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After the Typewriter: the Screenplay in a Digital Era

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Abstract

This paper aims to contribute to contemporary debates about (1) screenwriting as a process of developing the screen idea, (2) the ways in which formatting conventions from an earlier era of cinema may restrict innovation in screenwriting, and (3) shifting practices of screenwriting in a digital era in which images and sound play a potentially more significant role. Additionally, it questions the use of terms such as ‘blueprint’ to describe the relationship between the screenplay and the proposed film that it represents. **After the Typewriter: the Screenplay in a Digital Era** draws on the author’s body of practice-led research as a writer and director of feature films and documentaries, as well as histories of screenwriting, film production, comics and the graphic arts.

Keywords

Screenwriting; Scriptwriting; Screen Practice Research; Digital Cinema;
Independent Film;
Script development.

Biography

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Kathryn Millard is a writer, filmmaker and is Associate Professor at Macquarie University, Sydney. Her credits as writer, producer and director include award-winning features, documentaries and essay films. Kathryn publishes on topics including screenwriting, screen history, colour, photography, creativity and collaboration. Her feature-length essay film about Chaplin imitators, *The Boot Cake*, was released in 2008.

Introduction

In 2003, I directed a feature film *Travelling Light* (2003) which was loosely inspired by Allen Ginsberg's visit to Australia to participate in Adelaide Writers' Week in the 1960s. The script, which was in development for approximately six years, was funded draft by draft through the Australian Film Commission, the national film funding agency then responsible for script development. The project was conceived as a multi-stranded narrative with an ensemble of characters at pivotal moments in their lives, all connected via their relationship to television; in particular, to a fictional 1960s variety show *Adelaide Tonight*, hosted by the equally fictional Ray Sugars. The screenplay utilised motifs of light and electricity to be played out across the film's image and sound tracks. As is so often the case however, as the project progressed down the financing route there came increased pressure for the screenplay to conform to a more classic, protagonist-driven, three-act structure. I, together with the script editor and producer, was advised by assessors and readers that we should complete the set-up more quickly, snip out those scenes about early television they deemed unnecessary, and focus more on a central character (thereby ensuring sufficient screen time to retain the prominent young Australian actress who was attached to the project). We were also encouraged to fill out the sound track with hit songs of the 1970s to ensure audience accessibility. These pressures did not come from the film distributors who were providing a distribution guarantee, but from the public broadcaster and government screen funding agencies who would form a vital piece of the financing jigsaw if the script was to make it to the screen. Needless to say, my talk of independent cinema with its ambiguity, internalised character conflict and visual motifs as structuring devices did not go down well.

Over the third, fourth and fifth drafts, the film was re-structured and pruned to fit a template more closely aligned to those promoted by the screenwriting manuals. In the process temporal, stylistic and thematic complexity were significantly minimised. Finally I made enough changes to steer the film through the two state agencies, the Australian theatrical distributor, the Australian public broadcaster, the Australian pay-TV broadcaster and the European-based sales agent who were all needed to secure the balance in federal film funding. The additional plot introduced at the last moment to provide the narrative closure demanded was undoubtedly the most 'undercooked' aspect of the script, introducing a false note to the characterisation of Lou, our beat poet/trickster character. Despite a number of

nominations, awards and enthusiastic responses, critical reactions to the film were sharply divided, and *Travelling Light* had difficulty finding its cinema audience in the narrow time-span within which even specialised, limited release films are expected to perform.

While the claim is frequently made that Australian feature screenplays are under-developed, I would argue the opposite. My experience with *Travelling Light*, and my background as a script reader and assessor for various funding bodies, leads me to the conclusion that many scripts are over- rather than under-developed. The handful of screenplays and film projects chosen for development through government programs all too often lose momentum and energy as a consequence of this selection. A selection which almost invariably subjects them to drawn-out rounds of assessment, reports, required revisions and yet more revisions—all justified in the name of critical rigour and industry imperatives. Along the way, screenwriters and their collaborators struggle to retain, or re-inject, into their screen ideas what social psychologist Abraham Maslow called in his diaries a quality of ‘aliveness’ (Lowry 1982: 37), an attribute that Maslow considered fundamental to works of art if they were to connect with their intended audiences.

