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AIN'T IT COOL NEWS

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CRAVE

What We Do in the Shadows

Media 101
Some interviews with some Vampires
Semester 2, 2020

UNISON FILMS DEFENDER FILMS AND THE NEW ZEALAND DOCUMENTARY BOARD IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE NEW ZEALAND FILM COMMISSION PRESENT A SHADOWS PRODUCTION "WHAT WE DO IN THE SHADOWS" JEMAINNE CLEMENT TAIKA WAITITI JONATHAN BRUGH CORI GONZALEZ MACQUEEN STU RUTHERFORD
CASTING TINA CLEARY PRODUCTION DESIGNER RA VINCENT CINEMATOGRAPHY BY DJ STIPSEN / RICHARD BLUECK MUSIC BY JONAS WUNDER AND ROBERTO MONTES
WRITTEN & DIRECTED BY JEMAINNE CLEMENT & TAIKA WAITITI
whatwedoontheshadows.com #deliciousnecks UNISON NZ FILM



Guiding Questions

- *How does cinema negotiate the relationship between realism and 'truth'?*
- *How does comedy help us address potentially serious topics?*
- *What does the vampire tell us about otherness?*
- *And what does all this have to do with a bunch of vampires flatting in Wellington?*





Lecture Breakdown

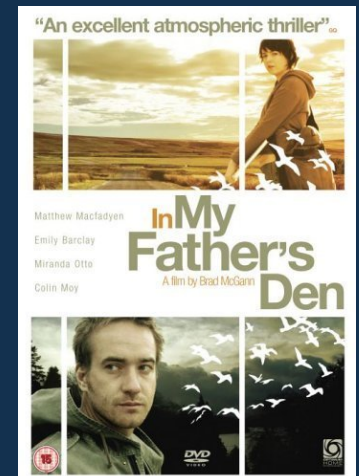
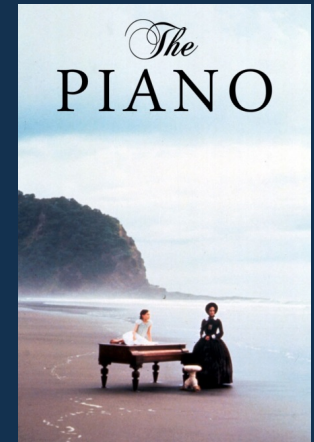
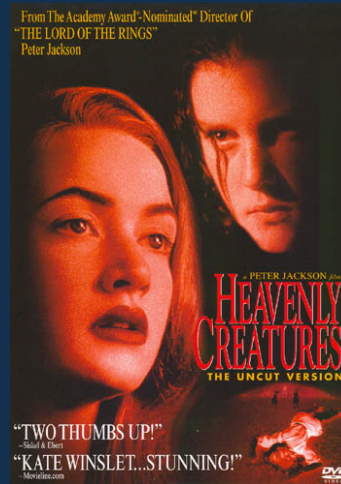
- New Zealand Cinema
- Genre and Parody
- Comedy Horror and the Mundane
- Postcolonial Vampires





New Zealand Cinema

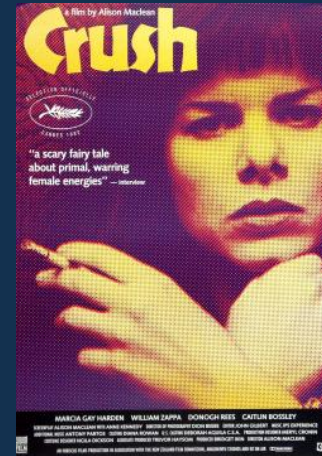
- Isolation
- Postcolonial context
- Journeys and escape
- Mundanity and Horror
- A likable grotesque
- Identity
- Rebellion





Themes

- landscape (as a metaphor for the psychological interior)
- Horror, unease and profound (settler) anxiety
- Adolescence and rites of passages
- Madness
- (kiwi) male culture





Cinema of Unease

- “A society can be said to have come of age when it begins to live by the light of an imaginative order of its own.”
 - Charles Brasch, quoted in *Cinema of Unease*



[http://
www.nzonscreen.com
/title/cinema-of-
unease-1995](http://www.nzonscreen.com/title/cinema-of-unease-1995)



The Kiwi Gothic

- mirror to the psychic struggles of characters as well as the cultural tensions in settler nations
- terror and abuse, enclosure and entrapment, madness, death and emotional or sexual excess that are set in a variety of dark and gloomy sinister locations

Paravasini Gebert

The gothic “was, from its earliest history in England and Europe, fundamentally linked to colonial settings, characters and realities as frequent embodiments of the forbidding and frightening.”



