effect of the environment, even if they may be ascribed a certain mental state). The cycle of the chapter, with acknowledgements to the other functions outlined above, is intended to reintroduce Serena in a way that facilitates further combinations (segments/frames) in which she and Julian are paired and can advance their narrative to the conclusion. In all cases, the frames are constructed in ways which pay heed to their individual contributions to the whole, even if not all of the effects they create are entirely consciously wrought. But they *are* designed in ways which reference structural requirements from micro to macrostructural levels. The methodology for this task draws on both written models of discourse *and* audio-visual. In fact, it cannot do otherwise, for reasons I will outline in the next section.

# Conclusion

## Conc. 1: Mental Modelling

So, what do I think is happening in the process of this cross-pollination between film and written fiction? First I should state that it’s clearly not a simple negotiation between the two media. Over the long history of film, now encompassing at least parts of three centuries, countless other factors have been in play: cultural, artistic, historical, political, practical (the development of what is possible), legislative, moral, theoretical and more. Can literature, at least in the Western world, be the same after the advent of Freud and psychoanalysis? I have discussed tabloid journalism in the context of 1920s New York, but there are developments in journalistic styles after the First World War to which we might yoke aspects of Hemingway’s writing. Again, in the 1950s and 60s, the ‘New Journalism’ of such writers as Gay Talese and George Plimpton emphasised participatory responses to events, seeking the ‘truth’ beyond the ‘facts’. Such developments must feed into the general field of influences. James M. Cain was first a journalist, as Dickens was first a dramatist before a novelist. If D. W Griffith claims that all he learnt about editing came from Dickens, does the classical Hollywood system of editing, with its standard vocabulary of shot/reverse shot etc., then, owe its origins to early nineteenth-century drama (filtered through Dicken’s short stories and serialised fiction, itself also designed to be performed live to audiences)? Flaubert’s highly scenic delivery of discourse also owes something to his own history as a dramatist, so does the scenic novel ultimately predate film, as some of my commentators have it? Film itself is also intimately related to theatre, with its mise-en-scène, sets, actors, staging and delivery of lines. So, could this study have more productively concentrated on this relationship? Where does the invention of radio, and of radio broadcasting, fit?

One could also look at the relationship between pictorial art and cinema. Both are, traditionally, framed. A still picture from a film still elicits motion, in the form of saccadic eye movements, as would a painting (though so does any physical object). One only need only view stills selected stills from Derek Jarman’s *Caravaggio* (1986) to see how the artist’s colour palette and sense of light are crucial to the shot composition and to the tone and content of the film.[[217]](#footnote-218) Also, how does music and the advent of the talking picture contribute to the effect? Films may never have been destined to be silent. Edison thought of ways to synchronise his short film loops with his cylinder recordings, inevitably as a way of enhancing the sales potential of both; pioneer silent films were often accompanied by dramatic or descriptive readings and, so, the shows were anything but silent. There are also things to be said about how animation has influenced the possibilities of narrative and of the manipulation of reality.

However, this study is concerned primarily with structure and with creative realisation from the level of the individual shot or image, to the overall structures of complete works. And it is in these realisations that I believe the root of cross-pollination lies.

During the process of reading, or watching a film, we are creating mental models or representations of the received world we are trying to understand. In a book (unless there are pictures) we generally formulate the mental images in these models from elements of the descriptions in the discourse and from image schemata held in the memory. These image schema resources are categorised, so that, if we read the cue to mentally visualise an oak tree, for instance, we draw on our memories of actual oak trees, or memories of drawings of them, or of photographs, footage etc., even previous mental representations of oak trees we have had to visualise from cues in other texts. If the discourse supplies the cue ‘a wizened old oak tree’ then the category search is further refined. If I describe an ‘avuncular oak’ there may be some delay in reaching a serviceable image and associative semantic characteristics, but the schematised memory will have a go at this, however tentatively. Similar processes are going on for sound memory and smell, taste, emotional states and so on.[[218]](#footnote-219)

It would seem axiomatic that, in the realms of image and sound, the same thing does not follow for cinema, but this is not always the case. Film apparently supplies the images and sounds, but not all of them. As it is highly elliptical, that not every moment is shown, we are constantly filling in the gaps: how did characters get to where they are?; what happened just then in the cut, when we jumped to the next day? If a character or narrator talks about something that is not happening on screen, then this has to be modelled in a similar way to that we employ if we had just read it in a book, with the proviso that some of the auditory or visual cues may already have been presented (if, for example, it is a character that has already been shown in shot). The same is true in written prose as well, of course, we are constantly filling in gaps between chapters, between episodes, between scenes, between the lines.

We are also anticipating. If we have any paratext of a book or a film, a review, a trailer, comments or recommendations from others, reputation (previous output from the producer of the text and so on), then we come already with expectations of what may happen in the text. In some cases the expectation of the sort of things that might happen (superstructural expectations) are part of the pleasure of the anticipation and the joy of the reception (that those expectations are entertained). As we commence to read the book or watch the film, we begin to run tentative model scenarios of what we think might happen later. These also draw on schematised knowledge or prior memory scripts of what kinds of things may transpire. In the Hollywood tradition, outcomes (and the way in which they are delivered) can be highly predictable. Anyone who has seen a Hollywood film from the period of the middle part of the twentieth century, when it was subject to the strictures of the Production Code, will know that it is very unlikely that anyone on screen will profit from the proceeds of crime. Marital infidelity is also highly unlikely to go unpunished. The same thing obtains for an Edgar Wallace mystery: the chance to speculate on the culprit(s) with the expectation of being provided with the solution would seem to be the basic contract under which the act of reading is commenced. Receptions of a text, and the anticipatory models we create for them, may be highly subject to what one might call ‘contextual webs’, highly complex systems of experience and understanding-generating knowledge. As Bordwell puts it:

Generally, the spectator comes to the film already tuned, prepared to focus energies toward story construction and to apply sets of schemata derived from context and prior experience. This effort toward meaning involves an effort toward unity. Comprehending a narrative requires assigning it some coherence. At a local level, the viewer must grasp character relations, lines of dialogue, relations between shots, and so on. More broadly, the viewer must test the narrative information for consistency: does it hang together in a way we can identify? For instance, does a series of gestures, words, and manipulations of objects add up to the action sequence we know as “buying a loaf of bread”? The viewer also finds unity by looking for relevance, testing each event for its pertinence to the action which the film (or scene, or character action) seems to be basically setting forth. Such general criteria direct perceptual activity through anticipations and hypotheses, and they are in turn modified by the data supplied by the film.[[219]](#footnote-220)

For an individual coming to *Double Indemnity* for the first time (book and film) a prior reading of my brief contextual introductions in Chapter 1 might condition their reception of the text and their expectations (and, thus, modelling thereof). It might even condition the way in which they model the information I have selected to summarise and provide in my synopses and segmentations. In fact, the contextual information in all the chapters has more than one function: partly to provide a little background to the environmental, cultural and autobiographical origins of the text and partly to underline the point I have just made, that the process of reception is enabled by schematised knowledge which is subject to modification from sources outside the text (and is drawn upon by cognitive processes to facilitate understanding).

Anticipatory mental modelling is not just a feature in the reception of texts. It’s fundamental to the way humans operate at a basic level. Unless human beings have very pressing challenges which require intense concentration in the present, much of how we occupy our imaginations is concerned with reviewing and modelling past occurrences or running models of future activities so that we can prepare and plan for them, perhaps even fantasise about things we might like to happen. This is a crucial task in both making sense of how things have gone, to learn lessons and to place experiences in a proper context (which involves, of course a certain amount of narrativisation, categorisation and formulation of schematised patterns) and in preparing ourselves for future experiences. It may not be that our future models are accurate in every respect, but to have no model is to come to an event somewhat less than prepared. This imagining of future scenarios is probably extremely ancient in humans and may even predate language or, indeed, be instrumental in the *development* of language. If an individual in one valley can create a mental model of what may be found in another, unseen valley across the other side of a mountain, and conceive that it might contain more of the roots or nutritious lizards that are so hard to find in this valley, then they can develop a plan to access and explore that valley to test out the theory and exploit any discovered resources. If they can communicate their vision to others, than that plan may be more co-operatively put into effect, with potentially greater chances of success (plus with the advantage that dependents, offspring etc. may benefit). Even if a lone individual has made a solo expedition and come back to bring the good news to the rest of the group, the whole operation is still predicated on the original mental model and the same value applies.

I have heard this anticipatory or imaginative mental modelling described as ‘**Proception**’ (I suppose, ‘thinking ahead’). One may simply call it daydreaming. As the writer and creative writing tutor Robert Olen Butler puts it:

…flashes of the future, similar to flashes of the past, but of something that has not yet happened or that may happen, something we desire or fear or otherwise anticipate. Those also come to us as images, like bursts of waking dreams.[[220]](#footnote-221)

This is not necessarily a new idea. Samuel Johnson would have it this way:

So few of the hours of life are filled with objects adequate to the mind of man, and so frequently are we in want of present pleasure or employment, that we are forced to have recourse every moment to past and future for satisfactions, and relieve the vacuities of our being, by recollections of former passages, or anticipations of events to come.

It’s a process mediated by prior knowledge, both an evaluative mechanism and a speculative one, as he continues:

We owe to memory not only the increase of our knowledge, and our progress in rational inquiries, but many other intellectual pleasures. Indeed, all that we can be said to enjoy is past or future; the present is in perpetual motion, leaves us as soon as it arrives, ceases to be present before its presence is well perceived, and is only known to have existed by the effects it leaves behind. The greatest part of our ideas arises, therefore, from the view before or behind us, and we are happy to be miserable according as we are affected by the survey of our life, or our prospect of future existence.[[221]](#footnote-222)

The operations of proception are, thus, universal and fundamental. They are intimately connected to our frameworks of existing knowledge however they have been derived. They are also connected to the processes of producing narrative texts. Sometimes when, for whatever purpose, we feel we have to talk to others about the content of one of these personal proceptive activities, then we are verbalising a version of the model and this is closely related to the process of writing. When we are running models not of *our* future selves, but of other characters, then this is *exactly* the process that occurs in fictional writing, the only difference perhaps being the specific targeting of the model for a specific product.

But there is more to it than this, and that is to do with the nature of the modelling. As I have said, proceptive representation is dependent on existing schematic knowledge, of existing scripts, realised through imaginative speculation about what the kinds of things might happen and the ways in which those things might occur. And ‘ways’ is crucial here. I suggest that, particularly in modelling scenarios where we have little actual experience of those scenarios, where they fall outside our own autobiographies, we draw on less personal prototypes to provide the material from which to construct the models. This can be drawn from anecdotes, newspaper articles, other books, photographs or oil paintings or whatever, but I suggest that, owing to the fact that our memories (particularly the working memory facilities used so extensively in creating texts) work in highly verbal and visual ways, often the source that for that material is audio-visual and predominantly from sources that we might call televisual or cinematic. Butler calls the imagination an ‘omnisensual cinema’ or ‘cinema of the mind’; the author Alan Garner talks of his creative process as ‘writing the film in his head.’[[222]](#footnote-223)

The approach is not even isolated to writers of prose. This idea that visualisation in creativity is reserved for film and written fiction is too confining. At a research lecture, the poet Helen Mort, in answer to a question about her processes of creativity, stated that the ideas start out as images, and that these are filmic, like shots. In composing her collection addressing women climbers, the shots were generally specifically from above, a kind of bird’s-eye camera view.[[223]](#footnote-224) Simply in the act of daydreaming, of fantasising about scenarios in which we might like to participate, the source may originate in audio-visual media. Indeed, sources from audio-visual media may be privileged in many cases. I have never fired a machine gun (my activities with barrelled weapons are confined to air weapons and a couple of shots with a twelve bore shotgun decades ago). Most of my experience of machine guns in action comes from filmed sources, either television news items or, more predominantly, film sequences (see proviso below). I may also have read about machine guns being deployed, but these representations from written discourse are modified and conditioned by the audio-visual accounts. When I need to write about machine-gunning activities, I will privilege the audio-visual sources, because they have the most impact and immediacy.

Thus with countless other scenario-building components: those from audio-visual media are privileged above other sources either because they are the only ones available or because they are simply the most dynamic or create the best impact. Films are better than life: the special effects are better and the actors’ lines are scripted, so that characters don’t falter and make fools of themselves as we do in real life (unless scripted to do so). When modelling the activities of our future selves or running representations of fantasy scenarios, the filmic way may be the attractive way, may be the preferred way, may even be the default way, thus Butler’s ‘cinema of the mind’. So, when we come to create our works of fiction, we may be, in most instances, defaulting to cinematic models. In some ways, the novel is already a film at a fundamental level, at the very level of mental representation, before it is even written.

In the tradition of three-letter initialisations for concepts in cognitive neuroscience, I will refer to this process as PFM or ‘Proceptive Filmic Modelling’ One might call it, simply, ‘daydreaming’, but this is a specific type of daydreaming which, if it is involved in the production of texts, can create the specific types of outcome I have outlined above. As such, I feel that it merits a specific term of its own.

## Conc. 2: The case for embodiment

How intrinsic is this cognitive connection to cinematic prototypes. I suggest that it is so intrinsic as to be embodied. To understand a written text requires embodied processing. If we were to watch someone throwing a ball in the air and catching it, part of how we understand that action is by activating mental processes that are similar to, if not the same as, those we would activate to perform that action ourselves, firing so-called ‘mirror neurons’. If we read about this activity, pretty much the same thing is happening. The way, particularly the rate of this processing, can be tested.[[224]](#footnote-225) If I say that I am throwing a ball towards you, this is processed slightly quicker than if I say I am throwing that ball away from you (perhaps simply because incoming objects may be threats and/or require action). When we are writing, our mental models may involve the use embodied qualities, both literally and in the sense of embodied mental processing. Writing is the physical embodiment of verbalised thought, but thought processes have their own facets of embodiment. Sometimes, to effectively run a model of some physical activity, I have to enact some of the physical movements in a kind of rehearsal that demonstrates and ‘authorises’ the running of the model. Sometimes I will try out, usually quietly, the odd line of dialogue to see how the phonology and meaning are carried. Always, of course, when directing physical scenarios in Butler’s mental cinema, I am firing similar patterns of neurons that I would deploy in doing those activities myself or perceiving and understanding those activities when undertaken by others.

By extension, understanding cinematic representations (re-representing them in the mind to make sense of them), involves similar, mirror-neuron mediated processing. Hence, when re-running variations of these models to use as material for writing our own work, embodied cognition is invoked. As I have suggested that cinematic, audio-visual prototypes are often privileged in all kinds of proceptive activities (or, indeed, understanding past activities, be they reported to us, ‘enhanced’ re-runs of our own experiences or simply attempts to visualise events in history books), then it follows that these prototypes, for the individual brought up in an environment that requires the ability to process and understand audio-visual media at an early age, are fundamental to our mental processes at an embodied level (at a level of understanding the world) when we are very young. For many children, because of the way in which literacy tends to develop, their first experience of sustained narrative may be audio-visual in the form of television programmes or films shown on home entertainment systems. Even for myself, at the age of fifty-one (at the time of writing), and in an environment which enabled me to be able to read on my own at the age of three, much of my early experience of narrative was through television (typically *Watch with Mother*, though I can also remember such Sixties’ staple series as *Daktari* and *Skippy*).[[225]](#footnote-226) I suggest that older generations (and thus generations of writers), even before the ubiquity of television, were subject to the formative influence of the moving picture. The charms of audio-visual media are so seductive that, in certain parts of the world, they were already privileged deep in the last century, which is why I propose that the origins of this cross-pollination of form are in place even in the early days of cinema (which, of course, predates even broadcast radio). Which is why I feel I can maintain that James M. Cain is fully under the influence even in the 1930s. Arthur Miller understood this in the late Fifties (ref. his quote on page 22 of my introduction) and Leo Tolstoy even earlier:

You will see that the little clicking contraption with the revolving handle will make a revolution in our life – in the life of writers. It is a direct attack on the old methods of literary art. We shall have to adapt ourselves to the shadowy screen and to the cold machine. A new form of writing will be necessary. I have thought of that and I can feel what is coming.

But I rather like it. The swift change of scene, this blending of emotion and experience – it is much better than the heavy, long-drawn-out kind of writing to which we are accustomed. It is closer to life.[[226]](#footnote-227)

Which is not to say that film and television are the only audio-visual prototypes. If I state that most of my experience of the operation of machine guns is from filmic and televisual examples, then I am being slightly misleading. This is because I am talking about actual, physical machine guns being shown on film. Most of the machine-gunning I have performed myself has been through the medium of computer games (and specifically, ‘first-person shooters’). Here the embodiment is twofold, both in terms of mental processing and the physical controlling which interfaces with the avatar on screen (now typically via computer mouse, but I have been gaming since a time when these activities were solely keyboard mediated). There is also the sense in which the level of immersion can lead to actual physical responses: catching your breath to heft a firearm; dodging away from virtual incoming fire.

Much of what I have said here applies to shots and shot sequences, but I believe that what is happening in these smaller units of structure extends into the larger ones. Shots are edited into sequences, which build into scenes, which are then structured into scene-sequences, acts and films. The microstructures build into macrostructures and the macrostructures are comprised entirely of microstructural elements in patterns. In making sense of microstructural elements, macrorules, or expected patterns can help make sense of the smaller components. Structure and meaning, from a sentence level to overall gist conclusions, are intimately connected. One may even be contingent upon the other. The embodied understanding of texts at the level of shot, and the running of models that use shots and shot sequences to imagine scenarios, connect up by the fabric of understanding to the superstructural patterns in which the texts we have received have been made manifest. When we come to write texts, then we have the potential to access these patterns to structure our own work. As a result the work may be patterned both in terms of its microstructures and superstructural prototypes. For individuals with long or formative histories involving audio-visual media, the privileged prototypes have a high likelihood of being filmic: the novel is already a film at a fundamental level, at the very level of mental representation, before it is even written. The influence of film, and its integration into embodied processes of thinking, means that part of how we think and relate ourselves to the world *is* essentially filmic.

The mention of computer games is perhaps something of a specialised cul-de-sac in terms of my argument. They are, of course, audio-visual in nature. But there is something to say about cross-pollination. We now have generations of filmmakers and writers who have grown up with computers and gaming consoles. We also have tie-ins between film and game franchises. Map-based games may ultimately owe their origins to early text-based games taking the form of quests (which in turn may originate in role-playing board games and fantasy novels of the early part of the twentieth century) but, for a long time, the framing of action games in particular has looked like cinematic framing, and the trends have been towards making them more photo-realistic. So too are there films that look like games. Andrzej Bartkowiak’s *Doom* (2005) replicates a first-person shooter sequence in one of its scenes. Both Pete Travis’s *Dredd* (2012) and Gareth Evans *The Raid* (2011), with quite similar plots, have their heroes escalating through the levels of high-rise buildings to reach an ultimate boss.[[227]](#footnote-228) Christopher Nolan’s *Inception* (2010) provides different thematic maps for its gameplay-like action, including a snow combat setting, as well as looking like a living example of text world shifts into successively deeper levels. Even *Battleship* (directed by Peter Berg, 2012) shoehorns an old paper-based game into its overblown narrative, referencing an older and more analogue form of electronic gaming. *Edge of Tomorrow* (directed by Doug Liman, 2014), departs from its Japanese novel source in presenting a conceit in which a hero in a combat situation ‘respawns’ once he dies, in an exactly similar way that has been a tradition in computer games for decades. Thus, the narrative structure and plot device of reliving (replaying) the same events, getting better at them each time, advancing along the sequence until finally winning the chance to face the ultimate ‘boss’, is both a filmic management of progressive scene dynamics and a direct loan from computer game design.

## Conc. 3: Cycles of influence

Some may respond that it is a mere coincidence that the earmarks of modern fiction share so many technological and ontological qualities with the movies, that these earmarks must be located first and foremost within the evolution of the novel as literary genre. For me, the two perspectives are not mutually exclusive. There is no doubt about the modern novel’s responsiveness to an inner dynamic; Flaubert foresaw with uncanny acuteness many of the directions the new novel would take. But to deny the impact of the cinema would be like denying the importance of science to Romantic poetry; beyond constraints felt by the writers as coming from their specifically literary forebears, a new cultural phenomenon was forcing itself into their awareness and into the way their generation saw the world.[[228]](#footnote-229)

Cohen, then, is convinced: there must be interaction, even in the context of a natural evolution of written forms. The influence is there right at the turn of the nineteenth into the twentieth century. Writing had been waiting for this cross-pollination, to accelerate processes that have already started:

[…] the movies drew on a century of technological advancement and artistic experiments that included great flops and successes, in order to create a new means of expression that scarcely betrays a trace of those forebears. And, according to the same dialectic of creation, the “classic” modern novelists, in inventing the new, highly elastic form of the novel, drew inevitable upon their nineteenth-century predecessors, but also upon recent vehicles of extraliterary aesthetic vision, of which the cinematic experience was perhaps the most powerful.[[229]](#footnote-230)

If then, films have influenced written fiction in this way, and films are often adapted from books, then there must be a cyclical or cumulative effect. It would certainly seem that no one could write a Victorian novel with a high level of omniscient narration and lengthy description without it being a pastiche. Perhaps Dickens, with his scenic approach to composition, would have seemed alien to writers of the eighteenth century. Literature and film are both evolving. Contemporary editing techniques and scene structure often differ from those of the early years of sound, where microphones had to be hidden in such places as vases of flowers with the actors largely static to remain in range. Digital film recording allows for a greater depth of focus than traditional film stock. One can’t make a melodramatic romance of the immediate post-war variety without it also being a pastiche.

Perhaps there is a limit, a level that cross-media influence can’t exceed. A book is ultimately a book and a film is a film. Yet there can’t be a limit to the variety of ways in which human beings model their representations of the world and its narratives. Humans evolve and the world evolves and, so, mental representations have to evolve to keep up with nascent phenomena. If film changes, so too do the available ways in which our proceptive modelling of events can be prototyped. Perhaps Cain’s, and McCarthy’s, and my own modes of film-influenced structuring will seem archaic after the advent of immersive full-scale holographic entertainment and PFM becomes PHM (actually probably not that much different from Flaubert or Dickens visualising their players organised on stage sets). Whatever the outcome, it is apparent that one media has the potential to profoundly influence the nature of another. In some cases, and at some stages of evolution, the influence of one particular art may be paramount. As Cohen concludes:

[…] the cinematic precedence, given the background and the practical demonstration through texts, has a particularly *privileged position* in determining and analysing the new forms adopted by the classic modern novel. Those who insist on an even, uninterrupted development from the nineteenth- to the twentieth-century novel turn their backs not only on history but on the development as well of parallel arts which collide crucially at the turn of the century. [Cohen’s italics][[230]](#footnote-231)

Cinema was the first new art form in history. The existing arts, from physical performance to painting, sculpture to poetry, have their origins so far back into prehistory that it is possible to say that, practically, they have always been with us. The moving picture required a level of technical advancement that emerged from the Enlightenment and built up momentum through the industrial age, to give life to it at the end of the nineteenth century. Out of this technical age emerge new ways of seeing the world and new expressions of art to respond to the new experiences. With the advent of new forms of entertainment in the twenty-first century, and new ways of reading books, it may be that art is adapting again, but even the worldwide web, though it has brought the global into the home, relies predominantly on pre-existing forms: writing; photography; sound recording; the moving image. Cinema may be the last possible new art or, perhaps, human evolution will allow for another. It would be interesting to know if any new medium could occupy such a privileged position again.