Early in his career, Atom Egoyan observed that many script development and film funding mechanisms seem aimed at delaying the production of the film as long as possible in the belief that this was a good thing (Burnett 1988). In all the many and various deliberations about *Travelling Light* it was invariably words on a page that were discussed, dissected and analysed, rather than images, sounds, gestures, rhythm or the cinematic qualities of the script. Yet the work of many innovative screenwriters and film-makers has long favoured audio and visual expressivity over plot and narrative drive, and their approaches provide a wealth of alternative scripting methodologies and structures for analysis. Scripts can be inspired by still photographs, visual art, sense memories, location pictures, video footage or popular songs. Acclaimed writers and film-makers including Gus Van Sant, Jim Jarmusch, Tony Grisoni and Michael Winterbottom, Wong Kar Wai, Wim Wenders and Chantal Ackerman have all developed methods of shifting between writing and production, working with both words and images. These writers and filmmakers embrace *cinematic* scriptwriting. Some of the terms used to describe the resulting story designs include the road map, the open screenplay, the visual scenario and the *ars combinatoria* screenplay (Millard 2006). As filmmaker and screenwriting theorist J.J. Murphy suggests, ‘real innovation in screenwriting... comes not from ignorance of narrative film conventions but from being able to see beyond their limitations’ (Murphy 2007: 266).

Script development as a process, not as an end in itself

Increasingly I find myself interested in screenwriting and development processes aimed at realising films within *specific* production contexts and parameters, rather than free-floating script development programs that can so easily become ends in themselves. As Australian playwright and dramaturg Noëlle Janaczewska notes in her blog entry *The Development Sceptic*, the most useful development of new play scripts is undertaken in contexts where the writer works with the company and collaborators who are committed to producing the play. Janaczewska is particularly wary of development programs influenced by the development practices of film. She argues:

Film has a whole host of development initiatives, most of which seem to exist to (a) provide an income stream for assessors, script editors, program directors, administrators and others, presumably while they try to get their own projects up, (b) generate activity and create the illusion that your project/screenplay is progressing, and (c) to explain why things can't or won't happen. (Janaczewska 2007)

Many development processes simply shape screenplays to pre-existing templates, so that the distinctiveness of works can be gradually eroded, assessment-by-assessment, draft-by-draft. As Ian Macdonald argues in his discussion of the 'screen idea' as the basis for the proposed screenwork, development processes such as those held by CILECT involve writers in workshops in which 'the screen idea was being shaped, altered and drawn towards what the professionals thought of as right, based on internalised experience and expressed as craft or lore' (Macdonald 2004: 91).

Although the workshop Macdonald discusses was specifically aimed at screenwriters collaborating with directors and producers as part of their studies at film school, the methods used appear to be modelled on those used within the subsidised sectors of the film industry. That is, screenplays and projects are often selected on the basis of attributes such as originality and innovation, only to have these very qualities systematically minimised through the workshopping and script development process. As Lewis Hyde suggests in his book about the archetypes of creativity, 'works proceed according to their own logic... Premature evaluation cuts off the flow' (Hyde 2007: 187).

Beyond the Blueprint

The screenplay is often referred to as a 'blueprint' for the film to come, but perhaps it is time to reconsider this term? After all, blueprints derive their name from the cyanotype photographic process developed by John Herschel in the 1840s (Ware 2008). Herschel coated paper with photosensitive compounds and then exposed it to strong light. In the process, areas of paper were converted to Prussian blue. The cyanotype, one of the tantalising byways of early photography, did not find wide acceptance because many viewers were unable to accept the world rendered in shades of blue and white. The process, however, was widely used to reproduce architectural and engineering technical drawings until replaced by less expensive printing methods in the 1940s and 50s and, more recently, by digital displays. Given the term 'blueprint' still carries with it this residue of technical drawing and specifications rather than fluidity and flux, it seems a less than ideal metaphor for the screenplay. The development of the screen idea inevitably involves collaboration and therefore to concentrate solely on the screenplay as a source for the film-to-be seems unnecessarily restrictive.

