COMMUNICATING COMMUNITY:

Cultural Production, Habitus and the Construction of a City's Identity

Judith A Sandner

B.A (CS), B.A. (CS) Hons.

A thesis presented to the School of Design, Communication & IT,
Faculty of Science & IT, University of Newcastle, NSW,
in fulfilment of requirements for the degree
of Doctor of Philosophy by research.

August 2009

Declarations

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. I give consent to this copy of my thesis, when deposited in the University Library, being made available for loan and photocopying subject to the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968.

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Acknowledgements

There are many special people who've helped me get to this stage of my educational development, and to whom I owe a debt of gratitude for their willingness to share their knowledge, and for inspiring me in the pursuit of learning so that I too may pass that message on to others. When I first embarked on the path to tertiary study with trepidation, and, a desire to find out what might be possible, I never imagined it would set me on a career path as an academic researcher. Dr Jo May's simple three-word comment on my first (hand-written) Australian History Essay – 'Now you're cooking!' – gave positive reinforcement at a time when it was sorely needed, and I feel truly fortunate to have experienced her amazing teaching skills and to have later shared her friendship.

Similarly, my Honours Supervisor and friend Dr Judy Wells encouraged me to stretch my thinking by introducing me to the work of Pierre Bourdieu, and although at times I felt his conceptual schema was beyond my capabilities, in hindsight I'm pleased to have persevered with combining the Frenchman's sociological ideas with my undergraduate communication grounding and my doctoral research in the quest to understand 'local' meaning-making.

Dr Phillip McIntyre, my PhD Supervisor, has been instrumental in that grounding. In my second year as a Communication student I was blessed to have been one of Phillip's (many) students in both semesters. His depth of knowledge, generosity of spirit, warm demeanour and salient advice, have supported me for a long time throughout the many challenges this research has presented, and for that I am especially grateful. Thank you Phillip for your patience, your encouragement and your professionalism.

My other workmates and friends in the School of DCIT have also sustained me and encouraged my progression with their interest in my research, professional development and general wellbeing. Michael Meany, Keith Russell, Ben Matthews, Susan

Kerrigan, Paul Scott, Christina Koutsoukas, Chris Lawrence, Anne Llewellyn, Janet Fulton, Patricia Gillard and Clare Lloyd, along with Karyn Asher and Kathleen Clancy, have provided stimulating conversations, a kind ear, funny distractions, and the occasional tissue (in equal measure) when the workload has seemed too vast to conquer!

To my beautiful parents Don and Maureen, thank you for the many prayers, the delicious meals, the uncompromising work ethic, and the faith in my commitment to this task, your love has stayed with me and I want to make you proud. My terrific sisters Helen, Susie, Marg and Anno have listened to my concerns, trusted my intellect, told me that I 'could' when a reminder was due, 'cracked me up' laughing when it was needed, and promised me celebrations when the thesis was done – it's almost party-time girls!

To my lovely son Pat, who was a Lenny Kravitz-loving pre-schooler when I first commenced University study and now writes, plays and records his own songs and engages me in conversations about how much I've 'evolved' in the last little while – right back at you mate. I remember wondering in the early days if you'd be able to contain your 'boy' energy for a Graduation photo to be taken, and now you're telling me that you're proud of the work I've done and what I'm about to accomplish. That, to me, is a tremendous achievement. We've both learned much throughout this process and I dedicate this to you.

CONTENTS

Abstract

This thesis is about the making of a selection of stories that have emanated from and/or evolved in relation to, the city of Newcastle, NSW, Australia. In the past thirty years Newcastle's cultural and community identity has undergone some transformation as the social fabric of the town, its cultural geography, and its natural terrain have each responded to changes that de-industrialisation has bestowed on the area. Yet, as this body of work demonstrates, predominant 'traditional' city meanings prevail and continue to be embedded in creative projects affiliated with the place.

It is the contention of this thesis that to come to an understanding of the representation of local cultural identity discourses, specifically through mediated inter-texts such as newspaper articles and reviews, theatrical plays, and mainstream films, that have resonant meaning potential for widespread 'audiences', the practices involved in producing the texts, and the socio-cultural contexts of their creation should be considered.

Therefore a set of sociological concerns which address some of the power relationships, communication exchanges and 'naturalized' activities involved in constructing particular 'Newcastle' narratives have been appropriated for this study. Pierre Bourdieu's theory of habitus (1984, 1992, 1993a, 1996) has provided a conceptual framework for illuminating how and why certain textual material may be generated initially in reaction to socio-cultural conditionings, plus, it has enabled the researcher to deconstruct some of the processes included in the development, progression and dissemination of a selection of texts featuring Newcastle according to professional and non-professional systems of 'authorship'.

The researcher's application of habitus to the analysis of selected plays and films made throughout the 1990s has helped to explain why certain texts may be considered to epitomize the region and its residents, and also accounts for their ongoing communicative currency as performance or pedagogic resources that continue to circulate perceptions of the city.

1.0 Introduction

This thesis is a study in communication practices, cultural production activities, and interpretive engagement potential. With an emphasis on the co-construction of a city's socio-cultural identity through textual production processes, the research examines perception formation through the mediated lens of representation. It explores how 'place' meanings may be attributed to a particular location throughout textual development and appropriation, plus, it investigates the important role that anticipated and likely textual reception plays in the communication of a distinct sense of place.

Newcastle, NSW, Australia, is the 'place' at the centre of this research. In Chapter 5 the rationale for choosing Newcastle as a focus for this research is explained; aspects of Newcastle's historical development and its generative identity formation are explored, particularly in regard to its cultural geography and region-specific 'classifications'; and, various discursive mediations that have arisen at salient points throughout the city's relatively recent past, that had a strong bearing on the way the area may be perceived and continue to do so, are introduced. Examples of mainstream media content are threaded throughout this discussion to demonstrate how information about Newcastle that distinguishes it as a place, and defines it as a community may be disseminated, as these types of mediations are crucial to the analyses that take place in this thesis. In this regard Fairclough contends that:

> Analysis of the construction of relations and identities in media texts is...a significant constituent in addressing a range of important socio-cultural questions. This is so because of the uniquely influential and formative position of the media in contemporary societies...relatively stable constructions of social and personal identity and relations have become naturalized as facets of familiar media genres and formats...[and] are now more ideologically significant in the implicit messages they convey about people and relationships...(1995, p.126)

Fairclough raises several issues that are of relevance to the analyses this work contains. He speaks generally of the 'everyday' power that media production has in terms of its recognizable systems of meaning-making, and he points out that within these systems categories of persons, their interactions with others, and their 'place in the world' are

made apparent and become identifiable. O'Keefe describes these kinds of communication systems as a 'game played co-operatively, according to socially conventional rules and procedures' (1988, p.86). As the work in this thesis will demonstrate, her game analogy applies equally to specialized practices involved in media productions that have resulted in 'Newcastle' stories being made, and, to less formalized but no less significant acts of interpretive processing.

To understand from a sociological standpoint how media practitioners may develop 'Newcastle' content infused with socio-cultural distinctions that become naturalized, a set of theoretical concerns proposed by Pierre Bourdieu have been applied to this research. Although Bourdieu's theoretical constituents are generally too expansive to clarify fully in this introduction (that will be attempted further in the thesis), the following brief description of his keystone hypothesis *habitus*, provides some tentative insight as to why his ideas may be appropriate for this project:

> The habitus…enables an intelligible and necessary relation to be established between practices and a situation, the meaning of which is produced by the habitus through categories of perception and appreciation that are themselves produced by an observable social condition. (Bourdieu 1984, p.101)

As the above alludes to and the forthcoming analyses will reveal, habitus helps to explain the acquisition of knowledge in context and functions as a form of socialized subjectivity by enabling individuals to act according to the 'game of culture' (Bourdieu 1984, p.12). For the purposes of this research one of the most significant arenas for 'games of culture' related to the production of Newcastle stories to be explored is the 'cultural field':

> Bourdieu's theory of the cultural field…takes into consideration not only the works themselves, seen relationally within the space of available possibilities and within the historical development of such possibilities, but also producers of works in terms of their strategies and trajectories, based on their individual and class habitus, as well as their objective position in the field…Bourdieu's theory of the field of cultural production…encompass[es] the set of social conditions of the production, circulation and consumption of symbolic goods. (Johnson 1993, p.9)

Chapter 4 outlines in detail the multi-faceted features of Bourdieu's theoretical terrain

and explains why his concepts are well-suited to explaining: *how* particular productions featuring Newcastle have come about: *why* those involved in making them have designed them the ways they have; and, *what* bearing these choices may have had (and continue to have) on the products' contributions to perceptions of Newcastle.

Delanty argues that an understanding of 'community has always been based on communication' and emphasizes that traditional cultural structures which enabled regions and social relationships to be 'bound' making social integration more likely, are no longer viable in modern society (2003, p.188). It should be stressed however that he does not discount the propensity for geographic 'positioning' to contribute to notions of shared ideals and values, but chooses to focus instead on interactive processes to understand constructions of a particular community constitution. Massey shares similar views when she claims:

> The uniqueness of a place, or locality…is constructed out of particular interactions and mutual articulations and social relations, social processes, experiences and understandings, in a situation of co-presence…experiences and understandings are actually constructed on a far larger scale than what we happen to define for that moment as the place itself…Instead then, of thinking of places as areas with boundaries around, they can be imagined as articulated moments in networks of social relations and understandings. (Massey 1993, p.66)

Delanty's and Massey's ideas are applicable to the ways that members of a local community such as Newcastle may begin to define *themselves* in terms of their insider knowledge, their phenomenological experiences, and their communicative exchanges. But, they also pertain to the means by which people other than Newcastle residents may come to know of the city's cultural geography; become aware of its landscape aesthetics; find out about the types of people that populate the area; and consequently develop opinions about the place. Much of this knowledge acquisition occurs through engaging with media that features the city.

Subsequently, the author has drawn from a range of media texts (described in detail in the following Research Methodology Chapter) with the aim of discovering and uncovering similarities and differences in discursive material, particularly throughout

crucial periods in Newcastle's recent history when some of its perceived community values have been celebrated and/or placed under scrutiny. In Chapters 5, 6 and 8 specific detail pertaining to these contextual dimensions is provided and helps to explain some of the reasons why the city may have experienced an increase in 'outsider' interest at certain times, and, what this interest has meant for further cultural production activity.

Importantly for this research, apart from the relatively 'mainstream' media content specific Newcastle 'incidents' propagated, they also set in motion a unique system of production relationships that resulted in the making of several theatrical works and films. In Chapters 6 and 8 the intricacies of these production collaborations are explored with an emphasis on: the habitus of those involved in conceiving ideas for development; the systematic and personal power relationships involved in getting these ideas together; the decisions that were made about what kinds of texts to produce; how these activities shaped story construction and hence, the production output.

In Chapters 7 and 9 the texts proper undergo analysis, again by applying habitus, in order to deconstruct the manifestation of Newcastle themes encoded in them, and to understand how these place-specific codes may be interpreted. In this regard the thesis considers several representations of Newcastle in accordance with Dyer's typology of *re-presentation* that includes ideas about sense-making activities and *typicality* in relation to the communication of social positions [original emphasis] (1985, p.44). 'All communication must deal in the typical. We cannot communicate only through the utterly unique, particular and individuated' (ibid p.45). Dyer's approach to film and television representation suggests that 'conventions of media language', 'social groups and stereotypes', 'institutional influences' and 'audience responses' need to be analyzed, to understand how consensus about cultural products may be realized (cited in Lacey 1998, p.131) and the arguments this thesis presents, combined with Bourdieu's like-minded hypotheses, support Dyer's view.

Catt suggests 'communicology is transdisciplinary' and that the study of communication constitutes 'both a cultural discipline (encompassing social science) and

a human science' (2006 online). This is a view shared also by Craig who states 'communication is already an important theoretical category within a wide range of established disciplines, from which we can derive a rich array of conceptual resources' (2007, p.70). The broad spectrum of literature examined for this project is testimony to Catt's and Craig's propositions and significantly highlights the potential for this original research to bridge various academic disciplines in ways which are innovative, thought provoking and challenging. The literature review has been an opportunity for the author to investigate what has been written most recently in areas pertaining to thematic fields of enquiry, and to select keystone issues relevant to this particular research purpose.

In Chapter 1 - *Communication, Discourse and Interpretive Dispositions,* particular communication theories and related contingencies have been explored to: discuss meaning-construction from a sociological perspective; to offer a general understanding of communication as a culturally contextualized system of relationships; to explain the complexities of language use and discursive environments; to consider the roles that narrative and genre play in structuring story-worlds; to examine the manifestation of textual encodings and decoding possibilities; to appreciate the interpretive dispositions of potential audience subjects; and to gain insight into the symbolic construction of 'community' through media representation.

In Chapter 2 - *Overview of Cultural Identity and Authenticity,* the influences that various communicative practices (such as narrative interaction; textual analysis; and symbolic representation) have in contributing to the construction and maintenance of identity discourses is considered. With particular emphasis on socialized signifying practices and value-laden interpretive engagement, this chapter explains how notions of 'authenticated' community perceptions may be generated. It introduces life-world framing analogies for phenomenological links between production, content, and audience to be interrogated.

In Chapter 3 - *Sites for Sense-Making and Locating Meaning,* contexts for perception formation are investigated using spatial metaphors to explain the mediated environments text *products* may present in, and the *experiential* dimensions of cognitive

acts. Media spaces are identified as locations for texts to be *placed in* so that structurally, audience positions may be configured. Additionally, narrative detail using material objects, 'natural' scenes, and performances embodying corporeal qualities and lifestyle attributes, highlight some of the *physical* aspects of communication exchange. These observations aid in determining how Newcastle's *cultural geography* may be mediated through textual production.

In Chapter 4 - *Habitus: Producing Culture Through Practice,* many critiques and applications of Bourdieu's concept of habitus have been sought to offer an overview of the theory and its strengths, weaknesses, and relevance for this independent research. These provide grounding for the etymology of the term and its epistemological development. General criticisms of habitus concerned with the *bridging* of objective/subjective distinctions and structure/agency dichotomies are outlined. The contextualization of habitus as a 'scientific' theory is covered along with its focus on class structures, power relationships and the accumulation of social capital. Its standing as a foundational, yet malleable sociological theory does not detract from its explanatory value in this instance. For a deep interrogation of the *embodiment* of habitus and its subsequent relationship to phenomenological knowledge-building, its critical component *hexis* is explored. Despite its conceptual beginnings as a predominantly sociological set of concerns (most often applied in socio-economic and education research studies) habitus' significance to the field of cultural studies, and in limited respects communication and media studies, has been taken up by several authors to elucidate the concepts of *cultural fields*, *cultural capital* and *symbolic capital*.

Some authors who have applied habitus to their own research endeavours particularly in formal educational environments to understand identity construction, learning processes, and language development include: Corbett (2004); Desmarchelier (2000); Diamond, Randolph & Spillane (2004); Formosa (2001); Gunn (2003); Hanks (2005); Inghilleri (2003); Karol & Gale (2004); Kenway & McLeod (2004); Myles (1999); Shilling (2004); Trier (2002); Vilhjálmsdóttir & Arnkelsson (2003) and Watkins (2005). Unlike this thesis, these studies concentrate on the acquisition of knowledge specifically from a *gendered* or *demographic* perspective. There is also evidence of cultural studies

applications of habitus in popular culture arenas. For example, Blackshaw and Long (2005) researched leisure policy discourse and social capital; Lipstadt (2003) investigated habitus' contribution to field validations within contemporary architectural competitions; Lupton (2004) looked into cinematic experience as an economy of exchange; and Negus (2002) and Nixon & du Gay (2002) examined habitus' occurrence in the production work of cultural intermediaries. Couldry (2003, 2004 & 2008) discusses the media's role in constructing versions of 'reality' by criticizing purely functionalist perspectives, and highlighting power relationships involved in ritualized media engagement practices at ordinary, everyday levels. Again, although these studies show evidence of constructivist paradigms at work, they are mostly couched within institutionalized and politicized frameworks rather than interpretive ones. There are a few contemporary applications of Bourdieu's sociology to explain processes of production, representation and communication but with reference to either a s*pecific* film text, or television news. These include: research into semiotics and American film, and television journalism and community responses (Gaines, 2001 & 2002b); a study of social change and character destiny in *The Age of Innocence* (Singley, 2003); and the durability of dispositions and notions of masculinity in *Fight Club* (Craine & Aitken, 2004).

Using Bourdieu's theoretical apparatus, the work that follows shows that playwrights, filmmakers and other media practitioners have used (and continue to use) combinations of natural, built, and socio-culturally codified Newcastle environments as contextual grounding points for their productions. It reveals that through their specialized systems of authorship, they blend subtlety with precision to give *re-presented* Newcastle 'spaces' evocative power enabling predominant messages pertaining to the city and its people to resonate. In doing so, they generatively construct narratives in which notions of an *identifiable* community prevail and may be interrogated.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 General Issues

'People are not considered to be objects like other objects, but are active sense-makers like the researcher.' (Deetz 2001, p.24)

'Research does not exist in a vacuum but is intimately tied to the workings of modern society.' (Silverman 2007, p.125)

This chapter outlines the range of qualitative methodologies used to address the initial research question this project explores: *How may Newcastle's identity be communicated through the textual production practices of authors, filmmakers, and everyday cultural intermediaries, who themselves are active participants in the construction of the city's habitus?* It discusses why qualitative frameworks are the most appropriate means of exploring *where* and *how* research questions generally. It proceeds to explain that *where* and *how* questions are at the core of my journey to understanding the role that habitus plays (both professionally and personally), in the planning, making, diffusion, and likely responses to, Newcastle stories and identity discourses. The chapter continues with specific details of the various methodologies used, together with reflexive observations of the pragmatism of these choices.

A 'pure' communication science or formula which can be applied to the function of habitus in and out of Newcastle films and publications, does not exist.

> Scientists consider good theories to be mirrors of nature. They are confident that once a valid principle is discovered it will continue to be recognized as true as long as the conditions remain relatively the same. (Griffin 2000, p.10)

Any attempt to grasp the theory of habitus and apply it as a structure of principles which can be replicated in an exact form, rather than understanding it as a contingent system of 'communicative practices that enact the environment, instantiate activities, and reproduce perceived relationships' would be a mistake (Corman, Kuhn, McPhee & Dooley 2002, p.163). Phillips contends it is not at all plausible or appropriate to begin to think about a theory such as habitus as a set of fixed causal elements which have

meaning only when they are verifiable in a quantitative form as per the positivist tradition (1987) For habitus (as described in the introductory chapter and fully interrogated in Chapter 4) is a way of describing how people interact with each other in various situations and circumstances according to what they know about themselves, other people and the culture they inhabit. This knowledge or cultural capital is not a static set of concepts or ideas like a mathematical equation or scientific experiment. It is *acquired* knowledge which pre-disposes human beings to categorize their communicative behaviour and the behaviour of others. But this categorization or classification cannot be investigated in a completely objective sense. The theory of habitus and the role that it plays in production and creative processes, and in textual and narrative construction, is best approached from a humanist perspective to capture what Murdock terms 'the uniqueness of contemporary conditions' (1993, p.525). Similarly, Dreyfus and Rabinow argue that 'the meaning of human action is not accessible to a scientific theory; to understand the significance of human action requires an interpretive approach' (1999, p.85). Consequently, a 'hermeneutic-interpretive' paradigm underscores this research project to ascertain how subjective knowledge may be meaningfully acquired, what impact habitus may have on this knowledge acquisition, and what this may mean for the everyday communication of Newcastle's cultural identity (Craig 2007, p.57). In Alasuutari's terms therefore, the scope of this research intent constitutes a:

> Broadened frame within which one conceives of the media and media use…the main focus is not restricted to finding out about the reception or 'reading' of a [specific] programme by a particular audience. Rather, the objective is to get a grasp of our contemporary 'media culture', particularly as it can be seen in the role of the media in everyday life, both as a topic and as an activity structured by and structuring the discourses within which it is discussed.
> (Alasuutari 1999, pp.6-7)

Statistics-based communication enquiries are mostly concerned with discovering how ideological and social power is distributed through cultural production processes (Craig 2007, pp.56-67; Griffin 2000, p.310; McCombs & Shaw 2000, p.360; Ruddock 2007, p.2; Schwandt 2000, p.196), but this is not the sole objective of this research. The research does acknowledge the role that some power relationships have in shaping and spreading Newcastle stories but it considers these power relationships within a

‘symbolic interactionist’ framework ‘a wide-ranging theory that links language with perception, thinking, self-concept, and culture’ (Griffin 2000, p.52). The research mechanisms chosen for this task do not attempt to measure or expose a universal truth about Newcastle’s identity construction, or propose predictable outcomes of audience responses each time a Newcastle tale is manufactured or told. While ‘the quantitative approach makes use of experiments and surveys in order to measure both media power and audience behaviour’ (Devereux 2007, p.222), the methodological tools chosen for this project have avoided collating data that could be described as ‘empirical, quantitative, and narrowly focused on discovering cause-and-effect relationships’ (Hall 2000, p.337). Rather, through a qualitative paradigm they seek to explain how general perceptions about Newcastle may be linked by and through particular representations so that people – be they authors, filmmakers, media practitioners, readers or viewers, may individually acknowledge shared concepts and collectively respond to context-specific content over time. There is no denying that certain temporal conditions have been instrumental in generating the production of particular Newcastle stories but the idea that these narratives ‘are more than merely idiosyncratic…[and] have transubjective truth value’ stresses the point that meanings *within* cultural narrative exchanges are subject to the communicative dimensions of social life generally (Hinchman & Hinchman 1997, p.xvi). In his discussion of *‘A Cultural Approach to Communication’* Carey reinforces this concept. He suggests:

> We not only produce reality but we must likewise maintain what we have produced, for there are always new generations coming along for whom our productions are incipiently problematic and for whom reality must be regenerated and made authoritative. (2007, pp.46)

Carey’s views on the social negotiations involved in effective and commonsense communication practices correspond with Schwandt’s explanations of ‘social constructionist epistemologies’. For Schwandt:

> Knowing is not passive…but active…constructivism means that human beings do not find or discover knowledge so much as we construct or make it. We invent concepts, models, and schemes to make sense of experience, and we continually test and modify these constructions in the light of new experience….there is an inevitable historical and sociocultural dimension to this construction. We do not construct our interpretations in isolation but against a backdrop of shared

> understandings, practices, language, and so forth. (2000, p.197)

The 'backdrop of shared understandings' Schwandt mentions depend on and contribute to the habitus' of those involved in the production of meaning circulating around the Newcastle texts chosen for this study.

The following discussion demonstrates how the disparate qualitative methods chosen for this research project function in a holistic fashion - to contextualise habitus as *acts of meaning* inherent in processes of *engagement* throughout the production of texts that reflect and construct images of Newcastle and contribute to the cultural production of the city.

2.2 Key Theoretical Foundations

> What made Bourdieu such an important figure was not just his concepts and complicated graphs of the social world, but the ways in which his work offered an exemplary model of how to investigate the complex networks that produce contemporary social life. (Szeman n.d. online)

Significantly, the extensive research on Bourdieu's notion of habitus has had an impact on its use as a theory for my original analyses. The research has had a twofold effect: it has enlightened me as to the value of habitus' constituents [a] in deciphering the production and articulation of Newcastle texts; and, it has enabled me to become attuned to my insider position as a Newcastle resident and researcher investigating 'Newcastle' representations.