## Conc. 4: Segmentation

When I commenced this study, I had an idea that the process of segmenting texts and providing synopses would be a useful, if not essential, tool for analysing those texts. Describing a narrative discourse requires some kind of abbreviating technique to make this possible. An exacting description of a discourse would be at least as long as its subject and, consequently, impractical. An exacting description of just one scene in a film might require an entire book to really do it justice, although modern films are generally furnished with audio descriptions in real time for those with impaired sight, which seem to suffice for a real-time reception.

What I had not anticipated is the way in which segmentation creates theoretical resonance for the way in which we process texts and the way in which they are produced. To create a segmentation (and indeed, a synopsis) is to evaluate the individual gists, the propositional information of the individual segments in ways which effectively summarise them and their contributions to the whole. Doing this requires modelling and processing of the type already discussed, with a conscious attempt to then reduce the kernel of the segment into a description that can communicate the gist to others.

In this study, I have provided a variety of segmentations, from those informed by the Bordwell/ Thompson prototype to others of my own derivation. These range from the more purely structural (*Double Indemnity* – film), to a simple aide mémoire (*No Country for Old Men* – film), to more complex descriptions such as that for McCarthy’s novel. My own segmentation for *Jacks* is particularly brief: it’s just for me to keep track of the contents of the chapters and their basic gist effects so that I have an overview of the pattern of the narrative. I need nothing more than this, as this is sufficient trigger for recall. As time goes by and I produce other works, however, much of the detail of the text will become more distant in memory and less liable to easy recall. Then I might need a fuller account to enable that overview, the creation of which will, of course, render the narrative more fully into recollection. The act of creating the segmentation forces a structural understanding of the text by the act of summarisation of the individual boundary effects.

This is not to say that segmentation is entirely objective. My gists may be different to another’s, in the same way that we receive full texts in different ways and with different apprehensions of macromeaning. Propositional information is hierarchical, in that there are scales of relevance. Establishing positioning in terms of relevance is part and parcel of the process of establishing sustainable meanings.

With Emmott’s tracking formula we can at least agree which entities are in which segment and in what capacity (she occasionally uses the term ‘segment’ in her book), which might be enough in some instances, though we might also be able to state categorically some of the outcomes (if characters are introduced for the first time, leave permanently, are killed etc.). At best, however, the segmentation can provide a really effective view of a narrative, particularly if it reinforces a full reception of the text.

All narratives of any duration break down into segments, even if the onset and cessation of those segments is not always clear or tends to overlap with neighbours. Most novels are divided into scenes if not chapters; a film script is essentially a segmentation with added description and dialogue. The reception of texts is a process of reading or viewing (or listening to) the segments in order, establishing propositions, speculating on others and working towards the final boundary. To create a segmentation is to summarise this process in a way that makes it comprehensible to oneself and (hopefully) to others.

Producing narrative texts is a process of producing segments and putting them in order. Regardless of creative technique (the giant ‘splurge’ method followed by refinement in cycles of editing, the exacting initial treatment or plan, or all points in between), at some stage the function of the individual segments in the context of the whole has to be addressed if the text is to operate successfully. The success of the work depends on this and so the competence of the producer of the text in understanding and marshalling the individual boundary effects in a satisfactory manner should be fundamental to the skill sets of producers of texts. Skills are always on a cline, however, which is why some texts seem to ‘hang together’ well and others seem to possess odd digressions and narrative *culs-de-sac*. Perhaps the mark of truly great creativity in the narrative arts is the ability to get one’s segments working effectively in the context of an engaging discourse (with the aforementioned proviso that, if one’s discourse is utterly compelling at a microstructural level, you can probably get away with anything!).

To add to my collection of segmentations I have composed one for Jack Trevor Story’s novel *The Trouble with Harry* (1949).[[231]](#footnote-232) In this I have fused elements of synopsis and segmentation together, in an attempt to provide an overview of a discourse that combines gist summations with something of the tone of Story’s prose. It’s an experiment, but one which may prove useful in advancing my research in the area of narrative comprehension. It’s not a new idea necessarily. Film treatments can run to tens of thousands of words and contain lines of dialogue and detailed character descriptions. They generally try to communicate something of the tone and texture of the proposed film, even if for the purely financial aim of providing cues to prompt a potential producer/director to create convincing mental models of a putative film that leads to a commission. My Trouble-with-Harry segmentation is thus a kind of treatment. Some prose writers work like this. I remember a radio interview with the novelist Andy McNab (author of *Bravo Two Zero*, 1993), in which stated that the genesis of each novel takes place in an audio dictation describing the putative novel, sequentially detailing the narrative before the first word of the text is written.[[232]](#footnote-233) Writing of texts of any duration takes place in segments, with very rare examples of single ‘sittings’, and all sustained narrative is subject to subdivision. I suggest that, as a tool for analysis and for the production of texts, segmentary approaches have high value and ongoing repercussions for the field of cognitive narratology in investigating what types of processing events are taking place during the production and reception of texts.

This sense of segmentation or particulate nature of texts has repercussions for adaptation studies. Earlier on, I introduced Cohen’s notion of ‘discrete units’ and Chatman’s conception of story ‘kernels’ and ‘satellites’. The key here is in the word ‘story’. As we have seen, narrative discourses provide cues for receivers of texts to construct story worlds by drawing on schematised knowledge bases to create mental models of worlds, enactors and events that can build into fully realised universes in which scenarios play out, can be understood, and provide gists or senses of macromeaning. Integrated into these scenarios are the styles, tones and artistic variations that create the individual textures and intricacies of those universes. In adaptation, if we forget the translation of one discourse into another and think about Chatman’s kernels of story and Cohen’s paradigms of connotation (see quote, p. 36), then what persists in successful adaptation is at a level of story, manifested in Metz’s ‘intentional effects’. Both film and writing can create qualities of tone, emotion, style, mood etc. that have similar effects on receivers that are perhaps cued by different discourse factors, but derive the same resonance.

If I want to adapt my chapter ‘PARROTS’ in a way that captures the feeling of a moment of existential loneliness (and its solution), I might chose to shoot footage early in the morning when there is no-one about. To underline this, I might then add a soundtrack that relies on very subtle music or, better, no music at all. The various street sounds might have to be tuned-out or attenuated in a way that loses the high frequencies and forces them into the deep background. I might draw on a schema from the ‘murder’ scene in the original version of *Blow-up* (1966), which I seem to remember (rightly or wrongly) is sound-tracked by the susurration of rustling foliage in the wind.[[233]](#footnote-234) One way or another, there is a way to reproduce the effect that I strive for in the book in the medium of film.

What is true for effects is also true in global terms. If we can consider the universes of works, their story-world manifestations, as broad text worlds, it is clear that these can easily survive translation if the particles of those worlds, their ‘discrete units’ (Cohen), are managed in ways that reproduce their effects. In Bordwell’s terms:

As a distinction, the fabula/syuzhet pair cuts across media. At a gross level, the same fabula could be inferred from a novel, a painting, or a play. Thus one difficulty of enunciative theories – the forced analogy between linguistic categories and nonverbal phenomena – vanishes. [...] The conception of syuzhet avoids surface phenomena distinctions (such as person, tense, metalanguage) and relies more on supple principles basic to all narrative representation. Consequently, and contrary to what some writers believe, the fabula/syuzhet distinction does not replicate the *histoire/discours* distinction held by enunciation theories. The fabula is not an unmarked enunciative act; it is not a speech act at all but a set of inferences.[[234]](#footnote-235)

We are all familiar with such transferable worlds from numerous multi-media franchises, particularly in the era of comic-book adaptation, where the graphic translates to the small screen (as both animated and live action series), and to series of CGI-intensive feature films, as well as to numerous video games (*Spider-man* would fit into this category, with a console-based video game as early as 1982). *Star Trek* is a huge franchise that includes many manifestations of areas of its universe, with many hundreds of characters and its own made up-language (Klingon), which has a life in people’s imaginations far beyond its screen productions. These are ‘transmedial worlds’, which, with their sets of clearly understood, disseminated and perpetuated parameters, exist beyond the confines of their textual origins:

Transmedial worlds are abstract content systems from which a repertoire of fictional stories can be actualized or derived across a variety of media forms. That is, TMWs are mental constructs shared by both the designers/creators of the world and the audience/participants. The TMW is not defined by the material entity of any particular instantiation (the media platform) but by the shared idea of the world, a sort of platonic approach that situates the ontological status of the TMW in a disembodied plane. We call this mental image “worldness”, and a number of distinguishing and recognizable features of the TMW originate from the first version, or *instantiation*, of the world but can be elaborated and changed over time. For example, the world of Middle Earth has its origin in the writings of J. R. R. Tolkien, but it has been reinterpreted by Peter Jackson’s films or the designers of the *Lord of the Rings Online* (LOTRO) multiplayer game. TMWs often have dedicated fans invested in both expanding the world (for example, by writing fan fiction) and keeping watch over new instantiations, making sure they respect the original spirit of the urtexts’s actualization.[[235]](#footnote-236)

Thus, thoroughly constructed worlds can be both robust, and compelling to a point which precipitates a high degree of valorisation:

A factual error about an important element of the mythos [establishing story], the invention of a new place that disrupts the original topos [setting], or a character not conforming to the particular ethos [‘moral codex’ of character behaviour] defined in the urtext’s actualization will cause a bitter uproar in the fan community.[[236]](#footnote-237)

So robust that their rules are not only translatable, but qualitatively essential.

To summarise, adaptation ceases to be problematic if one seeks analogues at a level of story, realised through comparable instances of discourse mediation (dialogue can, of course, simply translate intact). This brings me back to my assertion that it’s not necessarily the ‘what’ of the narrative, but the ‘what is it doing’ that matters most. If we can work out what a text is doing, at a level of reception, then we can create an adaptation that does similar things by utilising the resources of the adaptive medium. It is clear that styles and emotional cues, world-building factors and characterisations etc. can translate across media in ways which fulfil audience expectations (if not entirely satisfactorily in every instance!). In narrative terms, one can construct elements across media that produce similar effects at boundaries and, hence, similar accumulated effects at the final boundary. It’s all to do with segments, what those segments do and how they are arranged. In film as well as fiction, this is the critical factor in creating effective narrative texts. When there is commonality of effect, and commonality of structural objective, then there is also the capacity for influence to seep from one form of art to the next.

## Conc. 5: Outcomes for writing and creative writing pedagogy

So, what can we say about possible practical uses for these conclusions? Part of the rationale for my wanting to pursue this line of research was to formalise ideas I’ve been developing as part of my creative writing practice and teaching. On a practice basis, as I’ve already stated, achieving satisfactory structure is often the most crucial element in whether a project succeeds or fails. In my experience, most writers above a certain standard can produce good small scenes or descriptions, possibly convincing dialogue, but they will often fall short when putting these together in macrostructural patterns that effectively communicate or provide a well-mediated discourse. In my own writing, it these structural challenges that have proved the most intransigent. Writing a full-length novel is a major project that can occupy months or years, and knowing how to structure the discourse, essentially ‘what kinds of things to put at what kinds of points’, to derive a satisfactory structure, are fundamental to achieving one’s goals of communication and, indeed, providing the possibility of publication. The longer the project – the greater the extent of the text – the greater the structural challenge. Which is where film comes in.

Of course, film as structural exemplum is hardly new. ‘Screenwriting is structure.’ and those who have paid many hundreds of pounds for one of Robert McKee’s famous ‘STORY’ seminars will know that much of how he presents ideas of structure are through film examples. The same is true of numerous ‘how-to-write’ books. Robert J. Ray’s popular *The Weekend Novelist* series, that I have already mentioned, breaks down the novel-writing journey into a year of weekend tasks, citing such script-writing terms as ‘plot point’ and ‘midpoint’ and using examples of novels that follow traditional filmic macrostructures (in my copy, Anne Tyler’s *The Accidental Touris*t) to demonstrate exactly this what-kinds-of things-to-put-at-what-kinds-of-points way of thinking.[[237]](#footnote-238)

In structural terms, film can be experienced with brevity. A hundred minute film on electronic media can take a hundred minutes to watch, or be slowed down, re-run, paused and accelerated to get through to significant plot points or boundaries; a novel might take many hours to read and still not yield its structural secrets easily. In the case of classical Hollywood, the salient features may even be telegraphed with musical cues or especially long black screen time or whatever. We may even be able to anticipate when it is time for certain things to happen and then, perhaps, be disappointed when our expectations are thwarted (the end of *No Country for Old Men*). In effect, we already know about structure through film without perhaps being fully conscious of how it is doing what it’s doing. By using film in a deliberate and conscious way to examine structural issues, that schematised knowledge, perhaps literally, ‘scripts’, is foregrounded to an extent that it becomes explicit rather than tacit. By looking at the ‘nuts and bolts’, one gets to learn how to build an engine. By studying a multiplicity of examples, of macrostructural manifestations of the possibilities of narrative, *superstructural* prototypes can be elicited, understood and added to the resources of schematised memory.

By way of example I will outline a sample lesson plan that uses film as a teaching aid, in this case to examine beginnings. I have provided the working notes as Appendix N. This is a seminar that I have already run on one occasion, with generally good feedback. In a two to three hour session, students are first shown the beginning of a film, in this case Liliana Cavani’s *Ripley’s Game* (2002). After introductions, the opening scene is run, essentially two men meeting in a Berlin plaza, Reeves (played by Ray Winstone) and Tom Ripley (played by John Malkovich), who exchange a briefcase. They discuss why Reeves is not to accompany Ripley, before the latter takes the briefcase into an office, the entrance to which he has been standing outside. Here he meets two men and it becomes clear that he is trying to sell one of them some stolen art (the other is a bodyguard or assistant). After a disagreement, Ripley kills the assistant and takes both the art and the payoff, before returning to Reeves and giving him the money (he keeps the art). All this takes place over an elapse of around seven minutes, and all before the opening credits.

The sequence is then run in slow motion, and the nature of the different shots is described simultaneously. This particular piece is shot with some flair. Reeves is introduced in a follow shot which foregrounds his mode of dress and the briefcase. It’s apparent from a shot-reverse-shot that Ripley is watching Reeves as he crosses the plaza and so on. The intention here is to show how the film economically uses its establishing shots to set the tone and character of the film. Depending on time constraints, students may then have an opportunity to discuss what they have seen.

After this students read (and have read to them) the ‘Blitz fires’ piece (see appendix), which is, with minor detail changes, a short piece of prose which I have written to replicate the opening sequence of the film *Let Him Have It* (1991).[[238]](#footnote-239) I ask the students whether they can ‘see’ the scene. Then the film version is played to demonstrate the origins of the written piece. It’s not quite the same thing, but it does a similar job: this is *one* way of representing those images (and sounds) in written form. The students then have an opportunity to work on their own piece of writing, to create their own ‘establishing shots’ to experiment with and clarify some of the issues (hopefully). Then there is the opportunity for reading out, further discussion and conclusions. The session could be run just as a seminar or as a seminar/workshop but, in my experience, the latter model has greater impact for the student (they can also be set tasks to complete in their own time, perhaps to read out later: the overall effect is similar).

Beyond beginnings, such seminar/workshop based exercises can similarly examine the possibilities and manifestations of dialogue sequences, of the focalisation and momentum of action sequences, description and how the discourse level somehow creates the level of story (even if the story world is real or historical). If the seminar above was to be run as part of a series, then I would open with a session that looks at the basics of film editing to demonstrate the relationship between narrative discourse and story. The use of film here is particularly apposite owing to its economy. As a highly elliptical form, that there would seem to be much more happening at a story level than the film discourse has time to reproduce, film can also teach us about economy in our own writing. A standard beginner’s error is overwriting in the sense of putting in too much information (what people had for breakfast, when it is entirely irrelevant; outlining every event on a journey when only a small part is germane). Although it should always be stressed that filmic models are not the only way to access the methodologies of creativity, in practice it provides a useful tool in providing this foregrounding and development of conscious schematised knowledge of some of the possibilities of written fiction. From my research here, I suggest that works not just at a structural level, but right down to individual shots and instances of focalisation and deixis in written work.

There is probably much more potential than I suggest here, which might be developed through practical application and group-work activities. Student feedback could provide clues to how effective they find these strategies; also whether there are other questions that can be addressed through filmic exempla. Though I have run the ‘beginnings’ workshop in the manner I have described above, it is also possible to adapt it to a macrostructural context. The interaction between Reeves and Ripley, and the following incident with the art buyer, forms in itself a complete narrative. Although short, there is a circularity to it, with setup, conflict (both between Reeves and Ripley and between Ripley and the art buyer and his assistant) and a conclusion and payoff (literally). Here is all of classic three-act structure in just a few minutes. Of course, this is actually an inciting incident, which will have repercussions later in the film, but it still stands alone (and, of course, students may never watch the rest!). With *Ripley’s Game* there is also the possibility of looking at the mechanisms of film adaptation, as well as multiple adaptation. Patricia Highsmith’s novel of *Ripley’s Game* (1974) is the third in her ‘Ripliad’ series and was also adapted to film by Wim Wenders as *The American Friend* (*Der amerikanische Freund*, 1977).[[239]](#footnote-240) The two films are quite different in tone (and content to some extent), so issues of discourse selection and story world representation are also open for discussion.

Although this thesis has concentrated on the nature of the cross-pollination between film and written fiction, I suggest that there is further potential for developing creative and pedagogical strategies outside of those exploiting the connection between writing and the audio-visual.

A cognitive paradigm must surely be helpful in elucidating what are, essentially, cognitive processes. The connection between everyday proception and the practices of creative writing that I have posited are just a start point for a more thorough investigation of the creative imagination and its processes. If mental modelling can be influenced by teaching practices deploying the medium of film, then there must be more avenues in which cognitive processes can be trained and advanced to better facilitate the writing process. Film does not provide all the solutions to structural challenges, even if it can facilitate some very effectively. Films are also often not that good (though some of those might provide pertinent examples of bad practice), but I believe that, to use them effectively it is at the level of processing that we must make our analyses. Some writers believe that, to understand, or attempt to understand those processes, is to slowly murder the provider of the golden eggs. I believe, in the same way that knowing that one A in music an octave higher than another is vibrating at exactly twice the frequency doesn’t stop a musician form playing a violin, knowing something of how writing emerges from unconscious and conscious processes doesn’t make a writer worse at writing sentences. On the contrary, I believe that this type of understanding can be of great use both at personal and educational levels. If we ourselves can know something of our own creative processes, and develop ways of improving them, then we can also evolve strategies for teaching others to optimise those processes and improve their own skills and craft.

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# APPENDICES

## Appendix A

## Glossary

**Boundary Effect –** My term for the particular process initiated as receivers of texts arrive at segment boundaries, during which there is a particular step up in sorting and memorising activities in preparation for creating tentative gists that can be carried forward as the narrative updates. In normal reception, the greatest level of processing occurs at the final boundary, signalling the end of the discourse and, hence, the experiencing of the total effect of all gists combined. The terminology is only a small step from pre-existing conclusions on this subject. To quote van Dijk and Kintsch: ‘when subjects arrive at episodic boundaries, they must engage in macroprocessing’ (*Strategies of Discourse Comprehension*, p. 58).

**Hinge Point** – Also ‘mid-point’ or sometimes ‘point of no return’. In traditional Hollywood screen structure the halfway point in the discourse, sometimes the midway point that divides the central act of three into two parts. Often used to signal a high point in the conflict that has been initiated by the first act, in such a way that events have evolved to such an extent that there is no possibility of a return to the state of affairs extant at the beginning of the discourse. Hence, the final playing out of the potentialities of the second half of the discourse become inevitable: the point of no return. Right up until the murder in *Double Indemnity*, Huff/Neff can just walk away without recrimination; after the murder he is marked out for consequences.

**Macrostructure** – The entirety of the text from the micro to macro levels comprised of all of its communicative material. Subdivisible, so that sentence strings, paragraphs, chapters, film scenes etc. are liable to express macrostructural qualities (and thus be susceptible to macrostructural analysis). *Macrostrateigies* in discourse comprehension might lead to *macrosemantic* apprehensions including the overall upshot or *gist* of a text (indeed deriving the gist, or message of the text may be the primary reason for language users undertaking the task of engaging with the text). Each overall macrostructure, as a manifestation of all the constituent elements of the text, will be entirely unique, whereas its superstructure may conform to established principles. Language users look to apply *macrorules* to texts as part of the process of understanding and ascribing meaning. From Van Dijk and Kintsch: *Strategies of Discourse Comprehension*.

Van Dijk also uses the term in reference to the mental operations undertaken in the comprehension of discourse. The mind deploys macrostructural tactics to map rule sets and semantic frameworks onto texts as prototypes in the process of understanding:

Complex information, such as that involved in the processing of discourse and social interaction, must be *organized* and thereby reduced through the construction of higher-level, global structures. […] in comprehension and memorization, to be able to understand and to store complex information from action and discourse, language users and participants need to assign global structures to the complex semantic input: they look for or construct themes, topics, gist, point and the schemata organizing these global aspects of content. [italics as original][[240]](#footnote-241)

Macrostructural tactics are, then, instrumental in many forms of understanding, to include also ‘perception/vision, thinking, problem solving’ (*Macrostructures*, p. 287). According to van Dijk, they predominate in episodic memory functions, during the build up of structural analyses. Although I acknowledge this principal and, of course, that macrostructral effects are part and parcel of the cognitive apparatus of understanding, my main usage in this study is in the context of part structure in discourse and the ways in which parts accumulate into the whole.

**Origo** – Notional location from which current observations are taking place. If I state ‘Julian looked out over the playing fields,’ then Julian (his physical viewpoint), becomes the position from which the focalisation is occurring (the deictic centre) and all observations are relative to this. To process this text, the reader imagines, and models, this centre of perception to create a representation of what is observed, as well as modelling the spaces and directions of the textual universe accordingly.

**Proception** – Term for the mental activity of ‘daydreaming’ or modelling events that are projected to happen, may happen, or are simply being imagined. Despite a number of web searches, I have not been able to ascertain the origin of the word in this usage, owing to complications arising from its status as a legal term and in the context of positive strategies towards (human) conception. My first experience of it in my context was in academic papers given by Julia Dominguez and Alan Palmer at the Cognitive Futures in the Humanities conference at the University of Durham, 2014.

**Prolepsis** – Information about narrative events to come. As opposed to **analepsis** (backstory). Also **metalepsis**: information outside the narrative, sometimes that draws attention to the narrative as a construction. From Gérard Genette.

**Superstructure** – The basic structural ‘shape’ of a text, devoid of any semantic information. Superstructure may be considered the scaffolding on which the macrostructure hangs. Where macrostructure may be considered concrete (it is comprised of textual elements), superstructure is abstract, that it describes the positioning of information within the text without any textual substance of its own. However, superstructural qualities may be evaluated and compared and contrasted with those of pre-existing forms and, thus, we can express notions of superstructural schemata. Superstructure may be described in terms of *what it’s stating when* (or, more exactly, *what kind of narrative information is being imparted at what kind of point*). In certain texts (mysteries, romances, folk tales etc.) knowledge of canonical superstructures may condition expectations in a reading (that certain types of narrative elements are expected at certain points in the text). Even unsophisticated language users will have access to *superstructural schemata*, which will be deployed as strategic tools to divine the properties of any text with which they are engaged. Variations of such models have led some researchers to propose the possibility of *story grammars*, which might serve as a critical tool for a general approach to the analysis of narrative discourse. Also from van Dijk and Kintsch.