Collaboration involves reading and re-reading, notes, discussion and redrafting, creating and recreating something that represents a common understanding. The reader(s) of the screenplay and other documents inevitably construct a version of the screen idea in their heads which (unlike readers of novels) they then have to contribute to. (Macdonald 2004: 91)

This process, too, has only intensified with the proliferation of digital technologies and the working methods they enable. In this era of digital cinema previously discrete stages of pre-production, production and post-production tend to get collapsed into a single more fluid stage, in which images and sounds can be re-worked to a much greater degree. Increasingly, elements of post-production and pre-production can be happening simultaneously. Surely then, more than ever, the screenplay needs to be a flexible document? Film editor Walter Murch observes that 'digital technologies naturally tend to integrate with one another' (Murch 1999). Perhaps in this environment it is more appropriate to consider the screenplay as an open text that sketches out possibilities and remains fluid through the filmmaking process?

Courier and the screenplay

‘The screenplay ... is the record of an idea for a screenwork, written in a highly stylised form. It is constrained by the rules of its form on the page, and is the subject of industrial norms and conventions’ (Macdonald 2004: 81). When I began writing screenplays in the 1980s (assembling images and text with scissors, paste and colour Xeroxes to construct the treatment for my first production) I was astonished to discover the degree to which scriptwriting formats were rigidly prescribed. Even now, the Nicholl Fellowships Guidelines, sponsored by the U.S. Academy of Motion Pictures, warn that you can create a negative impression of your script through the following list of foibles and indiscretions; ‘Art on the script cover; Hard, slick Acco covers; Plastic spine binding; Commercial, College paper covers; Wimpy brads; Long ‘dangerous’ brads; Cut ‘dangerous’ brads’ (Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences 2008). Reading this list, a trip to the local stationery shop is beginning to sound surprisingly complex. The pitfalls awaiting the writer seeking professional acceptance and eventual production are many. The Nicholl guidelines go on to advise against ‘a *clipped* or *rubber-banded* script on non-three hole paper, overly *thick* scripts, *thin* scripts, *three-ring* binding, color of card stock cover that inadvertently *bugs* a reader’ (Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences 2008).

The number one convention however, is that the screenplay MUST be presented in Courier 12-point font. Similar advice can be found in screenwriting training manuals and submission guidelines around the world. Why must it? Is it because the font conveys a sense of timelessness, thanks to its association with the typewriter? Yet the Courier font was designed not in the early twentieth century along with the first mass-produced typewriters, but much later, in the 1950s Populuxe era.¹ It rapidly became one of the most popular fonts around with versions available for almost every typewriter on the market. One of the first advertisements for the ubiquitous Courier claimed ‘a letter can be just an ordinary messenger, or it can be the courier which radiates dignity, prestige and stability’ (Vanderbilt 2004).

Of course, this message is exactly what many screenwriting manuals and funding guidelines have long been trying to drum into aspiring screenwriters. Present your scripts in the approved formatting, and you not only imbue your work with ‘Dignity, Prestige and Stability’ but announce your status as an insider in the film industry. In *What Happens Next: A History of American Screenwriting* (Norman 2008: 190-196) Marc Norman reports that Preston Sturges was initially hired to write dialogue in 1930s Hollywood on the basis of his stage plays. Producer Jesse Lansky initially dismissed Sturges as an amateur when he offered

to take Sturges' idea straight from pitch to first draft (bypassing the conventional ten-page treatment common at the time). When, a month later, Sturges turned in a script, Lansky was forced to eat his words:

[It was] a complete screenplay of proper length, complete to every word of dialogue, the action of every scene blueprinted for the director, and including special instructions for the cameraman and all the departments... I was astounded. It was the most perfect script I'd ever seen... I wouldn't let anyone touch a word of it. (Norman 2008: 193)

There are several ways to read this but it is hard to go past the view that, in Lansky's eyes, it was Sturges's command of screenplay formatting that accorded him the status of the true professional.