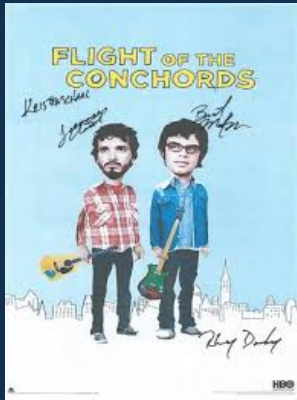
The Haunted House





Awkward Humour

- visual and verbal humour
- Taika Waititi and Jemaine Clement





Taika Waititi



- Two Cars, One Night (2004)
- Eagle vs Shark (2007)
- Boy (2010)
- What We Do in the Shadows (2014)
- Hunt for the Wilderpeople (2016)
- Thor Ragnarok (2017)
- Jojo Rabbit (2019)





Thor Ragnarok 2017



What We do in the Shadows

- distinct New Zealand sensibility
- deadpan humour
- Genre parody: homage and critique
- intersections between the ordinary and the horrific





Life Cycles of Film Genres

Four basic stages:

- 1) Experimental stage of conventional formulation
- 2) Classical stage of conventional stabilization
- 3) Refinement stage
- 4) The self-reflexive stage in which parody arises

Not a fixed sequence, but a rough pattern of canonization





Characters and Genre

Petyr



Nosferatu





Characters and Genre

Vladislav



Dracula





Bela Lugosi





Bram Stoker's Dracula





Characters and Genre

Deacon



David from *Lost Boys*





Characters and Genre

Viago

Lestat





Interview with the Vampire





Characters and Genre

Nick



Edward Cullen



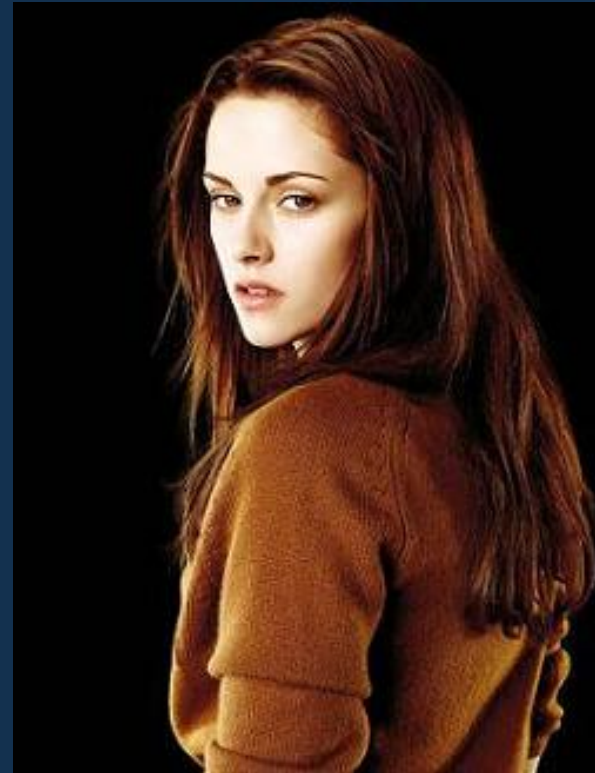


Characters and Genre

Stu



Bella Swan





What is Parody?

- Parodia: ‘counter-song’ or ‘beside’
- distance and a closeness
- defamiliarises something familiar
- highlights a text’s constructedness
- aesthetic or social critique/flattery
- intertextuality and transgression





Intertextuality

- decoding a text in the light of another text
- Self – reflexivity
- quoting
- mocking or flattery



‘Imitation is the highest form of flattery.’



The Bisgetti Trick





Lost Boys



MOVIECLIPS.COM



Genre Boundaries

Rick Altman

- **Lexicon:** the characters, the costumes, and various items comprising the film's iconography
- **Syntax** – the narrative structure / the film's plot
- **Film style:** (including sound effects, camera movement and dialogue subtitles)





Mockumentary

- Mocking both the vampire genre and the documentary genre
- Combining myth and realism
- outrageous fictions via a rhetoric of objectivity
- parody, and self-reflexivity
- ordinary and horrific





Docu-genre and Reality TV

- Real life situation and demystification
- Character bonding
- Crisis moment and resolution
- Melt down
- Re –enactment scenes
- extensive archival footage





Coming out to Stu





Demystification

- Demystifying mythical monsters
- insight into the ordinary lives of vampires (demystification)
- revitalises the vampire (remythification)