## Appendix B

## Synopsis of *Double Indemnity* - Novel

In Hollywoodland, insurance salesman WALTER HUFF calls on a client, H S NIRDLINGER, to renew his motor insurance. Nirdlinger isn’t home, but Huff manages a brief interview with his wife PHYLLIS. Phyllis brings up the subject of accident insurance, which sets alarm bells ringing for the experienced Huff. They arrange a meeting to include Nirdlinger, to settle the motor insurance business. Huff returns to his office, where he discusses with claims manager KEYES a recent insurance scam. Phyllis calls to cancel the appointment, to Huff’s relief. Three days later she re-arranges.

Huff meets Phyllis alone at the Nirdlinger residence, where they engage in talk of accident insurance before Huff succumbs and kisses Phyllis, consummating a desire suggested in the first meeting. Huff returns to his bungalow in Los Feliz. Phyllis arrives unannounced at nine. She describes her domestic arrangements (she is the second Mrs Nirdlinger; she has a stepdaughter, LOLA, nineteen). Huff explains to Phyllis that she wants to take out accident insurance on her husband without him knowing because she is going to kill him. Huff says that he is going to help her do it so that they can collect the insurance. He will work out how, using his insider knowledge. Later, they meet up and discuss details. Nirdlinger must die in a rail accident: such accidents pay double indemnity.

Huff calls on Phyllis and Nirdlinger at their house. Huff has asked Phyllis to provide a witness to his trying to sell Nirdlinger accident insurance. Phyllis will advise against taking out the accident cover. Huff is shocked to see that the witness is the young Lola (bearing in mind what they have in store for her father). Nirdlinger signs his motor insurance papers and, unknowingly, an undated accident policy. Afterwards, Huff is roped into giving Lola a lift down to Hollywood Boulevard, where she meets a friend, NINO SACHETTI, whom she is prohibited from seeing.

Huff continues the process of appearing to do things by the book with the accident insurance, which involves getting a cheque to a new value by deception. At his office, Huff is surprised by a visit from Lola and Sachetti. He would like a loan advanced on his car so that he can publish an academic paper and graduate. Huff runs a loan company on the side and agrees, even though it is poor deal.

The accident insurance is put in place. Huff and Phyllis meet to discuss getting Nirdlinger on a train. He is a car man. He’s due up at class reunion at Stanford, which would provide a chance to put in play the murder plan if only he can be induced to go by train. Within a few days the solution arrives: Nirdlinger has broken a leg and cannot drive.

Huff arranges a complex alibi, involving his Filipino house bay, a visit to a wine company and an elaborate sequence of phone calls. He leaves his bungalow dressed in similar clothes to those Phyllis has phoned to say that Nirdlinger is wearing. He drives to Hollywoodland and hides behind a tree until Phyllis stops nearby with Nirdlinger. She gets him to hobble back to the house on the pretext of having left her purse. When he is gone, Huff climbs into the car; when he is back, Huff waits until they get to a quiet stretch and breaks Nirdlinger’s neck with a crutch. Nirdlinger is in the boot. Phyllis drives to the station and Huff gets onto the sleeper train to Palo Alto pretending to be Nirdlinger. When the train is moving slowly out from Los Angeles, Huff diverts a witness and drops off the back of the observation platform.

Phyllis brings Nirdlinger’s body in the car. Huff is shocked to see the diminutive Phyllis dragging it along on her back using a rope apparatus that Huff has devised. They lay the body on the tracks. In the car, getting away, Huff and Phyllis argue violently. When he gets home, Huff makes calls to cement his alibi. Later, the significance of his crime hits home and he’s physically sick. He realises that he has done it for Phyllis and that he never wants to see her again.

The next day, Huff reads about the death in the paper. He’s called down to the office, where NORTON, the company president, talks through the predicament with Huff and Keyes. He wants to push for a verdict of suicide, so that they don’t have to pay out the $50 000 indemnity. Keyes has little respect for Norton. He says outright that it is murder. He wants to lean on Phyllis so that she caves in and admits the crime. Norton won’t have it, because of the position in which it would leave the company.

There’s an inquest. Huff has advised Phyllis to take a minister, whose presence will help sway the jury (suicides can’t be buried in hallowed ground). There’s a verdict of death in a ‘manner unknown’. Afterwards, Norton, Keyes and Huff discuss strategy. Later, to Huff’s terror, Keyes tells him he knows that Nirdlinger was never on the train. He discusses details. They are not quite right, but they are too close for Huff. Later, Huff telephones Phyllis to tell her that she will have to sue to get the money (the company will press for ‘suicide’). She tells him that Lola is taking things badly.

Lola calls at Huff’s office. She tells him her concerns (she feels confident in him since he helped out with the loan to Sachetti). Her mother died from pneumonia in suspicious circumstances. Phyllis was alone with her on a trip to the Nirdlinger’s holiday home on Lake Arrowhead. Phyllis is a nurse and an authority on pneumonia care. Huff placates Lola. He will keep it a secret, even though he knows he should tell Keyes for purposes of self-protection. At night, Huff listens surreptitiously to Keyes dictation recordings. He is in the clear for the moment. Investigators for the company have seen that Lola has left the family home and that Sachetti has started to call on Phyllis.

Huff meets Lola for dinner. She is trying to forget her suspicions of Phyllis. Huff encourages her to forget. She wonders whether Sachetti killed her father. He wants to know about Sachetti. Sachetti is the son of a doctor that Phyllis used to work for. Huff is beginning to break down under the weight of the murder. He also realises that he is in love with Lola.

Phyllis files her claim for the indemnity. It will go to court. Lola has followed Sachetti and Phyllis. It is clear to her that Sachetti cannot have committed the murder. She tells Huff that she has seen Phyllis once acting insane in front of her mirror, dressed in red and wielding a dagger. Before the death she was looking at black dresses. Lola will tell everything to the company.

Huff fantasises about marrying Lola. He knows he will have to kill Phyllis, because of what she has on him. He will implicate Sachetti by arriving at a Griffith Park rendezvous in Sachetti’s car (he has a copy of the key as a condition of the loan). He will drive her over a cliff and jump out at the last moment. He sets up an alibi using the viewing of a film featuring an actor who is also an insurance client. He makes sure he is noticed before slipping out during the performance. He steals Sachetti’s car and heads up to Griffith Park. While is waiting, at the quiet spot he’s picked out, someone comes out of the bushes and shoots him in the chest. He gets back to his own car, hidden close by, before passing out.

Huff wakes in hospital. He knows that Phyllis has got to him before he could get to her. Keyes is there. He tells Huff that Lola and Sachetti were caught at the location of the shooting. Sachetti must have also known about the insurance on Nirdlinger, which implicates him in the murder. The police will go to work on the couple to get the truth out of them. Huff can’t see Lola suffer. He tells Keyes that he killed Nirdlinger.

Norton comes down, with company lawyers KESWICK and SHAPIRO. They are working out what’s best for the company. Keyes will make the deal exclusively with Huff: a notarised confession that will enable Huff to get a head start on the law, while letting the company off their payout. Keyes tells Huff that Lola thinks that Sachetti shot him. Sachetti has been getting close to Phyllis to investigate her, because of three suspicious deaths of children at his father’s medical institution, which were blamed on the father, but were down to Phyllis (the father died a broken man). Phyllis gained property as a result of one of them, but only through the original Mrs Nirdlinger’s estate. Sachetti has found five previous deaths, through two of which Phyllis made personal gains. The extra deaths were just to complicate the trail. Phyllis is a monster, ‘an out-and-out lunatic’ as Keyes puts it.

Sachetti knew that Phyllis was going to Griffith Park that night, because she had asked him about road access after dark. Lola had followed Sachetti’s car, driven by Huff, thinking that it was Sachetti. Sachetti knew that Lola would be next on the death list, because his investigations have shown how Lola would inherit much of the property if she got married. Keyes spells out the terms of Huff’s escape. He tells him, also, that Phyllis is taken care of.

Lola calls on Huff. She entreats him not to prosecute Sachetti. Huff says he won’t. She is nice to him, but he is withdrawn, realising that any future for them was always a pipe dream. His conscience is catching up with him.

Huff is aboard ship, heading down the coast of Mexico. Keyes has arranged passage for him under an alias. Everything that has gone before has been his signed statement. Phyllis has also been put aboard. That’s what Keyes meant about her being taken care of. The ship’s paper announces the marriage of Lola and Sachetti. Phyllis talks of marriage, but they are doomed. The bullet has nicked Huff’s lung and he is coughing up blood. There’s no future for either of them. He thinks the captain has recognised them. The only thing left for them to do is to slip off the stern together, into the shark-infested waters.

## Appendix C

## Synopsis of *Double Indemnity* – Film

Insurance man WALTER NEFF stumbles out of his car and up to his office. There he starts to make a recorded confession to claims manager BARTON KEYES concerning the DIETRICHSON case. He killed Dietrichson.

In back story, Neff narrates how he arrived at the Dietrichson house in Los Feliz to attempt to get a renewal on some auto policies from Mr Dietrichson. Only his wife, PHYLLIS DIETRICHSON, is available. The two flirt and Neff arranges to return to see Phyllis’s husband the following night. He returns to his office, where Keyes is rejecting a scammed claim from SAM GORLOPIS.In Neff’s office, Phyllis calls to arrange a new appointment.

At an afternoon meeting at the Dietrichson house, Mr Dietrichson is not available again. Phyllis and Neff talk insurance and Phyllis brings up the subject of accident policies. Neff smells a rat and leaves. He drives around for a while, unsettled by his experience and his attraction for Phyllis. Neff gets to his apartment, where Phyllis visits him later. They acknowledge their mutual desire. Phyllis says that Dietrichson is violent and difficult. Cut to Neff’s confession, how he’s been thinking for a long time how one might scam the insurance agency. Back to the apartment, later, Neff will help Phyllis to murder Dietrichson if they do it his way.

Neff’s confession continues: how to prepare for the murder/scam.

At the Dietrichson house LOLA, Dietrichson’s daughter from his first marriage, is present as a witness. Neff contrives to get Dietrichson to sign an accident insurance form thinking that it is for his auto renewal. When Dietrichson retires to bed, Phyllis and Neff discuss strategy on the doorstep: Dietrichson must die in a train accident so that the policy pays out double indemnity. Dietrichson is due at a reunion at Stanford soon. Neff gets to his car, where he finds Lola. He gives her a lift to a pre-arranged meeting with her boyfriend NINO ZACHETTE, whom she is banned from seeing on grounds of unsuitability. Zachette is short tempered with Neff. Neff narrates that meeting her had made him feel uneasy, bearing in mind that plans that he has for her father.

Phyllis and Neff meet at a food market (it’s an ongoing arrangement to avert suspicion). Dietrichson has broken his leg in an oil-field incident and will go to his reunion by train. Phyllis and Neff affirm their love.

At Neff’s office. He hasn’t seen Phyllis for a week. Keyes enters and discusses the possibility of Neff becoming assistant claims manager, which Neff declines. Keyes is disappointed, but makes humour out of it. Phyllis calls to finalise arrangements for Dietrichson’s murder.

Neff puts an alibi scheme into operation. He gets himself noticed in the garage at his apartment, makes a toll call to a colleague, dresses in the same colour as Dietrichson, sets tell-tale pieces of card in the mechanisms of his phone and doorbell and gathers materials to fake a plaster cast. He walks over to the Dietrichson house, where he hides in the back of the one of their cars. Phyllis and Dietrichson get into the car. Phyllis drives them away. In a quiet detour she sounds her horn and Neff breaks Dietrichson’s neck.

Phyllis drives them to Glendale station, where Neff pretends to be Dietrichson, walking with his crutches and keeping his face as concealed as he can using the brim of his hat. He gets onto the train and moves to the observation platform at the back, where he encounters a witness, JACKSON. On the pretext of having left his cigars in his coat further down the train, he allows Jackson to go and find them. At a pre-arranged spot, he drops off the back of the slow moving train and meets Phyllis, who has arrived by car with Dietrichson’s body. Neff hauls it onto the tracks. They leave the hat and crutches and, after a tense moment where the car won’t start, they drive off, discussing strategy. Phyllis drops Neff off close to his apartment. Once again, he makes an appearance to the garage attendant and walks off to get something to eat, with the sudden anticipation that everything is going to go wrong.

Neff narrates that he was beginning to break down emotionally. At the office, Keyes tells him about Dietrichson’s death and that a summary inquest has ruled it as accidental. The company are going to have to pay out $100 000. They convene in the office of the company chairman NORTON, who declares that he has a theory. Phyllis has been invited down. She appears, in mourning. Norton tries to make a deal with Phyllis, to accept a lower sum. His theory is that it was suicide, which would invalidate the policy. She ripostes that she didn’t even know that there was a policy and now she is being pressured to have to make a deal at a difficult time. She storms out. Keyes rounds on his boss and, in an extended diatribe, reels through the evidence of statistics to rubbish Norton’s ‘suicide’ theory. They must pay out.

Phyllis is due at Neff’s apartment. Keyes arrives. His ‘little man’ of doubt is telling him that the Dietrichson claim is a scam. He hasn’t worked out how, yet, but it is definitely not right. Phyllis arrives but, hearing Keyes’s voice, she hides behind the door when he leaves. Phyllis and Neff talk. She detects a change in their relationship.

Lola pays a visit to Neff at his office. She is suspicious of Phyllis. Phyllis was her mother’s nurse and may have been implicated in her death. Phyllis and Dietrichson married soon afterwards. Neff takes Lola to dinner and on outings to try and occupy her and take her mind off publicising her suspicions.

Neff is in Keyes’s office. Keyes has worked out how the murder went. There must have been another man involved, who took Dietrichson’s place. Jackson has been called in to identify Dietrichson by his photographs, but they don’t represent the man he saw on the observation platform. Jackson finds something about Neff familiar, but can’t place him.

Phyllis and Neff meet at the market. Keyes will reject the claim. She will have to sue to get the money. Neff doesn’t want her to sue. He tells her about Lola’s suspicions. A court case could bring out the truth. Keyes is a persistent type. Phyllis wants to pursue the money.

Neff narrates into the Dictaphone. For the first time he thought about the possibility of Phyllis, dead.

Neff meets Lola in the hills above the Hollywood Bowl. She is distraught. Zachette has been seeing Phyllis. She wonders if he was involved in the murder, yet she still loves him.

Keyes and Neff meet in the foyer of the office building. Keyes says that the ‘other man’ has turned up. Neff gets into Keyes’s office, late, and listens to Keyes’s cylinder recordings. Neff is in the clear. The other man is Zachette. Neff has an idea. He phones Phyllis to arrange a meeting.

At the Dietrichson house, Neff walks in to find Phyllis. She has hidden a gun under the cushion of her arm chair. They talk. Phyllis has been winding the temperamental and jealous Zachette up to murder Lola. Neff tells her that he knows he was just a mug from the beginning and he has been used. He is going to kill her and let Zachette take the blame. They are both rotten, but she is worst. When he goes to a window to shut out some music that is bothering him, Phyllis shoots him in the shoulder. He walks over to her and invites her to shoot him again. She can’t. They embrace. She never loved anyone until *that* moment, when she couldn’t take another shot. Neff has the gun. He shoots her twice and she dies in his arms. Neff leaves. When he gets outside he finds Zachette coming in. He stops him and persuades him to leave and make it up with Lola.

Cut to the office and Neff is finishing his confession. He is suddenly aware that Keyes has been there for some time. The truth is out. He waits for a lecture, but Keyes’s comment is brief. Neff wants Keyes to give him four hours head start for the Mexican border. Keyes says that he won’t get far. Neff rises and stumbles out of the office but collapses before he can get to the lift. Keyes has called for an ambulance, “It’s a police job.” He lights a cigarette for Neff.

## Appendix D

## Contents of Archive

**Wittliff Collections, South Western Writers Collection, 091.**

***No Country for Old Men* [Screenplay], 1987, n.d.**

**Box Folder**

*Drafts, n.d.*

**79 1** Photocopy of heavily corrected typescript, July 12, 1987. 102 pages (104

leaves).

**79 2** Typescript, heavily corrected in pencil, 169 pages (189 leaves). Irregular

pagination.

Pagination: 1-2; 2a; 3; 3a; 4-5; 5a-5c; 5c1-5c3; 5da; 5db; 5fc; 6-21; 21a;

22-26; 26a; 27-31; 31a; 31b; 32-36; 36a; 37-63; 63a; 64-67; 67a; 68-101;

101a; 102-103; 103a; 104-107; 107a; 108; 108a; 108b; 109-126; 126a;

127-137; 137a; 139-140; 140a; 141-145; 145a-145d; 146-153; 153a; 154-

157; 157a; 158-169.

**79 3** Photocopy of previous corrected typescript, with alternate page 1, and

several variations in pagination. 169 pages (153 leaves). Irregular

pagination.

Pagination: 1; 1-2; 2; 3; 3a; 4-5; 5a-5c; 5cc; 5c1-5c3; 5da; 5da; 5eb; 5fc;

6-11; 11-14; 18; 20-21; 24; 26; 26a; 29; 31a-31b; 34; 40-46; 49; 60; 63-

67; 71; 73-74; 77-80; 84-86; 90-91; 95-100; 100-101; 101a; 102-103;

103a; 104-107; 107a; 108; 108a-108b; 107-126; 127-132; 132; 133; 133-

137; 139-140; 140a; 141-145 145a-145d; 146-153; 153a; 154-157; 157a;

158-162; 164-165; 165; 166-169.

**79 4** Printout draft with minor pencil corrections, 104 pages.

**79 5** Printout draft with no corrections, 104 pages, plus manila folder marked

“No Country – old orig script.”

*Fragments, n.d.*

**79 6** Typescript pages with holograph corrections, 28 leaves, plus folder labeled

“No Country.”

**79 7** Typescript pages with holograph corrections, 66 leaves, plus folder marked

“No Country.”

***No Country for Old Men*, 2003-2007, n.d. [Novel]**

*Correspondence*, 2004-2005, n.d.

**80 1** Della Ulibarri invoice for typing services, November 22, 2004 (2 leaves).

Gary Fisketjen to McCarthy, January 3, 2005. ANS (1 leaf) plus 6 page proofs.

**80 2** Amanda Urban to McCarthy, March 4, 2005. TLS (1 leaf) plus 26 page

enclosure.

**80 3** Barry [King] to McCarthy, undated. TL (3 leaves) plus 5 photocopy pages

and folder. Discusses and provides suggestions for ms pages relating to

Chigurh’s treatment of his injuries.

*Notes*, 2007, n.d.

**80 4** Texas sheriff notes, photocopy and typescript pages, plus a pencil rendering

of a main street scene “courtesy Benny Rodriquez.” (18 leaves).

**80 5** Page reference and notes, holograph and photocopy pages in folder marked

“Bell March ’07.” (5 leaves).

**80 6** “No Country last notes. Country talk…” Typescript pages with

annotations. (3 leaves) plus folder.

*Drafts*, 2003-2004, n.d.

**80 7** Typescript with holograph corrections in pencil. (379 leaves) Irregular

pagination.

**80 8** Typescript and photocopy draft with holograph corrections in pencil.

Various sections. (271 leaves).

**81 1** Partial photocopy of previous draft. No holograph corrections; fewer pages,

in folder labeled “Tickets” and marked [by typist] “rec’d 10/21/03 @ 4:30.”

167 pages (182 leaves).

**81 2** Printout draft with holograph corrections. May 10, 2004. Numbered: 1-89;

83-196. 196 pages (203 leaves).

**81 3** Photocopy of corrected printout draft #A. Holograph corrections begin on

p. 191,with note: “1st proofreading May 12, ’04…Della has xrox pp. 191-

264.”

Numbered: 1-82; 81-200; 201a; 201-241; 242a; 242-264. 264 pages (268

leaves plus folder).

**81 4** Printout draft with holograph in pencil. “Late draft.” 308 pages (328

leaves). Irregular pagination.

**82 1** Photocopy of printout draft with minor holograph corrections in pencil.

“Late draft – after pencil corr’s.” 320 pages.

**82 2** Photocopy of printout draft with minor holograph corrections in pencil. “X

of final draft – a few corr’s (in Xerox).” 319 pages.

**82 3** Printout draft with minor holograph corrections in pencil. “Final draft

w/some pencil corr’s June 10 2004.” 319 pages.

**83 1** Printout draft with minor holograph corrections in pencil. “Final draft. Orig

of 2 copies sent to NY June 10 04.” 320 pages.

**83 2** Printout draft with minor holograph corrections in pencil. In folder marked

“June 12 ’04 / Shred (old x’s).” 342 pages.

**83 3** Printout draft with no corrections. “Final draft Nov 22 no corr’s.” 341

pages.

**84 1** Photocopy draft with editorial annotations in red ink. Marked “Due 15 Nov

[Mon].” 320 pages.

*Fragments*, n.d.

**84 2** Typescript pages with holograph corrections in pencil. Includes

McCarthy’s list of alternate names for Chigurh, including Chingo, Chigaret,

Chigrey, Chingore and Chigore. Labeled “\_\_\_\_\_Country (Texas, 1984).” (3

leaves).

**84 3** Typescript pages 184a-184b; 239a-239h; 242a with holograph corrections

in pencil. In folder marked “No Country - new pp. (All x’d and into MS).”

11 leaves plus folder.

**84 4** Typescript pages in section titled “Prison” in folder marked “Prison + misc

(n/useable).” Corrected. 19 leaves plus folder.

Typescript pages in section titled “Motel.” Holograph corrections. (8 leaves).

Various corrected typescript pages (11 leaves).

**84 5** Photocopy of corrected typescript pages with no holograph corrections. (135 leaves).

Photocopy of corrected typescript pages of sections apparently unrelated to *NoCountry*, titled “Long John,” “QM,” “Journal,” “Quarry,” and “Kid.” (8 leaves).

**84 6** Photocopy of corrected typescript pages (149 leaves).

**84 7** Photocopy of notes written on Santa Fe Institute letterhead with pencil

notations (3 leaves)

**84 8** Photocopy of corrected typescript pages 1-70a, no holograph corrections in

folder marked “Bell/Moss.” (81 leaves).

**84 9** Photocopy of corrected typescript pages (100 leaves plus annotated folder).

**84 10** Photocopy of corrected typescript pages (13 leaves).

**85 1** Typescript and printout pages with holograph corrections (32 leaves).

**85 2** Typescript and photocopy pages (3 leaves).

**85 3** Printout pages numbered 1-80, no holograph corrections. (80 leaves).

**85 4** Printout pages of Sheriff Bell’s monologues from chapter openings. Minor

holograph corrections in pencil. In folder marked “All monologues

marked I through IX #A draft.” (39 leaves plus folder).

**85 5** Printout pages numbered 1-82 with holograph corrections in pencil.

Includes some typescript pages. In folder marked “#A pp. 1-82.” (83 leaves

plus folder).

**85 6** Printout pages numbered 81-190 [#A], with minor holograph corrections in

pencil. (110 leaves plus folder).

**85 7** Photocopy of corrected printout pages 83-190 in folder marked “Copy of

2nd batch (pp. 83-190) of pp from Della w/ corr’s for her. She has this (May 7 04).” (108 leaves plus folder).

**85 8** Photocopy of corrected printout pages 191-264, May 12 2004. (76 leaves).

**85 9** Printout pages numbered 221-308 with holograph corrections in pencil.

Note on first page, “#A. Della has Xerox of this, May 18, ’04.” (89 leaves

plus folder).