The personal computer and the rise and fall of Courier

One of the main reasons that Courier was able to migrate successfully from the typewriter to the first personal computers in the 1980s was that it did not require much memory. This is because Courier is a fixed pitch font, in which every character has the same width, and therefore requires no kerningⁱⁱ. Although perhaps even more important to note is that the packaging of Courier with the first PCs ensured that users would be able to replicate typewriter-looking documents, enabling a smooth transition to the new era of word processing and personal computing. By 2004 however, *Slate* writer Tom Vanderbilt reported that the U.S. State Department was replacing Courier 12 as its official font-in-residence.

Courier 12, created in 1955 by IBM, is perhaps the most recognisable typeface of the twentieth century – a visual symbol of typewritten anonymity, the widespread dissemination of information (and a classification of documents), stark factuality, and streamlined efficiency. (Vanderbilt 2004)

Exiled from bureaucracies, the film industry remains one of Courier's last strongholds. But for how much longer?

Conventional wisdom in the film and television industries suggests that the screenplay is not only a creative document, but also one that encompasses production planning; providing information about locations, actors, sets, props, time of day and, most vital of all, timing. If the usual film formatting conventions are followed, then a page of screenplay equals one minute of screen time. I suspect however, that the equation has never been as

easily calculated as this convention might imply. Different genres and styles of filmmaking, as well as individual director's preferred patterns of coverage are likely to result in a much greater range of page to screen ratios than the idealised one minute of screen time per page of screenplay. Moreover, one can't help but wonder if the enforcement of this equation does not nudge the screenplay towards a production and budgeting document, rather than a creative record of a screen idea? An idea in flux and transition, an idea on the way to becoming a film. Indeed, the insistence on a single method of writing and presenting a range of screen ideas across genres may primarily owe its existence to the need to efficiently process large numbers of speculatively written screenplays. It may be a response to the growing numbers of screenplays (fuelled in part at least, by the growing number of screenwriting manuals and workshops), rather than a response to the needs of the development process.

Fluidity: improvising the screenplay

Cognitive psychologist David Perkins notes that 'a lively interplay between the developing work and the mind of the artist' is an important factor in crafting large writing projects (John-Steiner 1997: 128-9). Novelist Anthony Burgess, for example, describes the early stages of new work; 'I chart a little at first... lists of names, rough synopses of chapters, and so on. But one doesn't over-plan; so many things are generated by the sheer act of writing'. Nelson Algren also spoke of a book finding its own shape in the process of creation (John-Steiner 1997: 128-9). Wong Kar-Wai 'typically allows his stories to evolve as he films them; he simply sketches an outline of the story, finds locations, and begins shooting' (Bosley 2001: 24 in Geuens 2007 : 413). As Wong puts it, he doesn't really know what he wants at the writing stage, thus 'making the film is actually a way for me to find all the answers' (Tizard 2002: 197 in Geuens 2007 : 213).

The 'evolving systems' theory of creativityⁱⁱⁱ proposes that major innovations across the arts and science are usually the result of extended periods of focused work on multiple, overlapping projects. Gruber terms this the 'network of enterprises', arguing that such a way of working increases the likelihood of cross-fertilisation across projects (Gruber & Wallace 1989: 11-13). Canadian filmmaker Guy Maddin uses just such a process. He describes the genesis of his mockumentary *Brand Upon The Brain* (2006) explaining that he was approached by Seattle's not-for-profit The Film Company. They were willing to fund a low budget feature providing that it was based on an original idea. Or as Maddin explains it, 'you

can't use an old pre-existing script that's got the producer's breath all over the title page' (Douglas 2007). He was asked to write something new within a month. Since Maddin's films typically revisit his autobiography, it was a given that some such scenes would be included.