> Reflexivity for Bourdieu does not refer simply to endless textual and autobiographical referentiality, or to the unconscious dispositions of the individual researcher, but to an examination of the 'epistemological unconscious' and the 'social organisation' of the discipline (or field) of sociology. (Bourdieu & Wacquant cited in Kenway & McLeod 2004, p.528)

In keeping with Bourdieu's ideas about contexts, subject positions and the dangers of an insular type of knowledge-building, there is a possibility that my social origins as a

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[a] For detailed explanation see the discussion of fields; cultural capital; symbolic capital; doxa; illusio, praxis, and hexis outlined in Chapter 4.

Novocastrian student could have clouded a thorough examination of communication intricacies, simply by concentrating wholly on my interpretive practices. For my

> …personal identity, understood as that set of meanings that individuals attach to themselves by themselves and for themselves with a view towards the presentation of self towards others, must also be seen as a practical practice that flows from a habitus ensconced in a field. (Widick 2004, p.201)

My personal identity has developed from my lived experiences as a Newcastle person *and* as a student of communication. My research practice subsequently uses a reflexive mode tantamount to Bourdieu's recommendations as to the authority of sociological epistemology (Schirato & Webb 2003), by declaring my subjectivity as a Newcastle person, and positioning my research proper within the domain of communication enquiry. So although my position as a *Newcastle* researcher is not incidental, it is not the centrepiece of this project. As a study in 'communicative agency' and its interrelationships with structures, this research manages to address interpretive activities relative to particular instances of textual engagement as well as generalized systems of meaning production (Catt 2006 online). In this respect the research considers an audience of one just as significant as an audience of many when it comes to sense-making activities related to Newcastle texts. However, it emphasizes that *all* sense-making activities are practically enacted under certain conditions, which applies to the interpretive work involved in the making of cultural texts and the reception processes necessary to analyse them. This perspective supports Bourdieu's view that 'one is better off knowing little things about many people, systematically bound together, than everything about an individual' (cited in Maton 2003, p.58).

A thorough overview of Bourdieu's theory as a schema for guiding and affirming participatory relationships involved in the production of Newcastle texts is presented in Chapter 4 of the thesis. As Probyn argues, 'the search for a hinge, or for different hinges, that will render evident the coinciding of the objective and subjective worlds of sociality is at the heart of Bourdieu's project' (2004, p.336). For now it is sufficient to state that 'Bourdieu's conceptual armoury is especially useful for eliciting and illuminating first hand accounts of the social world' (Wainwright & Turner 2003, p.5). The recognition work that habitus encourages during production and after it, has a

strong bearing on how Newcastle the *place*, together with aspects of local culture and perceptions of local people, may be categorized, distinguished, defined, and identified. The theory's value in terms of figuring out *how* 'perception and experience coalesce' (Berleant 1991, p.191) so that resonant meanings of Newcastle's identity may be communicated *across* contexts and timeframes, is qualified in the literature review and the analyses which follow it. Suffice to say, without pre-empting the discussion of the literature, there is only a small amount of contemporary research which bears *any* resemblance to any of the uses of habitus deployed throughout this specific research project. In particular, Richards (2004) uses habitus to explain theatrical performance contexts and actor dispositions, and these are themes explored in Chapters 6, 7 and 8. Catt's (2006 online) expose on '*Pierre Bourdieu's semiotic legacy: a theory of communicative agency'*, is the closest conceptual link to the material contained in this thesis. It incorporates ideas about 'semiotic phenomenology', 'embodied communication', discursive clarity and 'communicology as a cultural human science'. However, it does not apply these initiatives to particular cultural producers and particular cultural texts (as this research does), nor does it consider the capacity for cultural production to illuminate local identity perceptions.

2.3 Background and Rationale for Selection of Texts

The original impetus for a study of 'local' texts and the communication of a distinct 'local identity' occurred when (as an undergraduate *Newcastle, NSW, Australia* communication student) I engaged with a well-written fictional novel set in the city. The novel, *Lovers' Knots: a hundred-year novel* (Halligan 1992) also uses the cities of Canberra in Australia, and Paris, France for the multi-layered narrative to unfold. At the time I had not been to either place, so my general knowledge of them was limited and relied on secondary sources of information. My knowledge of Newcastle however, was primary and deeply experiential. 'Home is…a place held in common by experience but un-packable in its semiotic particulars as a single version for each person' (Brady 2005, p.986) so the natural and cultural landscapes featured in *Lovers' Knots* resonated for me on many levels. This reading experience catapulted me into a field of inquiry to find out how it was that places *I had not been to* could resound so evocatively through storytelling mediums. I understood that my Novocastrianism (Newcastle upbringing and

residency) meant I could relate specifically to the content of the novel in very subjective ways. For example, I've walked the streets, travelled on the harbour ferry, swum at the beaches, and some of my family members have worked in heavy industry. Additionally, my previous views of Canberra and Paris were changed through the reading experience so that those places too were effectively communicated to me. I initially thought the key to my strong responses to the *places* in *Lovers' Knots* lay firstly, in my embedded socialized subjectivity as a 'local' reader and, most importantly for this research, in the well-crafted authorship of the novel.

These preliminary estimations of *where the meaning resided* (both in the writing and the reading) were useful up to a point. While recognising that both readers and viewers may have wide-ranging interpretations of the same novel, play, film, newspaper report, production publicity and so on, it is emphasized that to engage with a text and hence to form opinions about its representative capacity, readers and viewers and in particular production practitioners are *all* predisposed to collective meanings that occur *in* the world of the text and *outside* of it. So, establishing a research effort which (like Bourdieu's theory) investigated notions of actuality (Newcastle's mediated 'reality') by linking instances of familiarity; similarity; disparity; peculiarity and generality in the processes of cultural production became the challenge. To meet this challenge an appreciation of aesthetic engagement pertinent to cultural producers as the group which presents the perceptual possibilities to ordinary readers and viewers who share a contextual frame with those producers was required:

> The profound influence of culture on perception…has been heavily documented by social psychologists, cultural geographers and anthropologists. Yet at the same time, aesthetic perception is foundational, continually reappraising cultural experience by digging beneath the layers of accrued meanings and cognitive habits for its authenticity in the directness and immediacy of experience. (Berleant 1991, p.92)

Importantly, Berleant's description of perceptual experience, which for the purposes of this research means developing an awareness of Newcastle's cultural identity primarily through textual production demonstrates that an *amalgamation* of existing cultural knowledges, shifting circumstances, and personal involvements, contribute to artistic

creation and cultural appreciation and hence meaning-construction. Furthermore, his claims support the view that perception-formation is a dynamic process of inter-relationships which show 'the practice of communication itself is very much alive and endlessly evolving in a worldly scene of contingency and conflict' (Craig in Craig & Muller 2007, p.66). Berleant's account, together with Bourdieu's 'meta-theoretical notions', offers theoretical provision for *individual* evaluations of Newcastle's identity to be re-constructed and re-shaped *while* collective insights about the city's culture continue to hold weight (Brubaker 2004, p.45). This means that alternative perspectives of the city's identity communicated through textual production processes are entirely viable. However, it also reveals that *all* impressions of the city's identity emanate from context-specific activities that are socio-structurally bound, which applies to professional production teams as well as 'ordinary' media consumers. 'This ordinary sense of constructivism is also called *perspectivism* in contemporary epistemology' [original emphasis] (Schwandt 2000, p.197). These issues are explored in depth in Chapters 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9.

The complexity of this research has required a methodological approach which demonstrates 'the relationships between heterogeneous action rather than trying to identify a [Newcastle] culture as a whole' (Baszanger & Dodier 1991, p.8). A traditional ethnographic combination of 'empirical observation', 'field notes' and '*in situ* studies' to understand the 'totalization' of an 'integrated' Newcastle identity would have been inappropriate, misguided, and impractical [original emphasis] (ibid, pp.9-13). For, as explained in the discussion of 'authentic' cultural identification in Chapter 2, it is not possible to definitively situate a place's identity as a fixed and unchanging system of relationships. It *is* possible though, through an examination of cultural production and communication practices to understand how 'ideological positions which reinforce the identities of social groups' may be regularly reinforced (Robbins 1991, p.179). Baszanger and Dodier suggest '*combinative ethnographic'* methodological techniques which consider cultural contexts 'as…disparate collection[s] of resources between which individuals have to navigate' are more useful ways of understanding cultural activities than the purely 'integrated' methods aimed at quantifying and totalizing information mentioned above [original emphasis] (1991, pp.16-18). Their views align

with Bourdieu's non-essentialist and constructivist theories discussed in Chapter 4. As Scahill argues:

> Bourdieu insists that habitus is a socialized subjectivity. Rejecting ethnological perspectives on the social construction of reality he says 'No doubt agents do construct their vision of the world. But this construction is carried out under structural constraints'. (1993 online)

Hence Baszanger and Dodier's (1991), and Bourdieu's concerns about non-reflective research practice highlight 'the dangers of unreflective empiricism, and the temptations of authenticity offered by uncritical ethnography' (Szeman n.d. online) by reinforcing the need for research centering on 'localized' cultures to include both interactionist and interpretive practices (1991, p.16, p.121). In this regard their arguments call attention to the fact that to appropriately comprehend 'insider' patterns of behaving, acting, performing, in specific cultural quarters, requires an awareness of the structural impositions placed on participants. For no 'localized' culture is entirely autonomous and self-regulating.

This notion is applicable if the concept of a 'localized culture' is attributed to the city of Newcastle and its residents; to filmmakers, authors, and other media practitioners working within production contexts, just as much as it is to viewers and readers positioned by text forms and genre styles. For these reasons specific plays and films that were developed out of actual events that occurred in Newcastle have been selected as primary analytical resources. These texts generated widespread publicity beyond the city's parameters *because of* their impacts on the socialized subjectivities of Newcastle residents and others (the murder of a young Newcastle schoolgirl by a local youth and the 1989 earthquake). [b]. Furthermore, in keeping with Baszanger and Dodier's (1991) claims that research into 'localized' cultures should include both interactionist and interpretive practices, each of the texts chosen in their original construction and various production contexts had significant input by local residents with 'insider' contributions of experiential detail, as the plays were initially designed to cater to perceived 'local'

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[b] These events are more fully described in Chapter 5.

audience concerns [c]. Additionally, the film versions of the play texts each contain pivotal scenes that were shot *on location* in Newcastle. These location based scenes structurally reinforced through visual means, features of the city's landscape and cultural geography which has made for some contentious and disparate claims and value judgements about place meanings specific to these films [d]. Other films shot on location in Newcastle include *Bootmen* (2000, D. Perry *Dir*.), *Suburban Mayhem* (2006, P. Goldman *Dir*.), *Streetsweeper* (2007, N. Mansfield *Dir*.) and *Newcastle* (2008, D. Castle *Dir*.). However, the specific films *Aftershocks* (1998, G. Burton *Dir*.) and *Blackrock* (1997, S. Vidler *Dir*.) have been chosen for analysis here because: the plays on which these films are based continue to be performed as theatrical texts in mainstream theatres and educational contexts; and, the films themselves also retain cultural currency as pedagogical resources [e] meaning that the texts' capacities to perpetuate representations of the city and its people are ongoing.

2.4

Play and Film Texts

The Newcastle films and literature included in this research have evolved at least partially because of local socio-cultural conditions, and the decisions that practitioners and their affiliate organisations (and in some cases community members) made about what would be the most appropriate ways to tell a story. The predominant stories chosen for this research emanate from the cultural production work revolving around the play *Aftershocks* (1993), and film *Aftershocks* (1998), and the plays *A Property of the Clan* (1994) and *Blackrock* (1996), and film *Blackrock* (1997) examined in Chapters 6, 7, 8 and 9 [f]. The *labelling* of these works as 'Newcastle' texts has been a deliberate classification on my part to decipher how value judgements about their textual origins have been instigated, along with the emergence of 'paratextual knowledge' which

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[c] The significant input of local residents is addressed in Chapters 6 and 8.
[d] These matters are analysed in detail in Chapters 7 and 9.
[e] Chapters 6 and 8 include discussion of these pedagogic contexts and the Appendix includes a sample list of the texts in their application as educational resources.
[f] The play *Aftershocks* was first performed in 1991 and published in 1993 & 2001. The play *A Property of the Clan* was first performed in 1992 and published in 1994, while the play *Blackrock* was first performed in 1995 and published in 1996. The screenplay for the film *Blackrock* was published in 1997. Forthcoming in-text references will cite the publication dates.

remains the source of local community concerns and ongoing mediated production. Peterson describes 'paratextual knowledge' as 'shared intertexts [which] circulate…widely [and] become part of the general cultural knowledge within communities' [original emphasis] (2005, p.133).

Aftershocks is a television docudrama about the 1989 Newcastle Earthquake. It was released on 29 December 1998 and was broadcast on Australian television station SBS (Special Broadcast Service) at the time. *Blackrock* is a fictional film which was released nationally in Australia in 1997 in cinemas and went to video shortly afterwards. There has been much contention in the Newcastle community (and beyond) about *Blackrock's* 'realist' content, especially given that the plot closely resembles an actual homicide that took place in the city in 1989 and parts of the film were shot *on location* in Newcastle. Both *Aftershock*s and *Blackrock* evolved from original plays developed in Newcastle, the first as a 'community theatre' enterprise [g], and the second as a 'theatre-in-education' production. But these representational beginnings are matters for the upcoming analyses to explore.

In conjunction with Shiel, this research conceives of 'cinema (as a set of practices and activities, as well as a set of texts) as something which never ceases to intervene in society, and which participates in the maintenance, mutation, and subversion of systems of power' (2001, p.4). Shiel chooses to focus on 'the role of the cinema in the physical, social, cultural, and economic development of cities' (ibid, p.3), so his research efforts have been geared towards determining cinematic impacts on urban development. My original research however, considers the impacts that the cultural production of two specific films featuring Newcastle may have, in relating powerful impressions of the city's culture. So, unlike Shiel, the power relationships between film production and consumption in this instance, are considered from the standpoint of interpretive engagement, and not from the position of socio-economic flow-on effects for a particular city environment.

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[g] '*Aftershocks* passed from oral history into a piece of community theatre, first staged at the Newcastle Playhouse in November, 1991' (Hoad 1993, p.82)

There are differences in the original planned screening environments for each of the films chosen. *Aftershocks* was designed to be broadcast as a television docudrama, and *Blackrock* was prepared for national and international cinematic release. These structural constraints have had some distinct effects in terms of the extra-textual content surrounding the films' original productions and potential audience receptions dealt with at length in Chapters 6 and 8. However, as contemporary cultural products (now both readily available in VHS and DVD form) it is the *ongoing* narrational impact of the films' discursive content which this thesis preferences. The storytelling that the film texts enable sustain the view that 'stories about one's experiences and the experiences of others are the fundamental constituents of human memory, knowledge, and social communication' (Schank & Abelson 1995, p.1).

2.5 Mainstream Intertextual Data

A repertoire of data is also embedded in media documents related to *Aftershocks, A Property of the Clan,* and *Blackrock*. This mainstream intertextual data has been examined highlighting the 'symbolic power of the media field' (Couldry 2003, p.653) to maintain its status as a 'naturalised framing system' (Couldry 2008, p.75). These documents include reviews and critiques of the plays and films, together with mainstream online and press articles as well as previously published interviews with some of the writers, producers, directors, and actors. These have been sourced from 'local' media outlets *and* external sources. Bearing in mind during the analytical work that 'regional and local media are seen as fundamental resources of both democracy and identity…meaning and emotional belonging' (Morley & Robins 1995, p.179), this collection of textual material shows contrasting views of the productions from *within* the Newcastle area and *beyond*. Their content also bears traces of perceptual consistency across disparate media production channels.

2.6 Specialist Intertexual Data

Additional data accumulated for this aspect of the research which constitutes evidence of the further 'social phenomena' which Phillips and Hardy (2002) allude to includes

academic criticism and comment focusing on aspects of the play and film productions according to legal, education, gender, genre, and drama discourses. These texts constitute data material that has emerged in specialist fields of inquiry that most everyday media consumers would not ordinarily engage in, but that researchers such as myself would be very interested in. Again, although not readily available to mainstream viewers and readers, these texts *do* contain valuable content applicable to this original research project 'to shed light on the structure of a singular logical whole' (Alasuutari 1996, p.11), that intent being to explain production and interpretive practices which build on perceptions of Newcastle's city habitus through representations of it. Consequently, those published texts that work to 'situate' the play and film texts according to formalized and institutionalized categories of distinction such as legal and educational fields which afford the texts cultural value have also been included in the analyses.

2.7 Interviews

A particular research method was conducted for this project that specifically sought to divulge the 'bearings' that individual communication literacies and competencies may have had on the production of Newcastle texts, and this consisted of a series of in-depth interviews. Miller and Glassner claim that interview data is not 'meaningless beyond the context' it occurs in but rather may 'contribute knowledge that can be beneficial in expanding understanding' beyond the scope of the interview itself (1997, p.99), a position also adopted by the author which the analyses in Chapters 6 and 7 support. Subsequently, the 'stories' certain interviewees relayed about their involvement in the construction of the play and film texts reveals much about their personalized participation as well as shedding light on their socio-cultural navigation according to the cultural production 'worlds' they operated in. According to Creswell 'a phenomenological study describes the meaning of the lived experiences for several individuals about a concept or the phenomenon' (1998, p.51). It was fitting then that the lived experiences of the interviewees also be examined, to reveal the impacts their individual habitus (in professional and non-professional environments) may have had in constructing perceptions of Newcastle's cultural identity, keeping in mind that their lived experiences were influenced by circumstances beyond their determination which

they needed to accommodate.

Thirteen people were interviewed and they were specifically chosen due to their involvement with, and input towards, the production of Newcastle texts. Significantly, my access to these interviewees ultimately depended on their willingness to participate in the research. Pertinently, *all* potential interviewees involved with the production of *Blackrock* in particular declined to be interviewed. Despite several attempts to garner interest in the research on my part, their participation was not forthcoming. However, this 'gap' in the interview data has not diminished from the analytical work related to the film's production included in Chapters 8 and 9. Rather, the decision to *not* be included as research participants and instead maintain 'distance' from the original film production (and academic interest in it), has been indicative of conflicting cultural contentions which have followed *Blackrock's* production since its inception. These are matters taken up in Chapter 8. To accommodate the lack of primary interview data a vast range of alternative secondary material such as published research and journalistic interviews, which importantly, include direct quotes from *Blackrock's* writer/s, film director and film producer about their practices and the film's meanings, has been sourced. Additionally, recorded interviews with the film's writer/s, director, producer (and some actors) included as 'extras' on the DVD version of *Blackrock* have been scrutinized to gain insight as to the cultural producers' storytelling intentions and approaches to their work, film techniques used, and conceptions of potential interpretations of *Blackrock's* narrative content.

The first plans for this research included original analysis of film and 'literary' texts with a Newcastle focus, and interviews with novelists, poets and authors about their work. However, as the research developed, it became apparent that the analysis of novels, poetry and short stories (in *addition* to play and film texts and related published materials) was beyond the scope of the thesis. Initially, seven interviewees connected to the production of *Novocastrian Tales* (1997) participated in the research, they included both editors, and five authors who contributed original short stories and poetry. This publication was in production at the same time as *Aftershocks* and *Blackrock*. It was a Newcastle Bicentenary Project fundraising initiative for an Aboriginal Accommodation

Facility in the grounds of the city's major public hospital. And it was a resounding commercial success. Unfortunately, due to the structural constraints of this thesis, the transcript analysis of these interview subjects has not been included. However, the thematic issues that arose from this interview data have enhanced the selection of the interview material which stays. For example Paul Walsh, the editor of *Novocastrian Tales* offered some valuable insights as to gauging other writers' pieces in terms of their capacities to help readers 'visualize' Newcastle:

> We had 45 authors…and a quarter of them were scattered around the bloody world, so it wasn't like some meeting took place. When [the writing] came in certain images and themes kept coming through…so instead of a bunch of people deciding, 'Oh, how are we going to recreate Newcastle?' or 'How are we going to portray the city?' what actually happened was, because they were all linked to the place, it all came through anyway. It came through because of who they are.
>
> For me it was terribly important to actually establish, in the reader's mind, a framework within which those tales were unwinding in their mind. Everybody goes on their own journey. Everyone that read *Novocastrian Tales* read their own book. And our mission was to create a canvas where they could play with their conceptualizations and paint their own Newcastle.
> (P Walsh 1999, pers. comm., 21 October)

The six interviewees whose contributions *have* been integrated in the analysis were deeply connected to the production of *Aftershocks*. These included two professional producers and four 'ordinary' Newcastle residents who only became involved in the 'story' of *Aftershocks* because the very real natural catastrophe the film is centered on dramatically altered their lives. My theoretical approach and overriding research question necessarily directed the questions put to the interviewees. Given that the research was seeking *experiential* perspectives relating to the manufacture and dissemination of 'Newcastle' messages, the interviewees were considered as informants rather than respondents. 'Respondents…are generally thought of as individuals who respond to more structured or formal surveys' (Johnson 1990, p.10). The semi-structured, informal, in-depth situations the participants were interviewed in (individually), facilitated their positions as informants contributing to my philosophical enquiry. Some of the questions were about their professional practice; some were about the original production intent and how this was approached and responded to; other questions were more generally targeted at their perceptions of Newcastle independent of

their own work, yet related to common 'Newcastle' discourses through a variety of 'known' representations. The 'open-ended interview' style was not expected to provide the 'opportunity for an authentic gaze into the soul of another…[to elevate]…the experiential as the authentic' and explain interview responses…[as indexing] some external reality' (Silverman 2000, p.822-823). Rather, the 'interview data' has been valued for its strength in 'accessing various stories or narratives through which people describe their worlds' (ibid, p.823). The interviews were audiotaped and transcribed, and coherent and relatively consistent communicative language underpinning the construction of Newcastle's cultural identity through film production work has been exposed. Referring to Halliday's social theory of discourse Lemke argues:

> Language [can] be viewed as a system of resources, a set of possible kinds of meanings that can be made…we then examine which kinds of meanings actually get made in the course of which human activities, by which social participants. This is what is meant by seeing language as a social semiotic, a resource to be deployed for social purposes. (1995 online)

The range of questions were purposely designed to allow for specific detail about the interviewee's *own* connection to a Newcastle story and for generalized detail about their memories of disparate Newcastle stories to be revealed. The combination of question-leading on *my* behalf, to anticipate universal and particular reactions about Newcastle identity constructions on *their* behalf, exposed interesting results about habitus' propensity to infiltrate interpretive practice across contexts.

Once the above data was collected it was subject to forms of textual and discourse analysis.