*Proofs, 2005.*

**85 10** Setting copy. No corrections. Includes photocopy note from McCarthy to

Gary [Fisketjen] and Jan 5, 2005 internal memo. 341 pages (349 leaves).

**86 1** Rough page proofs, “First Pass - uncorrected.” February 8, 2005. 306 pages

(320 leaves).

**86 2** Rough page proofs, “First Pass – original with pencil corrections.”

February 8, 2005. 306 pages (320 leaves plus folder).

**86 3** Page proofs, with holograph corrections in pencil. March 29 2005. 309

pages (320 leaves).

**86 4** Page proof fragments. Various pages from March 29, 2005 proof (41

leaves).

1 loose leaf page of holograph notes, April 11 [2005].

*Production Materials*, 2005, n.d.

**86 5** Dust jacket proof, first edition (2 copies).

**86 6** Dust jacket proof for UK (Picador) edition, plus ANS from Binky

[Amanda Urban] to McCarthy, May 13, n.y.

**86 7** Promotional placard for bookstores, plus ANS from Liz Van Hoose at

Knopf to McCarthy, undated.

**86 8** Digital printouts of Cormac McCarthy portraits by photographer Derek

Shapton for dust jacket consideration, plus ANS from Liz Van Hoose, April

26, 2005.

*Reviews*, 2005.

**86 9** Photocopies of reviews from *Booklist* (May 1, 2005); *Publishers Weekly*

(May 23, 2005); and *Entertainment Weekly* (May 27, 2005).

Full details of paginations of the working versions of the novel can be located via this link: http://www.thewittliffcollections.txstate.edu/research/a-z/mccarthypapers.html

## Appendix E

## *No Country for Old Men* – Original screenplay segmentation

Key: Numerals are mine; segment headings are as original. Descriptions in single quotes are verbatim transcriptions of text from the screenplay.

**1** EXT – THE DESERT – MORNING

Two Texas Rangers in patrol cars, talking about a woman’s body, late thirties (Bell’s daughter).

**2** INT – LATE MODEL CHEVROLET SUBURBAN – EVENING

Edward Ralston is in the back with Tommy (scared). Milo Jones is driving. Tommy says it was Lomas: “I didn’t know who the damn woman was.”

**3** INT – CHURCH – EVENING

Bell and the Rev. Don Mullins talking. Bell has outlived his daughter, been in law-enforcement 43 years. Mullins: “someone at home needs you.”

**4** INT – CAFE – MORNING

Bell and veterinarian ‘Doc’ Harlan White discuss absence of bullet in body, discuss lack of good hospital facilities, talk about how the drugs and the money are drawing near.

**5** EXT – SLAUGHTERHOUSE – DAY

Cattle being driven to a chute.

**6** INT – SLAUGHTERHOUSE CHUTE – DAY

A man slaughtering cattle with a bolt gun.

**7** INT – SLAUGHTERHOUSE – DAY

Cattle on a conveyor. Ralston watches as a man cuts open a steer and extracts packages.

**8** INT – OFFICE – DAY

Ralston weighs and tests brown powder

**9** INT – OFFICE – DAY

Ralston takes off his overall and displays trappings of wealth.

**10** EXT – PACKING COMPANY – DAY

Black Suburban standing. Ralston tells man to shut down plant. Milo drives him away.

**11** EXT – THE DESERT – MORNING

Description of Moss stalking antelope

CREDITS ROLL

Moss shoots at antelope, hears another shot in the distance, walks on.

**12** EXT – THE DESERT – MORNING

Moss continues, hears another shot

**13** EXT – THE DESERT – MORNING

Moss hears a third shot.

**14** EXT – THE DESERT – MORNING

Moss glasses caldera (scene of shootout).

15 EXT – THE DESERT – MORNING

Moss advances into caldera, carnage (shotgun with drum magazine), finds injured man (asking for water), takes pistol, man offers him ‘the shit’, Moss identifies heroin, checks glove box etc., winds up window to find bullet holes, thinks.

**16** EXT – THE DESERT – MORNING

Moss trails the last man, finds him dead, finds money.

**17** INT – GROCERY STORE – AFTERNOON

Moss buys a pack of cigarettes with a $100 bill.

**18** EXT – HIGHWAY – AFTERNOON

Moss in truck with many small value items on passenger seat.

**19** EXT – TRAILERPARK – NIGHT

Moss removes high-tension lead, money is behind seat, goes into trailer to Margie. Exchange about absence and cigarettes (he recovers some from truck).

**20** INT- TRAILER BEDROOM – NIGHT

Moss getting ready to go out (to take injured man water), Margie has been crying. Moss goes out to truck and tries to start it, returns inside for high-tension lead.

**21** EXT –THE YARD – NIGHT

Moss trying to start truck.

**22** EXT – THE HIGHWAY – NIGHT

Moss driving out, takes out torch and pistol and lays them beside him.

**23** EXT – THE HIGHWAY – NIGHT

Moss drives off road towards caldera, stops, walks, finds survivor dead, hears a noise, returns to truck and disables dome light “you dumb son of a bitch. You dumb son of a bitch.”). Bronco appears and there is automatic weapon fire (“Shit, shit, shit.”). Moss bails out of truck (on cruise control), fires on passing Bronco, limps after his own truck. A new truck follows after it, machinegun fire, the truck lights come to a stop, doors slam, finds buckshot in leg, hides with shotgun as new truck passes.

**24** EXT – THE DESERT – NIGHT

Moss watches and then starts out over open country.

**25** EXT – THE DESERT – NIGHT

Moss laying prone watching his truck lights dim.

**26** EXT – THE DESERT – NIGHT

Moss retrieves attaché case from truck, vehicle arrives, Moss hides, hearing men prying off license plates and inspection plate, waits until coast is clear and reviews damage.

**27** EXT – THE DESERT – DAWN

Moss limping across desert with attaché case and shotgun.

**28** EXT – THE DESERT – EARLY MORNING

Moss approaching highway.

**29** EXT – THE DESERT – MORNING

Moss finds gas station and washes at faucet, gets change from old man at counter (for soft drink) and establishes that there is a bus to Del Rio (but not Fort Stockton), gets masking tape and pocket handkerchiefs (for wound), makes bandage, gets coffee and sweetroll.

**30** INT – THE STORE – MORNING

Moss drinks coffee.

**31** EXT – FRONT OF STORE – NOON

Moss boards bus for Del Rio, old man watches him leave.

**32** EXT – THE CALDERA – EVENING

Ralston smokes a cigar and reviews the carnage with Milo (carrying automatic shotgun with drum clip), they talk. Milo: “What you want to do about Walter and them?” Ralston: “They cant help us now.” Milo fires two holes into a fender with a portable bolt gun. Ralston: “if old Walter hadn’t doublecrossed us we wouldn’t be in this mess.” Milo: “Him and that Junior both.”

**33** EXT – THE DESERT – MORNING

Bell surveys Moss’s truck from horseback, dismounts and inserts sticks to discover trajectories of rounds, looks for blood (none), notices cruise control, retrieves dust from holes, examines where Moss lay, rides off to get perspective, comes back, sees impression of attaché case.

**34** EXT – THE DESERT – MORNING

Bell rides, sees black Bronco (license plates missing – two dead occupants), no ID, collects two cartridge cases.

**35** EXT – THE WASH – MORNING

Bell continues to examine scene, collect cartridge cases and rounds, looks for signs of activity.

**36** EXT – THE WASH – MORNING

Bell looking at Bronco and red paint mark on rock (from Moss’s truck), demonstrates ‘old West’ relationship with horse.

**37** EXT – THE DESERT – MORNING

Bell backtracks the trail of Moss’s truck to caldera, horse nervous.

**38** EXT – THE DESERT – MORNING

Caldera, vultures.

**39** EXT – THE CALDERA – EVENING

DEA; Border Patrol; Texas Rangers; State Police. Bell talking to DEA agent, thinks one got away. Dead 5 days? Bell has cut a square out of the Blazer carpet to test for drugs (brown Mexican heroin). Who wiped pickup clean? Where’s money? Where’s dope? (DEA agent knows Bell doesn’t have it). If Bell does find it (if no direct connection to the case can be established) he will keep it for the county. They discuss honesty and Bell’s pragmatism, discuss the order of events. Bell: “They never traded. They shot each other instead.” Bell thinks that the (unidentified) guy in the red pickup took the money and that he came out twice (but why? for dope?). Plus, a couple of holes in the car aren’t bullet holes.

**40** INT – SHERIFF’S HOUSE – NIGHT

Telephone call. Bell: “No. It’ll keep till in the morning.” Granddaughter (Melinda) crying down the hall. Melinda: “She must have been so scared.”

**41** EXT – BELL’S HOUSE – EARLY MORNING

Melinda (17) dressed for school, asks Bell to be careful, he watches her go, listens to a conversation on the two-way radio (‘Allen’ reports continuance of ‘Hernandez deal’). Bell offers a prayer to God.

**42** INT- SHERRIFF’S OFFICE – MORNING

Bell and secretary Bobbie Anne. How many disasters today? Cat trapped in tree. Bell gets a call to go to Doc’s.

**43** EXT – SANDERSON TEXAS – MORNING

Bell greets ‘Wallace’, visits Doc White, establishes that the dust sample is a fragment of money and vinyl. Bell thinks that there is a lot of money out there.

**44** INT – SHERIFF’S OFFICE – MORNING

Deputy Ralph: DEA has seen another body from helicopter. Bell: “See if they’ll come get me.”

**45** EXT – SCHOOLGROUND – MORNING

Helicopter arrives.

**46** INT – HELICOPTER – MORNING

Bell introduced to pilot Bobby Green, they leave.

**47** INT – HELICOPTER – MORNING

DEA agent says body didn’t have money.

**48** EXT – THE DESERT – MORNING

Two four-wheel drive vehicles waiting. They arrive at the body. Bell: “They just hovered over him and blowed everything to hell.” DEA agent and Bell send body off and retain vehicle to facilitate further investigation.

**49** EXT – THE DESERT – MORNING

DEA agent and Bell examine site, Bell pockets stained rock, ‘somebody’ followed him here. Bell: “wasn’t easy to do, neither.” Bell thinks driver of red pickup still has money. Bell: “he’s pretty smart.”

**50** INT – SHERIIFF’S OFFICE – NOON

Bell asks Bobbie Anne if any missing persons have been reported (no).

**51** EXT – FILLINGSTATION – AFTERNOON

Bell arrives (1968 Chevrolet sedan. New ones “wouldn’t outrun a fat man”), questions attendant about whether he might have seen red truck (may have).

**52** EXT – OFF ROAD SHOP – AFTERNOON

Bell asks proprietor about red truck, but gets no joy.

**53** EXT – TRUCKSTOP – EVENING

Bell asks attendant about red truck but still gets nowhere.

**54** INT – SHERIFF’S KITCHEN – NIGHT

Deputy Ralph tells Bell that he has had a phone call offering a $40 000 inducement to recover the missing $600 000. Ralph: “This stuff is like cancer, aint it.” Discuss the devil and old man at filling station seeing guy with attaché case a few days prior.

**55** EXT – FILLING STATION – MORNING

Bell finds old man recently dead in storage area, arms himself, advances into house and finds old man’s mother, oblivious. Woman: “You aint Woodrow. Who are you, sir?”

**56** INT – THE STORE – MORNING

Two state police vehicles, Bell on telephone, old man’s daughter coming from Uvalde, suspect got on bus to Del Rio.

**57** INT – BUS STATION OFFICE – MIDMORNING

Bell inquires after the driver who picked up Moss (will be in in a couple of hours)

**58** INT – HALLWAY IN BUS STATION

Driver is reported missing

**59** EXT – HIGHWAY BRIDGE – NOON

Bell with Val Verde Sheriff at road block. Old man had been dead an hour. Bell: “That they didn’t seem to have all that much trouble second guessing me.” They decide to end roadblock and discuss whether Moss might buy a new car. VV: “You think this boy has got any notion of the sort of sons of bitches that’s huntin him?” Bell: “If he don’t he ought to. He seen most of what I seen and it made kind of a impression on me.” VV askes ‘Ted’ to check on car dealerships. They go for dinner.

**60** INT- RESTAURANT – NOON

Bell and VV discuss cold-blooded shooting of survivor in truck. Bell: “He was a Mexican boy”; “I think it all begins [the new wave of crime] when you begin to overlook bad manners.” They discuss Moss’s fate and whether he would be better off if the Mexicans caught up with him rather than the Americans.

**61** INT – MOTEL OFFICE – NOON

Moss jokes with landlady, gets a room for an unspecified period

**62** INT – MOTEL ROOM – NIGHT

Moss fixes his wound and sorts out new clothes.

**63** INT – MOTEL ROOM – NIGHT

Moss takes out some cash and hides case in air duct.

**64** EXT – VIA ACŨNA – NIGHT

Moss gets a cab.

**65** INT – OFFICE – NIGHT

Moss talks to man (who nods).

**66** INT – OFFICE – NIGHT

‘Moss stands staring straight ahead. A flashbulb pops.’

**67** INT – OFFICE – NIGHT

Laminating machine. New driver’s license.

**68** INT – RESTAURANT – NIGHT

Moss eats steak and smiles at a woman.

**69** INT – MOTEL ROOM – NIGHT

Three Mexicans in early thirties search Moss’s room.

**70** EXT – THE MOTEL – NIGHT

Moss arrives by cab, but is suspicious, gets driver to hide in a driveway (on the pretext that his ex-wife is looking for him).

**71** INT – HOTEL – MORNING

Moss leaves midtown hotel, limping.

**72** INT – SPORTING GOODS STORE – MORNING

Moss buys pistol gripped automatic shotgun with two drum clips, plus tent poles etc. Clerk: “You a survivalist?” Moss: “Damn straight.”

**73** INT – HOTEL ROOM – MORNING

Moss sorts purchases and arranges by phone to meet a private vendor selling a 454 engined Chevrolet Nova.

**74** EXT – STREET – DEL RIO

[no text]

**75** EXT – FRONT OF CAFÉ – MORNING

Moss buys supercharged Nova and goes to get the title notarised.

**76** EXT – STREET – NIGHT

Moss stops a block away from the motel and takes shotgun in bag.

**77** INT – MOTEL – NIGHT

Moss gets a room next to the original one

**78** EXT – REAR OF MOTEL – NIGHT

Moss primes shotgun, cuts glass, unlatches window, enters.

**79** INT – MOTEL ROOM – NIGHT

Moss recovers money from air duct (checks it), leaves by window.

**80** INT – MOTEL ROOM – NIGHT

A Mexican in a bathroom holding a shotgun.

**81** EXT – MOTEL – NIGHT

Moss moving with two bags and shotgun.

**82** EXT – EMPTY LOT – NIGHT

Moss (relieved) drives off.

**83** EXT – MOTEL – NOON

Landlady takes two police officers to the ‘burgled’ room, then to Moss’s original room next door, Mexican kills both officers, landlady runs off, man leaves in car.

**84** INT – HOTEL ROOM – NIGHT

Two Mexicans search Moss’s room, find marked ad for car and remains of cartridge box.

**85** INT REV MULLINS KITCHEN – NIGHT

Bell tells Mullins about working out where the money was hidden in motel, feels they are “about to hear from the American team.”, news in papers, killing police officers is a new thing, Bell predicts cop killer will be executed as an apology. Bell is getting old, sent five people to their deaths at Huntsville.

**86** INT –SHERIFF’S HOUSE – NIGHT

Melinda arrives on boyfriend’s motorcycle, Bell doesn’t want him ‘over here’, Melinda storms upstairs.

**87** EXT – HURLEY TEXAS – EVENING

Moss flattens himself against a wall, two Mexicans are looking at his car, three more in another car. Moss: “Shit, shit, shit.” Moss goes to store and buys automatic shotgun, buys shelf brackets, eyebolts, rubber bands and sundries.

**88** INT – CAFE – EVENING

Moss goes upstairs and accesses attic.

**89** INT – ATTIC – EVENING

Moss kicks in access door from cafe to hotel.

**90** INT – CORNER ROOM – EVENING

Moss gets into corner room, observes Mexican watching from opposite corner room, accesses own room next door, creates auto-firing mechanism, boobytraps door with shotgun, recovers original shotgun, turns on light.

**91** INT – CORNER ROOM – NIGHT

Man sees Moss’s light coming on, talks into radio.

**92** INT – MOSS’S ROOM – NIGHT

Moss returns to corner room, observes three armed men arriving, one tries Moss’s door and is blown against the wall by shotgun, another is shot through the wall.

**93** INT − HOTEL ROOM

‘The shotgun firing’ [recoil re-aims it].

**94** EXT – HALLWAY

Shotgun kills third man, Moss sees silhouette of first dead man on wall in shotgun pellets.

**95** INT – HOTEL ROOM

Auto-firing mechanism comes to a stop.

**96** INT – HALLWAY

Moss fails to see fourth man pinned against wall, man sees Moss’s shadow.

**97** INT – HOTEL ROOM

Auto-firing mechanism resting on trigger.

**98** INT – HALLWAY

‘Moss steps into the hallway. The man against the wall sucks in a breath and steps quickly out and levels the gun to fire. Moss freezes.’

**99** INT – HOTEL ROOM

‘the rubber band unwinds one last turn and the trigger of the shotgun collapses.’

**100** INT – HALLWAY

Shotgun blast kills last man (his shot misses Moss), Moss collects things and leaves hotel, sirens in distance. Outside, Ralston’s men are dealing with the last Mexican, Milo with bolt gun (pops lock on Moss’s car and is about to retrieve money), Moss shoots a gunman, opens fire on Milo and his own car (broken glass), Milo escapes under car. Moss gets case and drives off in his own car, Milo shoots out back window and wounds Moss. Sirens getting closer.

**101** EXT – THE STREET – DUSK

Moss struggles with controls, heading out to highway. Ralston’s Suburban pulls out and picks up Milo.

**102** INT − MOTEL OFFICE – NIGHT

Injured and cranky Moss (with visible injuries) gets room and acquires Scotch tape, leaves blood trail heading to room.

**103** INT – MOTEL ROOM – NIGHT

Moss loads shotgun, dumps money out (“There is no way, no way, no damn way.”). He slits open each package of money and reseals with tape.

**104** INT – MOTEL ROOM – NIGHT

Moss rings clerk for drink (there is none), carries on checking money, someone at door (clerk with beer), Moss rings desk to get him to leave, talks to him on phone to prime him to alert Moss of any visitors, continues to check money.

**105** INT – MOTEL ROOM – NIGHT

Four packages left, clerk rings with offer of further beers if he can collect, Moss finds transmitter, transfers money to zip bag, picks up shotgun and checks adjoining door.

**106** INT – MOTEL OFFICE – NIGHT

Ralston, Milo and another man wait (clerk has been induced).

**107** INT – MOTEL ROOM – NIGHT

Moss arranges lamp and dresser to shine light at door, kicks door into adjoining room (containing couple), gets their car keys and makes them get into the bathtub.

**108** INT – MOTEL OFFICE – NIGHT

Ralston motivates men. Milo kills clerk with bolt gun addressed to base of skull.

**109** INT – MOTEL ROOM – NIGHT

Moss phones desk and leaves it ringing.

**110** INT – MOTEL OFFICE – NIGHT

Ralston and others hear phone and halt.

**111** EXT – MOTEL – NIGHT

Man with automatic weapon sees Moss come out of adjoining room (surprised). Moss approaches car, man (“Hold it there, buddy.”), Moss shoots man, gets into car and drives off, Ralston produces Uzi and fires after.

**112** INT – CAR – NIGHT

Moss, with glass all around, accelerates away without lights.

**113** INT – CAR – NIGHT

Moss checks mirror.

**114** INT – CAR – NIGHT

Lights behind.

**115** INT – CAR – NIGHT

Moss drives into wash, stops, exits car, sets himself up behind door and fires on Suburban as it passes (bulletproof).

**116** INT – SUBURBAN – NIGHT

Milo calmly at the wheel. Moss fires again.

**117** EXT –THE WASH – NIGHT

‘Moss firing the second shot. The shot rattles off the glass.’ Moss manoeuvres car out of wash and back towards motel. Suburban waits.

**118** EXT – RANCH ROAD – NIGHT

Moss collects his own car and bursts off, Suburban squeals to a stop, approaching from the opposite direction.

**119** INT – CAR – NIGHT

Moss pulls away, into fourth at 130MPH, ‘Two jets of red raw flame burn from the tailpipes behind him.’ Desk phone is still ringing.

**120** INT – CAFE – DAWN

Moss finishes breakfast, taxi arrives.

**121** INT – CAB

Moss wants to go to Eagle Pass, discusses shootouts with driver, clerk is dead.

**122** INT – EAGLE PASS – NOON

Moss emerges from shower, unwraps new clothes.

**123** INT – BANK – NOON

Moss comes out of safety deposit room with key.

**124** INT – CAB – AFTERNOON

Moss in Pedras Negras (Mexico), continues to Carasco.

**125** INT – CLINIC – AFTERNOON

Moss sees nurse.

**126** INT – CLINIC – AFTERNOON

Moss sees doctor, has developed fever.

**127** INT – CLINIC – MORNING

Nurse is looking after Moss, knows pistol is in drawer, they joke about the attraction of him being a bad man.

**128** EXT – CUSTOMS HOUSE – EAGLE PASS

Bell collars Moss coming back into the US, but he’s not arrested.

**129** INT – CAFE – NOON

Bell and Moss discuss options and history of shootouts. Bell thinks he know who the Americans are and has fingerprints from the top of Moss’s car, Ralston has used Moss to kill the Mexicans. Bell wants Ralston (revenge), tells Moss about Milo and the bolt gun, also that Moss’s mother in Witchita Falls is not safe [continuity problem: in Scene 19 Moss’s mother is said to be dead], Bell has arranged private detective to look after Margie. Bell wants halves on the money ($325 000) and has the transmitter to lure Ralston. They shake on the deal. Bell asks Moss why he returned to the caldera (to take injured man water).

**130** EXT – STREET – AFTERNOON

Bell and Moss leave hotel, Moss with bag and shotgun.

**131** EXT – STREET – AFTERNOON

Moss and Bell collect money, Bell has H & K ‘automatic rifle’.

**132** INT – CAR – AFTERNOON

Moss will drive. Bell knows about armoured Suburban and has armour-piercing rounds, knows for certain that Ralston will come and that it will all pan out back on home turf.

**133** INT – CAR – AFTERNOON

Looking out from the car to the vast open space.

**134** EXT – THE DESERT – NIGHT

Moss and Bell in the desert, bonfire, distant thunder, Bell had hitherto concealed transmitter amongst lead bird shot. Moss talks about his origins (been here three years owing to breakdown). Bell relates speech about his ancestors arriving, Bell was in WWII, daughter’s husband killed in Vietnam, dislikes granddaughter’s boyfriend, daughter is dead, children can be superstitious (they love people who go on to die). Moss is surprised that Bell took the money. Bell: “I aint took it. I got some pretty big questions about all this but that aint one of em.” Moss will take first watch.

**135** EXT- THE DESERT – NIGHT

Moss dozes, a plane is circling, Bell is already armed, plane lands on road, Bell has dropped transmitter down the radiator. Moss: “No goin back. Is there?” Bell: “No goin back.”

**136** EXT – DESERT ROCKS –NIGHT

Bell wakes Moss, car lights in the distance.