I didn't have time to make up a lot of stuff, so I took some episodes from my childhood, one key sort of pivotal coming-together. I knew I didn't have time to write dialogue, but I knew I had time to wing a film poem together... especially if I started writing it later in the editing process, using title cards or narration. (Douglas 2007)

In fact, his script never really existed as a traditionally presented and formatted screenplay. Instead, Maddin and his collaborators worked from a story outline with lists of sets and props. He also describes gradually introducing other elements into the mix. Fascinated by sound post-production he invited the film's team of Foley artists to contribute to a live performance, and his narration was partly inspired by *benshi*, the film explainers of Japanese silent cinema. Maddin's work presents one possible model for opening up the screenplay, due to his insistence on working with cinematic elements from early in the process.

Maddin and Wong's methodologies also have parallels with the improvisational processes of performers and musicians. Social psychologist and creativity theorist Keith Sawyer observes that improvisational theatre groups that do 'long form improvisation' almost always prepare a *loose structure* in advance; 'good jazz improvisers have years of experience... they build a repertoire of phrases, overall forms, and memories of other musicians' famous solos and recordings... When improvising, they draw on this material' (Sawyer 2007: 170). In other words they draw on these phrases and forms, modifying and embellishing them to suit the demands of specific situations. Yet in the film and television industries it is usually only actors who are given the latitude to improvise. Research conducted in the IT industries also suggests that successful innovators build on limited structures; 'the critical balance for innovation is at the edge of chaos; not too rigid to prevent emergent innovation, but not too loose to result in total chaos' (Sawyer 2007: 169).

Comics and graphic novels

Screenwriter Jim Taylor (*Election*, 1999 and *Sideways*, 2004) argues that screenplays could draw more on comics and the graphic novel in their formatting and layout. 'I'm hoping

to figure out a new way to make screenplays more expressive,' he says (Kretchmer 2006). Taylor points to the work of comic artist Chris Ware as one of his own inspirations for experimenting with the look of screenplays, since in Ware's comics, text is often more prominent than pictures. Taylor's own experiments in creating visual interest include using a number of fonts and letterforms. In a sample page from *Sideways* he delineated characters with the use of different fonts and typefaces, formatting all of the Miles character's lines in Comic Sans, and all of Jack's in Chalkboard (Kretchmer 2006).

Paul Wells' *Scriptwriting* (in a series on *Basic Animation*) focuses on the role of narrative forms and concepts, images, sounds and music in the development of screen ideas (Wells 2007). Wells' wealth of beginning points for generating audio-visual narratives include iconic images, sounds, sense memories, emotions, concepts and re-narrations of established myths and fairy tales. Similarly, structuring devices and methods of analysis include story boards, friezes and ladders which combine sketches and hand-drawn text and event analysis. Many of these methods are drawn from the working methods of a diverse range of writers and directors. While *Scriptwriting* is aimed at those beginning to write for animation, is the openness of this approach that makes it a valuable source of ideas for screenwriters more generally. In *Comics as Literature* Rocco Versaci notes that comics of all kinds are increasingly being adapted into films. While mainstream superhero films have long drawn on comics, less well known and edgy material has been successfully adapted into high profile films too; Versaci cites *Sin City* (2005) and *V for Vendetta* (2005) as examples (2007: 11). His analysis of comics suggests, though, that the form has considerably more to offer cinema than simply a stockpile of stories ripe for adaptation. For him, they are a form of graphic language that operates within a unique poetics.

Comic narration blends and modifies features shared by other art forms – especially literature, painting, photography and film. Like literature, comics contain written narrative and dialogue, and they employ devices such as characterisation, conflict and plot... comics blend words and pictures... Unlike film, the images in comics are 'read' more like paintings and photographs rather than 'watched' like movies. (Versaci 2007: 13)

Versaci contends that reading the interplay between the written and the visual is complex and that comics do not happen in the words or the pictures but 'somewhere in between', in a process that requires the active participation of the reader to fill in the details between the panels. It is this *filling in the space between the words and the pictures*, he

suggests, that fosters an intimacy between creator and audience (Versaci 2007: 14, my emphasis). For me it is this dynamic mix of words and images, the fact that images as well as words (and the relationship between the two) take centre stage from the beginning, that makes comics and graphic novels one particularly apt model for the screenplay.