2.8 Textual Analysis of Film Production

As Langer suggests:

> Texts are intentionally constructed and contain expectations about possible interpretations. All texts are structured *a priori* by their producers and therefore (and because of the interrelation between form and content) all texts bind their audience to this structure. [original emphasis] (Langer 1998, p.4)

In Chapters 7 and 9 specific film detail is analyzed in terms of its structured content and

interpretive potential with close attention paid to scene locations and settings; characterizations and character interactions; dialogue and conversation, with a focus on the film form's capacities to promote viewer engagement leading to the influential communication of Newcastle's identity. As Louwerse and Kuiken assert, 'personal involvement may be directly influenced by the setting, characters, and events…[and may also] by affected when stylistic devices foster appreciation of the aesthetic quality of the narrative' (2004, p.170). While mention is made of film *design* in relation to archival footage, soundscapes, and editing issues, the goal has not been to conduct an exclusively cinematic analysis. Cinematic analysis refers to a film's technical creativity and superficial plotline whereas Film analysis attempts to understand how narratives become known through the use of semiotic structures (Bordwell & Thompson 1997; Chatman 1990; Stam 2000). Because 'film is a form of text where social life is produced and reproduced' (Durmaz 1999, p.104) the films have been deconstructed as 'discursive mediums' in keeping with the social-constructivist focus discussed earlier in this chapter.

2.9 Textual Analysis of Media Texts

Hughes argues that:

> The detailed examination of media texts is usually given the overall name 'textual analysis', but there is no single methodology of textual analysis…For analysts seeking to grasp the complexity of 'textuality', to grasp the ways texts produce potential meanings, and the ways these meanings are circulated, exchanged, and incorporated into people's lives (including that of the analyst), content analysis is insufficient to the task. (2007, p.250)

The transmissive features of these texts have been mined from a small degree of content analysis 'which seeks to study the message(s) in the media output…to enable a comparison between one text or series of texts' (Hughes 2007, p.254). For example, the discussion highlights the use of repetitive terms, rhetorical expressions, images, and language 'identifiers' to convey a raft of similarly themed messages about the plays and films. However, as Hughes (2007) and Richardson (2007) emphasise, this kind of categorical and systematic appraisal requires clarification to 'situate *what* [has been] written or said in the *context* in which it [occurred], rather than just summarizing patterns or regularities' and demonstrates 'that textual meaning is *constructed* through

an interaction between producer, text and consumer' [original emphasis] (Richardson 2007, p.15). In other words the discursive conditions in which these extra-texts arose and the ramifications of their production and potential interpretations also require consideration.

2.10 Discourse Analysis

> Discourse analysis involves a close examination of text, including visual imagery and sound as well as spoken or written language. It is concerned with both the form of the text and its use in social context, its construction, distribution and reception. It aims to understand and elucidate the meanings and social significance of the text. (Smith & Bell 2007, p.78)

As distinct cultural narratives, the content of the films reveals mediated Newcastle connections which 'are patterned and organized socially…based on human relations and emotionally-laced sentiments of belonging…[which have contributed to]…the formation and maintenance of [the city's] cultural identities' (Stewart 2001, p.23). McCalman describes cultural narratives as 'those stories that circulate widely and insistently across many media within a specific society or set of societies over a given period of time. These include non-literary forms such as theatrical performances' (2000 online). While the original films *Aftershocks* and *Blackrock* were produced more than a decade ago, their ongoing effects as cultural narratives representative of Newcastle's image and reputation continue to prevail in a number of discursive contexts. These discursive contexts can also be treated analytically. As Phillips and Hardy suggest:

> Introducing the idea of a discourse, in addition to text and context, provides the critical dimension that allows social construction to be understood. It is not individual texts that produce reality, but structured *bodies* of texts of various kinds – discourses – that constitute social phenomena. By examining the nature of discourse, including the methods of textual production, dissemination, and reception that surround it, we can understand how the concepts that make social reality meaningful are created. [original emphasis] (2002, p.82)

Using discourse as a platform to investigate *how* social values may be situated in texts through representational practices, generates new knowledge about *how* perceptions of a city's identity may materialize in a number of different contexts, including especially the contexts of production. Consequently, the intertextual resources selected for this

research provide valuable communicative material for evaluating how extra peri texts (interviews, press releases, radio transcripts, newspaper and magazine articles, celebrity status of authors) (Genette 1997, p.334) have the capacity to promulgate wider knowledge about firstly, the *actual* plays and films, and secondly, the vast discursive content surrounding the production of them as narrative representations of the city of Newcastle.

2.11 Conclusion

The preceding discussion explains in detail the range of qualitative methods chosen for this original research. By appraising the qualitative functions of a range of interdisciplinary literature; textual and discourse analysis; mainstream and specialist intertextual resources and interview data, a concerted effort has been made to propose Bourdieu's theory of habitus as a most appropriate application for understanding *how* Newcastle's identity may be communicated through the textual production practices of filmmakers, authors, and everyday cultural intermediaries, who themselves are active participants in the construction of the city's habitus. The author contends that to understand the representation of local identity discourses, specifically in regard to plays and films featuring the city, that the activities involved in their creation and the contexts of their textual development and representative output be accounted for.

3.0 Literature Review

Chapter 1 – Communication, Discourse and Interpretive Dispositions

'*In order to render the habitus intelligible, Bourdieu has had to stress its communicative aspect.'* (Acciaioli 1981 online)

To grasp the conditions and meaning circumstances that permit powerful messages about Newcastle's identity to be exchanged through literary and film forms, a basic understanding of traditional communication theory is needed. This basic understanding establishes a theoretical forum for acknowledging the significant functions communication serves in reflecting cultural systems *and* contributing to them. It also highlights the most appropriate and suitable ways for deconstructing cultural practices and representations as filtering systems for social sense-making, relationship building and identity discourses.

The transmission model of communication which formed the basis of communication theory for some time (see Griffin 2000; McQuail 1994; Morley 1980; O'Shaughnessy & Stadler 2008) was found to be limited in its capacity to *clarify* what receivers of 'Newcastle' messages might think of specific film or literary content:

> At the core of the dominant paradigm can be found…a particular view of communication as a process of transmission of a fixed 'quantity' of information – the message as determined by the sender or source. (McQuail 1994, p.49)

Within this theoretical framework the audience for Newcastle narratives would be considered as passive recipients of film and literary form and substance. As Bratich explains, 'in the traditional transmission model of communication, for instance, the audience is assumed to refer to people who are at the endpoint of the chain of media communication' (2005, p.46). Carey also suggests that in industrialized cultures the transmission view of communication is a common one, 'defined by terms such as imparting, sending, transmitting, or giving information to others. It is formed off a metaphor of geography or transportation' (cited in McQuail 2002, p.38). Schirato & Yell explain the limitations of this model arguing that 'in process

theories…communication is almost completely decontextualized' (2000, pp.4-5).

Additionally, the cybernetic tradition of research into information processing favours a structural and objectivist perspective of communication as 'the link connecting the separate parts of any system, such as a computer system, a family system, an organizational system, or a media system' (Griffin 2000, p.36). Shannon & Weaver's 'mathematical theory of communication characterized symbolic code systems in terms of their uncertainty' (Berger 2005, p.423). The uncertainty factor revolved around technical intrusions and interruptions to systematic information flow, in contrast to an effort to gauge the accuracy of message *meaning* at the 'end' of the communication process.

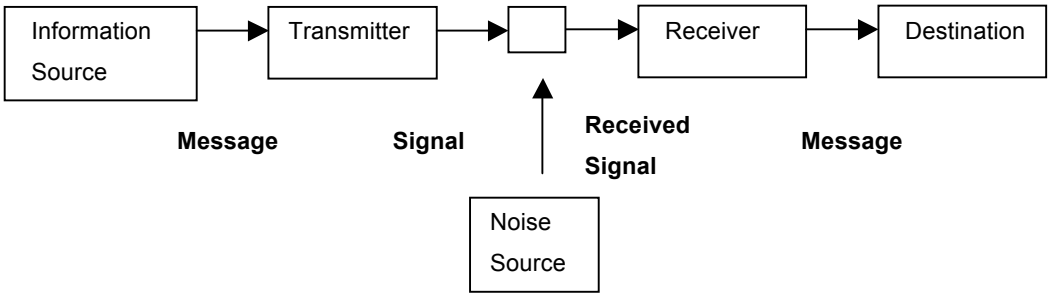

Figure 1: Shannon & Weaver's Model of Communication (Griffin 2000, p.37)

Holmes suggests that with the advent of Internet communication, challenges to medium theory or ''transport' models of communication as applied to communication relationships (one-to-one, one-to-many, many-to-many)' demanded variations in thinking about 'telecommunity…based on *community as practice*…and…*community as recognition*' [original emphasis] (2005, p.122).

Whether one takes a more technically oriented (see Figure 1) or socially constituted account of the transmission model of communication is incidental. What *is* important to this thesis is the concept that within the most basic transmission model of communication what appears to concern the senders is that a strong message has indeed been sent and received. Within the transmission model it is assumed producers of media

messages have more control over meaning, and the transmission of information is largely one-way, with limited audience feedback or input. An assumption of the audience as *passive* receivers rather than active or engaged participants prevails. This absolute focus on the linear transfer of material is problematic however. As Chandler argues:

> The transmission model is not merely a gross over-simplification but a dangerously misleading misrepresentation of the nature of human communication. This is particularly important since it underlies the 'commonsense' understanding of what communication is. Whilst such usage may be adequate for many everyday purposes, in the context of the study of media and communication the concept needs critical reframing. (Chandler 2000 online)

The transmission model should not be discounted as irrelevant to this research altogether however; it does provide a structural means for explaining how filmmakers, authors and other cultural producers may shape dominant meanings to begin with because, as McQuail contends, it 'involves the interpolation of a new 'communicator role'…between 'society' and 'audience'…[which considers] (1) events and 'voices' in society, (2) channel/communicator role, (3) messages, (4) receiver' (1994, p.50). McQuail's adaptation of the original source→ message→ receiver transmission model of communication, allows for consideration of what audience members may think about the information they've gained. It poses questions about whether or not they may accept the information as coming from a trusted and knowledgeable source, and it also asks what effect having been recipients of the information may have had on 'audiences'.

These socio-psychological accounts of interpersonal communication continue however, to place emphasis on the *control* that producers (or primary mediators) of message content have over relatively powerless audience members. By operating with the intent of finding out '*who* says *what* to *whom* and with what *effect'* [original emphasis] (Griffin 2000, p.35) most research in this vein has focussed on opinion change and consequently, on developing a mostly objective system for getting audience members to adjust their beliefs, behaviours or activities. In contrast to this position Stillar, in *Analyzing Everyday Texts: Discourse, Rhetoric and Social Perspectives* (1998), explains that *'what* is to be consumed, by *whom*, and with *what* meanings is a

consequence of how classification and distinction are negotiated in discursive practices' [original emphasis] (p.117). His message incorporates the need to count categories and contexts that create *subject* positions, as strong indicators for developing communication connections.

Despite the dissolution of power a sender of a message may be seen to hold, certainly in a theoretical sense, it's still apparent that authors and filmmakers plan and construct stories that, in this case, include Newcastle with audiences in mind. From this perspective it can be argued that the planning and construction of a cultural product is still a critical part of media production and human interaction. As Vera Zolberg has asserted, it is difficult to suggest that cultural products 'give birth to themselves by some parthenogenetic process' (1990, p.114). Janet Wolff supports this proposition by proposing that:

> …there is a middle way between the atheoretical biographical mode and the absent subject. Recent work in the social history of art has suggested that we can still focus on the artist as producer, on the understanding that we reconceptualise subjectivity as provisionally fixed, as fluid and inconsistent, and as itself the product and effect of discourse, ideology and social relations. (1993, p.147)

Given these arguments it is also possible to assert that particular texts (especially those perceived as relatively factual accounts) may offer new knowledge, in this case, about the place of Newcastle and the people there. It is not *always* apparent though that the story-maker's purpose is to persuade, change or alter an audience member's ideas or perceptions about the city. Sometimes this may be the authorial intent, but at times the film or literary content is not specifically designed to force individual or social *change* upon its reception. As Bourdieu asserts, the natural accomplishment of knowledge gathering through textual experiences is something that cannot always be foreseen. 'Codification may be antinomic to the application of the code' (Bourdieu 1990a, p.79). But an understanding of what *may occur* during the making of representations and throughout communication exchanges, does characterize the practices involved:

> Bourdieu considered the context in which a work is published is partially constitutive of the work itself, or, to put it differently, that artists internalise an

> anticipated reception of their work as a part of the process of production. Incidentally, Bourdieu was also arguing, against structuralism, that the ways in which artists locate themselves within a communicative field is different from the ways in which observers – contemporaries or subsequent academic critics - might seek to impose a structural conceptualisation of that relationship.
> (Robbins 2007, p.84).

Bourdieu's idea about the 'publication' conditions of a work contributing to and informing the work, applies equally to productions of a mediated, 'literary' or filmic nature. The point he makes, and which is applied in the analytical Chapters 6, 7, 8 and 9 contained in this thesis, is that ideas that develop for a work to be constructed, are drawn from the *'space of possibles'*, the artistic *'field of forces'* which the work (e.g. play, film, media content) develops in, and which the work itself eventually contributes to, and writers and filmmakers consider these conditions [original emphasis] (Bourdieu 2002, p. 290). Additionally, as his comments allude to, depending on decisions that are made about the constitution or genre of a specific work and which target group it's directed towards, variations as to how much of an 'authoring' role or production profile may be attributed to the products (plays, films) are also subject to the *'field of struggles'* that the work emerges in [original emphasis] (ibid).

The ways that filmmakers and authors of Newcastle stories locate themselves within the field of cultural production evolve because of the development of their naturalized dispositions as professional practitioners. 'Praxis is what one does. It belongs to a world of action. It has its own practical logic' (St. Clair, Rodríguez & Nelson 2005 online). Their work practices (script writing, screenplay writing, editing, directing and producing) afford them techniques and strategies befitting their individual roles within industry and social fields that they've come to know and recognize as participatory subjects. Pasztor and Slater (2000) take a similar view to Bourdieu in their general discussion of subjectivity and knowledge activity, and their ideas are also useful in understanding some of the dynamics of field production work carried out by individual writers, filmmakers, and producers:

> While our maps are in part based on our experiences, they also determine to a large degree what we experience of the world and how we experience it: what we notice, what we pay attention to, how we perceive the world, how we encode and

> process information, and what behaviour we generate. So our experiences are inseparable from our model of the world, as each determines the other. (Pasztor & Slater 2000, p.5)

So, at all times throughout the making of a Newcastle film or literary text, those involved in the making, make decisions and choices partially based on their cultural industry experiences, their peer engagements with fellow practitioners and their conception of the possible audience the text they aid in constructing will interact with. As such their professional subjectivity is something that exists *prior* to producing a cultural text which is further socially contextualized and enacted *by producing* a Newcastle textual representation. These activities constitute a set of knowledges that may not be as readily accessible to relatively objective non-practitioners who are not members of the field of cultural producers, as they may have developed differing kinds of habitus. This is because 'the problem with observers is that they have a map of the world of participation, but it is a different cultural map from those who reside there' (St. Clair, Rodríguez & Nelson 2005 online). Readers and viewers do not ordinarily fit into the category of cultural production that authors and filmmakers of Newcastle texts do because they're not industry professionals per se. In St. Clair, Rodríguez and Nelson's terms they would be classed as 'non-residents' of that particular habitus. However, it is also important to stress that perceptions of prospective audience members, together with anticipated viewer and reader receptions of Newcastle films and literature, are just as important as the contextual activities of practitioners' models and processes for making.

The communicative links and shared knowledges which allow filmmakers and other producers of Newcastle texts (such as playwrights) to construct representative stories featuring socialized subjectivities that firstly, meet the demands and limitations of field specific conditions (eg. budget constraints, film ratings, editing processes, marketing and promotional activities) and secondly, target objectified audience members with resonant and meaningful potential, involve the acquisition of cultural capital.

> Cultural capital involves the circulation of cultural products and the consequent reproduction of social relations. It lies to varying degrees in activities such as movie-going; in a knowledge of television…in choice of reading matter…cultural capital comes from having access to the codes of…artifacts: knowing how they

> work, what they do, what to say about them, how to appreciate, value and evaluate them: in short, how to consume them as cultural signs. (Thwaites, Davis & Mules 1994, p.190)

For the most part the production plan is to engage 'audience' responses that reinforce and affirm what they (writers, filmmakers, producers) already know about themselves and the culture they inhabit. In their discussion of the field of cultural production Webb, Schirato & Danaher reflect on this issue, suggesting that 'because this field is dedicated to making meanings – that is, to its symbolic function – cultural products can be seen as indicators of how members of a society perceive themselves and their values' (2003, p.150). In a discussion of contemporary literary theory and the practice of poetry reading, Buchbinder also speaks of the generative aspects of cultural identity building *throughout* textual production that is applicable in this case to both film and literary productions:

> Because authors are readers also of `texts' of many different kinds...the working principle of intertextuality in any given text becomes complicated and subtle. Intertextual reference extends not only through the diachronic dimension of meaning, but also through the synchronic...the author becomes a channel for cultural preoccupations and concerns. In a way, the culture writes the literary text by means of the author. (Buchbinder 1991, p.47)

Buchbinder and others (Craine & Aitken 2004; Mitscherling, Di Tommaso & Nayed 2004; Schirato & Webb 2004; Singley, 2003) are explicit in their understandings that although production practices include systematic decision making and relatively objective strategies, the dispositions (the habituses) of those involved, necessarily infiltrates the work and correlates with broader socio-cultural communication, 'outside' the immediate contexts of production.

> Our "tending towards" or "directed movement" occurs not as the result of our consciously creating and fully controlling the goal or target of our consciousness, but rather as the result of allowing ourselves to be moved or guided in a certain direction. (Mitscherling et al. 2004, p.106)

In this regard, some of the field structures and 'limiting' conditions that certain cultural production circumstances present, actually enable practitioner development and textual

output. What's more, the interplay between categories of constraint, and adjustments makers of (in this case Newcastle) cultural narratives project, may have the capacity to produce representations that may be deemed 'authentic'. For example, as will be argued, the development of the 'community theatre' play *Aftershocks* (1993) which was eventually also produced as a film was subject to familiarized relationships which were structured in such a way as to engage a communal production purpose. According to author Paul Makeham this meant that:

> The integrity and authenticity of the *Aftershocks* project was ensured by the formation of an extensive consultative network, both formal and informal, within the [Newcastle] Workers' Club community. This mechanism gave the research team, most of whom were personally acquainted with the individuals they interviewed, continuing access not only to the storytellers but also to a steering committee made up of trade unionists and club staff. (1998, p.170)

This is one example which demonstrates that through their writing and filmmaking activities, practitioners may embody and enact a communicative culture which 'can provide the ecstatic solace of communication, the shared community of representational worlds. It does so through identification' (Pajaczkowska 1997, p.106).

Through strategically framed production design, filmmakers and authors of Newcastle stories instantiate foundational knowledge that they themselves have previously forged links with to create representations which are progressive, correctable (Anderson & Baym 2004, p.604) and believable. 'Knowledge is both individuated and transcendent: individuated because it is housed within the mind of the individual, but transcendent because truth cannot be contained or limited to the individual' (ibid). In this sense the 'senders' of (Newcastle) messages tap into their expectations of what the audience is likely to relate to and may be interested in. 'Creators of …media texts are aware of audiences' tendency to interpret texts in various ways' (Burton 1997, p.25). So, when watching a play, viewing a film or reading literature that features Newcastle, audience members latently:

> …[forge] a non-problematic link between [their] own mind and the reality that transcends it…knowledge here is a question of accurate representation, or correspondence between understanding and existence.
> (Anderson & Baym 2004, p.604)

And this link is why theories (other than variations on the transmission model of communication) that encompass the dynamic use of language codes, symbolic representation, human interactions, semiotic phenomenology (Catt 2006 online) and discursive acts need to be investigated.

Sara Mills, in *Discourse* (2004), tracks historical shifts in the meaning of *discourse* from studies into structurally encoded linguistic systems (Foucault); to ideologically framed language distinctions (Pecheux); through to socio-semiotic situational actions, including speech acts and textual production (Halliday & Hasan; Macdonnell). Fiske describes discourse as 'a language or system of representation that has developed socially in order to make and circulate a coherent set of meanings about a topic area' (cited in McQuail 1994, p.237). The discourse of Newcastle's cultural identity includes the manipulation and mediation of socio-cultural languages for coherent perceptions of the city to be relayed and understood. As Burman and Parker argue, 'language contains the most basic categories that we use to understand ourselves; affecting the way we act…and reproducing the way we define our cultural identity' (1993, p.1). Consequently, as Barker & Galasiñski also argue, discourse is about ways of making the world intelligible and understandable, therefore it is ideological. 'Ideology is understood here as the social (general and abstract) representations shared by members of a group and used by them to accomplish everyday social practices: acting and communicating' (2001, p.66). Gee too acknowledges that power relations are present in discursive practices. He argues that the key to identifying discourses (as well as possibly participating in them) lies in being able to *recognise* socially acceptable associations between language, action, interaction, values, beliefs, symbols, objects, tools and places (2005, p.27). From Bourdieu's perspective, 'discourse is the product of social differences in the ability, or better, propensity to speak rather than any paradigmatic relations belonging or internal to the language itself' (Myles 1999, p.882). Renkema follows a similar line when he suggests that an adequate study of discourse cannot take place without considering the 'roles' that people play, the sites these occur at, and the rules which dictate symbolic interaction (2004, p.45). To participate in the field of production from which Newcastle texts emerge, professional practitioners need

to employ a sense of normative performance. They also need to adhere to conventions, typologies and simplifications in going about their work (Gee 2005, p.71). Additionally, throughout reading and viewing practices, audiences for Newcastle texts also draw on 'discourse models', that is, 'largely unconscious theories we hold that help us make sense of texts and the world' (ibid, p.72), for the plays, films, and articles about them to resonate. These models 'are learned from past experiences and relative experiences shaped and validated by the social and cultural groups we belong to' (ibid, p.72), so their appropriateness for understanding more about communication and habitus is sustained. Essentially, the sustained analyses which follow in Chapters 6, 7, 8 and 9 of this thesis to explain the significances of dispositional interpretive opportunities and the production of Newcastle's cultural identity, have at their core, discourse analysis.

In their discussion on philosophical issues related to communication as a field of study, Anderson & Baym point out that attempts to understand the 'truth' or 'reality' of communicative practices and outcomes are highly problematic. They call for approaches to communication research that identify structural conditions offering engagement systems that acknowledge agents' practices by questioning: 'What are the objects of our analysis, what is the character of our knowledge about them, how do we obtain that knowledge, and what is the value of obtaining it?' (2004, p.590). For this specific research into communication practices and likely outcomes, the *objects* of analysis include: the contributions of interviewees involved in play and film productions who have been 'individual agents linked by simple relations of *interaction*, or,…*cooperation*' [original emphasis] (Bourdieu 1996, p.205); the actual theatrical and film texts chosen for deconstruction in Chapters 7 and 9; and, the extra-textual material created in response to these products by a broad range of additional cultural intermediaries. As Negus argues the vigour of the notion of cultural intermediaries is that:

> …it places an emphasis on those workers who come *in-betwee*n creative artists and consumers (or, more generally, production and consumption). It also suggests a shift away from unidirectional or transmission models of cultural production towards an approach that conceives of workers as intermediaries continually engaged in forming a point of connection or articulation between production and consumption. [original emphasis] (Negus 2002, p.503)

According to Wright, who also draws on Bourdieu's original term [1984, pp.359-360], the reactionary work of those employed in 'cultural production and organization' such as film, theatre and literature reviewers, media analysts and journalists, 'reflects the interplay, inherent in contemporary cultural production, between generating new styles of life and protecting established hierarchies of cultural value' (2005, p.106). Non-professional discourse participants, such as those people whose personal narratives have been reappropriated for the making of *Aftershocks* (play 1993; film 1998) also enact dispositions that position them in mediating capacities. In this regard the communication of personal Newcastle stories has provided 'both the evidence for the embeddedness of artistic creation and the reason for the perpetuation of potentially exclusionary aspects of cultural value' (Wright 2005, p.109). As such, the original responses to interview questions put to everyday subjects, esteemed writers, and professional filmmakers *combined*, constitute a diverse selection of objects for this research as they 'have a transformative rather than simply a demand value, i.e. they allow for the exploration of aspects of human experience' (Wright 2005, p.107). This concept is critical to understanding more about the communication of cultural identity through a raft of 'representational' activities.