7 Vampire myths debunked

FUNNYÖDIE



Cinematography

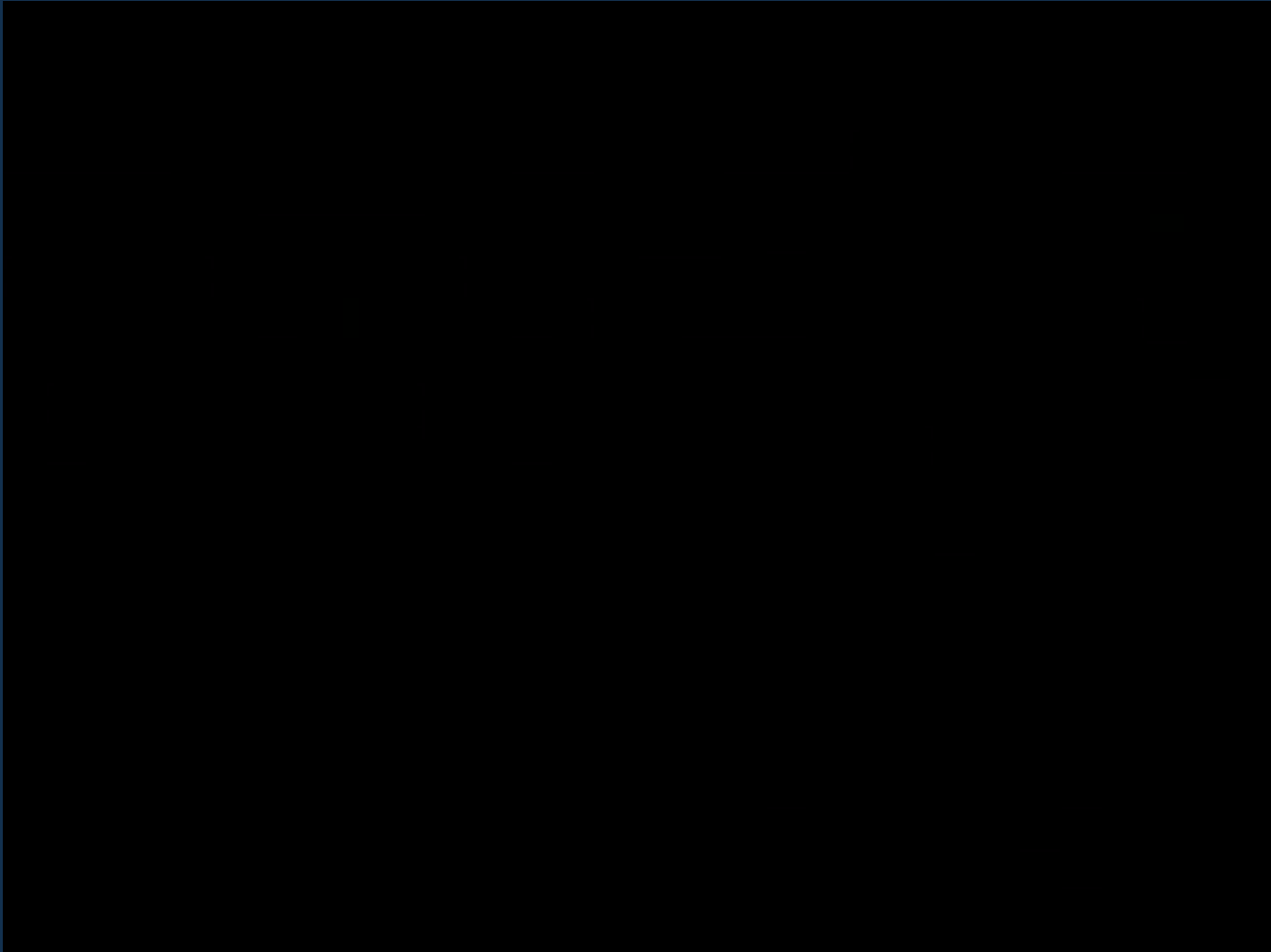
Cinema verité

- observational cinema
- Heightens perception of cinematic truths but at the same time also questions it
- **Handheld camera**
- **Zoom**
- **Rack focusing**





Forgotten Silver 1995





Cinematography





Comedy and Horror

Slapstick

- Slapstick occurs anytime things go wrong physically
- plays on our fear of physical and social maladjustment

Jerry Lewis: "I don't know that I have a carefully thought-out theory on exactly what makes people laugh, but the premise of all comedy is a man in trouble."