**137** EXT – DESERT – NIGHT

Almost 5, Bell knows daylight is coming and they will be exposed (plane will take to the air). Moss wants to open fire on the truck, but Bell thinks there is no-one in it. The differing parties know how each other think. They can’t allow the plane to become active.

**138** EXT – DESERT – NIGHT

Bell and Moss cross the road and move through the scrub.

**139** EXT – DESERT – NIGHT

They see the Suburban. Moss wants to get in and hotwire (to “bust off a piece of the tailsection and come back.”), Bell will shoot anything in the car that isn’t Moss, wants to know if Moss will bail, but Moss reassures him. Moss gains access to the Suburban, but Milo is in the back seat and addresses the bolt gun to Moss’s head. Moss must turn the car around.

**140** EXT – DESERT – NIGHT

They pull up alongside an identical car 200 yards away, Milo tells Moss to shut it down. They exit. Ralston threatens Moss for the money (which he nervously denies having), Milo blows out Moss’s elbow with the bolt gun (he falls to the ground in agony).

**141** EXT – DESERT – NIGHT

Bell is moving (“Be right back. Sure you will. I aint too old for this kind of work. I’m too dumb.”), he hears Moss’s cry and moves along more quickly.

**142** EXT – ROADSIDE PARK – NIGHT

Moss is injured, tells Ralston that Bell has the money, then that he only has half. Ralston tells Moss that he has “bought it”. Milo gets safety deposit box key and gets ready to kill Moss (bolt gun), but Ralston needs Moss to sign for the box. Ralston is amused. Bell has arrived: “Leave the boy alone, Ralston. I got your money.” A moment’s pause. Bell opens fire. Everyone is hit except Ralston and Moss. Milo is firing his shotgun from behind the gas tank, which is hit and explodes, filling Milo with shrapnel (“Damn tank blew up. Tank got me, Boss.”). Ralston shoots Milo in the head and then goes to shoot Moss. Moss brings out the pistol he has been lying on and shoots Ralston in the face. Ralston drops dead. Moss observes scene (“Both of them Suburbans are out of commission.”), bodyguards are dead, goes to Bell to reassure him, looks at plane in grey light and collects key back off Ralston’s body.

**143** INT – HOPSPITAL – DAY

Melinda comes to see Bell, surrounded by equipment. Bell will tell her about everything that has happened. Melinda has returned engagement ring to boyfriend. Bell: “I sure do love you.” Melinda: “I love you.”

**144** INT – BANK – MORNING

Ralph is organising a queue of 32 people to make (unnotifiable) deposits of $10 000 for an account to build a new clinic. Banker agrees to the scheme.

**145** INT – MOSS’S TRAILER – EVENING

Margie is crying: she wants to know what’s going on (Moss’s injuries). Moss teases her about having another man in during his absence and that he just got into a fight. She embraces him and she heads out to get steaks and wine. Moss hands over (to her surprise) keys to their new truck. He is going to take her to Vegas.

MARGIE

(Pausing at the door) We aint on the run are we?

MOSS

No. Are you going or not?

MARGIE

I’m going. Are you all right?’

MOSS

I’m fine. Go on.

MARGIE

I’ll be back as quick as I can.

MOSS

Well go on. I’ll be right here.

## Appendix F

## *No Country for Old Men –* Novel Segmentation

**Key:**

Roman numerals – Chapter number

Italics – Free indirect discourse (non-italic – third person)

Indent – Section starting on new page

Full stop – Sections separated by a time/space line

**I**

*Sheriff Bell, death row at Huntsville.*

Chigurh handcuffed, kills the deputy (Haskins) and escapes, kills a driver on the road (bolt gun) and steals his car.

Moss stalks the antelope, misses, finds the scene of the shootout (drugs), tracks the survivor (now dead) finds the money, returns home, is questioned by Carla Jean. Moss wakes, talks to Carla Jean, drives out to the site of the shootout (to take water to the now dead man – drugs gone), is chased by the truck, shooting, he escapes down the river.

**II**

*Bell talks about threat in the past, risk, the guy who shot back, two murderers (folie a deux), wife won’t read the papers.*

Bell at the courthouse, gets called out by Torbert. Bell and Wendell join Torbert at the dead deputy’s car, dead man (Bill Wyrick) is in the boot, Bell instructs Torbert to take the body, Bell leaves and finds a dead hawk in the road, he meets Lamar at the (dead deputy) crime scene, ‘something’ is new.

Moss gets in on the bus, goes home, to Sanderson, sends Carla Jean to Odessa (to her mothers, leave forever), she still doesn’t know about the money.

Chigurh pulls into the filling station at Sheffield, plays coin toss with the proprietor. Chigurh drives out to meet the men in the Ramcharger, drive to Moss’s truck (takes inspection plate), drive to the scene of the shootout, transponder, Chigurh kills the two men from the Ramcharger and takes the car.

**III**

*Bell talks about his preference for traditional tools (firearms and car), executions, never had to kill anyone, old-time sheriffs, no qualifications required.*

Moss arrives at Fort Stockton on the bus, takes his leave of Carla Jean (for the last time), “Don’t hurt nobody.”

Bell at home, phone rings (car fire in the desert), the Bells drive out to meet Wendell, Bill Wyrick’s car. Bell at the courthouse, calls Wendell (‘get the horses and bring them out’). They ride out to Wyrick’s car, they ride to Moss’s truck, they ride out the caldera and examine the scene of the shootout, they find the man who walked off with the money, they return, Bell calls up Torbert and goes to Lamar’s office to collect him, Torbert tells Bell about Wyrick’s strange wound. Chigurh searches Moss’s trailer, interrogates owner, phones Carla Jean’s mother. Chigurh looks for Moss at the garage where he works. Moss arrives at Del Rio, taxi to Trail Motel, pushes money into the air duct, goes out for dinner, suspicion, stays at Ramada instead, next morning, buys tools and shotgun, saws off shotgun, calls Trail Motel to hold his room.

**IV**

*Bell, sheriff at twenty-five, back from the war, feelings for his wife.*

Bell in the cafe, he takes Wendell to Moss’s trailer, ‘world of trouble’. Bell in the cafe, talks to reporter (drug trouble), he drives out to the scene of the shootout with Torbert, McIntyre (DEA) arrives (examines the scene), other officers will be coming. Chigurh shoots at a bird from his car (silencer). Moss gets a room next to his old one at the Trail Motel, extracts the money from the opposite vent. Chigurh finds the motel using the receiver, gets a room, arms himself (silenced shotgun), kills the Mexicans in Moss’s room (entry via bolt gun). Bell meets Torbert at the office, talks about bolt-gun slaughter. Moss gets to Eagle Pass via taxi, gets a room at the Hotel Eagle, finds transponder, Chigurh arrives in the early hours, Moss confronts him, escapes, Chigurh shoots him from behind (pistol), a car skids to a halt, two men (Moss shoots), crosses the bridge, buys coat from youth, heaves bag off bridge, crosses into Mexico (Piedras Negras), “I need a doctor”. Chigurh shoots at the two men from the hotel, escapes, finishes the men off.

**V**

*Bell, family came from Georgia, the couple who rented rooms to the elderly and killed them.*

Bell drives to Odessa to Carla Jean, talks to her at cafe, “They wont quit.” “He wont neither. He never has.”, Moss was in Vietnam, she married at sixteen, values him. Bell gets a call at home, drives to Eagle Pass, talks to sheriff about shootout, snowing on the way back to Sanderson, talks to Loretta about Moss and Carla Jean.

Wells meets the money man in Houston, counts the deaths, Chigurh’s character, Wells gets a room at the Hotel Eagle, interrogates clerk, examines Moss’s room and where Chigurh cleaned up, examines street scene in the morning, finds undiscovered dead woman. Wells talks to Moss in the Mexican hospital, the threat of Chigurh (the threat to Carla Jean), Wells is a hit man (special forces).

**VI**

*Bell, into the army at twenty-one, Loretta catering for prisoners.*

Chigurh drives with the injury, veterinary supplies, distraction and stealing pharmaceuticals, fixing himself at the motel in Hondo, leaves. Wells studying Moss’s bloodstains on the bridge. Bell talks to the secretary (practical aspects of dealing with aftermath of the shootout, he notices the bodies on show in the pickup, goes to Devil’s river Bridge to think. Chigurh goes back to the Hotel Eagle, waits for Wells, talks to him and kills him, Wells’ phone rings. Moss calls Carla Jean, Moss calls Wells’ phone and gets Chigurh (Chigurh will kill Carla Jean), Moss returns to the US. Bell revisits the Hotel Eagle.

**VII**

*Bell, decorated in the war, slipping standards.*

Chigurh kills the money man. Carla Jean and Mama head to El Paso. Chigurh visits Mama’s house. Moss retrieves the money from the river, goes to Rodeway Inn, prepares, buys a pickup, picks up a girl. Carla Jean calls Bell at home. Two men receive a message, Barracuda.

**VIII**

*Bell, no respect for the law, narcotics trade (Satan).*

Moss travels with the hitchhiker, to motel (philosophy), going to El Paso. Barracuda driver cleans blood off the car (Balmorhea). Bell travels towards Van Horn, burning car (Balmorhea), scene of shootout (girl dead; Moss dead), Barracuda, Bell goes to the morgue to identify Moss, returns later to the motel. Chigurh recovers the money from the motel, Bell arrives and calls for backup, nothing, Bell stays at the Rodeway Inn, tells Carla Jean that Moss is dead.

**IX**

*Bell, Carla Jean thinks the worst (Moss and the hitchhiker), truth should be simple.*

Chigurh returns the money to the senior operator (“I have no enemies. I don’t permit such a thing”). Carla Jean buries her mother, Chigurh waits for her, coin toss?, kills her. Chigurh has an accident, buys shirt as sling. Bell goes to visit Ellis (Grandad’s deputy), he’s quitting, “you wear out”, Harold (WW1), Uncle Mac (1879, killed on the porch), “This country will kill you in a heartbeat...”, failure in France (“I didn’t know you could steal your own life.”), unload the wagon.

**X**

*Bell, Ellis, old age, the killing of Carla Jean, Aunt Carolyn’s letters to Harold, Gold Star. Return to the scene of the first shootout (little left), talking to dead daughter.*

Odessa detective calls Bell, Carla Jean, Bell talks to Catron about Chigurh’s accident, goes to Odessa, talks to David Demarco about Chigurh (sold his gun), finds the other witness (“He looked like anybody”).

**XI**

*Bell, went to see Moss’s dad (“He was the best rifleshot I ever saw.” [Moss]), Moss visited relatives of the (Vietnam) dead, “You cant go to war without God.”, penultimate day on the job (“Loretta, I cant do it no more.”), talks to Huntsville suspect (burning car), conversation with prosecutor about truth/Mammon/real burning car killer (“He’s pretty much a ghost.”), “not equal to” [Chigurh].*

Bell rides out to find Loretta (“Late in the year”), desert doves.

**XII**

*Bell, demand for narcotics, standards breaking down, crime, crazies, Loretta and Revelations.*

(Fragment) Bell’s last day at the courthouse.

**XIII**

*Bell, old rock trough (who carved it?, permanence, faith), father, the dreams (father going on ahead with the fire).*

## Appendix G

## *No Country for Old Men* – Film Segmentation

(A simple aide mémoire for reference at the archive)

Opening credits. Bell voiceover – opening shots of desert.

Chigurh being arrested (continued voiceover) bolt gun.

Cut to interior. Chigurh kills deputy, washes hands, collects bolt gun.

Cut to exterior. Chigurh (in patrol car) stops motorist, kills him (bolt gun), steals car.

Moss sighting deer, shooting, tracking deer, sees injured dog, finds scene of shootout (long shot), finds injured man, finds heroin, (talks to himself – survivor?) stalks survivor, waits, finds money, walks back to truck.

Moss at trailer park, talks to Carla Jean. Night, wakes (‘alright’), goes out with water. Scene of shootout, guy is dead, men arrive, chase, shot!, dogs, in river, kills dog, morning.

Chigurh at gas station, coin toss.

Dark. Moss gets back to trailer – Carla jean must go to Odessa.

Chigurh visits scene of shootout with Dallas guys, kills them, receiver.

Bell leaving home, meets Wendel at dead motorist’s burnt out vehicle, ride to scene of shootout, Moss’s truck (‘will do til a mess gets here’).

Chigurh at Moss’s trailer, bills, milk. Questions trailer park manageress.

Moss (‘bad feeling’), Carla jean on bus to Odessa, last meeting (will buy car at Roberto’s).

Bell and Wendel at Moss’s trailer, milk (‘hunting’).

Moss arrives at Regal Motel, hides money in duct.

Chigurh phoning Carla Jean’s mother.

Moss buying clothes, goes back to motel, suspicion.

Chigurh driving (Del Rio), shoots at bird.

Bell and Wendell at diner (‘no bullet’), DEA going tout to scene of shootout.

Moss at store, gun and tent poles, back to Regal, new room next to old one, making hook.

Chigurh driving, receiver bleeps, location!

Moss continues to make hook, intercut with Chigurh getting room (intercut Moss recovering money), Chigurh prepares, kills Mexicans in Moss’s first room.

Moss getting a lift (‘shouldn’t be hitchhiking’).

Dallas office, Wells (‘loose cannon’; missing floor).

Moss arrives at Eagle Pass Hotel, preps clerk, finds transmitter, shadow at door, lights out, door lock blows out, out the window, back in alley, shot!, car comes, stops, Moss gets in, driver shot, crash, Moss hides behind car, shoots Chigurh, drives to border, buys coat, throws money over barrier, crosses border, mariachi band, ‘medico’.

Chigurh at drug store, sets fire to car (distraction), steals drugs etc. At motel fixing leg.

Bell’s office (vehicles?). Bell going to Odessa, bodies falling out of pickup.

Moss in hospital, Wells (‘sugar’), transponder.

Bell meeting Carla Jean in Odessa, beef slaughtering anecdote.

Wells sees case from border bridge. Night, returns to Eagle Pass Hotel, Chigurh follows him upstairs, conversation on fate, phone rings shoots Wells, Moss on phone.

Bell in diner with Wendel (Del Rio incident – dead mexicans), old people killers story (read from paper).

Moss crossing back to US (questions from border guard), buys new clothes, retrieves money, phones Carla Jean in Odessa (meet at Desert Sands, El Paso).

Chigurh at Dallas office (who gave mexicans receiver?), kills boss.

Carla Jean and mother in taxi, mexicans follow (mother gives away destination to mexican), Carla Jean phones Bell to say where Moss will be.

Chigurh (apparently) broken down on road, ask samaritan where one would fly from (El Paso), gets samaritan’s pickup (jet wash).

Moss at El Paso motel, talks to pool girl.

Bell arrives at El Paso motel, gunfire, dead pool girl, shot mexican, dead Moss.

Night, local police are there, Carla Jean arrives with mother, Bell.

Bell at morgue, dead Moss.

Bell talking to local sheriff (‘green hair and bones’; Sir and Ma’m; ‘pretty much a ghost’; ‘how do you defend against it?’).

Bell returns to motel, lock shot out, Chigurh inside (or not), enters, blood on floor, grill removed (coin).

Bell visiting Grandpa’s deputy (Ellis), ‘quittin’’, anecdote of Uncle Mac, (‘country’s hard on people’; ‘can’t stop what’s comin’’)

Carla Jean at mother’s funeral, returns to house, Chigurh waiting, conversation, Chigurh kills Carla Jean (off screen). Chigurh in car accident.

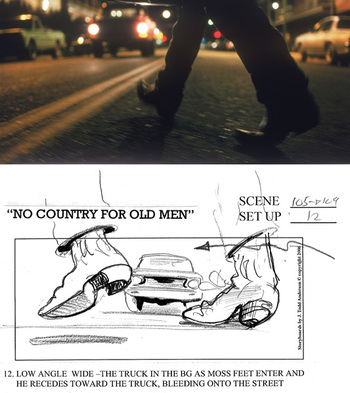
Bell (now retired) at home with Loretta, dreams of father.

End credits.

## Appendix H

## *No Country for Old Men* – Storyboard Samples

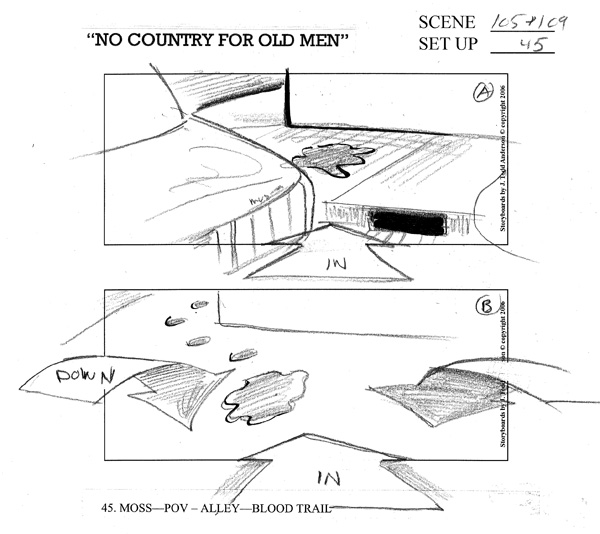
(Storyboard images and screen captures from the shootout between Chigurgh and Moss, commencing in the Eagle Pass Hotel)







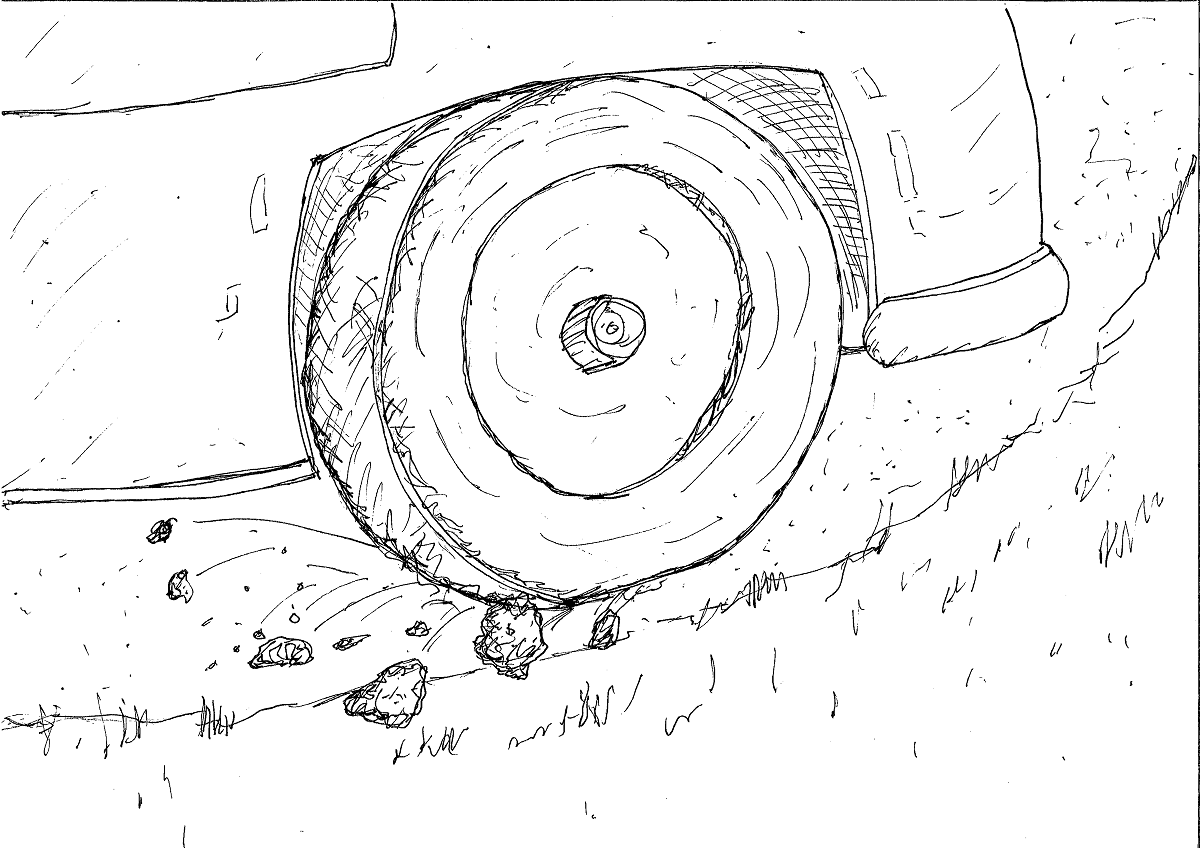
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## Appendix I

## Storyboard image from *Climbers*.

Owing to my limited drafting skills, this actually looks more like part of a 1960s Comma van than the sleek futuristic vehicle I had in mind, but it serves to give an indication of the dynamic of the uphill turn and the rocks spinning out towards the ‘camera’.



## Appendix J

## *JACKS* – Segmentation Working Version 4

This is the final working version. Titles in capitals are for extant chapters, those in lower case (asterisked) are to write. Numbers are then current extents for chapters (number of words).

TUESDAY – Krite wakes, Suzy. 1101

DESTINY – Julian introduced, wakes, quotidian day, phone messages. 1033

TUESDAY (NIGHT) – Carl introduced, Krite arrives, Carl goes home, filming Krite. 2112 SPLIT

BRICKS AND MORTAR – Carl looks at the new estate, surveyor’s report 1093

ROLLIN’ – Danny and the tarmac. Danny goes home. ADD ‘TEXTURE’ 959

STATEMENTS – Krite wakes at Diva’s, ear plugs, filming in the flat, money matters. 2451

NUPTIALS – Julian meets Serena at the wedding, Carl and Teddy Farber. 2448

PYRAMID – Carl and Serena go home, drink, think, forced Reena. 1291

PURSE – Krite at the Job Centre. 855

FLASHING – Danny at the clinic, bookies. 1489

MACAW – Bus stop lore, unease, Julian looks for the programme. 1811

BEGGARS – Carl goes to dad for a loan. Danny Foreigner. 1539

TEXACO – Krite visits Texaco, Skinny, announces blinder. 2051

POST TEXACO – Krite goes to Julian’s, problem with cash flow, blinder. 1232

DRILL – What drill made, poker going badly, being set on the terraces. 1555

PARROTS – Location shooting, Serena. 1708

STRAND – Julian at Serena’s (Carl’s) house. 1562

CRACKS – Lead stolen, retribution on car, ripping out, bad bets, Mick gets it. 1449

VESCENCE – Restaurant, Carl and Serena argue. 1777

SERRA – Serena calls at Julian’s, first liaison. 1551

COIL POTS – Krite and Attock at Job Centre, The Lamb, getting The Stuff from Tex. 1647

RODGE – Carl meets Lassiter at the hotel, £100 000. 1787

AMBITION – Krite calls at Julian’s, second liaison, Krite’s nature, Julian’s nature. 1403

MERRY-GO-ROUND – Loan shark one, Don Sutherland. 1510

PRIMACY - Carl optimistic about terrace (has sale on 4), monkeys compelled, dead Danny? 1161

FEMME – Krite calls at Julian’s and meets Serena, suggestion. 1636

DESIGNS – Carl’s Judy ambitions, out at the opera, apology, burning design. 1704

FLAWS – Terrace floods, Carl and the tar of anger 1892

THE CALL – Carl and Serena pinboard, Serena goes to Julian’s in pain. 1445

LONE − Loan shark two, bad bets, no favours from Judy, Don again. 939

VEIL – Serena at Julian’s, tells her about Natalie, Raymond, film dialogue 1. ADD 1549

SPEC – Carl looks at terrace damage again, tells Judy to forge documents. 1059

BACKFILL − Loan shark three, repayment, trench warfare. 1792

SETTS − Carl, retrospective about bank, nervous, no Judy available, empty yard. 876

TRIALS – Suzy calls at Krite’s, the courtroom, onset of blinder. 1193

THE POOL – Julian goes to pool, flashback. 1705

THEM – Krite wakes in the shrubbery. 1264

THE DISTANCE – Serena comes, weekend news (MOVE), Julian goes to stoned Krite’s: pool guilt? 1836

ANTICIPATION – Packing with Reena, build up to Judy, swimming pool. 1592

FIAT – Danny wakes up in terrace, flashback previous free day, sees Serena. 1417

DAY THREE – Krite wakes hungry, goes to Suzy’s, trial failed. 1190

COURSES – Julian and Serra, first day at the hotel. 2880

LEVELS − Carl and Judy at the hotel, investment denouement. 2698

THE BRIDGE – Julian and Serena leave hotel. 1048

BLIND − Krite wakes up from the blinder. 2056

HOLES − Danny and holes, gives Serena the news. 1197

SPECIALITEA – Krite arrives with hangover, debriefing, whisky tea, dialogue 2, bad news from Serena, ADD dialogue. 1025

BUILDINGS – Messages from the bank, Carl tension begins, Lassiter fantasy. 1381

COFFEE TOP – Serena and Danny talk business, Serena and Julian talk. 940

STALKS – Carl and Serena, Judy being coy, moving plant, first fire. 1766

PATIENCE – Serena and Danny second meeting, pawnbrokers, bookies, Krite, Julian. 1027

STEEPLES – Fire not worked, second fire, black tar. 1119

THE BUSH − Frustrating Danny, ‘I got a Krite.’ 986

SMOKES − Film description sequence, Julian and Krite in park (realisation), camera gone. 1092

K − Result of fire, police, broken Danny, own Serena, loss adjuster. 2026

CARDINAL − He can’t find Krite, to Suzy’s, case dropped, their natures, Serena calls, camera found. 2120

SPADES − Danny injury, swimming pool, Don deal, denouement. 1700

\* ‘clubs’: dishevelled figure, Krite confession and flashback.