The play and film texts featuring Newcastle, plus the intertexts pertaining to them, do not inherently contain or convey a *singular truth* about the identity of Newcastle and its people as, '*truth* in human communication is ambiguous at best because the interpretation of a receiver may only approximate the intent of a speaker' [original emphasis] (Gaines 2002a, p.2). But, they do communicate a social epistemology that enables the people who've made them and those who see and read them to:

> …move from a paradigm of absolute foundations to one of social agreement…if the real is neither singular nor universal but bounded by localized practices of language and action, then knowledge must be rethought, not as correspondence with an a priori truth, but as itself a language game. Knowledge here is understood not as the product of an objective and rational engagement with reality, but as the result of inter-subjective or communal agreement. (Anderson & Baym, 2004, p.604)

Accordingly, the contexts of textual production that amount to inter-subjective sites of praxis (St. Clair, Rodriguez & Nelson 2005 online) need to be examined, to get to the heart of agreed knowledge about conceptions of Newcastle during the production phases. The interview analyses forthcoming in Chapter 6 that are deeply connected with the *Aftershocks* projects serve this purpose. The additional attention to the field of cultural production pertaining to each of the plays as well as the films, revealed through praxis also contributes. 'Praxis refers to the idea that when proactive social actors make choices in their social worlds, they simultaneously become reactive objects' (Berger 2005, p.427). Likewise, reader and viewer encounters with textual material propagate consensual knowledge about Newcastle *perceptions.* Subsequently, interpretive dispositions potentially enacted in reaction to textual output (play and film production) also require interrogation. Each of these analytical approaches demonstrates an understanding of communication as a series of enactments that are socially ratified, institutionally endorsed, representatively mediated, and culturally identifiable and thus move well away from the idea of communication as transmission.

Anderson and Baym (2004) and others (Carey 1989; Gaines 2002a; Geertz 1983; Griffin 2000; Grossberg, Wartella & Whitney 1998; Taylor & Willis 1999;) claim that for a rounded picture of communication forms and functions to be realized, their presence (forms) and use (functions) in socio-cultural contexts should be studied. The questions these researchers raise about the need to explore the acquisition, character and value of knowledge in context are similar to Bourdieu's ideas regarding habitus and cultural and symbolic capital. In his article *'Building Community Through Stories About Real Events: the Habitus of Broadcast Journalism'*, Gaines (2002b) explains the layered constitution of community constructions and interpretive practices, and he uses Bourdieu's habitus to do so:

> Habitus [is]…a commonsense way of behaving based on beliefs and understandings about the nature of reality…[encompassing] the history, beliefs and rituals that are so well integrated in practice as to be forgotten and taken-for-granted by the individuals within a community. (pp.3-4)

Generally, these theorists emphasize the fluid nature of knowledge building *about* communication, by discussing the people power involved in its active construction. As a result, they reinforce the understanding that certain kinds of communicative behaviour naturalize social relations so that 'society exists not only *by* transmission, *by* communication, but it may fairly be said to exist *in* transmission, *in* communication' [original emphasis] (Dewey cited in Carey 2007, p.38). Carey uses this proposition from Dewey to explain how the nuances and participatory elements of communicative rites throughout everyday life assist individuals in 'the construction and maintenance of an ordered, meaningful cultural world which can serve as a control and container for human action' (Carey cited in McQuail 2002, p.39). According to Carey, acts of communication are not only about information transfer but are also about the *value* of meaning – both shaped and determined by themes of commonness, communion and community (ibid):

> In a ritual definition, communication is linked to terms such as sharing, participation, association, fellowship and the possession of a common faith…not the act of imparting information but the representation of shared beliefs. (ibid)

Traditionally, the ritual model of communication evolved from an understanding of the involvements and impacts of religious communities. Within the ritual model greater precedence is placed on the *togetherness* of interested parties purposely positioned for a common goal, rather than on a singular dominant and dominating 'instruction and admonishment' (ibid). The importance of individual participants identifying principles and standards, and feeling as though they are part of a group, is tantamount to a sense of belonging as a cultural member. In this regard, 'we know that Bourdieu regarded the meaning of ritual as polysemic and as strategic on the part of the practitioners' (Robbins 2003, p.13). The sense-making cultural world of co-communicators embodies community ideals in a range of *material* forms:

> Dance, plays, architecture, news stories, strings of speech [cultivate a] real symbolic order which operates not to provide information but confirmation, not to alter attitudes or change minds…not to perform functions but to manifest an ongoing and fragile social process. (Carey cited in McQuail 2002, p. 40)

It is evident that for ritual views of communication to prevail, an understanding of mediation processes linking people with each other, through practices and engagement with the material world is required. These activities allow for resonant relationships between texts, contexts, cultural producers and audience members to be ritually strengthened, as Yell explains:

> The ritual view acknowledges communication is not only about the 'transfer' of information but about forming connections…The ritual view is thus better able to accommodate a perspective on acts of communication (texts) as functioning to construct and maintain social relations rather than solely as representational/informational acts. (2005, p.12)

Denzin agrees when he asserts that 'interpretive practices are connected to systems of cultural discourse…structured by narrative history, woven through interpretations of the past and its representations' (1997, p.248). The ritual view of communication functioning *through* cultural texts (literature, plays, films, and intertexts featuring Newcastle) and through professionally prescribed *and* culturally circumscribed conditions, helps to explain some of the deep-seated relationships between: text producers as social subjects and professional makers of Newcastle stories; constructed story-world characters as valid social agents; readers and viewers as interpretive decoders of mediated narratives; and cultural intermediaries as contributors to intertexts.

Community members invest their time and energy in ritual engagement and in return seek consensus about the choices they've made and the information they've acquired. Current ideas about what comprises a community culture are diverse and at times contradictory. Gaines makes distinctions between traditional views of the definition of community (by referring to Tönnies *Gemeinschaft*), and offers an updated perspective to suit present concerns:

> Community is understood as a group of people living in a particular location that have interests in common, a personal commitment to each other, that are friends and family sharing a consanguine, tribal closeness, values, traditions, and lifestyle…In an age of electronic communication, rapid transit, and mass media, proximity is no longer a restriction in social relations and communities are now defined through common interests, commitments and lifestyles. (2002b, p.3)

Gaines further suggests 'community building happens at a preconscious level through communication practices that bridge various institutions and social strata' (ibid, p.3). This issue is further taken up by Fisher when he states:

> There are two essential sites of community: interpersonal relationships, such as families, friendships, social groupings, and some professional associations. The other site is what MacIntyre calls practices, including medicine and law, sport and scholarship. Each of these sites is the home of a set of values that constitute a community, specifying norms of character, role performance, interaction, and ideal aspiration. (1997, p.320)

Gaines' and Fisher's ideas demonstrate that individual habituses (multiple field experiences of an everyday and more formal type that influence each other) provide opportunities for the continuity of values and shared systems of understanding across contexts, and that media can play a pivotal role in the construction of these relationships. Gaines points out that contemporary community sensibilities arise through activities and practices that do not necessarily demand direct, spatial interaction with other people. Weber also suggests that a place-related understanding of community does not necessarily require primary proximal experience. His view is that approximations of community are able to be realized in indirect ways:

> The idea of community…has been tied to the idea of place. Although other conditions are associated with the community – including "sense of belonging", a body of shared values, a system of social organization, and interdependency – spatial proximity continues to be considered a necessary condition. But it is now becoming apparent that it is the accessibility rather than the propinquity aspect of 'place' that is the necessary condition.
> (Webber cited in Agnew 1989, pp.12-13)

Thwaites, Davis and Mules also speak of the concept of community filtered through mediation practices. 'An imagined community is one made up of individuals who do not interact face-to-face, but who never-the-less identify as a community' (2002, p.145). Delanty supports this view when he says:

> Community is becoming more discursively constituted…contemporary community may be understood as a communication community based on new kinds of belonging. By this is meant a sense of belonging that is peculiar to the

> circumstances of modern life and which is expressed in unstable, fluid, very open and highly individualized groups. (2003, p.187)

Similarly, Dempsey points out the difficulties that arise when definitions of community rely on the presence of structural characteristics (social ties producing solidarity) *as well as* 'the experience of belonging together' (cited in Holmes 2005, p.175):

> It is possible for the objective (or structural) characteristics of community to be present and the subjective characteristics to be absent. People may be linked by social ties of interdependence and yet have no sense of belonging together. It is also possible for the opposite to be true: for people who do not know one another, to have a sense of belonging together. (Dempsey 1996, p.141)

There is no doubting that 'media play a significant role in reproducing the imagined communities of nation, as well as those of a more local kind, such as neighbourhood, region, city and town' (Thwaites, Davis & Mules 2002, p.45). But, the notion that *uniform* cultural values, aims, aspirations and knowledge are able to be *determined* through media representation is contentious. However, the awareness that culturally conditioned and endorsed meanings may be *unified* is not. Desfor Edles' discussion of Eco's contemplations about cultural sociology emphasizes this point:

> Eco maintains that, like linguistic systems, cultural systems are commonly intelligible and widely accessible, and that they work at a relatively unconscious (or "prediscursive") level…symbols are "multivocal" (not univocal): they are not all of the same logical order, but are drawn from many domains of experience and ethical evaluation. (2002, p.179)

The consideration of 'Newcastle' literature and film as examples of Eco's 'multivocal' cultural symbols, and the appropriation of Geertz's definition of culture as a system of interactive relationships, can enable the identification of some of the subject positions and practical activities involved in the mediation of Newcastle's communicated identity. Geertz argued that 'culture should be understood as public symbolic forms, forms that both express and shape *meaning for actors* involved in the ongoing flow of social life' [original emphasis] (cited in Ortner 2005, p.36). The *meaning for actors* Geertz mentions has the capacity to link peoples' memories about what they read or see *about* Newcastle through textual representations, as 'memory is 'collective' rather than individual, it is

something which is shared and the activity of remembering can also be collectively and discursively accomplished' (Wetherell, Taylor & Yates 2001, p.213). This collective acquisition does not mean however, that individual memories of what constitutes Newcastle's identity will be the *same.* Differences may arise because although 'collective identity involves the achievement by individual actors or by social groups of a certain coherence and continuity, such bonding will always be provisional and more or less precarious' (Morley & Robins 1995, p.71). Some of the processes of interpretation readers and viewers enact and accomplish may be *similar*, yet it needs to be enforced that:

> Our reliance on cultural codes does not at all make us "cultural dopes"…it enables the generation of both "factual" messages which refer to original experiences, and messages which place in doubt the very structure of the code itself.
> (Eco cited in Desfor Edles 2002, p.179)

And although relatively structural media specific codes (such as textual genre, medium form, design and style) have shaping power to guide audience responses, it needs to be acknowledged that:

> When viewers [or readers] engage in this reception process, several things happen at the same time. The interaction between viewer [reader] and text is complex, multidimensional, and multilayered…the text is inserted in a context that also mediates the process (Martín-Barbero, 1987/1993); and this process is continuously evolving, due to social interactions. (La Pastina 2005, p.142)

While the terminology above appears to favour those persons at the receiving end of play, film, and intertextual productions, the concepts apply equally to sense-making practices, the 'cultural mastery' (Bourdieu 1990a, p.78) activated throughout their making. This is because, as Calhoun, Gerteis, Moody, Pfaff & Virk also suggest, 'social structure is internalized by each of us because we have learned from the experience of previous actions a practical mastery of how to do things that takes objective constraints into account' (2002, p.260). Consequently, the '*practical logic*…that defines one's ordinary relation to the world' [original emphasis] (Bourdieu 1990a, p.78) has a pivotal role to play in the *enabling* of a communicative text; the construction of an 'inhabitable' textual space that may potentially powerfully resonate when its substance is moderated

and exchanged.

Jensen describes texts as 'chains of signifiers initiating a play of differences that constantly puts meaning into question' (1995, p.9). The following definitions of 'text' provide clarification. Various cultural and communication theorists present meanings associated with the term, revealing the reciprocal dependencies generated through textual production and representation. Carey states:

> Texts are not always printed on pages or chiseled in stone – though sometimes they are...we deal with texts of public utterance or shaped behaviour ... a cultural science of communication, then, views…human action – as a text…The trick is to read these "texts" in relation to concrete social structure without reducing them to that structure. (1989, p. 60-61)

His ideas suggest that to understand textual functions and potentials, thinking beyond the physicality of material objects and considering how socio-cultural relationships are materialised through symbolic acts of production is needed. Carey's approach demonstrates that 'culture is best understood not by tracing it to psychological and sociological conditions or, indeed, to exclusively political or economic conditions, but as a manifestation of a basic cultural disposition to cast up experience in symbolic form' (1989, p. 64). Gosden follows a similar line of explanation:

> The notion of texts obviously derives from books which solidify meaning into more or less lasting forms. The concept of text, however is used much more broadly...to refer to any type of signification lasting longer than a face-to-face encounter. Hence, material objects, institutions or the layout of the landscape can all be considered texts to be read in differing ways. (1994, p.53)

Gosden's definition highlights traditional understandings of text as a functional form, a structure containing knowledge and ideas that is physically represented, durable, and remains consistent over time. His account includes the important message that remnants of a textual experience, encompassing material forms, social organizations and/or physical locations, have the potential to stay with people across time and space. Also, by including 'signification' in his rationale, he emphasizes the interpretive dimensions of textual engagement that require associative connections to be brought to the context a

text presents in because:

> All media messages, all their signs, work on the basis of something standing in for something else; all signs include a signifier and a signified. This helps us see the construction involved in media messages, and reminds us that what we are seeing is not 'reality'…but signs and signifiers that aim to represent the real world. (O'Shaughnessy & Stadler 2008, p.135)

These ideas account for partial textual meanings to be sustained over a period of time, *and* for traditional textual meanings to be re-appropriated throughout history, in response to newly available circumstances. 'Connotations are understood as the meaning implied as a consequence of something, perceived from within a particular context or cultural understanding (Gaines 2001, p.1). Fowler reiterates these points when she states, 'Bourdieu's demand for a return to the social relations underlying culture means that there is no 'essence' of a text, that is, no single set of interpretative rules which dictate the terms under which a text unambiguously yields up its treasures' (1997, p.44). As such, the meanings of the texts chosen for this research have been, and continue to be directed towards and adapted within, the field of inquiry they emerge in.

Barnes and Duncan also discuss the representational aspects of certain textual manifestations and their capacities to both instigate and repudiate socio-cultural distinctions:

> The notion of text [also]…includes other cultural productions such as paintings, maps and landscapes, as well as social, economic and political institutions. These should all be seen as signifying practices that are read, not passively, but, as it were, rewritten as they are read. (1992, p.5)

Duncan and Duncan defer to Roland Barthes' ideas about the sense-making aspects of textual interpretations when they declare that, 'a text…is a field within which there is an activity of production, of signification. A text has no closure, is an endless process of communication in which authors and contexts or origins are not privileged' (1992, p.27). According to Barthes, textual meanings need to be activated by people engaged in communicative exchange. In this regard he favours an interpretive approach to understanding text functions rather than a deterministic one.

His relativist slant is in keeping with Maturana and Varela's (1980) concept of autopoiesis, a process whereby a system produces its own organization and maintains and constitutes itself in a defined space. 'A text is a unit of meaning we can view from two perspectives…as a product…and as a process' (Schirato & Yell 2000, p.108). These theorists and others (Barker & Galasiñksi 2001; de Certeau, 1984; Grossberg, Wartella & Whitney 1998; Hall 2000; Real 1996) accentuate the relational aspects between symbolically encoded textual signs embedded throughout production, to explain the *potential* for semiotic decoding on the part of less direct cultural producers (such as readers and viewers). In this regard they account for the flexibility different intermediaries (professional or otherwise) may have in deciding what predominant meanings a particular text conveys. Yet, as Stuart Hall argues:

> Polysemy must not be confused with pluralism. Connotative codes are not equal among themselves. Any society/culture tends, with varying degrees of closure, to impose its segmentations…its classifications of the world…upon its members. There remains a dominant cultural order, though it is neither univocal or uncontested. (cited in Morley, 1980, p.12)

To attempt to comprehend *how* specific narrative developers (writers and filmmakers) may charge their Newcastle stories with meaningful content for purposeful evaluation, a theory of communication that addresses production intent *and* possible interpretive outcomes is required. Hall's reception model of communication fits the criteria:

> In a determinate moment the structure employs a 'code' and yields a 'message'; at another determinate moment the 'message', via its decodings, issues into the structure of social practices (Hall 2001:168). Of course, the contextual meaning structures of the sender's and receiver's social and economic relations are not identical. 'What are called 'distortions' or 'misunderstandings' arise precisely from the lack of equivalence between two sides of the communication exchange' (Hall 2001:169). Yet, much of the intended meaning might be perceived if there is a sharing of codes between the sender and recipient, some of which are so common, achieving a near-universality, that they become *naturalized* (Hall 2001:170) [original emphasis] (*James Carey & Stuart Hall* 2004 online).

Hall's theory enables deconstructive criticism of text-audience interactions to more fully explain code and language development, used to convey dominant ideological positions through texts. It reveals how various textual contexts expedite signification

processes to support discourses that are less likely to be challenged. It also offers a framework for examining how texts may be constructed aesthetically and stylistically to incorporate intertextual relationships. So, for many reasons it is an ideal model for unravelling the complex construction and consumption of Newcastle's identity across a range of textual appropriations. Reception theory's concentration on codification practices sits comfortably with Bourdieu's ideas about 'naturalized' perception formation and accompanying behaviours. He argues that:

> To codify means to formalize and to adopt formal behaviour. There is *a virtue proper to the form*. And cultural mastery is always a master of forms…Codification is a change of nature, a change of ontological status…Codification is an operation of symbolic ordering…[it] minimizes ambiguity and vagueness, in particular interactions. [original emphasis] (Bourdieu 1990a, p.78-80)

Reception theory's pertinence, relevance and value to this research as an encoding/decoding, structured/structuring model of communication incorporating '*habitus*…unconscious dependence on inherited schemes of practices that do not obey rules but are nevertheless followed' [original emphasis] (Vladiv-Glover & Frederic 2004, p.36) is explicated in Chapters 6, 7, 8 and 9. These discussions reveal how knowledge codes have informed production practices, so that specific encodings have been embedded in various materials (plays, films, newspaper articles/reviews), offering symbolic cues for participants to adopt and make meaningful.

The reception model of communication supports the view that not all people who read literature which includes Newcastle as its locale, or watch a film featuring the city will take from the experience, the same set of impressions of the city. As Agnew and Duncan assert, 'the reception of messages depends on interpretation, and interpretation depends on the nature of the sociological situations in which frames of reference operate' (1989, p.3). In the context of this research, reception theory allows for some variation on the kinds of messages and perceptions the city represents for textual producers and ordinary consumers alike. However, it should be remembered that, 'moments of encoding [do] exert, from the production end, an over-determining effect (though not fully determined closure) on the succeeding moments in the communicative

chain' (Morley 1980, p.12). Bourdieu (cited in Stillar) speaks of decoding and deciphering acts as practices of consumption which demand a 'capacity to see (*voir*)' which is itself 'a function of the knowledge (*savoir*)' available for perception [original emphasis] (1998, p.117). In their discussions, these theorists indicate that the chances of encoding strategies and hence dominant meanings (through Newcastle plays, films and intertexts) being misconstrued or misunderstood by readers and viewers in socio-semiotic relationships, is minimal. This is because 'texts are organized' to potentially predispose [interpreters] towards a 'given set of relevancies' (Silverman 1997, p.89). Real proposes that:

> "Text" concerns the message content itself in the media experience. The text is the organised content of images, sounds and words in the form of narrative, genre, signs and intertextuality that we encounter at the point of intersection between media production and media reception. (1996, p.xix)

He provides a more systematic way of understanding textual features (which promote meaning dissemination) by introducing categories of distinction. These distinctions provide communicative frameworks for cultural producers and everyday intermediaries alike, to recognize and use. Real's explanation indicates that specific textual *tools* (images, sounds, words, narrative, genre, signs and intertextuality) work in various ways to shape media content and hence, to a significant degree, dictate interpretive tendencies through 'meaningful discourse' (McQuail 1994, p.54).

> The words on the page...the images on the screen of a theater or television set or computer, and the music emanating from speakers are what convey the text. The text is whatever is encountered by the receiver's physical senses in accessing the media presentation. The text is that magical point of contact when one person's or group's creation reaches others, generating from the contact some form of meaning. (Real 1996, p.118)

Importantly, Real also explains that textual 'ingredients' alone do not instigate required messages. He understands that for likely, intended and potential meanings to be accepted within producer-text-audience relationships, interactions *with* and reactions *to* texts are essential. Schirato and Yell stress Real's point in a clearer manner when they argue, 'texts are produced through the choices made within systems of meaning making

(semiotic systems)' (2000, p.108). These authors advocate the view of most contemporary communication scholars when they indicate that the power of a mediated message is not exclusively embodied within a text, such as a play, film or media representation featuring Newcastle. They also reinforce the concept that a 'text' needs to be thought about as a process with outcomes, 'a fictio- a 'making', a construction' (Carey 1989, p.62) for example a play, film, or published intertext, *and,* as a vehicle for the communication of values, beliefs and identities. Stillar also expressed these concepts:

> Text is symbolic exchange between real social agents in situations bearing tangible consequences, and as such it always embodies motive and interest – not (simplistically) the motives and interests *of* the "individuals" involved, but those of the whole host of social systems and structures with their attendant resources "speaking through" social agents. The dynamism and tension inherent in this variety of motives and interests is created by and marked in textual practice. [original emphasis] (1998, p.6)

Again, it must be reiterated that for any kind of symbolic reception to be effectively activated, and for anticipated meaning potential to be realized, important encoding strategies need to have been embedded throughout the production process.