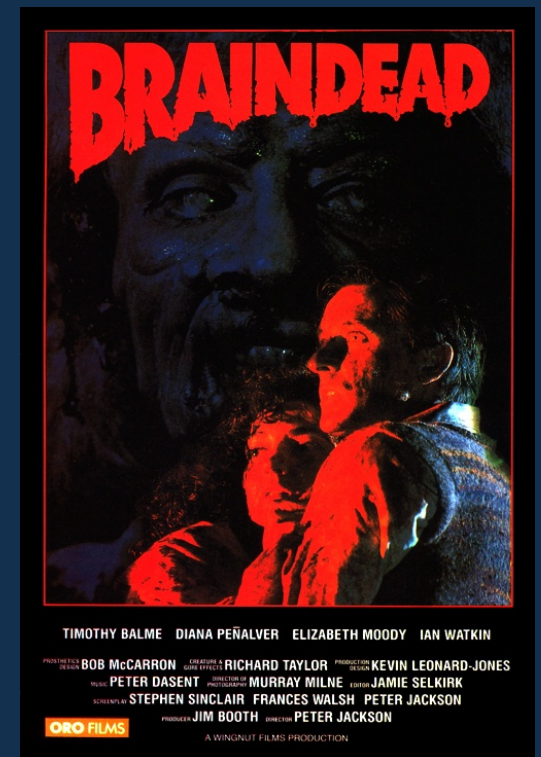
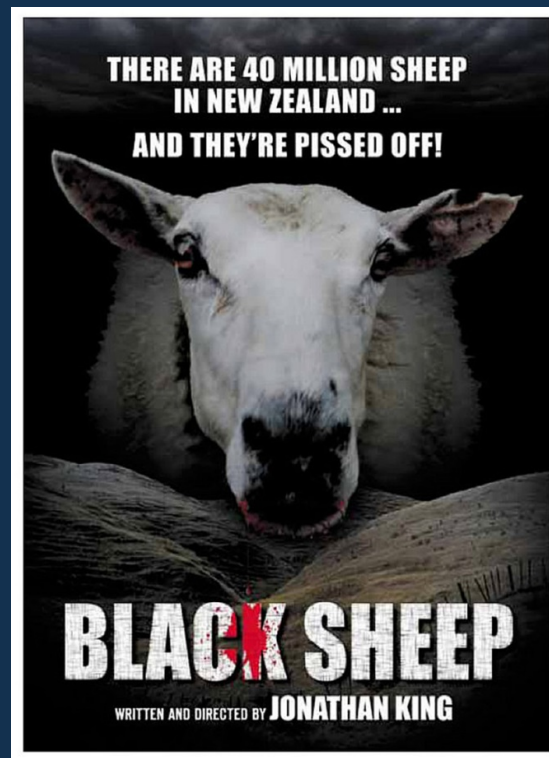
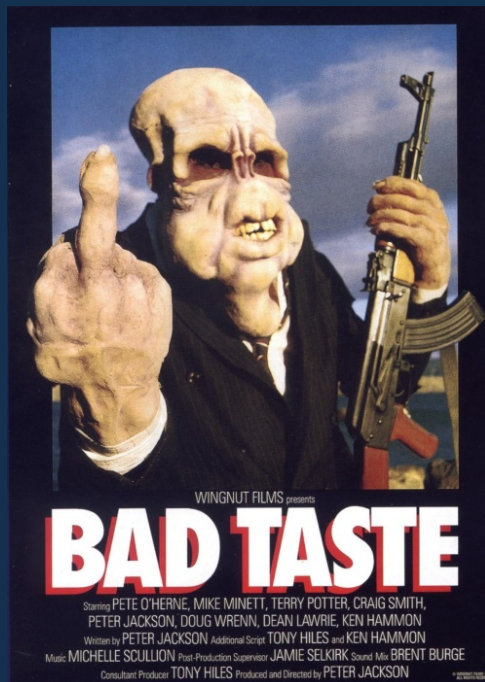
“the premise of all comedy is a man in trouble”





Splatstick

- Splatter horror + slapstick comedy





Braindead (1992)





Incongruous Comedy

- impassive deadpan humour
- comedy and horror – laughs and frights
- The ancient vampire is transferred into contemporary everyday New Zealand
- The characters don't fit in





The Mundanity of Horror

- The horrific is utterly mundane
- Closely modelled on the British TV series *The Young Ones*
- growing up eternally





The Young Ones





Boytribes





Werewolves





The Mundanity of Horror

- vampire trope as an endless source of inconvenience
- The categories of what it means to be human are made strange
- Monsters, such as vampires, make us think about what is monstrous about being human





The Mundanity of Horror





The Horror of the Mundane

- By rendering the horrific mundane, the film also suggests that there is something horrific about the mundane
- E.g. Jackie –outdoes them in cruelty
- a glimpse into everyday suburban psychopathic normality





Human Monstrosity





Postcolonial Vampires

- revisiting national myths
- Immigration

1) Vampire as feared and desired

Exoticism and demonization of the colonized subject

2) Vampire as exploitative lodsucker

- applied to the colonizer (e.g. Oliver Cromwell)





Postcolonial Vampires

- The European as other





Whanau





Awkward Cohabitation