One artist/illustrator whose work I have found especially inspiring is John M. Muth. In his graphic novel *M*, Muth restaged Fritz Lang's film (1931) about the investigation of a child murder with a neighbourhood cast and a collection of borrowed costumes (Muth 2008). He then produced watercolours based on stills from these re-enactments. His blurred, defocused images of his characters help convey the sense of an everyman's version of *M*. His graphic novel juxtaposes stills of dramatic action and evidence from the investigation – maps, memos, bars of haunting music and dialogue bubbles. *M* suggests yet another possible pathway for the screenplay, perhaps with collected and assembled images for those of us who do not have Muth's skills as a visual artist.

In her account of 'breakthrough thinking' across the arts and sciences, *Notebooks of the Mind*, cognitive psychologist Vera John-Steiner argues that images are a more nuanced form of representing ideas than words (John-Steiner 1997: 109). This is not to suggest, of course, that words such as the scene description within a screenplay cannot evoke images for readers. Indeed, in his discussion of the evolution of screenplay, Kevin Boon argues that the trend towards less technical information within screenplays, and a more distilled, literary style has been particularly pronounced over the last thirty years (Boon 2008). Boon describes this transition as cinema and television shaking off the influences of staged theatre and developing its own distinct literary form. He regards Robert Towne's influential screenplay for *Chinatown* (1969) as a significant marker in this evolution. For Boon, though, the object of screenplay analysis is always this written documentation rather than the processes and collaborations that are part of both the development of the screen idea and its transformation into the screen work. Perhaps this arises from the fact that in charting the transitions in the formatting of the screenplay over the last century and more, Boon is primarily concerned with making a case for the film script as a distinct literary form? **Just Add Words: Formats**

Since perhaps the early 1990s the film industry's standard software for screenwriting has been the *Final Draft* computer program, marketed with the slogan 'Just add words'. (Final Draft 2009) While *Final Draft*'s main function is to assist writers in formatting screenplays to industry standards, it also contains an expert problem-solver based on Syd

Field's three act structural paradigm. This generates reports and suggestions about how the screenplay could more closely fit Field's paradigm. Other software programs for writing screenplays such as *Dramatica* also include restrictive story paradigms. Ironically, just as digital technologies and networked media are opening up new methods of sketching screen ideas and collaborating with others, much of the scriptwriting software may be serving to restrict the range of possible storytelling strategies on offer. Story templates from the likes of Syd Field, Christopher Vogler and Robert McKee have migrated across to digital platforms, along with *Final Draft* and its Courier font. On the other hand, some individuals and communities are developing shareware computer programs like Celtx which allows writers to add 'assets' to conventional script layouts (Celtx 2009). These 'assets' can include video, stills, music and sound. Celtx also aims to build online communities who can respond to each other's work. The potential source of innovation is when these features are seen as aids to screenwriting as well as pre-production and production. While programs like Celtx still have a long way to go in enabling a more fluid use of imagery, sounds and words in the development of screen works and ideas, they do perhaps point towards one new set of possibilities for the screenplay. Similarly, pre-visualisation software such as Frameforge 3D suggests new possibilities when used as a tool for generating writing and scenarios rather than as a director's tool for the pre-production phase.

Cross-platform writing

'Want some screenwriting advice? Add drawings to your script. And then put your dialogue in bubbles. If recent studio acquisitions are any evidence, then the fastest way to get a movie deal these days may just be to turn your next Big Idea into a graphic novel,' wrote Jay Fernandez in *The Hollywood Reporter* (Fernandez 2008). A new generation of screenwriters who have grown up in a networked world saturated with YouTube, TiVo, instant messaging, MP3s and cell phones as well as graphic novels, are abandoning the idea of writing only for the movies. Instead they are embracing a more elastic, cross-platform approach. According to some commentators, the era of the speculative script with its armies of gatekeepers may have passed. US-based manager/producer Paul Young, for example, encourages his comedy clients to film excerpts from their speculative scripts and post them online. He sees producers, studios and distributors looking beyond the printed page for

material to film. Many people are now used to watching material online and do not expect it to have high production values, Young suggests (Fernandez 2008).