Through intentional design and constructive implementation writers and filmmakers are able to systematically structure Newcastle narratives so that the 'text [becomes] multifunctional and ideational, it draws together realities outside of the text with the speaker's cognitions, emotions, perceptions, acts of speaking and understanding' (Barker & Galasiñski 2001, p.68). In relation to this original research, the 'speakers' Barker and Galasiñksi mention would include the original producers of Newcastle plays and films and the writers of intertexts pertaining to them, as well as those people expected to 'see' and subsequently 'read' what they have produced [h]. 'Inquiring into the conditions of possibility of reading means inquiring into the social conditions which make possible the situations in which one reads' (Bourdieu 1990a, p. 95). While in this particular instance Bourdieu was referring to authorized forms of reading in terms of

[h] 'The term 'read' is being used here to refer to any process of interpretation – viewing, scanning, listening…to read or decode a text is to make sense of it' (O'Shaughnessy & Stadler 2008, p.94).

persons with the power to *read for*, and explain *to others*, what a publication represented, his central concern with the 'social conditions of the education of readers' (ibid) is relevant to the 'naturalized' interpretive frameworks of expectation that those engaging with Newcastle texts have to 'work' with.

Generally, do readers and viewers have the capacity to decode messages in ways that they're meant to or ways that they choose or both?

> Audience power refers to the creative processes of meaning making, the appropriation and circulation of affects, and the enhancement of these very capacities. It does not simply refer to people watching, reading, or listening to mediated texts (no matter how active the consumption). (Bratich 2005, p.46)

Active audience theory proposes that individuals actively construct their own interpretations and meanings of the world 'from messages that relate to the everyday context of their lives' (Santos 2004, p.395). It suggests that a mediated message or text does not have one single meaning, but that each individual receiver of the text will extract and interpret their own meaning depending on their personal prejudices, circumstances, beliefs, and values (Wilson 2004 online). Different members of the audience may therefore interpret texts in diverse ways (Underwood 2004 online). However, research demonstrates that although 'media audiences are very capable interpreters of media, [there] is a strong scepticism about some cultural studies' belief in the positive consequences of audiences' interpretative freedoms' (Couldry 2008, p.74). How much interpretive 'power' an individual person has at any given time is therefore questionable, and needs to be considered in relation to the individual's habitus and the discursive content available to them. 'We have to recognise…that how people read media (even when they are active readers and decoders) may reinforce, rather than undermine, broad media influence over public understandings' (Kitzinger cited in Couldry 2008, p.74)

Creators of media texts are aware of audiences' tendencies to interpret texts in various ways (Burton 1997, p.25). Through various production activities they structure texts to guide and direct audience dispositions by using identifiable and common codes and

conventions. 'Craftsmanship may involve the use of stylistic techniques or literary devices' (Green, Brock & Kaufman 2004, pp.320-321). These directions attempt to limit the various interpretations that audiences may have of a text, and guide them to extract the preferred meaning intended by the creator (Wilson 2004 online). 'Any text still has a degree of determination in the 'fixing' of its meaning, to the extent that the effect of its construction is to work to constrain, or at least shape, the range of possible interpretations which an audience can make' (Roscoe & Hight 2001,p.65). It is through the 'know how' a producer acquires and uses that they provide frames of understanding, possible interpretations. In their discussion of social epistemology and communicative 'know how' Anderson & Baym offer the following:

> [Social epistemology]: understands truth as existing within specific epistemic communities, whereas the test of validity is less a measure of accuracy and more a social process of justification. In this frame the location of knowledge is shifted from the mind of the individual knower to the communicative processes through which that mind is constructed. Further, knowledge inevitably is multiple; standards of evidence and criteria of justification exist only within communities of acceptance and often are incompatible across local epistemic boundaries. (2004, p.604)

Anderson and Baym's discussion emphasizes the importance of considering communicated information in terms of: its suitability to the context of its production; its direction at particular 'community' members; and its potential for acceptance by those participating in the exchange. These are ideas that Hall also dealt with when he discussed encoding-decoding strategies and styles, interpretive communities and subcultural audiences, and which Couldry (2008) takes up in his recently published chapter '*Media Discourse and the Naturalisation of Categorie*s':

> Each media text is encoded in analyzable ways, which determine a 'preferred meaning' for that text, related to dominant ideology…there are basically three interpretative positions for an audience to adopt - a decoding that uses the same codes with which the programme was encoded to produce the *dominant* reading, one which adjusts the programme's codes to produce a *negotiated* reading, and one which uses a quite different code, to produce an *oppositional* reading. [original emphasis] (p.69)

Here Couldry revisits some results from Morley's (1980) ethnographic study of a

British television audience that used Hall's encoding-decoding communication model to explain disparate responses in audience survey results. As with Hall's original concepts, Morley's research demonstrated the capacity for viewers to actively participate in the interpretation process. It did not consider them passive and it revealed that 'the same stimulus need not generate the same responses' (Agnew & Duncan 1989, p.3). Morley's findings were significant to the field of communication and cultural studies. The results highlighted a number of issues pertinent to audience-text relationships: firstly, questions about the impact of textual content from a specific media discourse (the genre of a Current Affairs Program) were raised; secondly, ideas about social and cultural identities (habitus) contributing to interpretive practice were presented; and thirdly, the understanding that each viewer inhabited *various* subject positions throughout the television watching experience was developed. Morley'*s* study revealed how an audience member's cultural and symbolic capital [i] informs their understandings of what is important in a program's content, so that some discursive material seems more salient than others. In this respect, the individual audience members' multiple subjectivities enabled them to participate in some discourses whilst they were excluded from others.

> Morley, drawing on Stuart Hall's (1980) encoding-decoding model, insisted that the audience's 'decoding' of the media text was connected with the wider 'complex field of communications' (work, school, family, and so on) to which viewers belong (Morley, 1992: 77). Morley aimed to relate the moment of audience interpretation to that more widely structured field. (Couldry 2008, p.69)

Hall and Morley did not concentrate on revealing a communication 'truth' as a relatively objective appraisal of actual media content. Rather, they focused on the life-worlds of content recipients, to explain how social agents may arrive at different meanings of the same media text. Because of their theoretical assumptions, Hall and Morley share in Denzin's ideas about the practice and activity of interpretation:

> Interpretive practices are connected to systems of cultural discourse (medicine, law, education, religion, family, gender, cinema, television, sexuality etc.) and to specific textual representations. (1997, p.248)

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[i] Detailed definitions and explanations for these types of capital are provided in Chapter 4.

In a similar fashion, Meinhof and Richardson argue that, 'readers and viewers make meaning. But they do not do so free of interpretive constraints that are part of their own histories, shared by their encounters with previous texts and genres' (1994, p.18). Consequently, like Bourdieu, these theorists acknowledge that the enactment of individual subjectivities through communication contexts (producer-text-audience interactions) is affiliated with life-world knowledge *outside of* the immediate experience of the textual engagement. As Woodward explains:

> Subjectivity involves the conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions which constitute our sense of who we are, and the feelings which are brought to different positions within culture. We experience subjectivity in a social context where language and culture give meaning to our experience of ourselves and where we adopt identity. (1997, p.39)

It is important to realize that the manifestation of an individual's social subjectivity (in Bourdieu's terms an individual's habitus) involves a dynamic and complex set of relationships that are not always easy to identify. 'Who one is is continually constructed, not a fixed place from which one interacts with the world' (Devereaux in Devereaux & Hillman 1995, p.68). On many levels, textual representations (in this case plays, films and intertexts featuring the city of Newcastle) as repositories of structured and structuring cultural languages, work *with* audience members to contextualize meanings. And as the previous discussion indicates, the ways that potential readers and viewers may respond to a text may differ. Their '[interpretive] action…is not a repetition of the already meaningful, but a creative response to continually unfolding contingency' (ibid). It must be acknowledged however, that their negotiating capacities are limited. 'Agency is not some natural or originary will; it takes shape as specific desires and intentions within a matrix of subjectivity' (Ortner 2005, p.34).

The network of subjectivities that Ortner refers to involve the concept of enaction, a term coined by Varela, Thompson and Rosch (1991) which presupposes that knowledge depends upon the experiences of a system with some capacities, and these capacities embed the system into specific contexts. Having considered some of the potential 'capacities' of readers and viewers of Newcastle texts, it is now pertinent to address some of the systemic properties of distinctive texts and consider how they may be

textually embedded by cultural producers because 'audience power is actualized only through the mediation of communications technologies' (Bratich 2005, p,46). Furthermore, plays, films and intertexts, as communication technologies, have embedded in them, skills, techniques and practices designed to produce 'a certain identity or a set of multiple, intersecting identities…The exchanges among the natural, the institutional and the discursive that we see in the process of embodiment occur across all social activities and operations' (Thwaites, Davis & Mules 2002, p. 143). Grossberg, Wartella and Whitney reiterate the importance of text style and connective strategies for mediation to occur when they state, 'the signifiers of the text, their organization by and into particular codes, the inter-textual relations of this text with other texts, and the questions and methods we bring to analysing the text, all limit or constrain our interpretations' (Grossberg et al. 1998, p.155). Two significant formal categories of distinction that impinge on textual construction and identification systems that need to be explored for this thesis, principally because of their constraining and enabling capacities, are genre and narrative.

'In its most general sense, genre is a textual form corresponding to a stereotypical social action, recognized and given a name by participants' (Miller cited in Myers 1998, p.222). Texts are grouped together according to similarities in their elements, structures and rules. 'Members of a genre have common characteristics of style and organisation and are found in similar cultural settings. By those common characteristics members of a genre can be recognised' (Kassabian 2002, p.138). Similarly, Kellner suggests that:

> A genre consists of a coded set of formulas and conventions which indicate a culturally accepted way of organizing material into distinct patterns. Once established, genres dictate the basic conditions of cultural production and reception. (cited in Berger 1992, p.44)

In a succinct manner, Berger states that genre is a 'kind', a 'type' or a 'class' of text (1992, pp.3-4). To avoid oversimplifying these categorical distinctions he adopts Aristotle's philosophical solution of *conceptualism* to explain how genre categories may be understood:

> Aristotle…suggested that every object in nature had two aspects – matter and form. Thus anything has both specificity, distinctiveness, individuality, concreteness on one hand and form, character, generality on the other. The first aspect, which we can *sense*, tells us that something exists, that it is; the second aspect, which we can *know*, tells us what something is. [original emphasis] (Berger 1992, p.5)

Schirato and Webb's appraisal of genre distinctions, particularly in relation to visual texts, corresponds with the philosophical position outlined above:

> Genres…like intertexts, do not provide us with special access to visual reality; rather, they are frames and references that we use to negotiate, edit, evaluate and in a sense read the visual as a series of texts. And the way in which socio-cultural fields and institutions categorise people, places, events and texts in terms of certain genres (often based on or associated with evaluative binaries such as normal/perverted, civilised/barbaric, good/evil, art/pornography) orients and disposes us to see and read the visual world in particular ways. (2004, p.33)

Altman offers a specific application of the notion of genre to film texts and his descriptions also correlate with Aristotle's position. He argues, 'genre, it would appear, is not your average descriptive term, but a complex concept with multiple meanings':

> Genre as *blueprint*, as a formula that precedes, programmes and patterns industry production; genre as *structure*, as the formal framework on which individual films are founded; genre as *label*, as the name of a category central to the decisions and communications of distributors and exhibitors; genre as *contract*, as the viewing position required by each genre film of its audience. [original emphasis] (2006, pp.150-151)

These genre theorists reinforce two important points. Firstly, institutionalized practices shape and sustain professional categories of distinction (for field appropriate reasons such as industry and censorship support) that influence the construction and codification of textual products. Secondly, viewer (and reader) potential to gauge and identify genre types requires decoding skills that have a bearing on the way that a text's dominant meanings may be conveyed and understood. This indicates that 'genres are historically specific, relatively stable types of discourse practice corresponding to different positions in social fields' (Hanks 2005, p.75). However, genre is but one category of mediated distinction used throughout the cultural production of representational textual material

to reinforce cultural attributes:

> Culture is not merely a common code or even a common catalogue of answers to recurring problems; it is a common set of previously assimilated master patterns from which, by an 'art of invention' similar to that involved in the writing of music, an infinite number of individual patterns directly applicable to specific situations are generated. (Bourdieu cited in Robbins 2000, p.13)

In keeping with Bourdieu's ideas about the generative, yet adaptive nature of 'cultural' characteristics, the range of 'Newcastle' texts and intertexts [j] chosen for this research do not collectively constitute a definitive genre *per se.* For example, the play *Aftershocks* was constructed as a 'verbatim theatre community' piece, and the film version as a 'docudrama'; the plays which informed the film *Blackrock,* and the film itself, have been variously described as 'realist', 'hard realism' and 'fictional' stories. Despite the disparate genre types however, narrative encodings embedded throughout the range of texts do tend to represent some common themes, patterned meanings and implied messages. In this regard, a *variety* of Newcastle texts that do *not* categorically 'sit' within a singularly recognizable generic framework, have the capacity to disparately develop prominent perceptions of the city. This concept parallels Fairclough's claim that 'in talking about discourse as different ways of representing, we are implying a degree of repetition, commonality in the sense that they are shared by groups of people [including producers and consumers], and stable over time' (2003, p.124).

Chamberlain and Thompson (1998) put forward the proposition that to get a grasp of the idea of genre it's necessary to look at narrative also, because genre and narrative are the cultural and imaginative constructions that shape perception and memory, recall and recount, which describe and interpret, argue and explain. 'Each narrative has two parts: a story (*histoire*) and a discourse (*discourse*). The story is the content, or chain of events. The story is the 'what' in a narrative, the discourse is the 'how'' [original emphasis] (Sarup 1996, p.17). In communication and cultural studies, narrative is studied

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[j] Additionally, the range of intertextual materials used for the cultural production analyses constitute print and radio reports; interviews; feature stories; play reviews; film reviews; academic critique & scholarship.

as a way in which culture structures and propagates knowledge (Mateas & Sengers 2003). 'No wonder, then, that the word *narrative* itself derives from the Sanskrit word *jn~a:na,* meaning "knowledge"' [original emphasis] (Herman 1999, p.3). Similarly, Anderson & Baym (2004) refer to narrative epistemology as a fundamental framework for understanding. Louwerse and Kuiken (2004) in their article '*The Effects of Personal Involvement in Narrative Discourse'* offer insight into micro-processes of communicative acts that assist individuals in being '*captured* by a literary text…*entranced* by a cinematic narrative…*moved* by a dramatic performance, and so on' [original emphasis] (p.169). Herman argues that narrative is simultaneously a cognitive style, a discourse genre, and a resource for writing. He recapitulates that stories are strategies that help humans make sense of their world, narratives not only have a logic but also are a logic in their own right, providing an irreplaceable resource for structuring and comprehending:

> Stories should be viewed not just as temporally structured communicative acts, but also as sets of verbal or visual cues anchored in mental models (Johnson-Laird 1983) having a particular spatial structure. More exactly, stories encode mental representations according to which the world being told about has a particular spatial structure. (Herman 1999, p.22)

Herman's understanding of narrative constructs as layered and layering, structured and structuring schemes of communication interchange have a multi-pronged bearing on this research. In terms of the *writing* of characters, actions, and dramatic events, they accommodate the understanding of a textually-bound story-world with its own set of encoded internal relationships, and this applies to the filmic appropriation of particular stories such as *Aftershocks* and *Blackrock* also. In terms of the socio-cultural *reception* of those 'stories' it allows for conceptualizations about those stories to generate meanings and perceptions beyond the world of the text, and this may apply in the first instance to cultural intermediaries involved in and/or responding to their production, and secondly, to general viewers and readers of the original texts, and/or those produced by the cultural intermediaries. Herman's concepts are derivative of Bourdieu's notion of habitus and its infiltration into the objective/subjective sense-making practices of discursive agents. At the production point of the process, effective interpretive consensus requires practical engagement with various narrative structures and

properties, as well as an understanding of socialized subjectivities. These acquisitions facilitate meaningful imaginative work by cultural producers acting as agents for the development in their work of the:

> Hermeneutic circle: the meaning of the parts depends on the meaning of the whole, but the meaning of the whole depends on the meaning of the parts. You have to try to read both levels simultaneously, if either is to be made transparently meaningful. It is one of the reasons stories can be so absorbing.
> (Taylor & Van Emery 2000, p.42)

Herman's, and Taylor and Van Emery's ideas about narrative acts and knowledge building *between* producers, texts, and audiences, touch on the skills, dispositions and preferences that formal industry practitioners, and, readers and viewers *enact* when they involve themselves in narrative discourses. 'Narration is communication rooted in time and space…it is embedded in the speaker's ongoing story that has a beginning, middle, and end, and it invites listeners to interpret its meanings and assess its values for their own lives' (Fisher 2000, p.297). A general understanding then of the significant contribution that narrative makes to writers, filmmakers, reviewers, reporters etc. participating in the '*field of large-scale cultural production'* [original emphasis] (Bourdieu 1993a, p.115) so that their work may yield engaged 'audience' reactions demonstrates that:

> Text not only is 'woven together' itself but also weaves us together. It is a fundamental means through which we create identification – what Burke sometimes calls "consubstantiation", whereby identification is achieved through a sharing of the "substance" (the terms, the meaning potentials) of text.
> (Stillar 1998, p.6)

Fairclough describes these processes of integrative communication exchange and subsequent information acquisition in terms of three types of meaning:

> Meanings which a text has as a part of the action in social events (actional). Meanings which appertain to the representation of the world in texts (representational). Meanings which appertain to the textual construction of people's identities (identificatory). (2003, p.225)

Identity is therefore important. In Chapters 6 and 8 the production contexts and activities surrounding the making of the plays and films chosen for this thesis are discussed. As per Fairclough's ideas, the social events which instigated their making, and the social events which their making has generated are included in the discussion. In 7 and 9 the likely meanings the 'storyworlds' potentially convey are described and analyzed, particularly in terms of how they may construct and circulate perceptions of Newcastle's identity. But it is in the immediately following chapter, that ideas about what a 'cultural identity' constitutes, how it may be communicated, and what role discourses of authenticity have to play in these processes of identity construction are canvassed.

Chapter 2 - Overview of Cultural Identity and Authenticity

'The representation of identity is an ongoing process, undertaken on many levels, in different practices and sites of experience.' (Sarup 1996, p.40)

This chapter focuses on the complex issue of identity construction. It introduces important questions about cultural authenticity and authenticity in representation. It considers the meaning of cultural identity in relation to the portrayal of local Newcastle people and places. Throughout this discussion the significance of an authentic cultural identity is highlighted as a key concern for understanding how Newcastle stories may be manufactured to evoke resonant responses. The bearing that Pierre Bourdieu's theory of habitus has on place classification and clarification is also investigated. Bourdieu's theory grounds much of the terrain where ideas about locations and identities evolve and are communicated. It is also a connective source between the constant interplay and dynamism of identity construction in discursively mediated community narratives, in the production of story-worlds, and in the subjective reactions of individual readers and viewers who participate and position-take in textual engagement. Sarup in *Identity, Culture and the Postmodern World* (1996), describes processes of identity construction:

> Identity, in my view, is a mediating concept between the external and the internal, the individual and society, theory and practice. Identity is a convenient 'tool' through which to try and understand many aspects - personal, philosophical, political - of our lives. (Sarup 1996, p.28)

This analysis will examine how contingent identity-making and place-related meanings develop when 'one's own particularity is subsumed into some larger collectivity...[which] entails the mobilization of the repertoire of communal symbols, sentiments and collective memories' (Featherstone 1995, p.110). In other words, to analyse how individuals may make assumptions about the image or identity of a particular place like Newcastle, it is important to consider their communication practices as social subjects, as well as their work as professional textual producers. With this in mind, understanding meanings connected to identity formation and hence place recognition through textual production and engagement, demands a discussion of

experiential perspective-building. In this regard, it may be understood that writers and filmmakers' subjectivities inform their abilities to construct story-worlds as representative of an 'objectified' Newcastle, which readers and viewers may be prompted to 'identify' and/or identify with. Some literary and film productions may evoke exceptionally strong subjective interpretations depending on the style, content, and narrative detail of the work, and these matters are discussed in the following chapter, *Sites for Sense-Making and Locating Meaning*, and in the forthcoming analyses of the actual plays and films.

While at times an individual may be more pre-disposed to respond to a particular subjective detail or circumstance represented in a Newcastle story (for example the occupation of a character or an aspect of their personal relationships set against a domestic or 'natural' backdrop), most often they are using the cultural capital they've acquired independently of the specific play or film, *together with* the text created for them, to sustain a sense of the people and the city. This concept allows for an assessment of Newcastle texts that evoke, and/or sometimes directly refer to spaces and areas in the city (for example the Newcastle Workers' Club; the steelworks; the harbour; beaches, public transport system) which is best understood by including personal humanity as integral to meaning-making practices and outcomes. Furthermore, as James, Hockey and Dawson suggest, 'closer attention needs to be paid to the conversation-making that lies at the communicative heart of representational practices' (1997, p.63). The conversation-making James et al. refer to encompasses the shared understandings and public knowledges instigated by cultural producers such as writers and filmmakers, who have acquired specialized communication practices, the products of which may have the potential to be recognised by readers and viewers. These authors' conceptions correlate with Dyer's typology of representation that 'insists that there is a real world, but that our perception of it is always mediated by…selection, emphasis and use of technical/aesthetic means to render that world to us…through the forms of representation available in the culture' (1985, p.44).

At a more implicit level, particularly in relation to the imagined reader and viewer positions textual producers may themselves also hold, the 'conversation-making'

concept James et al. propose may also refer to the 'interior' dialogue individuals engage in to make connections between a 'story' and what they *know*, what they think they *identify*, and hence what they *feel* at a very basic level. For even though people live their lives as social beings linked with public organisations and institutions, their private, personal experiences are just as important (if not more so) when it comes to 'authenticating' or interpretively validating a narrative representation of a place's cultural identity. Readers or viewers would be more inclined to believe what is represented to them if they are transported by a media product which reflects *them* in some way. Green, Brock and Kaufman explain this process in terms of experiential transformation arguing that 'transportation itself is a tripartite formulation (attention, imagery, feelings) of persuasive communication that entails constructs well known to communication theorists including absorption and identification' (2004, p.312). This does not mean that generally, readers and viewers have to 'see' themselves in print or on the screen in a literal sense [k]. It simply indicates that for a mediated construct of Newcastle to have sustainable meaning it needs to facilitate an experiential *and* referential communication system, for intended 'receivers' to participate in the recognition and construction of an identity. Green, Brock & Kaufman refer to this kind of interpretive activity as 'identity play' (2004, p.318) which may lead 'individuals to appreciate truths about themselves and their world, [because] transportation can bring about transformations that endure in some way once individuals return from the narrative world to their everyday reality' (ibid, pp.317-318).

Many times the valuable contribution that everyday circumstances make to identity - building is subsumed by more overt and extraordinary happenings - especially when the media are involved. Members of the general public often rely on images and information from the media which are heavily imbued with notions of identity. For example, the steady decline of Newcastle as an industrial and manufacturing base,

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[k] In the forthcoming discussions about the cultural production of *Aftershock*s and *Blackrock* the indirect representation of 'real' storytellers for the former text, and direct representation of acting 'extras' for the latter text is discussed. Yet, for the purposes of this chapter's analysis of interpretive engagement and 'identifiable' narrative schemas, a conception of viewers and readers as 'general' audience members remains.