\* ‘diamonds’: Carl at home, jewellery, denouemnent.

\* ‘hearts’: Julian and Serena wrap up.

## Appendix K

## *Jacks* – Short Synopsis

This is typical of the sort of synopsis requested by agents to accompany sample chapters.

Krite is working up to the biggest bender of all time. He’s out of work and out of his mind on drink and drugs. He’s also the sole performer in his mate Julian’s ‘existential detective film’. Julian used to be something of a player in film scripts, but is now washed up and reduced to teaching night classes in film appreciation.

Carl’s building business is going down the tubes. He’s also having an affair with his secretary, Judy. Danny works as a labourer for Carl, and is trying it on with every scam he can to help fund a gambling habit. Judy is Danny’s partner, but he knows nothing of the affair.

Julian meets Serena at a wedding. He has had a thing for her for years, since school, but she’s married to Carl. Carl is meanwhile finding out about an investment scam that might remedy his finances.

Krite is running out of money. He goes to the job centre, but it doesn’t go well. Danny is in work, but Carl is giving him and his team all the worst jobs. He’s taking out loans and his gambling is getting out of hand.

By chance, Julian runs into Serena again and they start their own affair. Krite is building up to his big ‘blinder.’ Carl meets the architect of the investment scam and, on the spur of the moment, promises £100 000. Getting this money will involve a process of fraud and misrepresentation.

At the trial of Ray Raymond, accused of murdering Krite’s niece, Krite starts the blinder. In parallel scenes, Carl takes Judy for a few days away at a conference, while Julian is at a hotel with Serena. At the end of their breaks, Carl will have found out that he has failed to exploit the scammer and is now broke and in debt; Julian will have realised that he will probably never be with Serena.

Danny has found out about the affair and is blackmailing Serena. Carl will kill her if he finds out. Krite is coming down from the blinder. Raymond’s trial has collapsed. He and Julian concoct a scheme to outfox Danny. Carl is now so desperate that he has torched his plant for the insurance money. The stress is breaking down his natural confidence. Krite finally catches up with himself and disappears from view.

There’s no blackmail money coming to Danny. He has an accident at work and goes home early to find a loan shark he has been doing business with and some ‘company’ seeking recompense… Krite finally reappears, late at night at Julian’s house. He has killed Raymond.

Carl has been found out. He goes home looking for Serena, but she is meeting Julian who is trying to finish the affair. As the Police come for Carl, Serena tells Julian she can’t let him go…

## Appendix L

## *Jacks* – Long Synopsis

More detailed synopsis permitting greater communication of tone and scenic composition.

*Jacks* is a contemporary novel following the lives of four men in their early thirties who all went to the same school. CARL is the managing director of a building firm that is struggling through the recession. Carl’s father has a longer established firm that is doing much better and Carl’s finding it an affront to his ego. He has been having physical relationship with his secretary JUDY, even though he is married to SERENA. JULIAN was in the year behind Carl and had some success in his early twenties when an original script of his was made into a film, *Parrots*. The success has long since worn off and he now scrapes a living teaching night classes. To keep his creative spirit alive he is making what he calls an ‘existential detective film’ featuring just one actor, his old school friend KRITE. Krite was injured in an accident at work three years ago and has been living off the compensation ever since, living a life of increasing hedonistic debauchery. He has an older sister, SUZY, whose daughter NATALIE was abducted and murdered about the time of Krite’s accident by ‘RAY’ RAYMOND, whose trial is about to start. DANNY is a labourer working for Carl whose ambition seems to be to bet all the money he has every time he has it, whilst resenting everyone whom he thinks has done better than him. Judy is Danny’s partner, though he knows nothing about the affair.

Julian has loved Serena since school, though he hasn’t seen her for years. They meet accidentally at a wedding while Carl is off talking to a colleague about an investment scam and realises that his feelings are undiminished. He remembers an incident at the local lido when they were teenagers that seemed to scupper his chances with her. He feels a huge loss when she has to go.

Krite’s money is running out, so he’s forced to sign on. Something in him triggers a desire to go on a monumental ‘blinder’, a drug-fuelled escapade over a period of days without sleep. He goes to his dealer to set up a purchase.

Danny is busy using company resources to make extra money, including a tarmac job and stealing a drill (ostensibly to buy himself a van). He has some success with his gambling, but it’s always frittered away. Carl sets him and his team on an unpleasant job ripping out some old terraces: Carl has never liked Danny. He also wants to take advantage of the investment scam, but Serena doesn’t like it and won’t give him her savings (a similar entreaty to his dad also falls on deaf ears). Carl and Serena have an argument that borders on violence.

By complete chance, Julian meets Serena while he is out filming background footage for his detective piece. They talk about old times, and when Julian chose her to perform in a play he produced at school. Later, she appears at his house and entices him into bed. Finally Julian is happy.

Carl meets the architect of the investment scam, ROGER LASSITER, and, again because of his ego, agrees to invest £100 000 he hasn’t got. He hopes to sell one of the terraces to raise the funds. Danny has been having even less luck with his betting and, after squandering a payday loan, has fallen into the clutches of a shark, DON SUTHERLAND.

Julian and Krite are continuing to work on the film. Julian now wants to get it finished. They talk about their ambitions. Julian’s has always been to be with Serena; Krite’s to get as wasted as anyone in history. Serena’s has always been to have a career in design, but Carl has stopped this. Krite suggests that Serena should appear in the film as a femme fatale.

Danny’s team have been careless and flooded out the terraces, causing a gable end to collapse. They cover up their mistake. Carl now cannot find the money for the investment. His natural anger is building internally, like black tar bubbling up in a cauldron. The idea of the investment is obsessing him and he decides to get Judy to make up a false order so that he can make a fraudulent application for a bank loan.

Suzy drags Krite to the trial in place of her husband BOB, who can’t face it. Krite can’t face it, so takes drugs before he goes in. Through his narcotic haze he hears snippets of terrible evidence and knows that his blinder is fully underway.

Julian’s happiness with Serena is tempered with his realisation that it is hopeless and that he has missed all the years with her. He takes a nocturnal trip to school and then to the lido to remember. The feeling of loss is overwhelming. Meanwhile Krite is getting more and more out of it, seeking the ‘MacGuffin’ that Julian has said informs the actions in the detective film. Julian confronts him in his flat to ask if he was responsible for the lido incident, which forced Serena into the arms of Carl, but he says ‘no’. Krite makes a visit to Suzy, who tells him that the trial has collapsed owing to contaminated evidence. Krite decides to get more intoxicated.

Serena has arranged a couple of days at a spa hotel with Julian; Carl has arranged similar with Judy. Both men are supremely happy with the experience until the end. Serena realises that she has made a bad choice in Carl; Carl finds out that the investment scam is a Ponzi scheme and that all of the money from the bank that he forwarded to Lassiter has been lost. At the same time Krite wakes up from the blinder, having finally slept, to find that he has seduced a teenage school friend of Natalie’s and doesn’t know how to deal with it.

Serena doesn’t know how to deal with Danny, who saw her getting into the car with Julian and is now blackmailing her. She engages Julian and Krite to help her out. Carl will kill them if he finds out about the affair.

Danny has been getting in deeper with Don. Carl has the team working on an even more unpleasant job causing more resentment. Serena gives him her gold watch as a down-payment on £20 000 he is trying to extort from her. Carl is now getting phone calls from the bank, who must be realising that the loan was taken out under false pretences. He decides to set fire to the plant in the yard to claim the insurance money to pay back the loan. His first attempt fails, but the second doesn’t. The sight of the diggers and rollers going up in flame makes him physically sick.

Danny goes to meet Serena in a pub to collect the money, but is met by Julian and Krite. He has already committed blackmail, and they have a record of it, so there’s nothing more he can do without going to jail. Krite and Julian congratulate themselves afterwards, but Krite suddenly goes quiet: he has realised what the MacGuffin is. He walks off into the fog taking, Julian realises too late, the camera with him.

The insurance loss adjuster is getting suspicious and Carl is becoming more desperate. The phone calls from the bank have stopped and he’s ignoring the mail. Judy is now hinting more and more about ‘future plans’. The sense of authority has moved from Carl to Judy.

Julian is worried. Krite has disappeared. He goes to look for him at his flat, but he’s not there. He goes to see Suzy, but she hasn’t heard from him since the trial collapsed. Serena calls briefly to advise Julian that he needs to find Krite. Julian searches the pubs and clubs and finally goes to the flat, this time with the spare key. Krite is nowhere, but the camera is in the wardrobe.

Danny gets an injury at the site, a bad gash in the leg. He thinks back to the day at the pool, where he was responsible for the contamination which caused the incident. When he gets home, he finds Don with a solution to the debt: he will take Judy’s treasured car. When Danny threatens violence, Don introduces the ‘muscle’.

Late at night, Julian is looking at the footage Krite recorded on the camera. At first it’s just static, then abstract shots of streets and houses then, finally, unsteady telephoto shots through a kitchen window. Julian is trying to make sense of it when Krite arrives, worn out and dishevelled. Krite wants to commit his account to film. The footage is of Raymond’s street, Raymond’s house, Raymond. It’s surveillance material. Krite has just come from Raymond’s, where he tortured a confession out of him: where he took Natalie; where the Police will find forensic evidence. Then Krite meted out his revenge. Raymond is tied dead to a post in his kitchen. Julian records it all. How will Krite get away with it? He won’t: in the morning they are going to the Police.

Carl is now desperate. Judy is talking about what they are going to do, how Serena will hear about the affair and how Carl is going to treat her from now on and ask his dad for a loan for the company. Danny is all smashed up and will no longer be coming to work. He can be sacked; he’s also leaving the house and Judy for good. Carl escapes home seeking Serena for comfort, but she’s not there. He thinks about selling off the limited amount of jewellery, even though it won’t cover the debt. Judy phones to say that the loss adjuster has seen the footage from the CCTV (though Carl had said the system was broken). Carl will be all over it setting the fire. He hears Serena returning, but when he looks it’s the Police…

Meanwhile Serena has gone to visit Julian in a pub. Julian has been building up courage to do the right thing and finish the relationship. They talk about Krite, how he seemed happy to have done the ‘right’ thing himself. Julian can make anything of all the footage he has of Krite. It can be a story of Krite finding the MacGuffin. It would be easy for Julian to sell with all the publicity, to re-start his career, but should he? He tells Serena that he must leave her. Serena says he can’t. She won’t let him. She can’t let him, regardless of the consequences from Carl. Julian insists. He loves her more than anything, but he has to go. He can’t go. She holds on to him. He has always been the love of her life and Carl won’t want to look after her any more – she is carrying Julian’s child.

## Appendix M

## *The Trouble with Harry* – Novel Segmentation.

(Chapter numbers are my addition)

**1**) A PLACE FOR THE DEAD

Four year old Abie is out hunting in the summer sunshine on Sparrowswick Heath with his toy rifle. Below the heath is his home, an estate of bungalows or cabins developed by landlord and speculator Mark Douglas. Abie hears a series of shots fired by, he thinks, the new captain, who must be out tracking game. He drops to the ground and crawls, soon coming across the sort of thing his mother has told him (as well as telling him they should be avoided) is a ‘nest of lovers’. There is much colourful language and commotion and a woman departs rapidly from the scene where, once Abie gets to it, is occupied by very dead body with wavy hair, moustache and a fresh wound above the eye leaking blood into his shirt collar.

**2**) BODY IN THE BRACKEN

The new captain is Albert Wiles. He replaced the old captain. Mark Douglas thinks that the estate is in need of a captain, though this one has not been much further than the Thames and, indeed, has never been a captain. Captain Wiles goes in search of the victims of his three shots which turn out to be: a paper bag containing a sticky aniseed ball and a neat hole; a mother hedgehog accompanied by two baby orphan hedgehogs; the dead body of what appears to be a Harry Worp of Eighty-Seven, Eastfield, Fulham. After ruminating on the consequences of going to the police, Captain Wiles commences to move the body towards a final resting place in a thick clump of rhododendron.

**3**) ACCESSORY AFTER THE FACT

In mid drag Captain Wiles is intercepted by Miss Gravely, a middle-aged spinster of the estate, who discusses whether they should phone the police. The Captain suggests not, to which Miss Gravely assents before asking him for tea at five. He continues with his mission of concealment.

**4**) LET’S RUN HOME AND EAT CAKES!

As Abie returns with his mother, Captain Wiles conceals *himself* in the rhododendron. She immediately recognises the body as Harry, though seems remarkably calm. Captain Wiles feels somewhat reassured by her lack of perturbation (in fact, everyone in Sparrowswick seems charming). Abie and his mother run off for cakes, as a butterfly collector runs up the hill and trips over the body before dusting himself off and carrying on.

**5**) THE MAN AND THE BLONDE

As the afternoon draws on Captain Wiles begins to drowse in the rhododendron. A tramp arrives, inspects the body and steals the shoes. Next along is Mark Douglas, flirting with a young blonde woman, apparently from central casting. The tramp lies down with Harry and the couple divert away from what they perceive as two tramps sleeping in the middle of the path.

**6**) WIGG’S EMPORIUM

At the entrance to the estate, Mrs Wiggs is running her small emporium from the front room of her cottage. She has been widowed since the sad decline of Mr Wiggs as a consequence of chasing Mark Douglas around the heath with a shotgun, after taking offence at Douglas’s request for him to order in a ‘certain commodity’. The emporium has most of the small consumable items one might require on a day to day level and, also, the paintings of Sam Marlow in some abundance.

**7**) PEOPLE WITH HATS ON

Mrs Wiggs is busy sorting out the trestle table she has set up outside the cottage to attract passing motorists, one of whom, on one occasion, almost bought one of Sam’s paintings, but not quite. In the distance, Sam himself (‘carved, it seemed from solid gold’) can be heard singing ‘Jerusalem’ as he walks down through the estate to the shop. He arrives with a new picture and admonishes her for not selling any of the old ones. He purchases the cheapest and fewest cigarettes she has available and cuts them in half for later. Whilst inside, a man in a Rolls Royce arrives and begins to inspect his paintings on the trestle outside.

**8**) A PIECE OF COLOURED RIBBON

Miss Gravely arrives and, for the first time, engages in conversation with Sam. She is buying ‘out of character’ (a large and ugly tea cup; some ribbon for her hair). Outside, the man in the Rolls Royce is trying to get attention. Sam gets entailed in Miss Gravely’s tea plans, whilst negotiating some food purchases with inadequate means. They decide to restyle Miss Gravely’s hair as the Rolls Royce man drives off.

**9**) LET’S GET THIS STRAIGHT

Sam carries his painting gear through the woods. He finds the dead hedgehog and collects the babies. Then he finds the dead Harry (surprisingly without shoes). In a flash of inspiration he decides to paint the dead Harry as an exemplum of all the dead of all the centuries. Just as he starts, Captain Wiles wakes up, anguished, once more, at the possibility that he may be doomed.

**10**) THE CORPSE MADE NO REPLY

Sam tries to put Captain Wiles’ mind at ease. He is worried about the police and ‘nooses’. He wants to bury Harry, but Sam thinks that even those who hadn’t seemed bothered about the corpse may come to be bothered about it later, particularly the butterfly collector (Dr Greenbow). They elect to hide the body in the rhododendron while Captain Wiles visits Miss Gravely for tea and Sam asks Mrs Rogers how she knows the corpse. As they are dragging the body, they converse briefly with a man in a tree looking into the distance and Dr Greenbow hoves into view chasing his butterfly and trips over the corpse again, before continuing on his way.

**11**) A NICE CUP OF TEA

The man in the tree is Walter D’Arcy and he is watching his wife cavorting with Mark Douglas. He stalks off home thinking of justice. He writes a note to Mrs Douglas inviting her up to the heath to hear something to her ‘advantage’ and delivers it with a wink. Meanwhile, Sam is taking the baby hedgehogs to Mrs Rogers’ cabin (‘Chaos’). At the door he praises her beauty in an artistic way and suggests that he might like to paint her naked. Abie appears with a rabbit that Captain Wiles has, apparently, shot. Over tea Sam establishes that Harry was Mrs Rogers’ (Jennifer’s) husband (‘He was too [horribly] good to live’).

**12**) THE TRUTH ABOUT HARRY

Jennifer tells him everything: Harry asked her to marry him after his brother Robert got her pregnant and promptly died; she thought Harry might have had a secret longing for her (she dearly loved Robert), but actually it was out of duty; Harry placed a photograph of Robert over the marital bed on their wedding night (!); she ran away immediately to her mother and later changed her name and moved to Sparrowswick, where Harry at last caught up with her; he was seeking to satisfy a ‘basic urge’ and, when he pressed his conjugal rights, she knocked him ‘silly’ with a milk bottle and he wandered off up the heath.

**13**) MIRAGE

Captain Wiles has got himself spruced up in his untidy cabin (‘The Ship’), ready for tea with Miss Gravely. He wanders down to hers (‘The Haven’), imaging her all beribboned and made up (she is). He hears bells in his head.

**14**) DO YOU WANT TO SELL A RABBIT?

Abie sets off to Captain Wiles’cabin to give him the rabbit, but he is not at home. He finds him at Miss Gravely’s, where the two are having tea. The captain is astounded by achieving his much anticipated rabbit-shooting ambition and, while he and Miss Gravely develop their acquaintance, Abie is rewarded with cake.

**15**) NICE PEOPLE

At dusk, Sam and the captain dig a hole in the woods ready for the interment of Harry. They discuss the recent visits to their new romantic interests as they lay him in the hole amongst the bracken. Captain Wiles is happy he has brought Mrs Rogers a welcome release with his shot. He recounts the shots. With all three accounted for, with the recent inclusion of the rabbit, he can’t have shot Harry. They dig him up again. He hasn’t been shot: he has been despatched with a blunt instrument. But by whom? Jennifer (who hit him with the bottle)? Another of their friends? On balance he seems better off underground, so they roll him back into the hole.

**16**) THE LOVER’S NEST

It’s night on the heath. Walter D’Arcy is out meeting Mrs Douglas in the bracken; Captain Wiles is out with Miss Gravely; Sam, Jennifer and Abie are retracing the boy’s steps to where he found Harry (Abie re-iterates the heated conversation he heard earlier). They decide to question Abie about the scenario, but he is confused about timing. Sam thinks they should establish who actually did kill Harry. They decide that Harry must have some kind of set-to with a woman (there appears to have been a struggle).

**17**) MY CRIME ON YOUR CONSCIENCE

Captain Wiles and Miss Gravely are talking on the heath. He is trying to impress. She wants to tell him something. Eventually she manages to confide that she killed Harry when, confused, he tried to demand his ‘rights’ from her in the bracken and she struck him smartly on the temple with her dislodged ‘ice-calf brogue’. They must dig him up again and inform the authorities that it was self-defence…

**18**) BIG THINGS, TREES

Sam shows Jennifer and Abie the run-down barn in the woods that serves as his home and studio. They are increasingly impressed with each other. It’s time for Jennifer and Abie to go home. Sam will escort them.

**19**) I’LL GET MY SPADE

Sam and Jennifer are having coffee at her cabin when Captain Wiles and Miss Gravely arrive. Miss Gravely confesses to the murder and they inform the others that Harry is, once again, above ground. The police are to be informed. However, after discussion, it’s evident that everyone’s business, including the circumstances of Abie’s parenthood, will be all over the papers. It’s time for Harry to be re-interred.

**20**) THAT’S NOT A BUGLE

It’s night and the four of them are returning from the reburial when they hear what sounds like a bugle. Mrs Wiggs appears in a night dress to inform them that a millionaire has taken a shine to Sam’s painting and wants to buy the lot. The bugle sound is the horn of the Rolls Royce. Two couples emerge suddenly from the bracken. It’s Mark Douglas and Mrs D’Arcy and Walter D’Arcy and Mrs Douglas. There are various recriminations, leading to the D’Arcy’s being reconciled and Mark Douglas running off weeping.

**21**) COMES LOVE

They are all down by the road. Sam, somewhat bewildered, is in possession of a cheque for £200. The millionaire is to promote an exhibition of Sam’s work. After some more confusion, and words about his reversal of fortune, Sam proposes to the newly widowed Jennifer. They will be the only ‘free married couple in the world.’ He gives her until they return to her cabin to decide, which she does, in the affirmative. Unfortunately, this means that Harry will have to come up again to prove that Jennifer is free to remarry. Miss Gravely will face the consequences, though she believes that Harry will be found to be the guilty party.

**22**) THIS IS RIDICULOUS

1 a.m.: the four main parties are on their way up the heath to dig up Harry. Should they tell the police about Jennifer hitting Harry? Probably, in case Sam is implicated, seeing how he now has an interest in being Harry’s replacement. Miss Gravely will still confess to her part, though they will have to clean up the body and make an excuse for the delay in reporting the thing. As they take a rest from carrying the body, the see the tramp from earlier in the day. Next up is Dr Greenbow, sleepwalking back from his butterfly expedition. He falls over Harry once more and wakes up. They ask the doctor to look at Harry: “We think he’s met with a bit of an accident.”; “He’s dead… been dead a long time.”. The doctor suggests that they take the body where there is more light.

**23**) AS GOOD AS NEW

At Jennifer’s cabin, while Abie squirts milk at the corpse with his water pistol, the doctor diagnoses that Harry met his through a seizure. It’s also apparent that he’s in the midst of some nightmare. Sam leads the doctor away to sleep and forget. Sam comes back and they wash and prepare Harry to go back on the heath to be found by Abie the following day. The addition of a sticking plaster will make his head wound look historic.