Conclusion

We are all subject to what Susan Stewart calls the “self periodisation of popular culture”, to the ways in which shifts in technologies and viewing platforms shape our experiences of viewing and watching (Straw 2002: 313). *Courier*, a product of the 1950s, could perhaps be regarded as the film industry equivalent of the Ploughman’s Lunch. If the Ploughman’s Lunch was a fake heritage item devised in the 1980s to bolster lunchtime trade in British pubs, then might we see *Courier* as a font maintained by a nostalgic film industry keen to keep itself aligned with the era of classic Hollywood?

Media theorists Henry Jenkins and David Thorburn challenge the assumption that new technologies displace older systems with decisive suddenness. ‘Media change is an accretive, gradual process, always a mix of tradition and innovation, in which emerging and established systems interact, shift and collude with each other’ (Jenkins & Thorburn 2003: x). So much of cinema did not begin with film, but migrated across from earlier art-forms and entertainments. Consequently, its histories can be found in photography, painting, portraiture, music, the fairground, the peep show, picture palaces, vaudeville, theatre, the nickelodeon, magic shows, travelogues, the illustrated lecture, the public science experiment, the book, the typewriter, and the architectural sketch. Digital cinema continues to transform, to adapt and reconfigure itself. So much of the current era, with its proliferation of digital technologies, returns us to the beginnings of cinema and creates spaces to investigate the paths that were not followed, the possibilities not explored. The branching lines and loops, or the byways of cinema as Guy Madden describes them (Marlow 2007). Film theorist Robert Stam notes; ‘Pre-cinema and post-cinema have come to resemble each other. Then, as now, everything seems possible’ (Stam 2000: 318). I think the same is true for the screenplay. As Lawrence Lessig argues, the more interesting ways to write are increasingly with images and sounds in addition to text (Korman 2005). The processes of screenwriting and filmmaking have been separated since the early years of cinema when Thomas Harper Ince, Hollywood’s answer to Henry Ford, devised his industrial system of the continuity script as a basis for pre-planned productions (Staiger 1985: 191 in Geuens 2000: 83). Over ninety years later, the

digital era offers the possibility of re-uniting screenplay and film production in an expanded notion of the screenplay.

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Films

Brand Upon the Brain (2006) Wr. Guy Maddin, Louis Negin, Dir. Guy Maddin. Canada, 95 mins.

Election (1999) Wr: Alexander Payne, Jim Taylor, Dir: Alexander Payne, USA, 103mins.

M (1931) Wr. Thea von Harbou, Fritz Lang, Dir: Fritz Lang. Germany, 117 mins.

Sideways (2004) Wr. Alexander Payne, Jim Taylor, Dir. Alexander Payne, USA, 126 mins.

Sin City (2005) Wr: Frank Miller, Dir: Frank Miller, Robert Rodriguez, Quentin Tarantino. USA, 124 mins.

Travelling Light (2003) Wr: Kathryn Millard, Dir: Kathryn Millard. Australia, 84 mins.

V for Vendetta (2005) Wr: Andy Wachowski, Larry Wachowski, Dir: James McTeague. USA, 132 mins.

ⁱ Cultural historian Thomas Hine uses the term 'populuxe' to describe a trend within architecture and design in the USA between approximately 1955-1964. The design of everyday spaces and consumer goods aimed at a combination of populism and luxury. Hines suggests that 'populuxe' simultaneously looked back to

the myths of the frontier whilst anticipating the coming space age. For more information about populuxe see Hines: 1986.

ⁱⁱ In typography, kerning refers to the process of adjusting the spaces between letters.

ⁱⁱⁱ In his 'evolving systems' theory of creativity Howard Gruber proposes that each creative practitioner is a complex, organised and knowing system. His phenomenological approach to studying creativity involves taking individuals' self-reports as points of departure and studying them within the historical, social and institutional frameworks within which they operate. For more information, see Gruber and Wallace: 1989