(especially at the time the texts for this research were constructed) has been a recurring news item that has been associated with a 'loss' of identity for Newcastle people (as workers) and for the city's sense of socio-economic community focus, generally. As Homan suggests:

> Newcastle, situated on the New South Wales coast 150 kilometres north of Sydney, is a city that has always been troubled by its identity. Since its settlement as a port and series of coal mining towns in 1797, Newcastle residents have been preoccupied with its perception by outsiders in general, and by the neighbouring metropolis of Sydney in particular. This preoccupation has been shaped by gender, class and economics on both sides and has waxed and waned along with cycles in manufacturing boom and busts. (2005, p.21)

Even though the types of socio-structural collective constraints Homan mentions have been significant in the lives of many Novocastrians, there are others which have occurred simultaneously, and which have impacted in varying degrees on how Newcastle people may see themselves, as integral 'parts' of the overall place. Much community-building takes place on a personal level between families, friends and acquaintances, through routines and social performances that are not necessarily dictated by working conditions. Some of these communicative exchanges may include sporting activities, leisure pursuits and informal social networks. So, it's important to understand that the ways a predominant cultural identity may arise depends on the combination of pre-existing community histories and ideologies, *and*, experiential environments that often function at very 'ordinary' levels in a person's daily life. Bourdieu was interested in philosophical inquiry that demonstrated an appreciation of 'the social, the practical, the contextual, the historical…and the *ordinary*' [original emphasis] (Shusterman 1999, p.22). Bourdieu and others (Hall 1996; Hanks 2005; Sarup 1996) imply that an understanding of the construction of cultural identity requires the integration of socialized subjectivities on a collective and individual level. This is where the question of the fabrication and invention of a city's cultural identity comes into play. How can cultural producers attempt to develop authentic accounts of Newcastle in literature and film when:

> The representation of identity is an ongoing process, undertaken on many levels, in different practices and sites of experience. Identity is articulated in multiple modalities - the moment of experience, the mode of writing or representation (for example, in fiction or film) and the theoretical modality. ?
> (Sarup 1996, p.40) [author's insertion]

As Sarup alludes to, identity itself is not a fixed or static mechanism but can be understood as a conduit for communication about knowing and belonging that operates in a dynamic field of inter-relationships between material, symbolic and cultural environments. Woodward goes so far as to say that 'identity is a 'moment' in the circuit of culture' (1997, intro 1). How is it possible then to harness *identifiable* moments throughout the mediation of cultural products that have the capacity to constitute a distinctive and recognizable Newcastle message? Taylor, drawing on Bourdieu's ideas about 'embodied understanding' provides some insight as to how the question above may be addressed:

> Much of our understanding of self, society, and world is carried in practices which consist in dialogical action…this means that our identity is never defined simply in terms of our individual properties. It also places us in some social space. We define ourselves partly in terms of what we come to accept as our appropriate place within dialogical actions. (1993, pp.52-53)

So, as Taylor, and Sarup articulate, both the construction of 'identity' and perceptions of its representation, require value judgements to be made through expressive 'languages' (language in this instance refers to terminologies, discourses and texts) that have collective foundations. These value judgements apply to those persons in the formalized role of cultural producer, and to ordinary readers and viewers as producers of 'everyday' culture.

The previous discussion reveals that an examination of Newcastle's cultural identity as depicted in plays and films, as well as the intertexts related to them, is a complex task. It calls for a deconstruction of many *defining* strategies (such as repetition, recall and response) to establish, instigate and sustain connections between a range of communicative transactions. How then to capture a 'moment in the circuit of culture' when this field of recognition and reaction is so fluid? Geertz says 'the interpretive

study of culture represents an attempt to come to terms with the diversity of the ways human beings construct their lives in the act of living them' (1983, p.5). So, while textual *deconstruction* of various representations is pertinent to the purpose of this study, it must not be considered the primary motivation for understanding 'Newcastle' texts. Textual *analysis* on the other hand will show that the social codes for activating symbol systems, imagination, memory, and emotion - which all guide and drive cognition, need to be valued just as much as format, style and structure when it comes to creating, reading and watching Newcastle 'stories'. The latter provide substantial mechanisms for supporting recognition systems that may be deemed 'authentic', while the former indicate that for people and place representations to have resonant meaning, and therefore be potentially considered as 'authentic', relational and experiential perspectives between the text and readers/viewers needs to be developed. An example of a Newcastle story that encompasses the aforementioned concepts, particularly in relation to its textual accomplishment and production design is the play *Aftershocks*. In discussing its setting and staging, Makeham argues that:

> No need exists for elaborate 'atmospherics' or technical effects, since the felt authenticity of the piece is in no way dependent upon an illusionistic representation of the [Newcastle Workers] Club or the city. Indeed, a complex staging would very likely detract from the raw immediacy and authenticity of the material, which is compelling enough to stand on its own simply through storytelling.
> (1998, p.173)

In relation to the earlier point about the pivotal role that 'language' plays in identity formation, as Makeham's statement indicates, the language of *Aftershocks* in terms of its genre and performance style, and the 'word power' that is used to convey the narrative, perpetuates a notion of 'authentic' representation. The textual analysis of *Aftershock*s presented in Chapter 7 reveals that the 'discourses that are stylistically marked' in the production 'aim to transmit emotions…by eliciting and reviving singular, and therefore, socially marked, experience' (Bourdieu 1991, p.39).

Within constructed story-worlds each of the elements in the communicative exchange of symbolism, imagination, memory, emotion, and perception formation, also plays a

crucial part in disseminating *narrative criteria* about story-world characters, and their socio-cultural locations. In the context of this research these elements are examined in terms of how they've been incorporated by writers and filmmakers using professional contextual techniques to embed them in the texts. For example, in the analysis of the play and film *Aftershocks* many of the 'characters' speak of their place of work as a symbolic representation of their ties to friends, family and their local community while they recount and relay memorable traumas of the 1989 Newcastle earthquake. In *Blackrock*, the surfing sub-culture symbolizes (in material manifestations and relationships) the protagonists' personalities and 'worldviews' that impact heavily on the memories and emotional state of a central character, and propel the play/film's drama. These examples, which are fully explored in Chapters 7 and 9 demonstrate that the individual and collective dispositions of story-world characters may be represented in such a way as to reveal *their* habitus to readers and viewers, *while they tap into and inform* the habitus of 'audience' members (readers, theatre-goers, viewers). As Thwaites, Davis and Mules argue, 'what habitus inculcates as disposition is experienced as a *sense of place*, both one's own and others' [original emphasis] (2002, p.194). For the purposes of this research, it is argued that for people to take on board a predominant sense of Newcastle through plays and /or films featuring the city, their dispositional 'imaginings' of the feelings and recollections of story-world characters need to resonate with classificatory systems of socio-cultural distinctions which habitus offers.

If collective messages about a place and its inhabitants that contribute to a sense of identity are to operate successfully, associative ideas between social and symbolic markers that have the capacity to disrupt or construct identities need to be explored. This is where Carey's view of ritual communication (or as I prefer to call it - communication and community recognition) emerges as a key component of identity discourses. Carey uses terms such as 'sharing', 'participation', 'association', 'fellowship' and 'the possession of common faith' to define ritual types of communication which clearly implicate the relational aspects of social situations, storytelling scenes and sense-making scenarios (1989, pp.18-19). He discusses the embodiment of shared beliefs represented and projected in a range of material forms as diverse as architecture, stories, and speech, in terms of their capacity to bring together

what might otherwise be considered disparate community ideals (ibid.). Carey's ideas correlate with those of Raymond Williams who (like Bourdieu):

> Sought to circumvent what he saw as the false opposition between 'idealist' accounts of culture as consciousness and 'materialist' accounts of culture as the 'superstructural' effect of an economic base, by insisting that culture is itself both real and material. (Milner & Browitt 2002, p.36)

What is useful about Carey's and Williams' theories for the purposes of this research, is the idea that a distinctive community (or a perception of a 'collective') identity is not only clarified and realised through the shape (e.g. play script, screen play, film style) or context (eg. theatre production, cinema screening) it presents in, but in conjunction with pre-existing views on the part of the writers, filmmakers, readers and viewers about what it may mean to *belong* and/or to be *excluded*. These realisations lead to an interrogation of the notion of authenticity in terms of how the concept may be used by writers and filmmakers to assist readers and viewers in the act of experiencing a place, in guiding them to attach an identity *to it*, and in aiding them to extract one *from it*.

> The quest for authenticity is a peculiar longing, at once modern and antimodern. It is oriented toward the recovery of an essence whose loss has been realized only through modernity, and whose recovery is feasible only through methods and sentiments created in modernity...The search for authenticity is fundamentally an emotional and moral quest. But this experiential dimension does not provide lasting satisfaction, and authenticity needs to be augmented with pragmatic and evaluative dimensions. (Bendix 1997, pp.6-7)

Bendix's description emphasizes the point that any discussion of the notion of authenticity needs to be contextualized. This means that the reasons for wanting to analyse whether something may be considered authentic (or inauthentic) need to be clear at the outset. Also, the conditions in which an appropriation of authenticity is applied are subject to a range of communicative discourses operating in the same environments as the concept of authenticity. MacNeil and Mak support this position when they argue that 'authenticity is best understood as a social construction that has been put into place to achieve a particular aim' (2007, p.26). In *Sincerity and Authenticity* (1972) Trilling explains that:

> Nowadays our sense of what authenticity means involves a degree of rough concreteness or of extremity…authenticity is implicitly a polemical concept, fulfilling its nature by dealing aggressively with received and habitual opinion, aesthetic opinion in the first instance, social and political opinion in the next. (p.94)

As Trilling suggests, throughout an examination of the notion of authenticity there is a constant play of forces at work involving value judgements and categories of distinction based on previous experiences, to challenge and/or establish the idea. Like the concept of habitus, the forces that help to introduce and sustain a notion of authenticity, rely on knowledge of prior actions and events in relation to contemporary conditions for a semblance of validity to be naturalized. Therefore any attempt at defining authenticity should be concerned with the fluid and dynamic nature of the term according to *who* may be using and applying it, in *what contexts* the concept may be applied, and for *what* purposes. For as MacNeil and Mak reiterate:

> Authenticity itself is a creature of circumstance. What it means to be authentic continues to change, and the parameters and content of authenticity are always under negotiation. Authenticity provides a semblance of stability and a mode by which each disciplinary area can function. (2007, p.44)

Accordingly, Bendix's, Trilling's, and MacNeil and Mak's appraisals of the frameworks in which a determining aspect of authenticity may be *understood*, stress that the discursive fields in which the idea of authenticity is *applied* need to be closely scrutinized before generalisations about its meaning may be expressed. In direct relation to the field of communication studies, Craig offers an insightful proposition that exemplifies the points these theorists make. In discussing the general theorization of 'communication' from a phenomenological standpoint 'as dialogue or experience of others' Craig explains the limitations involved in considering 'direct, unmediated contact with others' as *the defining category* of authentic communication [original emphasis] (Craig in Craig & Muller 2007, p.79). For, if interpersonal exchanges were the *only* barometer for a notion of authenticity to prevail, what might this mean for recognizably constructed mediations designed to evoke '*true, consistent, sincere*, or *real* as opposed to *imitative, artifactual, contrived,* or *phony*' stories in textual form? [original emphasis] (*Oxford English Dictionary* 1989, pp.205-211)

Given these accounts of some of the derivatives and definitions of the concept of authenticity, I choose to offer one of my own and in doing so, explain *why* understandings about what may be *communicated* as 'true', 'accurate', '*believable* or *credible* to the contemporary general observer' (ibid) are relevant to this research into the construction of a city's identity through cultural production. The literature, plays, and films on which the analysis is based, are examples of what Bendix calls 'commodified cultural authenticities' (1997, p.6). That is to say, as mediated products they have the capacity to reinforce and rekindle certain ideas about what a Newcastle story would be likely to include within the bounds of its structural make-up. For example, how have the stereotypical port and coal industries, beaches, working-class ideologies and egalitarian ethos been codified by writers and filmmakers alike, to convey city discourses ? The fact that this particular research subjects the meanings attributed to Newcastle's 'cultural identity' as communicated through literature, plays and films to academic scrutiny of an interdisciplinary nature, also aligns with Bendix's theory of 'commodified cultural authenticities'. According to her discussion, a cross-disciplinary study of what may constitute perceptions of cultural identity and community through representations, reappropriates traditional views of authenticity that position the notion within one school of thought (such as anthropology). Peterson also considers the concept as an *application* in a vast range of fields:

> Authenticity in a living art form can have a number of meanings…in popular culture, where experts and authorities do not control the particulars of the word's meaning, the definition centers on being *believable* relative to a more or less explicit model, and at the same time being *original*, that is not being an imitation of the model. Thus what is taken to be authentic does not remain static but is continually renewed over the years. The changing meaning of authenticity is not random, but is renegotiated in a continual political struggle in which the goal of each contending interest is to naturalize a particular construction of authenticity. [original emphasis] (1997, p.220)

These types of inquiry indicate the adaptable character of the notion of authenticity as an interpretive discourse that operates within 'fluid' conditions and according to power relationships. For example, Peterson argues that 'one of the most effective ways to assert authenticity is to claim that an action, object, or person is "natural" and 'without "artifice"' (1997, p.211). Distinct evidence of Peterson's suggestion has been revealed throughout the research for this thesis, particularly in relation to the play and film versions of *Aftershocks*. For example, theatre critic Fiona Scott-Norman stated, 'in the

main it is enthralling, authentic and, in the second act particularly, very moving…it builds up a vivid picture…and through its lack of artifice reveals much of the Australian spirit, sense of humour and identity' (1995, p.79). In speaking about local input into the film production producer Julia Overton proclaimed, 'this is the story of the people of Newcastle, and the involvement all the way through of local people…has been very important in ensuring authenticity' (cited in Joyce 1998a, p.16).

With these communicative 'labelling' strategies in mind, it is appropriate to re-appropriate traditional meanings of the expression 'authenticity, 'the Greek ancestry of the word 'authentic'. *Authenteo*: to have full power over; [original emphasis] (Trilling 1972, p.131) and to substitute (for the purposes of this research) 'powerful place' or more specifically, 'cogent Newcastle' as part of the discursive family when applying the concept. For example, in the cultural production and textual analyses sections of this thesis pertaining to *Aftershocks,* the natural spoken and visual languages used in the play and film constructions have been largely endorsed as contributing powerfully to the portrayal of Newcastle and its people. And, in the cultural production and textual analyses sections of this thesis pertaining to *Blackrock,* the natural spoken and visual languages used in the play and film constructions also feature strongly in value judgements made about the 'powerful' portrayal of Newcastle and its people. These examinations highlight the important point that, in keeping with extra-textual content including ways of talking about the city and its representation, impressions of *narrative* 'authenticity' are also subject to manipulation, negotiation and contextualization. Bendix discusses this issue in relation to authorship and poses the question that if declaring something as an authentic piece of work de-legitimizes the role of the author (playwright, filmmakers) and elevates the material text (play, film), then what might this say about the emotional and moral base on which traditional views of authenticity have been founded? (1997, p.7) Rather than discounting the original writers/filmmakers as relatively inconsequential and reductive 'parts' of the textual production process and focusing solely on textual features to determine perceptions of 'authenticity', this research *includes* some analysis of 'authorship' as a contributing factor in the 'powerful' ways that Newcastle's cultural identity may be communicated.

Where traditional constructions of 'authentic' place identity may have been more directly connected with the 'physicality' of human and landscape interactions,

contemporary socio-cultural conditions now rely excessively on symbolic representations to convey place meanings. So the question of a tangibly evocative authentic Newcastle identity based on the cultural production and mediation of corporeal experiences arises. Do writers and filmmakers have to *physically* know a place to gain a sense of its 'authentic' identity, or, is it possible to acquire a perceptive depth simply by *experiencing* representations of it that successfully integrate the 'cultural materialism' Raymond Williams speaks of ? (cited in Milner & Browitt 2002, p.36) [12]. Denzin, citing Thi Minh Ha Trinh's views on film production recapitulates these constructivist themes:

> There is no real – reality is something already classified by men, a ready-made code (Trinh, 1991, p.136). This code allows writers and filmmakers to produce texts that look real because they conform to the rules concerning what the real looks like. Under this regime, authenticity becomes a textual accomplishment, and factual truth becomes the "dominant criterion for evaluation…[and] the more the representation leans on verisimilitude, the more it is subject to normative verification" (Trinh, 1991, p.76). (Denzin 1997, p.74)

One answer to these communicative complexities is that 'realist', emotive *narrative* experiences embedded by textual producers with the potential to be reactivated by readers and viewers, foreground many 'authentic' perceptions of particular places and people 'in' them. 'The ease with which individuals relate to story characters may be a natural extension of individuals' needs to understand real others in their social world' (Green, Brock & Kaufman 2004, p.316). Part of the need to understand story characters in terms of a level of 'realism' involves dispositional evaluations about their behaviours because 'actions that do not resonate with one's true self, no matter how skilfully they are performed, will undermine one's well-being and erode one's interpersonal relationships over time' (Kernis & Goldman 2005, p.31). Instances in the plays and films chosen for this research where specific protagonists behave in a manner that displays their positive attributes and/or negative dimensions effect dramatic change, and potentially affect audience reactions to them. It can be argued then that the constant interplay between narrative characters within story-worlds that may facilitate *experiential* engagement rather than purely *referential* responses, is likely to

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[12] These matters are given close attention in the following chapter – *Sites for Sense-Making and Locating Meaning*. Additionally, the impact that direct knowledge of Newcastle may have had on the cultural production practices of the writers and filmmakers of *Aftershocks* and *Blackrock* is explored in the forthcoming analyses.

authenticate believable situations, instead of simply replicating representations. Bendix refers to this aspect of authenticity as the:

> Quality of experience: the chills running down one's spine during musical performance, for instance, moments that may stir one to tears, laughter, elation - which on reflection crystallize into categories and in the process lose the immediacy that characterizes authenticity. (1997, p.14)

This position runs parallel with the view expressed earlier that identity might be better understood as a 'moment in the circuit of culture'. It's important to note that relatively 'ordinary' emotive responses to textual content that constitute such a large part of authentication processes, are not always of a culturally uncontaminated or positive nature. Bendix argues that 'the twentieth century…[came] to endorse the raw and ugly as a truer version of authenticity than the simple and pure' (ibid, p.18). This concept is dealt with further on in the thesis using the circumstances surrounding the cultural production of the films *Blackrock (*1997) and *Aftershocks* (1998) as well as their narrative schemas to reiterate the idea. 'Such narrative worlds may allow us to explore our boundaries of tolerance of unpleasant emotions, such as fear, sadness, and rage, by affording the vicarious experience of such feelings' (Green, Brock & Kaufman 2004, p.315). Whether ideological perspectives are generated by positive or negative narrative themes that establish a 'type' of authenticity is incidental. What matters here is that the processes through which the concept of authenticity may be articulated and the discourses in which it is applied require systems of shared understanding to be entered into. When these socio-cultural exchanges occur, the transcendence from the experience of the individual (because of textualized expressive culture) to a rhetoric of legitimate, collectivized community beliefs is made possible (Bendix 1997, p.20). This declaration opens up ways of talking about what may constitute a notion of authenticity through collectivized communication practices.

Stokes suggests that 'we should see 'authenticity', as a discursive trope of great persuasive power' (1994, p.7).

> A trope substitutes a figurative function for a 'literal' function on the grounds of apparent resemblance...a deepening of the meaning of a word by means of 'embellishment' 'mellows' its character. (Kersenboom 1995, p.20)

Consequently, the use of authenticity as a focal point, a trope for determining what may constitute resonant 'Newcastle' meanings and messages, is subject to a holistic observation of the context in which it is applied. Crang describes tropes as 'the ways of telling a story, through a particular format, a scenario or relationship of characters so that the pattern is repeated in different concrete situations with different contents' (1998, p.62). So the question of authentic textual representations or 'cogent Newcastle' narratives in this respect, is reliant on a variety of ideological exchanges with similar motifs operating within a range of communication frameworks, In this regard, de Certeau's discussion of semantic tropisms and their capacity to 'close the gap' between ethnological fragments of society by means of connecting particular circumstances to universal discourses (de Certeau 1984, p.7) is useful. Yet how do these concerns with similarity and difference, and regularity and familiarity relate specifically to identity construction? Sarup argues that:

> Men and women are not born with an identity. We have to identify to get one. Identity presupposes identification...It is by means of a series of identifications that identity is constituted...Of course, several different identifications can exist side by side, and a subject's identifications viewed as a whole are in no way a coherent relational system. (1996, p.30)

It's apparent then that for writers and filmmakers to be able to construct and maintain some semblance of identity (this includes for themselves in a professional capacity; and, for their characters in a narrational capacity) requires a setting of binding structures to mark out cultural territory, for, as Sarup explains:

> Identity is a construction, a consequence of a process of interaction between people, institutions and practices and ...because the range of human behaviour is so wide, groups maintain boundaries to limit the type of behaviour within a defined cultural territory. Boundaries are an important point of reference for those participating in any system. Boundaries may refer to, or consist of, geographical areas, political or religious viewpoints, occupational categories, or linguistic and cultural traditions. (ibid, p.11)

These limiting or classification schemas that are pertinent to the identifiable aspects of Newcastle's construction, *and* the constructive nature of its peoples' identities are best understood in relation to Pierre Bourdieu's theory of habitus:

> *Habitus* refers to the everyday, the situations, actions, procedures, demands, practices which go along with a certain kind of life, and the ways in which an individual is positioned within the social world (gender, class, race, etc.) The habitus in which you go about your daily affairs means that you acquire a certain set of dispositions. You tend to do some things rather than others - and, what's more, to do these things in certain ways rather than others. [original emphasis] (Thwaites, Davis & Mules 1994, p.187)

The key aspect of this theory, which is discussed more fully in Chapter 4, is that habitus is not consciously mastered, but built up from experience. It represents past practice in humans so it unconsciously guides future practice. It is a link between past and future which is unconsciously transmitted and it bridges subjectivism and objectivism. Also, habitus explains familiarity - not exclusively in the sense of primary, subjective experience, but it shows how actions and perceptions may be unintentionally impressed in individual bodies and the social body, in ways that create consistency, but not sameness, in life (Bourdieu 1990a, p.13). Subsequently, in conjunction with Kernis and Goldman's deconstruction of authenticity as involving '*awareness, unbiased processing, behaviours*, and *relational orientation*[s]' [original emphasis] (2005, p.32), Bourdieu's ideas about systems of socialized subjectivity reveal how past experience and exposure to practices of exclusion shapes relational and classifiable distinctions. These distinctions become naturalised within particular social frames and representations of them so that when constructing a text, writers and filmmakers act as 'social agents' by using a 'system of acquired dispositions functioning on the practical level as categories of perception and assessment' (Bourdieu 1990a, p.13). Additionally, through their engagement with a text, readers, theatre-goers, and viewers, share an affinity with some characters and their 'place' in the world, more so than others using the '*generative capacities* of dispositions…his or her capacity for invention and improvisation' [original emphasis] (ibid). These interpretive potentialities have been introduced in the preceding discussion and are considered at length in the forthcoming analyses.