**24**) ANOTHER DAY

Abie is once again out ‘hunting’ on the heath, where, once more, he comes across the body of Harry. Captain Wiles, Miss Gravely and Sam watch as he tries unsuccessfully to lift the body, before running off home to his mother. Sam starts singing again and all is right on the heath.

## Appendix N

## Operational notes for lesson plan: Introductions, Settings and the Establishing Shot

Introduce myself – Writing experience etc. →

Who are you? Group introductions if first session.

Thesis – How film structure and fiction have cross-pollinated, probably done by the Thirties. Looking at what lessons can be gained by using film as a short-hand to examine structure visually. We are all of us, below a certain age, audio-visually adept readers. →

What is Structure? – It is both micro and macro: the total is made up of the sum of the parts, in film, every shot (and composition of the shot), in fiction, every word, phrase and paragraph (there are also brief narrative arcs, sequences of shots, chapters etc.). In my work, because of this audio-visual sophistication, I usually describe my narrative units as scenes and visualise them in a filmic way (quote Alan Garner writing *‘the film director in the head’*). →

So, today we are going to look at beginnings, see how they can be put together filmically and see where that takes us in terms of fiction. →

Show beginning of *Ripley’s Game*. Mention paratext (we don’t come to this unprepared: trailers, TV introduction, DVD case and blurb, other films (*Talented Mr Ripley* expectation), author paratext etc. (epitext [close] and peritext [unattached]). Watch the introduction through once without comment. →

Show in slow motion with breakdown:

Music pre-image to set tone. Establishing shot: the briefcase. ‘Berlin’ to establish space, the platz: which one? Follow shot (steady cam or track). The briefcase is the subject. Ripley’s back is towards us, we turn with him. Now the two men are the subjects and are more fully revealed in detail. Ray Winstone’s character: expensively but tastelessly dressed, reveals him. Ripley is more elegant, but with the artistic beret (?). Looking at the watch signifies lateness. Eyeline match. 180º rule. The two men meet and form a new frame. Dialogue reveal. The mise en scene is very deliberate with the framing. From the original motion to meet; they now form a new unit and a following shot takes them to the door of the apartment to argue and reveal, through further dialogue, what the scam is. Ripley goes into the apartment. Mention ‘Continuity Editing.’ Then there is a new setup and establishing shot: the interior of the apartment (in fiction you would start a new description, or not: apartment or office might supply enough to trigger a range of schemata from the reader). Action, dialogue reveal, character. It is all nicely paced and the reveals (exposition) are mostly subtle. Action, action, action. Outside meeting; inside for the scam and drama; outside for denouement (which needs no establishing shot other than to show the taxi waiting for Ripley – a complete, self-contained narrative with a beginning, middle (conflict) and end. All before the opening credits.

So, how can we use these kinds of filmic representation in fiction writing? By thinking of the areas of attention that we want to supply as evidence to the reader, how to move with our characters or focalise the attention where we need it; when to move to dialogue to reveal characters (motivations and intent). Fiction is not film, but we are audio-visual people now (as are our readers) and the way in which we (and they) visualise scenes is in a filmic way (I suggest). It also helps (in my experience) to help find your way around the topography of your created universe (text world) in an authentic way. The reader looks for the cues (or evidence) within the text to navigate their imagination (‘image’-ination) around the settings and characters. As writers, we utilise our own methods of mise en scene to achieve this (in film sound, setting, people, clothing, framing etc.; in fiction the sequential evidence of our phrases and sentences to guide the readers eye [mind’s eye] where we want to take them to build up the world).

Distribute and read out the Blitz piece. It’s not supposed to be masterpiece and was written quite quickly. Refer to the two lists that help create the space. Once again we are moving from the general to the specific through a tracking shot in words. The first sentence is my equivalent of an establishing shot. This will serve to activate the reader’s own schemata of what a Blitz street is and ready them to add their own detail as it’s provided. Can you see the images? →

Text:

Blitz fires raged on the night street. Between the crackling of the flames and the soft thuds of falling masonry, the bells of ambulances and fire engines echoed off shattered walls. The red light danced on the ruined frontages and fresh piles of cracked masonry wrought by the bombs, the velvet dark of the blackout scorched away.

It seemed as if everyone was out on the streets: firemen; ambulance-men; the steel helmeted officers of the ARP; tending the wounded; tending to fires; raising the ladders of the fire tenders, on one hand the rushing and shouting, c*ome on, move!*, on the other the still, shocked silence of the now homeless family wrapped in blankets, leant against an ambulance. Beyond them, amongst writhing fire hoses, remnant possessions: a sewing machine; a wooden horse; a bear sodden in a pool of water; a pram wheel still alight from the fire; a tea pot now a sputtering lamp. *Keep running* and c*ome on, come* almost lost to the sound of the ‘all clear’; a woman holding the lifeless body of a child, her lament echoing the siren’s wail; a girl’s voice:

‘Help me, it’s Derek. He’s under here. Daddy, Daddy, quick, he’s over here.’

Show the Blitz clip from *Let him have it*. Yes? No? The listing and description in the written piece is not exhaustive. Prose is not a film. This is one way of representing *that* series of images and sounds in words (and it can be done quite economically, in under 200 words before the dialogue).

So, the task. Propose a piece of writing that has an establishing shot or set of establishing shots that form a developing picture or scene. Hand out the ‘Scene Suggestions’ sheet for those who might need ideas. It would be okay to try and recreate the beginning of a film that one might remember. The aim is to produce a piece of writing which creates a coherent and authentic picture for the reader. Think how the eye, or the point of focalisation, moves. Does it need to move or can it stay still and take in the scene. Both of my examples have started with tracking, but a picture might be made which is a frame that one moves around saccadically (‘saccades’ [a long shot of a cityscape or a shot that tracks or zooms into a figure in a landscape]). Think about what ‘evidence’ is necessary to make the picture work. There may or may not be characters (although characters create action). It doesn’t have to be sophisticated.

Read out the results and discuss. Can workshop participants ‘see’ the created world of each piece? What elements are successful and which less so?

Does the visualisation process from looking at the films help? Do writers find themselves already using their audio-visual sophistication in their writing (with or without knowing it)? Does this type of visualising process go on in their reading?

Finish with the idea that the establishing shot paradigm works whenever there is a new setting. Returning to a setting (as in the third part of the initial mini-narrative of *Ripley’s Game*) requires only that the setting is named or suggested; creating a new setting requires a new establishing shot.