Habitus underscores a great deal of communication about the city of Newcastle and its people because it enables cultural producers such as writers and filmmakers, to particularize narrative detail for universalized meanings to be understood, and, it accommodates their generalization of story themes for particular localised events and issues to be conveyed. For example, *Aftershocks* deals with highly personalized

accounts of the traumas of natural catastrophe, described by film director Geoff Burton as an 'everyman' story (cited in *Illawarra Mercury* 27 November 1998, p.3), while *Blackrock's* production has been treated as a forum to explore issues of Australian teenage masculinity (Butterss 1998; Elfick 1997) drawing on familial and subcultural relationships to represent individual and socialized 'identities'. In discussing some of the features of 'identity' classifications Sarup offers the following which reinforces the role that Bourdieu's theory of habitus plays in identity construction:

> Identity is, in some ways, an effect of socializing institutions - mother, father, the family, schooling, the factory/office, friends, media - but, at the same time, we can choose to stress some elements in certain circumstances and historical conditions. All identities whether based on class, ethnicity, religion or nation, [community] are social constructions. (1996, p.48)

While recognizing that identities are developed through a combination of familial experiences, demographic concerns, socialising institutions and ideological apparatuses, Sarup also proposes that certain socio-cultural conditions dictate *which* identifiable distinctiveness may be enacted by an individual (ibid.). His views on the discursive construction of identity align with Bourdieu's central thesis, covered extensively in Chapter 4, that:

> The habitus entertains with the social world which has produced it a real ontological complicity, the source of cognition without consciousness, intentionality without intention, and a practical mastery of the world's regularities which allows one to anticipate the future without even needing to posit it as such. (Bourdieu 1990a, p.11-12)

Identity then may be understood as a result of cultural acts of classification that materialize because of dispositional practices and performances. These personal, naturalized activities that are shaped by social arrangements and public judgements, also eventuate from a specific timeframe or historical position. Hall conceptualizes this conduct in connection with the construction of a cultural identity and says that while identity does have a past which is part of an 'imagined community', that past undergoes constant transformation, as it is reconstructed at the same time as it is being defined:

> We cannot speak for very long, without any exactness, about 'one experience, one identity', without acknowledging its other side – the ruptures and discontinuities which constitute, precisely the uniqueness. Cultural identity, in this second sense,

> is a matter of 'becoming' as well as of 'being'. It belongs to the future as much as to the past…identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past. (cited in Rutherford 1990, p.225)

Hall's position stresses the flexible features of humanistic identity construction, and acknowledges that a notion of an authentic community identity is not a fixed entity, but is reconstituted in response to generative circumstances and categorizations. Lee considers these cultural adaptations in terms of 'place specificity' and argues that:

> Places, (towns, cities, regions, nations) have cultural characters which transcend and exist relatively autonomously, although by no means independently, of their current populations and of the consequences of the social processes which may be taking place upon their terrain at a given historical juncture. The culture of a location…is the cumulative product of the collective and sedimented history of that location, and like any history cannot be readily or easily dissolved but manifests a certain durability, marking its presence onto the contemporary social and physical landscape of the location in question. (1997, pp.126-127)

Therefore, in terms of classifying the location of Newcastle and categorizing or 'naming' its cultural identity (for to name something gives it meaning) is to *reify* an experiential city as an objectified place. Reification is 'a situation in which social relations seem to be beyond human control because they acquire a fixed and immutable quality, almost as if they were features of the natural, rather than social world' (Abercrombie, Hill & Turner 1994, p.353). Just as habitus is not consciously mastered but built up from experience so that it becomes second nature, so too does authentic place identification come about through reification. It has been established thus far that an authentic understanding of Newcastle's cultural identity is not pre-determined, nor fixed, but relative to observations and positions of construction. Yet, the same level of 'flexibility' may not be implied when it comes to many of the communication processes activated throughout Newcastle's 'image' confirmation and perception formation (for cultural producers *and* readers and viewers). 'Identity can be understood as a relationship to signs and images which are recognizable by others, according to the degree of permanence that such readability presupposes' (Floch 2000, p.5). One of the mediating structures which helps to naturalize and stabilize messages about Newcastle's identity is the field of representation.

> Representations make the city available for analysis and replay...In everyday life, we fashion and receive countless representations. Of course we all realize that a totally accurate representation - a perfect copy - is impossible...Representations are linked to normative notions of what are appropriate social reactions…[and] tend to follow the formula of telling us 'what is really happening'.
> (Shields 1996, p.228)

Shields demonstrates in these assertions a reliance on representation in communication generally and in ascertaining a recognizably authentic city identity specifically. Wallman takes a similar position suggesting that 'two essential features of representations are key. One is that they simplify the reality they represent; the other is that any meaning imputed to them will be socially constructed' (1997, p.244). Setting aside the most obvious forms of representation (plays, films and intertexts) chosen for this research for the moment, it is apparent and relevant that city representation as a cultural practice needs to be considered. In support of this concept, Thomas in '*Screen cities – not all bad?'* (2003) cites Elizabeth Grosz' definition of the city as consisting of many representational opportunities which offer:

> A complex and interactive network which links together, often in an unintegrated and de facto way, a number of disparate social activities, processes, and relations, with a number of imaginary and real, projected or actual architectural, geographic, civic, and public relations. The city brings together economic and informational flows, power networks, forms of displacement, management and political organization, interpersonal, familial, and extra-familial relations, and an aesthetic/economic organization of space and place to create a semipermanent but ever-changing built environment or milieu. (2003, p.402)

The recognition of Newcastle as a place with a distinctive set of images is best understood by exploring how a range of social identities in various representational forms are interconnected and associated with the city and its people through cultural productions. This discussion has indicated that it's not simply the *types* of representations that contribute to constructions of Newcastle's identity, but also the *systems* of representations that produce messages about Newcastle people and Newcastle's community. And while *types* of representations do include and involve *systems* of representations, the thesis analysis highlights the range of disparate *systems* of representation which create and communicate perceptions of Newcastle and consequently, the cultural identity of the city. James, Hockey and Dawson discuss representation in terms of interpretation, communication, visualisation, translation and

advocacy and in doing so accentuate the *human* element of representation (1997, p. 2) which is what this research does also. In a largely indirect way, James et al. incorporate Bourdieu's habitus into these discursive activities to reveal the connections between practices, knowledge acquisition, social, cultural and material worlds. How may it be possible to interpret, communicate, visualise, translate and advocate Newcastle's cultural identity without having a specific or actual prior socio-cultural, or material representation to relate it to? The essential theme of this rhetorical question is to highlight that as pre-conditioned field agents with inclinations open to them, what cultural producers *and* audience members usually do - is draw on a *combination* of representative textual experiences to make sense of the text/context they present, or are presented with. Literary, theatrical and film forms give them a structural base to work with, but they are only part of the communicative equation.

> The literary meaning of the experience of place and the literary experience of that meaning of place are both part of an active process of cultural creation and destruction. They do not start or stop with an author. They do not reside in the text. They are not contained in the production and distribution of the work. They do not begin or end with the pattern and nature of the readership. They are a function of all these things and more. They are all moments in a cumulatively historical spiral of signification [13]. (Thrift 1981, p.12)

The signification that Thrift mentions is about contextual meaning-construction and habitus' feature of pre-disposition is central to these communicative exchanges. The structure of the available information, the environment or field it is presented in and the discursive histories which accompany it, all have the power to influence *personal* dispositions and hence production work and textual output. For example, an interviewee for the *Aftershocks* play project described the following processes that allowed for generative representations of this Newcastle story to be created:

> There was a Newcastle production first which was our production, a Workers Cultural Action Committee production staged at the Hunter Valley Theatre Company in 1991- Suzie Porter was in that one, it was all local people. Then the 'dream director' from Belvoir Street, Neil Armfield came up to Newcastle. Neil came up to see it [the play] and really liked it and he eventually purchased it for

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[13] Each of the texts chosen for analysis in Chapters 7 and 9 have undergone numerous 'reproductions' in multiple fields, for example as theatrical performances, as study texts, in various media environments, which all have the propensity to convey meanings attributable to Newcastle's cultural identity according to the 'spiral of signification' Thrift refers to.

> Belvoir Street Theatre Company. Then after that there was the Melbourne Theatre Company production. Then the artistic director of Newcastle High did it last year with students who graduated - it was their project.
> (WCAC Arts Administrator 1999, pers. comm., 29 October)

Thrift's statement and the interviewee's account of its themes *in practice,* reveal that an 'authenticated' cultural identity may be constructed and reinforced out of *both* material and symbolic resources which themselves have been previously represented in some acknowledgeable socialized structure. Furthermore, their comments suggest that for value judgements to be made about the representation of the city many *acts of identification* (some of which have been mentioned earlier and others which are covered extensively in the analyses) need to be called upon, with triggers placed in the text to allow them to develop. One of the most important triggers that functions on personal and professional levels to assist the communication of Newcastle's identity is narrative. The discussion in Chapter 1 argues that narrative provides a framework for bringing together some of the random (yet relatable) contingencies that habitus permits and constitutes a system of culturally identifiable codifications. Lodge argues that narrative 'is one of the fundamental sense-making operations of the mind, and would appear to be both peculiar to and universal throughout humanity' (cited in Danesi 1999, p.114). Connecting 'life-stories' with identity formation and subsequent place perception through representation simply revisits this author's claims that producer-text-audience relationships need to be made 'habitable' for a notion of authentic cultural identity to prevail. When cultural producers instigate these possibilities, readers and viewers are presented with textualized opportunities to share and participate in collective understandings of Newcastle and its people. How these orientations may be manifested in terms of 'situated' meanings and embedded messages are discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter 3 – Sites for Sense-Making and Locating Meaning

'Perception does not give me truth like geometry but presences.'
(Merleau-Ponty 1964, p.14)

The preceding chapters explained the complexities of communication events, and introduced ideas about identity construction through socio-cultural frameworks. This chapter concentrates on discovering 'sites' for multi-layered meaning to occur, so that a deep appreciation of the cultural geography of Newcastle through textual production *and* textual engagement is made possible. In Chapter 4 - *Habitus – Producing Culture Through Practice,* Bourdieu's theory of habitus, its component parts, and *places* for its manifestation and appropriation are discussed at length. Leach asserts that 'habitus is…a dynamic field of behaviour, of position-taking where individuals inherit the parameters of a given situation, and modify them into a new situation' (2002, p.282). An integral feature of habitus as practically enacted situated *experience*, is its ability to influence and draw from 'social structures, individual action and cultural practice' (Milner 2004, p.106). One of the theory's main strengths is its capacity to encompass relationships *between* fields, agents & ideologies (or places, people, and perceptions). Because it is premised on 'social positions and position-taking, with both a geographical or physical connotation and a social connotation' (Reed-Danahay 2005, p.134) habitus' presence in 'natural' and constructed environments is key to the analyses which take place in this thesis. As Kearnes advocates:

> For a representation 'to matter' it must be mimetically linked with an external materiality – the real world'…'To matter' is therefore also 'to do matter', to produce certain forms of physicality deemed discursively significant.
> (2003, p.139)

In the section entitled *Communication, Discourse & Interpretive Dispositions* ideas about socio-cognitive engagements with text types to instigate and retain meanings in common were introduced. Together with issues about identity construction and 'authentic' representations presented in the section *An Overview of Cultural Identity & Authenticity*, it has been intimated thus far that particular discursive frameworks shape prevalent ideologies about Newcastle's identity. These frameworks develop from inter-relationships with strong sociological underpinnings and these concepts receive fuller

treatment in the following chapter. For now, it's important to focus on the discursive relationships *between* writers, filmmakers, cultural intermediaries [14], *and,* viewers and readers of Newcastle narratives as present in a number of different manifestations. The following discussion will reveal how they (meaning both the people and the relationships) are embedded in multiple circumstances and grounded in various representations. One of these representations is the play and film *Aftershocks*, based on the 1989 Newcastle earthquake:

> Despite the manifestly physical – the geological – character of its crisis, the city here is understood in its most important aspects to be a socio-political structure constituted of people in the community. Notions of Newcastle as a physical location are thus subordinated to notions of the city as a discursive construction, a set of sites brought into being and textualised by a community of voices speaking collaboratively. (Makeham 1998, p.169)

The discursive relationships involved in 'textualising' the city's identity include formalized industry practices (be they scriptwriting; screenwriting; film direction; media reporting etc.) as well as reader and viewer *engagement*. It is argued that the production work *and* consumption work involved in Newcastle story-making locates and subsequently structures, meanings derived from situated practices that constitute 'socialized' spaces. Furthermore, these spaces are conducive to phenomenological knowledge-building because:

> In Husserlian phenomenology, when we interact with the world, we establish intentional structures with it – and the world might include material objects, other people or ideas. Our relations with and interpretations of these are determined by two forms of consciousness: *noematic* and *noetic*. The *noema* is every thing that one knows about an object of thought; the *noetic* represents individual moments of perception. [original emphasis] (Grenfell 2004, p.26)

It's important to realize that the communication exchanges occurring at particular social sites constitute what Bourdieu refers to as '*lieu*…the point in physical space where an agent or thing is situated, 'takes place', exists; that is to say, either as a localization, or,

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[14] 'The term 'cultural intermediaries' was introduced by Pierre Bourdieu in his book *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (1984) and was associated with his comments on the 'new petite bourgeoisie', a new faction of middle-class workers… It refers to those workers engaged in 'occupations involving presentation and representation . . . providing symbolic goods and services' (Negus 2002, pp.502-502).

from a relational viewpoint, as a position' [original emphasis] (1999, p.123). So in this regard, socialized spaces which for the purposes of this research include: *work* places (such as planning meetings, performance workshops, location shooting and film screenings); *actual* places (such as beach and harbour locations, archival film footage of earthquake-damaged Newcastle buildings); *contrived* places (such as domestic, schoolyard, and police station settings) and *constructed* places (such as mediated intertexts) necessarily include activities relative to hierarchies of distinction which have influenced decision-making processes connected to actual film production and consumption. From a more abstract point of view, socialized spaces would also include cognitive mappings of textual information on the part of readers and viewers so that relative mediated content may be understood as materially conditioned, narratively succinct, and culturally specific – especially in terms of Newcastle's city identity.

De Certeau suggests 'a place (*lieu)* is the order (of whatever kind) in accord with which elements are distributed in relationships of coexistence' [original emphasis] (1984, p.117). De Certeau's concept of place understanding requires connections between physical coherence, familiarised structures and interactive exchange to be recognized. Therefore, within the context of this research, according to his definition, site-specific examples of 'relationships of coexistence' would include the intangible (yet tenable) perceptions of Newcastle communicated through specific texts. 'Communication is invisible and, as such, is not a means but a possible outcome of the embodied experience of discourse' (Catt 2006 online). As highlighted by Catt and reiterated in Cameron's discussion of place effects expressed through literature and the arts, 'a sense of place, like a performance, is a meta-experience…for a sense of place to emerge from a set of experiences, there needs to be a complex interplay of feeling and understanding which is then communicated' (n.d. online) As discussed earlier in this literature review and in close detail later, Bourdieu's habitus is imbued in social spaces and provides a constructivist platform for a 'sense of one's place' and a 'sense of the other's place' (1990a, p.131) to be implicated in the production and reception of Newcastle texts.

It's apparent that these socialized spaces are varied and the activities which go on there imbue them with contextually specific identifiers and understandings - pertinent to peoples' interactions in relationship to them, and the reasons for their coming together in the first place. For example, for those employed in a formal capacity, literary and

film production 'places' might include scriptwriter, director, producer, crew, and actor recruitments; audition processes; writers' studios and editing suites; scripting workshops for peer review and rehearsal opportunities; performance and screening spaces; liaison for financial backing/funding support; location 'scouting' for visually appropriate geographical environments, to name but a few. Complementary 'places' for socialized spaces linked with the production of Newcastle narratives, and hence the development of its ongoing identity construction, would include producers' incremental evaluations of their work in progress, and other participants' reactions to the literature and films. Additionally, the viewing environments, for example (initially) ordinary homes for the television docudrama *Aftershocks*, or, more public community forums such as schools and mainstream cinema for *Blackrock,* constitute distinct socialized spaces with their own sets of patterned and predetermined relationships [15]. Lanigan argues that 'television creates a form of embodiment that is the essence of capacity symbolized…captured in the cultural theatre of memory. The World is spatially located and enframed in the TV set in front of which we sit and watch and listen' (cited in Gaines 2001, p.118). Similarly, Crang contends that 'TV functions as a 'gathering place'. It does so at least on two levels: first, in the local communities of viewers and, second, creating communities of viewers who may not directly know each other' (1998, p.96). With a specific emphasis on cinema Shiel explains that:

> Cinema is a peculiarly spatial form of culture…because…cinema operates and is best understood in terms of the organization of space: both *space in films* – the space of the shot; the space of the narrative setting; the geographical relationship of various settings in sequence in a film; the mapping of a lived environment on film; and films *in space* – the shaping of lived urban spaces by cinema as a cultural practice; the spatial organization of its industry at the levels of production, distribution, and exhibition; the role of cinema in globalization. [original emphasis] (2001, p.5)

For the purposes of this research Shiel's ideas about *films in space* are imperative as they implicate some of the primary functions of the fields in which both *Aftershocks* and *Blackrock* developed. In the cultural production analyses to come, film industry networks and controls that have influenced budgets, timelines, censorship and

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[15] The analytical chapters discuss the original viewing 'places' for *Aftershocks* and *Blackrock* and also indicate that since both films have been readily available in VHS and/or DVD Format for a number of years, apart from 'domestic' viewing opportunities, they continue to be used predominantly within pedagogic frameworks as study resources.

competition matters that affected the films' contents and their positionings as products are discussed. Also, as the previous two chapters indicate, Shiel's ideas about *space in films* are the predominant means by which the films are deconstructed and their contribution to the construction of Newcastle's cultural identity is explored. Like Shiel, Tinkcom and Villarejo also propose that discursive activities revolving around cinematic productions necessarily incorporate a wealth of communicative opportunities, further textual production, and resulting 'spaces' for film-related content to proliferate:

> To gather a fuller understanding of how cinema's meanings are forged in our daily lives, we need to discover how cinema is made, beyond the massive reportage of fan magazines and entertainment guides, whose usual fare relies almost entirely upon the form of star biography and directorial intent as guideposts for claiming to know about cinema. These forms of star journalism—what goes under the more usual name of "gossip"—themselves cannot be disregarded or scorned simply because they might seem to represent what the corporate cinema wishes its recipients to think about films, but they also need to be framed in a larger scope of the matrix of social relations needed to make movies, a matrix that the industry would be at pains to reproduce in its self-generated reportage. (2003, pp.301-302)

The preceding statement is entirely relevant to the 'extra' texts that have been, and continue to be produced, as a result of (in this specific case) *Aftershocks'* and *Blackrock's* film productions, and these issues are discussed further on in the thesis. For an understanding of one of the generative intertexts that evolved simultaneously with the actual making of *Aftershocks*, film producer Julia Overton (in conversation with the author) offered the following information:

> There's an interview, a guy called…at Fox Entertainment. They came out to the set and did a whole lot of interviews. And then they did an interview with Tina Bursill, Suzie Porter, Jeremy Simms [actors], Paul Brown [scriptwriter], with me, and with Geoff Burton [director]. And then we got put to air on this show that he runs, *Disaster Films in America and Australia*, and it was us and the *Titanic*! (laughs) [author's insertions] (1999 J Overton pers. comm., 9 November)

Overton's comments, and Shiel's, Tinkcom's and Villarejo's propositions, offer various interpretative schemas for understanding 'cinema' discourses and help to explain that 'film is a form of text where social life is produced and reproduced…and is a genuine semiotic system, a communication medium where meaning is created and displayed in a certain way' (Durmaz 1999, p.104).

Intertexts such as producer/director/scriptwriter/actor interviews; published reviews, feature stories and newspaper reports; cultural and academic critiques, and promotional materials, are also objects of socialized spaces which contribute to constructions and representations of Newcastle's cultural identity - whether individuals have actually seen the original *Aftershocks* or *Blackrock* films (and/or plays), or not. As Peterson explains, 'recognition of intertextuality by some audiences does not imply recognition by all, nor does it imply that all audiences will make the same intertextual references' (2005, p.130). The notion of polysemic interpretations has been referred to earlier to explain that textual messages are subject to 'the identity and perspective of an individual in the audience [who] will affect the final interpretation of the meaning' (Gaines 2006, p.177) [16]. The production of intertexts related to *Aftershocks* and *Blackrock* forms a large part of the analyses presented further on in the thesis and demonstrates that these 'mediascapes' (ibid) or sites of media production, expose the 'media [as] complex spaces insofar as images and stories in a newspaper, TV show or film are already mediated by the producers and production processes before they reach an audience' (ibid). A specific example of extra-textual production that emerged in this case from a redeveloped theatre script process and mainstage production, can be seen in the following excerpt from Squires' 1995 *Sydney Morning Herald* newspaper article:

> When *Blackrock* was [sic] *Property Of The Clan* it walked among the young people it represented and divided them. An early reading in the Stockton loungeroom of one of the families that had assisted in research was a "potent night", according to Brian Joyce. Couples who arrived for performances holding hands were separate bodies by halfway through. (1995, p.8A)

This particular example of *associative* textual material is especially significant. The rhetorical language used to communicate an initial localized domestic context for the textual effects of the original play *A Property of the Clan* (1994) to develop, does *itself* rely on metaphors and descriptions of place-based physical and psychological responses. In this respect Squires' article uses aspects of 'embedded social geography' (Moss & Dyck 2003, p.60) and understandings of 'social topography' (Grenfell 2004,

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[16] The idea that a singular, fixed and cause-effect interpretation of textual material is problematic was addressed in the section *Communication, Discourse & Interpretive Dispositions*. Additionally, the limited potential that readers and viewers have to make meanings independent of a text's schemas was also clarified.

p.98) expressed through the discursive framework of a metropolitan newspaper report, to convey a micro-narrative of some of the complexities involved in the production of the play *A Property of the Clan,* which was later redeveloped as *Blackrock* (1996). This small example of but one 'metatextual discourse' (Peterson 2005, p.133) provides evidence for understanding text-audience linkages that may be made possible through the wide-ranging cultural production of a diversity of 'Newcastle' stories. Herman argues in his discussion of spatial cognition and narrative language that:

> Stories encode mental representations according to which the world being told about has a particular spatial structure…[they] can also be thought of as spatializing storyworlds into evolving configurations of agents, objects, and places. Recent work in narrative theory incorporating discourse-analytic and cognitive-scientific ideas confirms that grasping the when, what, who, and where of events being recounted is a matter of actively building and updating mental representations of storyworlds. (1999, p.2)

Herman's explanation of the 'spatiality' of narrative objects and strong perceptions associated with encoded structures *within* them, allows for a personalized entry into the 'intertextual performance: the reproduction of media texts in social discourse' (Peterson 2005, p.133) surrounding *Aftershocks* and *Blackrock.* Everyday readers and viewers and media production specialists may encounter newly generated 'transtextualities' (Genette cited in Peterson 2005, p.133) for example film reviews, academic criticism, screening publicity and marketing content, in spatially indirect and 'partial' ways. They may not have deliberately chosen to seek this information out, yet because 'media, like all social processes, are inherently stretched out in space in particular ways and not others' (Couldry & McCarthy 2004, p.4) the likelihood of 'metaphorai' [17] (Schirato & Webb 2004, p.82) connected to the specific film texts being *imposed* on them through ordinary, everyday circumstances is quite high. These experiential opportunities reveal that the contexts of intertextual exchange may be systematically embedded (for example as a television news report) [18] and subjectively encountered (for example as a radio

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[17] Schirato and Webb explain that because visual texts 'rarely provide a clear narrative' that they have the potential to 'work as a 'metaphorai' – providing vehicles that enable viewers to 'go somewhere else', or to craft a story' (2004, p.82). In terms of specific filmic experiences *and* intertexual relevancies, their concept would apply to interpretive engagements and sense-making practices.