1. There are, of course, lots of examples where this rule is broken, ignored or consciously subverted for creative effect. I seem to remember the example in the seminar being of a Woody Allen sequence in which the camera dollies around a group of diners sitting at a table, enabling each of them to come into shot in turn as they speak or react to elements of the conversation. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. An adage variously attributed to Syd Field and Robert McKee, but which was probably originated by William Goldman. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. I personally know of one writer who attended one of McKee’s lecture series and directly used his structural dicta to formulate her own debut novel. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Robert J. Ray, *The Weekend Novelist* (New York: Dell Publishing, 1994). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. François Truffaut, *Hitchcock/Truffaut: Dialogue between Truffaut and Hitchcock* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984), p. 72. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. I’m restricting this categorisation of mass-entertainment to the arts in this instance, which would place the popularity of filmgoing historically above concerts, nightclubs and comedy shows, for example (with intermittent periods of decline and resurgence). However, mass forms of activity clearly also include sports participation and spectatorship, political rallies, trade shows, conferences etc. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. Mark Turner, *Reading Minds: The Study of English in the Age of Cognitive Science* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), p. 30. See also George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and Its Challenge to Western Thought* (New York: Basic Books, 1999). [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. H. Porter Abbott, *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative*, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Monika Fludernik, *An Introduction to Narratology* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009). [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. Peter Stockwell, *Cognitive Poetics: An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2002). [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. Seymour Chatman, *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978). [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
11. Robert Stam, *Film Theory: An Introduction* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing Inc., 2000); Edward Branigan, *Narrative Comprehension and Film* (London: Routledge, 1992). [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
12. James Monaco, *How to Read a Film: Movies, Media, and Beyond* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009). [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
13. David A. Cook, *A History of Narrative Film*, 4th edn (New York: Norton, 2003). [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
14. David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, *Film Art: An Introduction (Ninth Edition)* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2010). [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
15. David Bordwell, *Narration in the Fiction Film* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1986). [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
16. I refer particularly to this article: David Bordwell, ‘Cinema and Cognitive Psychology’ in *Iris*, issue no. 9, Spring 1989. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
17. *Narration in the Fiction Film*, p. 31. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
18. F. C. Bartlett, *Remembering: A Study in Experimental and Social Psychology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1932); Guy Cook, *Discourse and Literature: The Interplay of Form and Mind* (Oxford; Oxford University Press, 1994). [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
19. Reid Hastie, ‘Schematic Principles in Human Memory’ in *Social Cognition: The Ontario Symposium*, ed. by E. Tony Huggins, C. Peter Herman and Mark P. Zanna, Vol. 1 (Hilldale: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1981). [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
20. Paul Werth, *Text Worlds: Representing conceptual space in discourse* (Harlow: Pearson Education Ltd., 1999); Joanna Gavins, *Text World Theory: An Introduction* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007). [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
21. Catherine Emmott, *Narrative Comprehension: A Discourse perspective* (Oxford; Oxford University Press, 1997). [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
22. George Lakhoff, *Women, Fire and Dangerous Things: What Categories Reveal about the Mind* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987); Ray Gibbs, *Embodiment and Cognitive Science* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2006). [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
23. David Herman, *Storytelling and the Sciences of the Mind* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2013). [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
24. David Herman, *Universal Grammar and Narrative Form* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1995), see Ch. 5, ‘Modes of Meaning in Film’, pp. 203-24. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
25. P. N. Johnson-Laird, *Mental Models: Towards a Cognitive Science of Language, Inference and Consciousness* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983). [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
26. Richard J. Gerrig and Giovanna Egidi, ‘Cognitive Psychological Foundations of Narrative Experiences’ in *Narrative Theory and the Cognitive Sciences*, ed. by David Herman (Stanford: CSLI Publications, 2003), pp. 33-55. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
27. Alan Palmer, *Fictional Minds* (Lincoln and London: Nebraska Press, 2007). [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
28. Peter Stockwell, *Texture: A Cognitive Aesthetics of Reading* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009). [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
29. Keith Oatley, *Such Stuff as Dreams* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011). [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
30. Robert Olen Butler, *From Where You Dream: The Process of Writing Fiction* (New York: Grove Press, 2005). [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
31. Teun A.van Dijk and Walter Kintsch, *Strategies of Discourse Comprehension* (London: Academic Press, 1983). [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
32. Chatman, *Story and Discourse*, p. 9. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
33. Both terms in general use by a number of Russian theoreticians including Vladimir Propp (1894-1970) and Viktor Shkolvsky (1893-1984). Ref: Vladimir Propp, *Morphology of the Folktale*, trans. by Laurence Scott (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1968). [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
34. Robert Stam, ‘Introduction: The Theory and Practice of Adaptation.’ in *Literature and Film: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Film Adaptation*, ed. by Robert Stam and Allesandra Raengo (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), p. 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
35. George Bluestone, *Novels into Film* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1957), p. 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
36. As an experiment I once composed a simple piece of guitar music to accompany a scene in a novel, essentially a kind of montage chapter showing two people going off on a romantic trip into the country. The music was designed to reflect the slightly whimsical mood in which I had tried to cast the chapter and also as incidental music to accompany an imagined filmed adaptation of the work. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
37. Stam, *Literature and Film*, p. 14. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
38. Of course, Georg W. F. Hegel (1770-1831) never used the word ‘synthesis’ in his writings, but the principle of thesis, antithesis and synthesis is often used to explain his expansion of the dyadic principle of a proposition and its opposite to the triadic, in which a third quality is formed (others attribute the origin of this to Johann Fichte [1762-1814]). The main Russian formalists to which I refer are V. I. Pudovkin (1893-1953), ref. *Film Technique* (New York: Grove, 1970) and Sergei Eisenstein (1898-1948). Here I am drawing on later collections of the latter’s work: *The Film Sense, trans. by Jay Leyda (New York: Hartcourt, 1942)*; *Film Form: Essays in Film Theory,* trans. by Jay Leyda (New York:Hartcourt, 1949), and referring specifically to his notion of juxtaposed images in montage creating a relationship which produces a third idea, which then proceeds to form one half of a new relationship, and so on. Interestingly, Eisenstein perceived these meanings as construed in the mental processes of the viewer and, so, this might be considered, to some extent, a constructivist or cognitivist viewpoint. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
39. Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, ed. by Michael Holquist, trans. by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), p. 425. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
40. From *Film Language: A Semiotics of Cinema*, Christian Metz, trans. by Donna Jean (The Hague: Mouton, 1974). [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
41. Stuart MacDougal, *Made into Movies, From Literature to Film* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1985), p. 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
42. Stam, *Literature and Film*, p. 34. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
43. From Dudley Andrew, ‘Adaptation’ in *Film Theory and Criticism*, ed. by Gerald Mast, Marshal Cohen and Leo Braudy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992). [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
44. From Gérard Genette, *Palimpsestes* (Paris: Seuil, 1982). [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
45. Chatman, *Story and Discourse*, p. 54. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
46. Chatman, *Story and Discourse* , pp. 55-6. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
47. Dennis J. Packard, *The Film Novelist: Writing a Screenplay and Short Novel in 15 Weeks* (London: Continuum, 2011). [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
48. Packard, *The Film Novelist*, p. 14. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
49. Ibid., p. 14. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
50. Packard, *The Film Novelist* ., p. 16. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
51. Chatman, *Story and Discourse*, p. 75. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
52. Packard, *The Film Novelist*, p. 17; James Joyce, *Ulysses* (Paris: Sylvia Beach, 1922). [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
53. Laura Marcus, *The Tenth Muse: Writing about Cinema in the Modernist Period* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 94-8. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
54. Virginia Woolf, *Mrs Dalloway* (London: Hogarth Press, 1925). [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
55. Marcus, *The Tenth Muse*, p. 92. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
56. Thomas Burkdall, *Joycean Frames: Film and the Fiction of James Joyce* (New York: Routledge, 2001), p. 19. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
57. Ibid., p. 21. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
58. Dashiell Hammett, *The Maltese Falcon* (New York: Modern Library, 1934), first published as a serial in *Black Mask* magazine, commencing September 1929. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
59. Packard, *The Film Novelist*, p. 29. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
60. Arthur Miller, *The Misfits* (New York: Viking Press, 1961). Packard here may not have considered Graham Greene’s novella *The Third Man* (1950), which was written to provide a foundation for his screenplay for the film of the same name (1949). [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
61. *The Misfits: A Story Conceived as a Film* (subtitle to above). [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
62. Packard, *The Film Novelist*, p. 39. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
63. Arthur Miller, preface to *The Misfits*, pp. ix-x. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
64. Alan Spiegel, *Fiction and the Camera Eye: Visual Consciousness in Film and the Modern Novel* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1976). [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
65. Virginia Woolf, *To the Lighthouse* (London: Hogarth Press, 1927). [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
66. Spiegel, *Fiction and the Camera Eye*, p. 80. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
67. Ibid., pp. 80-1. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
68. William Faulkner, *Sanctuary* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1931); *The Story of Temple Drake*, dir. by Steven Roberts (Paramount Pictures, 1933). [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
69. Spiegel, *Fiction and the Camera Eye*, p. 120. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
70. Vladimir Nabokov, *Lolita* (Paris: Olympia press, 1955). [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
71. Spiegel, *Fiction and the Camera Eye*, p. 121; Vladimir Nabokov, *Laughter in the Dark* (London: Jonathan Long, 1936); *King, Queen, Knave* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1968). [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
72. Spiegel, *Fiction and the Camera Eye*, p. 185. [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
73. Kamilla Elliott, *Rethinking the Novel/Film Debate* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009). [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
74. Elliott, *Rethinking the Novel/Film Debate*, pp. 12-13. [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
75. Ibid., p. 96. [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
76. Monaco, *How to Read a Film*, p. 44. [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
77. Elliott, *Rethinking the Novel/Film Debate*,p. 134. [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
78. Ibid., p. 138. [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
79. Elliott, *Rethinking the Novel/Film Debate* , p. 144. [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
80. Elliott, *Rethinking the Novel/Film Debate*, p. 182. [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
81. Ibid., p. 184. [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
82. Ibid., p. 185. [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
83. Elliott, *Rethinking the Novel/Film Debate* , p. 217. [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
84. Ibid., p. 222. [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
85. Elliott, *Rethinking the Novel/Film Debate*, p. 229. [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
86. Keith Cohen, *Film and Fiction: The Dynamics of Exchange* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1979). [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
87. Cohen, *Film and Fiction*, pp. 79-80. [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
88. Cohen, *Film and Fiction*, p. 79. [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
89. Ibid., p. 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
90. Keith Cohen, *Film and Fiction*, p.162. [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
91. Ibid., pp. 169-70. [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
92. Cohen, *Film and Fiction*, p. 90. [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
93. Ibid., pp. 91-2. [↑](#footnote-ref-94)
94. Cohen, *Film and Fiction*, p. 210. [↑](#footnote-ref-95)
95. I will use the word ‘receivers’ as a general term for readers/viewers when they cannot simply be defined as readers or viewers. Although a common use of the word receiver as a passive instrument of radio reception would seem to contradict cognitive notions of the active (and proactive) representation of text within the minds of readers/viewers, it should be remembered that radio receivers, in fact, decode and interpret incoming signals so that they can be converted into meaningful sound representations. Branigan favours ‘perceivers’ (sometimes ‘spectators’), but I will stick to my choice. [↑](#footnote-ref-96)
96. See Gavins, *Text World Theory*, Chapters 6 (‘Attitudes’) and 7 (‘Distances’), pp. 91-125. [↑](#footnote-ref-97)
97. For practical and theoretical applications of segmentation in film, see Bordwell and Thompson, *Film Art*: *An Introduction*, pp. 72-3, 76, 443-4. [↑](#footnote-ref-98)
98. Ibid.,pp. 105-6. [↑](#footnote-ref-99)
99. I use the term ‘textural’ here to summarise all aspects of the text that are do not directly correspond to narrative meanings, such as the momentum of action, incidental music, description, backgrounds etc., which is not to say that any of the above cannot carry and communicate meaning in their own right or in combination with more directly semantic evidence, just to outline that there are central processes and peripheral ones (though any reception of a text will incorporate a sum of all its discourse evidence, central or otherwise). [↑](#footnote-ref-100)
100. Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay on Method*, trans. by Jane E. Lewin (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980). [↑](#footnote-ref-101)
101. The word ‘boundaries’, in the context of narrative structure, will always refer to boundaries between contiguous segments of discourse (or onsets and endings) and not potential boundaries between readers and the text, producers of texts and receivers of texts etc. [↑](#footnote-ref-102)
102. The term was originated by Chicago attorney Frank L. Roesch, but used extensively by J. Edgar Hoover. [↑](#footnote-ref-103)
103. *Algiers* (1938), additional dialogue; *Blockade* (1938), additional dialogue; *Stand Up and Fight* (1939), screenplay; *Gypsy Wildcat* (1944), elements of screenplay. Of the four, only the first has any historical significance, in providing the first starring role in Hollywood for the actress Hedy Lamarr. [↑](#footnote-ref-104)
104. I will return to this case and its influence on Cain later in the chapter. [↑](#footnote-ref-105)
105. One possible example may occur at the midpoint of Chapter 2, ending with the paired exchange of the phrase ‘Straight down the line.’, the declaration that the perpetrators are going to go through with the crime. This would seem to create an adequate suspension at the end of a first instalment, to encourage readers to want to seek out the next. [↑](#footnote-ref-106)
106. Along with *Career in C Major* and *The Embezzler*. [↑](#footnote-ref-107)
107. For a synopsis of the novel, see Appendix B. [↑](#footnote-ref-108)
108. Shelby Smoak, *CLUES: A Journal of Detection*, Vol. 29, Number 2 (Autumn 2011), pp. 40-6. [↑](#footnote-ref-109)
109. A good account of deictic categories can be found in Elena Semino’s *Language and world creation in poems and other texts* (Harlow: Longman, 1997), Ch. 3, ‘Deixis and Context Creation’, pp. 31-51; also Keith Green, ‘Deixis: A Revaluation of Concepts and Categories’ in *New Essays in Deixis: Discourse, Narrative, Literature*, ed. by Keith Green (Amsterdam-Atlanta: Rodopi, 1995), pp. 11-25. Much of the early work in the field emanates from Karl Bühler (1879-1963): see *Sprachtheorie* (Stuttgart: Fisher, 1965); ‘The Deictic Field of Language and Deictic Words’, in *Speech, Place and Action: Essays on Deixis and Related Topics*, ed. by R. J. Jarvella and W. Klein (Chichester: John Wiley, 1982), pp. 9-30. [↑](#footnote-ref-110)
110. Modern readers with the appropriate knowledge will also be able place the narrative historically: Hollywoodland was a Los Angeles housing development. Its developers advertised it with large hillside letters spelling ‘HOLLYWOODLAND’. The sign was erected in 1923; by the end of 1949 the rather dilapidated letters had lost their final ‘LAND’ and become a familiar landmark. [↑](#footnote-ref-111)
111. Traditionally, in journalism, ‘Who’, ‘What’, ‘Where’, ‘When’, ‘Why’ and ‘hoW’. [↑](#footnote-ref-112)
112. *Double Indemnity* (2002, p. 27), the end of Chapter 2 and another candidate for a possible boundary in the original serialisation. [↑](#footnote-ref-113)
113. ‘Then I heard something. I heard a panting. Then with it I heard footsteps. They would go fast for a second or two, and then stop. It was like being in a nightmare, with something queer coming after me, and I didn’t know what it was, but it was horrible. Then I saw it. It was her. The man must have weighed 200 pounds, but she had him on her back, holding him by the handle, and staggering with him, over the tracks. His head was hanging down beside her head. They looked like something in a horror picture.’ (*Double Indemnity*, 2002, pp. 59-60). [↑](#footnote-ref-114)
114. ‘I knew what I had done. I had killed a man... I had put myself in her power... and I never wanted to see her again as long as I lived.’ (*Double Indemnity*, 2002, p. 64). [↑](#footnote-ref-115)
115. In *Double Indemnity*’s location scenes at a supermarket, the piled-high stock was protected by officers of the L.A.P.D. [↑](#footnote-ref-116)
116. For example, *Bataan* (1943) and *So Proudly We Hail!* (1943). [↑](#footnote-ref-117)
117. The term probably originates from an article by Nino Frank (1904-1988), ‘Un nouveau genre ‘policier’: L’aventure criminelle’ in *L’ecran français*, August 1946, though its etymology must stem from the application of the eighteenth- century phrase *roman noir* to the kind of *Black Mask* school of fiction and its international counterparts. [↑](#footnote-ref-118)
118. Paul Schrader: ‘Notes on *Film Noir*’ in *Film Noir Reader*, ed. by Alain Silver and James Ursini (New York: Proscenium Publishers Inc., 1999), pp. 58-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-119)
119. Schrader cites *The Roaring Twenties* (1939, directed by Raoul Walsh) and *You Only Live Once* (1937, directed by Fritz Lang). [↑](#footnote-ref-120)
120. Schrader, ‘Notes on *Film Noir’*, pp. 54-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-121)
121. In the U.S., at least: ‘*Postman*’ was filmed in France as *Le Dernier Tournant* (1939) and in Italy as *Ossessione* (released 1943), the first feature from Luchino Visconte. [↑](#footnote-ref-122)
122. Wilder was familiar with the novel only by reputation, as a hot property that had been talked about but never optioned. As to how he came across it at this time, accounts differ as to whether it was via a set of stapled together extracts from *Liberty* magazine lent by a young staff producer or from a secretary’s copy of *Three of a Kind* (Cain’s agent H. N. Swanson had circulated proof copies to the studios to elicit interest in the properties). [↑](#footnote-ref-123)
123. Wilder may have considered himself, first and foremost, a writer. The epitaph on his gravestone reads, in an adaptation of the final line from *Some Like It Hot* (1959), ‘I’M A WRITER, BUT THEN, NOBODY’S PERFECT’. [↑](#footnote-ref-124)
124. *The Big Sleep* (1939); *Farewell, My Lovely* (1940); *The High Window* (1942); *The Lady in the Lake* (1943). [↑](#footnote-ref-125)
125. Quoted in Frank MacShane, *The Life of Raymond Chandler* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1976). [↑](#footnote-ref-126)
126. For a synopsis of the film narrative, see Appendix C. [↑](#footnote-ref-127)
127. The omission of the Neff’s execution also obviated any objections from the Breen Office, which took a dim view of such representations. [↑](#footnote-ref-128)
128. Derived from César Franck’s Symphony in D Minor (1888). [↑](#footnote-ref-129)
129. Wilder and Chandler changed Cain’s ‘General Fidelity’ to the more telling ‘Pacific All Risk’. [↑](#footnote-ref-130)
130. J. P. Telotte, *Voices in the Dark: The Narrative Patterns of Film Noir* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois press, 1989), p. 41. [↑](#footnote-ref-131)
131. Ibid., p. 40. [↑](#footnote-ref-132)
132. *Double Indemnity* script, A-39 (**2a** in my segmentation) The exchange after ‘(pause)’ in the script appears in the film version only, so must be a late addition or extemporised in performance. [↑](#footnote-ref-133)
133. Quoted in Peter Brunette and Gerald Peary, ‘James M. Cain: Tough Guy’, in *Backstory: Interviews with Screenwriters of Hollywood’s Golden Age*, ed. by Pat McGilligan (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), p. 127. [↑](#footnote-ref-134)
134. In Walter Hill’s neo-*noir* film *The Driver* (1978), the unnamed eponymous lead character, played by Ryan O’Neal, speaks only 350 words in the entire film. [↑](#footnote-ref-135)
135. V. Penelope Pelizzon, Nancy Martha West, ‘Multiple Indemnity: Film Noir, James M. Cain, and Adaptations of a Tabloid Case’, in *Narrative*, Volume 13, Number 3 (October 2005), 221-37, p. 231. [↑](#footnote-ref-136)
136. ‘Multiple Indemnity’, p. 220. [↑](#footnote-ref-137)
137. Ibid., pp. 212-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-138)
138. ‘Multiple Indemnity’ , p. 214. [↑](#footnote-ref-139)
139. The ‘death photo’ edition of the *New York Daily News* boasted the highest circulation of a US newspaper in history at 1.5 million copies, more even than for the report of the landing of Lindbergh in Paris after his successful solo transatlantic flight (source: Landis MacKellar, *The Double-Indemnity Murder: Ruth Snyder, Judd Gray, and New York’s Crime of the Century* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2006). [↑](#footnote-ref-140)
140. ‘Multiple Indemnity’, p. 212. [↑](#footnote-ref-141)
141. Of course, though the narrative arc that the papers presented ended with the deaths of the perpetrators (the protagonists), both Cain’s novella and the film as shown avoid these scenes. Where, in real life, the photo of Ruth Snyder, in the instant of being electrocuted to death, can sell hundreds and thousands of copies, the sentiments of literature, and of Hollywood, seem to draw the line at graphically showing the full consequences. Where Cain and Wilder are providing entertainment, the role of the press is not so clear, though clearly, in the case of the tabloids, it is not just to inform. [↑](#footnote-ref-142)
142. Richard Schickel, *Double Indemnity*, (London: BFI Film Classics 1992), pp. 32 and 22 respectively. [↑](#footnote-ref-143)
143. Albert Van Nostrand, *The Denatured Novel* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1960), pp. 126-132. [↑](#footnote-ref-144)
144. Unusually for a modern Hollywood film, the script was fully storyboarded (rather than partially or just for significant shots) by the Coen’s long-time collaborator J. Todd Anderson. On two occasions I have entered into dialogue with J. Todd Anderson in an attempt to get sight of copies of the full storyboard scheme. However, apparently for copyright, and perhaps also personal reasons, Mr Anderson was unable to acquiesce to my request. Although an analysis of these images may have proved fruitful to some extent, I feel that it is ultimately unnecessary with the presence of the adapted script and finished film. As an indicator of the nature of Anderson’s input, I have supplied a few examples from the public domain, along with a pair of accompanying film-image captures, as Appendix H. [↑](#footnote-ref-145)
145. The title itself comes from the first line of the W. B. Yeats poem ‘Sailing to Byzantium’: ‘That is no country for old men.’(line 1) first published in his collection *The Tower* in 1928. [↑](#footnote-ref-146)
146. Box 091/79 [↑](#footnote-ref-147)
147. An outline of the contents of the archives is provided in Appendix D. [↑](#footnote-ref-148)
148. A receipt for typing services is present in Box 79. [↑](#footnote-ref-149)
149. *The Dion Brothers* (A.K.A. *The Gravy Train*), dir. by Jack Starrett (1974); *Dirty Harry*, dir. by Don Siegel (1971); *Smokey and the Bandit*, dir. by Hal Needham, (1977); *Bullitt*, dir. by Peter Yates (1968); *Bonnie and Clyde*, dir. by Arthur Penn (1967). [↑](#footnote-ref-150)
150. *Valdez is Coming*, dir. by Edwin Sherin (United Artists, 1971). [↑](#footnote-ref-151)
151. Folder 091/84/2. [↑](#footnote-ref-152)
152. Folder 091/84/5. [↑](#footnote-ref-153)
153. A segmentation of the published novel is provided as Appendix F. [↑](#footnote-ref-154)
154. Further possibilities are noted on a single page containing an early draft of Chigurh’s first scene: Chigerat; Chigorate; Chigoron; Chigrey; Chingore; Chigore (Folder 091/84/2). [↑](#footnote-ref-155)
155. Cormac McCarthy, *No Country for Old Men* (London: Picador, 2005), pp. 4, 299. [↑](#footnote-ref-156)
156. Again, the literal mechanisms are crucial to the text: Chigurh’s silenced pistol and the menacing and oddball silenced shotgun. [↑](#footnote-ref-157)
157. Folder 091/84/5. [↑](#footnote-ref-158)
158. Folder 091/84/4. [↑](#footnote-ref-159)
159. Blue Revised Draft courtesy of the University of Victoria, <http://www.yumpu.com/en/document/view/11788361/no-country-for-old-men-adaptation-by-joel-coen-ethan-> [last accessed 20 February 2014 at 14:30]. [↑](#footnote-ref-160)
160. From an interview with Rob Carnevale in IndieLondon online magazine and ticket outlet (2007) <http://www.indielondon.co.uk/Film-Review/no-country-for-old-men-joel-ethan-coen-interview> [last accessed 23 March 2014 at 15:45]. [↑](#footnote-ref-161)
161. Michael Wood, ‘At the Movies’, in the *London Review of Books*, (February 2008), p. 17. [↑](#footnote-ref-162)
162. Dennis Rothermel, ‘Denial and Trepidation Awaiting What’s Coming in the Coen Brothers’ First Film Adaptation’, in *No Country for Old Men: From Novel to Film*, ed. by Lynnea Chapman King, Rick Wallach and Jim Walsh (Lanham: Scarecrow Press Inc., 2009), pp. 195-6. In fact, in the novel the dog does look back, but not necessarily at Moss. [↑](#footnote-ref-163)
163. Moss’s line ‘and by anyone, I mean any swinging dick’, delivered to the clerk at the Eagle Pass Hotel, is absent from the Blue Revised Draft, but in both the novel and the film as released. [↑](#footnote-ref-164)
164. A segmentation of the completed film is provided as Appendix G. [↑](#footnote-ref-165)
165. From Appendix E, original screenplay. Segments are McCarthy’s own; numbering is mine. [↑](#footnote-ref-166)
166. There is, of course, no standard definition of where a medium long shot becomes a medium shot, for instance. I have based my assessments on the guidelines suggested in David Bordwell and Kristen Thompson’s *Film Art: An Introduction*, p. 195. [↑](#footnote-ref-167)
167. *No Country for Old Men*, pp. 8-10. [↑](#footnote-ref-168)
168. I use the term third person figural here, though others prefer the alternative terms third person ‘close’, ‘proper’ or ‘restricted’. [↑](#footnote-ref-169)
169. *No Country for Old Men*, pp. 5-6. Interestingly, the film always portrays Chigurh carrying the gas cylinder in one hand and the plunger in another. However, it seems clear from the descriptions in the novel that the gas tube is concealed in his sleeve and the cylinder harnessed to his body in some fashion, which would make it far more wieldy than in the Coens’ contrivance. Whether this is because they failed to picture it in this way based on the novel’s descriptions or simply because they felt that their depiction created more impact is not certain, but I suspect that the former is most likely. [↑](#footnote-ref-170)
170. *No Country for Old Men*, p. 19. [↑](#footnote-ref-171)
171. Introduction to *Cormac McCarthy: All the Pretty Horses/No Country for Old Men/The Road*, ed. by Sarah L. Spurgeon (London/New York: Continuum, 2011), p. 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-172)
172. *Blood Meridian* is almost a Katabatic version of Xenophon’s *Anabasis*, a kind of martial mission into the poorly understood liminal spaces of the Mexican borders, exemplified by endless bloodletting and barbarity. [↑](#footnote-ref-173)
173. During my visit to the Witliff Collections I was unable to find time to see if there was any chronological overlap in the developmental documents. [↑](#footnote-ref-174)
174. Introduction to *No Country for Old Men: From Novel to Film*, p. xii. [↑](#footnote-ref-175)
175. Introduction to *No Country for Old Men: From Novel to Film*, p. xv. [↑](#footnote-ref-176)
176. Kent Jones, from ‘Airtight’ in *Film Comment* (November/December 2000,), pp. 45-9, quoted in ‘Cold-blooded Coen Brothers’, by Jason Landrum, in *No Country for Old Men: From Novel to Film*, p. 205. [↑](#footnote-ref-177)
177. *The Man Who Wasn’t There*, dir. by Joel Coen (USA Films, 2001); *Intolerable Cruelty*, dir. by Joel Coen (Universal Studios, 2003). [↑](#footnote-ref-178)
178. Lynnea Chapman King, ‘An Interview with Roger Deakin’ in *No Country for Old Men: From Novel to Film,* p. 220. [↑](#footnote-ref-179)
179. Chapman King, ‘An Interview with Roger Deakin’, p. 222. [↑](#footnote-ref-180)
180. I am using the term ‘image schemata’ here in the sense of mental representations of physical layouts of objects, sometimes with facets of action. Perhaps a better word would be ‘visualisations’, but I want to make the point that there is some prototypicality at work in these instances. Mark Turner defines ‘image-schemas’ as ‘extremely skeletal images that we use in cognitive operations’ (*Reading Minds*, p. 171). These are simply representations of the three-dimensionality of objects and actions. His term ‘image metaphor’ (ibid.), which he uses to describe more complex, richer representations may be more analogous, but for my usage here I will define them as prior knowledge of physical arrangements and manifestations of action that are utilised and modified by cues from texts, or, new representations derived from textual cues that are based on pre-existing schematised knowledge of the appearance of the physical world and the physics of actions. Even in cases where physical appearances and actions are unlikely or impossible, such as in some science fiction and fantasy, schematised knowledge will draw from stores of the possible and recognise any deviations (with provisos for people who believe in ghosts, angels etc.). [↑](#footnote-ref-181)
181. The novel is written in third person figural, so that the viewpoint is always restricted to one or other of the four central characters and moves between them. The challenge in managing these transitions effectively will be discussed in the next chapter. [↑](#footnote-ref-182)
182. I have provided a rough sketch of this image as Appendix I. [↑](#footnote-ref-183)
183. I am using the term ‘scenario’ here in its broad definition of ‘setting’. I will use this term also for narrative scenarios, detailed plot layouts particularly employed in film production. I will make clear the distinctions if necessary. [↑](#footnote-ref-184)
184. There are, of course other options, including abduction, forced emigration etc., but the two that I have outlined appeared most congruent with my initialising ideas. [↑](#footnote-ref-185)
185. Readers of *Jacks* will notice that the unspecified drug that Texaco has sourced for Krite is known simply as ‘the stuff’. This is essentially an intertextual joke for my own personal amusement although, as a consequence, this raises the possibility that the universe in which *Jacks* takes place is the same one inhabited by characters in the Ben/John novels, though perhaps a few years later. One could then argue for stylistic and philosophical repercussions, that these text worlds are related and that the types of potential occurrences in the separate narratives will be relatable. [↑](#footnote-ref-186)
186. Neither novel has a particularly positive tone, but this was a deliberate choice to try to do maximum justice to the sense of the narratives. [↑](#footnote-ref-187)
187. From *Contracts*, an unpublished novel, Chapter 16, ‘Jack’ (p. 71 of the working typescript. The chapter title is coincidental). [↑](#footnote-ref-188)
188. When practising Taekwondo in my late teens, the advice we were given when going through to spar with the senior practitioners was not to be most cautious with the black belts, who had nothing to prove, but the next level down red belts, who would habitually try and make a point at your expense. [↑](#footnote-ref-189)
189. William Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1929); *Rashomon*, dir. by Akira Kurosawa (Daiei Film Co. Ltd., 1950). [↑](#footnote-ref-190)
190. Barbara Kingsolver, *The Poisonwood Bible* (New York: Harper, 1998). [↑](#footnote-ref-191)
191. Action/reaction alternation is a well-known principle in script writing that I believe also has repercussions for the way in which information is received and processed by readers/viewers. I will come back to this later. [↑](#footnote-ref-192)
192. See Appendix J. I have also provided two versions of the synopsis, as Appendices K and L. [↑](#footnote-ref-193)
193. This does not necessarily mean that the new material is easy to come by, just that one is not, as it were, writing material ‘blind’, in the hope that something useful will develop. [↑](#footnote-ref-194)
194. A friend of mine many years ago coined (or perhaps borrowed) the term ‘metalifer’, to describe the type of person who is both living events and also slightly ‘outside’ them observing. I have used the analogy of someone who is engaged in swimming in a pool, but is at the same time focalising another position of someone at the edge of the pool looking back at the swimmer (themselves). One might say that this is the condition of the writer, to be both undergoing experience and objectifying this experience for later use as formulating material. Whether this may be said to be true of all writers is highly debatable but, in my own experience, this idea has some currency. In any case, I have used this idea to inform aspects of Julian’s character. [↑](#footnote-ref-195)
195. *Jacks*, p. 277. [↑](#footnote-ref-196)
196. For the purposes of this study, in the contest of narrative structures, I am mostly confining the use of the word ‘gist’ to its propositional sense, i.e. concerning physical outcomes, states of mind, actions and related and resulting meanings (macromeanings; macrorules). However, gists can clearly include, also, conclusions about style, the recognition and experience of textures and ‘atmospheres’, genre and intertextual relationships, personal outcomes for the receiver (gaining knowledge and emotional impact, for instance) etc. Any full analysis of the gists of specific texts would have to account for these kinds of diffuse effects, but this is beyond the immediate scope of my particular research goals in this instance. [↑](#footnote-ref-197)
197. Catherine Emmott, *Narrative Comprehension: A Discourse Perspective* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997). [↑](#footnote-ref-198)
198. Emmott, *Narrative Comprehension*, p. 120. [↑](#footnote-ref-199)
199. One could, of course, argue that this is something of the case with all entire texts, that the full nature of the text is tentative until it has all been received, even when certain outcomes are highly likely owing to genre conventions etc. [↑](#footnote-ref-200)
200. Emmott, *Narrative Comprehension*, p. 124. [↑](#footnote-ref-201)
201. As Emmott puts it: ‘An instanataneous switch is like a spliced film recording.’ (p. 157). Such transit scenes provide an interesting example of a mixed case scenario. In the archetypal road movie, the external frame may be in a constant state of flux whilst, at the same time, the internal, that of the car interior, stagecoach, train etc. may remain relatively fixed, even with the same combination of characters. [↑](#footnote-ref-202)
202. Emmott, *Narrative Comprehension*, p. 173. [↑](#footnote-ref-203)
203. Ibid., p. 125, FIG. 4.1. [↑](#footnote-ref-204)
204. Robert A. Henlein, ‘Waldo’, first published in *Astounding Magazine* (1942). [↑](#footnote-ref-205)
205. Teun A. Van Dijk, *Macrostructures: An Interdisciplinary Study of Global Structures in Discourse, Interaction and Cognition* (Hillsdale: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Inc., 1980), p. 227. [↑](#footnote-ref-206)
206. Oatley, *Such Stuff* *as Dreams*, p. 145. [↑](#footnote-ref-207)
207. Mark Turner, *The Literary Mind: The origins of thought and language* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-208)
208. Oatley, *Such Stuff* *as Dreams*, p. 146. [↑](#footnote-ref-209)
209. Oatley, *Such Stuff* *as Dreams*, p. 147. [↑](#footnote-ref-210)
210. Whether this easy adaptability has resulted may be for others to decide. However I did receive a comment from the literary agent David Grossman, who, after the reading a submitted draft said ‘It also strikes us as a gift for a TV producer’, which made me feel I had gone some way to satisfying my aim. I have not, however, worked out a scheme to divide the narrative into acts or episodes, though this would be a necessary step during adaptation. This process would be contingent upon the demands for establishing the new (script) discourse and would, thus, be suggested by the demands of this process of selection and re-emphasis. [↑](#footnote-ref-211)
211. Clearly, in film, a ‘reading’ cannot accelerate, but cutting frequencies and action/dialogue pacing can. [↑](#footnote-ref-212)
212. There is no structural pun intended in Julian having the surname ‘Strand’. It just occurred to me that it made a good pairing with Julian and only later afforded the confusion with the actor Julian Sands, as well as the slight allusion to its shoreline denotation in the chapter ‘STRAND’, where he is observing Serena and suddenly feels that: ‘Each movement she made around the kitchen rippled out to the shore of his soul and lapped playfully on the beach.’ (p. 75). [↑](#footnote-ref-213)
213. My prototype or for this type of cinematography may be the film *Messidor* (dir. by Alain Tanner, 1979), which I recall shows lots of extended shots of empty roads and unpopulated landscapes, although this might be merely an establishing schema onto which I have mapped other experiences of this type of shot composition. [↑](#footnote-ref-214)
214. Branigan, *Narrative Comprehension and Film*, p. 13. [↑](#footnote-ref-215)
215. Ibid., p. 123. [↑](#footnote-ref-216)
216. As I have stated before, overall gist conclusions are contingent until the narrative reception is complete, and only then are they settled. Or not. Gist conclusions can be negotiated through conversation with others, be subject to reappraisal for autpbiographical reasons or remain permanently unsettled. They may be modified by additional knowledge. One reading of the film *Taxi Driver* (dir. by Martin Scorsese, 1976) is that Travis Bickle’s final sequence, in which he is hailed as a hero is, in fact, a dying fantasy as he bleeds out on the sofa. A sequel has been muted on a number of occasions, featuring a much older Bickle. If this were the case, this interpretation, and its accompanying gists, would be obviated. [↑](#footnote-ref-217)
217. *Caravaggio*, dir. by Derek Jarman (Cinevista, 1986). [↑](#footnote-ref-218)
218. A good account of this type of categorisation may be found in William Croft and D. Alan Cruse, *Cognitive Linguistics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), with particular reference to Ch. 4, ‘Categories, concepts and meanings’, pp. 74-106. [↑](#footnote-ref-219)
219. Bordwell, *Narration in the Fiction Film*, p. 34. [↑](#footnote-ref-220)
220. Robert Olen Butler, *From Where You Dream: The Process of Writing Fiction* (New York: Grove Press, 2005), p. 15. [↑](#footnote-ref-221)
221. Samuel Johnson, *The Rambler* No. 41, Tuesday 7 August 1750. [↑](#footnote-ref-222)
222. Butler, p. 64; Alan Garner, from an interview in the online magazine ‘elimae’, 2004 (<http://elimae.com>, link now lapsed). [↑](#footnote-ref-223)
223. From one of a series of lectures on the interface between poetry and neuroscience, at the University of Sheffield, 28 April 2015. [↑](#footnote-ref-224)
224. My source here is Anthony J. Sanford and Catherine Emmott, *Mind, Brain and Narrative* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2012), with particular reference to Chapter 6, ‘The experiential aspect: using embodiment theory’, pp. 132-60. [↑](#footnote-ref-225)
225. The combined effects of which, along with decoding written English from the surreally illustrated books of Dr Seuss, may have had profound effects on the way in which I view the world. [↑](#footnote-ref-226)
226. Leo Tolstoy on the occasion of his eightieth birthday (9 September 1908), quoted in: Cecile Starr, *Discovering the Movies* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1972), p. 32. [↑](#footnote-ref-227)
227. The prototype for this structure of an ascending series of challenges may be Bruce Lee’s incomplete film *Game of Death* (dir. by Bruce Lee, 1972) and its edited remake, dir. by Robert Clouse, Sammo Hung and Bruce Lee (1978). [↑](#footnote-ref-228)
228. Cohen, *Film and Fiction*, p. 6. [↑](#footnote-ref-229)
229. Ibid., p. 208. [↑](#footnote-ref-230)
230. Cohen, *Film and Fiction*, p. 209. [↑](#footnote-ref-231)
231. Appendix M. [↑](#footnote-ref-232)
232. Andy McNab, *Bravo Two Zero* (London: Bantam Press, 1993). [↑](#footnote-ref-233)
233. *Blow-up*, dir. by Michaelangelo Antonioni (Metro-Goldwyn Mayer/Premier Productions, 1966). [↑](#footnote-ref-234)
234. Bordwell, *Narration in the Fiction Film*, p. 51. [↑](#footnote-ref-235)
235. Lisbeth Klastrup and Susana Tosca, ‘Game of Thrones: Transmedial Worlds, Fandom, and Social Gaming’ in *Storyworlds across Media: Toward a Media-Conscious Narratology*, ed. by Marie-Laure Ryan and Jan-Noël Thon (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2014), pp. 296-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-236)
236. Ibid., p. 297. [↑](#footnote-ref-237)
237. Anne Tyler, *The Accidental Tourist* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985). [↑](#footnote-ref-238)
238. *Let Him Have It*, dir. by Peter Medak (British Screen Productions, 1991). [↑](#footnote-ref-239)
239. Patricia Highsmith, *Ripley’s Game* (London: Heinemann, 1974); *The American Friend*, dir. by Wim Wenders (Axiom Films, 1977). [↑](#footnote-ref-240)
240. Teun A. Van Dijk, *Macrostructures: An Interdisciplinary Study of Global Structures in Discourse, Interaction and Cognition* (Hillsdale: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Inc., 1980), p. 202. [↑](#footnote-ref-241)