[18] News reports of internationally renowned actor Heath Ledger's death early in 2008 referred to his film performances and mentioned that *Blackrock* (1997) was his feature film debut.

performance) [19]. Either way, the 'places' for disparate intertexts to inform multi-positioned *individuals* of Newcastle themes embodied in discursive fields featuring information about the films *Aftershocks* and *Blackrock,* are many, wide-ranging, and influential.

Having established that textual production processes, representative environments, and mediated spaces contribute in many ways to place-based knowledges and identifications, it's now pertinent to turn to some of the more intricate means of textual engagement that contribute to perceptions of Newcastle's identity on a more intimate scale. Green, Brock and Kaufman suggest:

> The presence of rich detail [in narrative] leads to greater transportation and enjoyment, perhaps because details allow individuals to form more vivid mental images, or perhaps because these details allow individuals to feel that they are closer to or more knowledgeable about the story characters. (2004, p.320)

According to Green et al. effective narrative detail which means that 'audiences do not have to struggle with comprehending the strategies of storytelling before they engage with the characters and content' (Message 2003, p.90) affords the reader or viewer a familiar place from which to interact with a text. With specific reference to the films used for this research project, some of the 'rich detail' that has been used to evoke strong audience connections includes the working-class demographics of central characters in *Aftershocks* and the youth surfing subculture in *Blackrock.* These are but two small examples where film actors as *social actors* embody a discourse's 'commonsense ways of knowing, valuing, and doing' (Duncan & Duncan 2004, p.38) that are easily recognizable categories of distinction for film directors to guide performance objectives, and for viewers to identify and connect with. Furthermore, the physicality of character performances interacting with others, therefore *enacted* in the films chosen for this research, provide evidence to support Richards' premise that:

> Performance practice is not only mediated by the body, it is transacted and its codes transmitted through body-to-body co-presence. It employs a variety of communicative channels, including, crucially, the extra-linguistic…Performance

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[19] *Blackrock* was performed on ABC Radio National Program *Radio Flix* on 7th July 2003. The story was re-conceived for radio by playwright and screenwriter Nick Enright, working from aspects of both the stage text and the screenplay.

> is situated, located, and corporeal. (2004, p.54)

Although Richards' focus here is on 'theatrical performance practice' (2004, p.53) her ideas about actors performing communicative acts that take in and expose bonds between physical *and* thinking selves, provide strong argument that 'neither disembodied minds nor mindless bodies can appear in stories' (Crites 1997, p.45). What this means for film viewers and for the cultural producers who construct story characters, is that for a characterisation to resonate, the *performance* aspect must be implicit. Bodily dispositions play a large part in shaping protagonists' 'naturalised' behaviours. Consequently, lifestyle distinctions become evident through the 'physical capital' adopted by screen performers to portray their roles with some degree of authenticity. 'Body hexis is a political mythology realized, embodied, turned into a permanent disposition, a durable manner of standing, speaking and thereby of f*eeling* and *thinking* [original emphasis] (Bourdieu cited in Reed-Danahay 2005, p. 99).

Wainwright & Turner, drawing on Bourdieu's notion of *hexis* or embodied habitus, explain 'body techniques' as:

> Ways of walking or blowing one's nose, ways of eating or talking…[reveal] the most fundamental principles of construction and evaluation of the social world…social classes become inscribed on and in…bodies…-via body shape, gait, posture, speech and so on. (2003, p.5)

Bodily signals enacted in film performances represent a form of 'transactionalism, an approach within cognitive psychology [which] recognizes the link between physical environment and social systems by placing humans as an integral part of the environment, rather than an object in it' (Kennedy & Lukinbeal 1997, pp.35-36). Within the films selected for this research, natural links between both the geographical and cultural landscapes represented and the characters who inhabit them are effectively conveyed. These communicative connections incorporate many facets of Bourdieu's habitus in substantial ways.

Bourdieu argues that 'signs of habitus are found in articles that people surround themselves with, such as houses, furniture and paintings as well as in practices such as the consumption of food, entertainment and sports' (cited in Vilhjálmsdóttir &

Arnkelsson 2003, p.140). He further contends that:

> Taste, the propensity and capacity to appropriate (materially or symbolically) a given class of classified, classifying objects or practices, is the generative formula of lifestyle, a unitary set of distinctive preferences which express the same expressive intention in the specific logic of each of the symbolic sub-spaces, furniture, clothing, language or body hexis. (Bourdieu 1984, p.173)

Similarly to Bourdieu, Dant in *Material Culture: Values, Activities, Lifestyles* (1999) attempts to challenge traditional sociological distinctions that problematise the definitions of, and relationships between, that which is considered objective 'material' and/or subjective 'culture' He suggests, 'material culture ties us to others in our society providing a means of sharing values, activities and styles of life in a more concrete and enduring way than language use or direct interaction' (1999, p.2). While Bourdieu was mostly concerned with material culture as a means and representation of social distinction that empowered some and disaffected others, Dant proposes that material culture should be explored as an enabling system, not purely as a mechanism for defining difference. His aim is:

> …to shift thinking in the cultural and social sciences about the nature of material things from treating them as 'products', 'commodities' or 'technology' to thinking about them as allies, artefacts and meaningful objects that make up a substantial part of the context of our social lives. (1999, p.14)

In the films chosen for this research, the material accoutrements (such as clothes and hairstyles; vehicles and other transport mechanisms; alcohol and food consumption; homes and living spaces; workplaces and recreational activities) that have been attached to specific characters provide *textural evidence* of their individual personhood and their sub-cultural community relationships. Subsequently, through the film medium visual cues relating to personage enable the characters' 'identities [to be] defined by shared perspectives and…value judgments about the correct interpretation of objects or events that have no meaning in and of themselves' (Gaines 2006, p.178). Some particular examples of character traits which permeate in objectified forms throughout *Aftershocks* and/or *Blackrock* include: beer glasses and bottles; barbeque and bonfire food items; cigarettes and drug paraphernalia; cars; surfboards, tattoos and youth fashion.

In his discussion of body schema and pragmatism Shilling (2004) mentions Bourdieu's ideas about the social shaping of embodiment. He stresses the importance of considering individual and 'raw', physical mediating experiences, to also account for sociological distinctions and contextual awareness. 'Situated action occurs in material contexts and our sensory dealings with the physical environment are important to our self-awareness as embodied actor' (Shilling 2004, p.480). Shilling's ideas have to do with the biological body, socio-cultural contexts and mediation systems, so their use for an intense level of thinking about place-based interactions 'delivered' in Newcastle films for viewer consideration are invaluable. Dovey (citing Merleau-Ponty) suggests:

> …the lived experience of the body-in-space is the primary relation from which all conceptions of space are constructed...Our understandings of space emerge from action, indeed space is to be defined as 'a certain possession of the world by my body, a certain gearing of my body to the world' (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p.250). (1999, p.39)

Like Shilling, Bourdieu, and de Certeau, Dovey (deferring to Merleau-Ponty) defines space in phenomenological terms to reinforce the assumption that the 'truth' of a location is not able to be *known* until it has been used and inhabited. His particular interest is in the manifestation and appropriation of power relations through built forms (architecture). Despite his architecturally-based analysis, Dovey's approach favours an interdisciplinary inquiry as to how s*paces* may be invested with meaning so that they evolve into *places*. 'Places are the warehouses of memory, always haunted with a myriad of possibilities for meaning and behaviour' (Dovey 1999, p.47). As outlined extensively throughout this literature review and especially in this chapter, interpretive engagement with a multitude of *mediated* spaces (of *either* tangibl*e* or intangible forms) offers up 'places' for meaning to be negotiated. These negotiations are fashioned through immediate life experiences, and arbitrated through representational forms. Consequently, the place *experiences* instigated through the textual productions of *Aftershocks* and *Blackrock* (be they as diverse and individuated as film watching; review reading; 'memory provoking' by possibly *relating* to the surf culture in *Blackrock*; or 'sensory perceiving' by empathizing with the physical and psychological traumas of earthquake survivors in *Aftershocks)* reveal that:

> Representations produce meanings through which we can make sense of our experience and of who we are...representation as a cultural process establishes

> individual and collective identities... the production of meaning and the identities positioned within and by representational systems are closely interconnected. (Woodward 1997, pp.13-14)

So what might these phenomenological concerns with 'corporeal experience', interpretive 'immediacy' and communicative 'familiarity' (Hanks 2005, p.69) mean for the embodiment and enactment of Newcastle's cultural geography at a collective level?

> Cultural geography focuses on the way in which space, place, and landscape shape culture at the same time that culture shapes space, place, and landscape…cultural geography demarcates two important and interrelated parts. *Culture* is the ongoing process of producing a shared set of meanings, while *geography* is the dynamic setting within which groups operate to shape those meanings and in the process form an identity and act. Geography in this definition can be as small as the micro space of the body and as large as the macro space of the globe. [original emphasis] (Knox & Marston, 1998, p.191)

Importantly, Knox and Marston's humanistic understanding of the study of cultural geography highlights *both* landscapes and 'manscapes' (Berleant n.d., p.21) as inclusive entities when it comes to recognizing, identifying, and attaching meaning to certain 'locations'. This contention is also evident in Meinig's conception of what constitutes an understanding of a 'landscape' when he defines it as not being specifically limited to 'nature, scenery, environment, place, region, area or geography' (cited in Tyas 1995, p.15), and argues that landscape is 'composed…of what lies before our eyes [and] what lies within our heads' (Meinig 1979, p.34). Like Meinig's, Knox and Marston's position has been criticized by some theorists who argue they have 'limited utility because individual attitudes and views do not necessarily add up to the views held by a group or society' (Knox & Marston 1998, p. 236). The negative attention given to the limited capacities of individuals to sustain shared meanings about particular places is accurate to a point. However, in keeping with the corresponding themes of socialized subjectivity put forward by Bourdieu and others throughout this chapter, the potential for individual cognitions and interpretive practices to reveal collective knowledges about a localised environment, its people and its image is strong. In particular, the films chosen for this research potentially 'describe the nexus of personal and collective experiences of social, built and natural environments [and] tease out the constituent processes of individual and collective identities' (Moss & Dyck 2003, pp.59-60).

Like Knox and Marston, Anderson, Domosh, Pile and Thrift also envision the field of cultural geographical studies as an active and spirited domain of enquiry. They go a step further than the aforementioned theorists (with the exception of Bourdieu) to introduce aspects of power relations inherent in an understanding of cultural geography as 'a living tradition of disagreements, passions, commitments and enthusiasms' (2003, p.2). Their rationale includes a stipulation that consensus about place meanings (specifically geographical sites) is necessarily tied to contentious issues about 'the distribution of things…and…ways of life…' (ibid). Anderson et al.'s grounds for defining spaces, places and locations, essentially include ideas about regional capital accumulation and resource allocation. In the context of this research, their emphasis on natural resources, a localized economy, and power relationships involved in shaping the cultural geography of a particular place, are entirely commensurate with a discussion of the history of Newcastle's identity construction.

As flagged earlier in this literature review the purpose of this research is not to extrapolate a singular socio-economic perception of the city of Newcastle through textual production. It does not seek an objective 'truth' about utilitarian use of a predominant city identity. Instead, this research explains how personal and autonomous exchanges with textual material promulgate a community of impressions relative to perception formation. It posits that collective identification processes are shaped and reinforced through the presence of both naturally occurring environments, and the complex codings of cultural landscapes used by cultural producers. 'The cultural landscape is fashioned from a natural landscape by a cultural group. Culture is the agent, the natural area is the medium, the cultural landscape is the result' (Knox & Marston 1998, p.193). Accordingly, the analysis of 'cultural landscapes' represented in the films *Aftershocks* and *Blackrock* feature explanations of relationships *between* bounded sites of interactivity requiring cognitive assessments; assessments generated and bounded by the protagonists and their cultural producers' habitus. These matters are addressed in the following chapter.

Chapter 4 – Habitus – Producing Culture Through Practice

'Bourdieu is enormously good to think with. He raises tricky questions and helps to provide some of the means by which they may be answered.'
(Jenkins 2002, p.11)

The importance of Pierre Bourdieu's theory of habitus as the key theoretical foundation for this research was initiated in the Methodology chapter and referred to in Chapters 1, 2 and 3. Many discussions, applications and explications of Bourdieu's concept of habitus have been sought to offer a comprehensive summary of the theory and its strengths, weaknesses and relevance for this study. In this chapter the tools the theory proposes for understanding more about socio-cultural relationships are explored and explained. Their use substantiates the notion that habitus is a pivotal idea for investigating the conception, construction, and communication of stories relating to Newcastle. As Bourdieu asserts:

> …social science, in constructing the social world, takes note of the fact that agents are, in their ordinary practice, the subjects of acts of construction of the social world…it aims, among other things, to describe the social genesis of the principles of construction and seeks the basis of these principles in the social world. (1984, p.467)

As art forms, films and literature with Newcastle connections involve cultural and sociological distinctions that the texts contain, constrain and maintain. The material texts express, limit and reinforce socio-cultural meanings and relationships. The stories they communicate are about people and places so they simultaneously project strong ideas about the appropriateness of human behaviour in certain situations. The ways that writers and producers arbitrate perceptions of appropriateness and add to dispositional knowledge is partly through the construction of characters' relationships with people and places. These arbitrations include expectations concerning the value and consequences of individual and collective actions.

> Bourdieu's relational concepts…are ways of talking about a relational world. It is a vision of society as one of continuous creation or production. Only the concept of *habitus* prevents total contingency. There is a constant tension between the urge to create and the urge to conserve, between the tendency of the *habitus* to deploy objectivated cultural capital creatively or to be constrained and

> conditioned by the legacy of institutionalised cultural capital.
> (Robbins 2000, p.40)

Experiencing Newcastle stories adds to the reservoir of knowledge that textual audiences and other more formalized cultural producers accumulate about the community of Newcastle. Therefore, validating the city references and relational ideas perceived to be existent in the texts, becomes possible through experiential knowledge and practice recognition. Hence, over time an amount of cultural and symbolic capital about the city may be acquired, related and referred to. These reproductive processes and the terms given to them, namely the acquisition of cultural and symbolic capital, are integral to understanding habitus. Together with the concept of field, they generate opportunities for meaning-construction and knowledge-building to occur. In this respect, habitus and its constituents are instrumental in communicating relational dynamics about the *making* of Newcastle stories, and, about the *potential interpretations* of those stories. A general and brief overview of the etymology of *habitus* in historical terms, and its theoretical application and appropriation by Bourdieu, helps to further explain its appeal as the theoretical foundation for this thesis.

> The Latin*, habitus*, means condition (of the body); character, quality: style of dress, attire, disposition, state of feeling; habit. The ancient Greeks used the term habitus to refer to permanent dispositions and their mediating effects on behavior and persona. [original emphasis] (Scahill 1993 online)

> Deriving from philosophy – being used by, among others, Hegel and Husserl – habitus in its original Latin meaning, refers to the habitual or typical state or condition of the body. The notion came to prominence and found its widest currency, however, within twentieth-century social theory…Rooted in early socialization, according to Elias, the embodied disciplines of thoughtless habit create the everyday possibility of ordered, complex, and intense social life. (Jenkins 2005, p.352)

> Elias frequently used the term *habitus*, which in the 1970s and early 1980s was quite unfamiliar in English and was therefore generally translated by such expressions as "personality make-up". [original emphasis] (Sterne 2003, p.377)

These early meanings of habitus tend to indicate a fairly static approach to understanding how to recognize learning processes which may impact on individuals' activities and perceptions. 'Like Bourdieu, both Elias and Mauss used habitus as a way

of discussing embodied subjectivity, 'practical knowledge' as Bourdieu calls it' (ibid, p.370).

> I wanted to insist on the *generative capacities* of dispositions, it being understood that these are acquired, socially constituted dispositions…I wanted to emphasize that this 'creative', active, inventive capacity was not that of a transcendental subject in the idealist tradition, but that of an acting agent. [original emphasis] (Bourdieu 1990a, p.13)

Rather than describing the habitus purely as a *consequence* of personal history that predisposes behaviour and choice-making, Bourdieu chose to explain it as an *active construction* of personal history which encompasses contemporary socio-cultural contexts. In this case habitus is:

> A term used by Pierre Bourdieu to mean the unifying principle which generates the tastes, dispositions, preferences, body-language, prejudices, etc., characteristic of a given class or class fraction, across all the different fields of practice – art appreciation, making conversation, life-style, eating, etc. It is the acquisition of a class habitus which gains an individual recognition as a member of a given class, and determines their likely place and trajectory in social hierarchies. (*Encyclopedia of Marxism*, n.d. online)

In this respect habitus is a fluid concept which shapes and is shaped by, the contexts it occurs in. As Fiske suggests:

> The concept "habitus" contains the meanings of habitat, habitant, the processes of habitation and habit, particularly habits of thought. A habitat is a social environment in which we live: it is a product of both its position in the social space and of practices of the social beings who inhabit it. The social space is, for Bourdieu, a multidimensional map of the social order in which the main axes are economic capital, cultural capital, education, class, and historical trajectories; in it, the material, the symbolic, and the historical are not separate categories but interactive lines of force whose operations structure the macro-social order, the practices of those who inhabit different positions and moments of it, and their cultural tastes, ways of thinking, of "dispositions." The habitus, then, is at one and the same time, a position in the social and a historical trajectory through it; it is the practice of hiring within that position and trajectory, and the social identity, the habits of thoughts, tastes and dispositions that are formed in and by those practices. The position in social space, the practices and the identities are not separate categories in a hierarchical or deterministic relation to each other, but mutually inform each other. (cited in Trier 2002, p.242)

Fiske's discussion of habitus, its manifestations and appropriations, highlights the active and reactive nature of the theory as well as its limiting capacities. Importantly, he points out that recognizing habitus within cultural contexts requires *capturing* the interconnectedness of what may otherwise be considered disparate aspects of social life. Bourdieu's idea that habitus is durable yet transposable thus becomes important. As Scahill asserts, 'the social world [is not] experienced on a common sense level as totally structured, imposing on the perceived subject inescapable perceptions, outlooks, opinions, and rules of conduct' (1993 online). Bourdieu's appropriation of habitus recognizes that individuals gauge particular social situations in ways that are familiar and structured without underlying determinism taking precedence over these activities. However, 'the world does not appear as pure chaos capable of being constructed in any old way, according to individual prerogative and whim' (ibid). Rather, habitus has a practical function allowing 'agents to some extent *fall into* the practice that is theirs rather than freely choosing it or being impelled into it by mechanical constraints' [original emphasis] (Bourdieu 1990a, p.90). It's apparent then that habitus is a complex theory integrating what have been thought to be otherwise oppositional theoretical proposals. For this reason the theory *itself* has been met with wide-ranging disapproval (particularly from those ensconced in one of the oppositional views) as well as acceptance.

Bourdieu argued that 'of all the oppositions that artificially divide social science, the most fundamental, and the most ruinous, is the one that is set up between subjectivism and objectivism' (1990b, p.25). His central philosophical quest was an attempt to resolve this dichotomy. '[Bourdieu's life work] may be seen as a probing reflection on one of the oldest problems in the Western intellectual tradition, namely, the relationship between the individual and society' (Swartz 1997, p.96). Bourdieu argued that 'all of my thinking started from this point: how can behaviour be regulated without being the product of obedience to rules?' (cited in Swartz 1997, p.95). Bourdieu's sociological inquiry correlates significantly with that of Anthony Giddens who developed the theory of structuration:

> Structuration involves the *duality of structure*, which relates to the *fundamentally recursive character of social life, and expresses the mutual dependence of structure and agency.* By the duality of structure I mean that the structural properties of social systems are both the medium and the outcome of the practices

> that constitute those systems…structure is both enabling and constraining…every process of action is a production of something new, a fresh act; but at the same time, all action exists in continuity with the past, which supplies the means of its initiation. [original emphasis] (Giddens 2002, pp.238-239)

Like Giddens who argued for an understanding of the *'continuous flow of conduct'* [original emphasis] (Calhoun, Gerteis, Moody, Pfaff & Virk 2002, p.233):

> Bourdieu sought to develop a concept of agent free from the voluntarism and idealism of subjectivist accounts and a concept of social space free from the deterministic and mechanistic causality inherent in many objectivist approaches (Johnson 1993, p.4).

> Bourdieu, reading across both approaches simultaneously, insists that practice is always informed by a sense of agency (the ability to understand and control our own actions), but that the possibilities of agency must be understood in terms of cultural trajectories, literacies and dispositions. (Schirato & Yell 1996, p.148)

With these ideas in mind it's pertinent to discuss some of the responses to the key features of Bourdieu's theory and interrogate them. It should be noted, however, that a deconstructionist approach to the elements that support habitus as a unifying stratagem might seem problematic. But un-packing the theory's tools is imperative to understanding the entire theoretical process.

> Bourdieu despised the false oppositions used to categorize theoretical projects and perspectives. He built on Lévi-Straussian structuralism but sought a way to reach beyond structuralism's static character and more generally beyond the dualisms of structure and action, objective and subjective, social physics and social semiology. (Calhoun 2004 online)

An issue which emerges as a continuing theme in most critiques (and other literature) pertaining to Bourdieu's theory is the following proposition: habitus does not simply operate as a result of dichotomies in either structural or behavioural terms - although polar or binary distinctions do have an impact on its process. Bourdieu 'positions himself against both structuralist approaches that fall into a mechanical determinism, and subjectivist approaches that presuppose a calculating actor, as in rational action theory' (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992 p.129). As Watkins argues:

> Bourdieu's intention in devising the habitus is to counter both the subjectivist and objectivist tendencies within social and cultural theory, dissolving the binarism that permeates both sociological and philosophical inquiry. (2005, p.550)

And this dissolution of binarism is why certain theorists and other social commentators have had difficulties in accepting Bourdieu's ideas (Gartman 1991; Giroux 1982; Margolis 1999; Nash 2003; Vladiv-Glover & Frederic 2004; Watkins 2005).

Much of the disapproval of Bourdieu's habitus is directed at his integration of 'objective structures and subjective constructions,…located beyond the usual alternatives of objectivism and subjectivism, of structuralism and constructivism, and even of materialism and idealism' (Calhoun et al. 2002, p.275). Bourdieu's 'constructivist structuralism' (Fowler 1997, p.6; Sterne 2003, p.376) or 'structuralist constructivism' (Ernste, Pignone & Winkels 2006, p.2) clearly does not fit neatly into one category of social thought and action and not another. According to Nash the idea of habitus as a potentially pre-disposing yet not necessarily conscious and/or *causal* system of thought and action is problematic: 'any sociological theory that attempts to explain reproduction, rather than transformation, will tend to privilege structure over agency, and the force of collective habit over the energy of the individual will' (2003, pp.47–48). Unlike Bourdieu, Nash tends to view habitus more as a systematic process of socialization which creates sustainable relationships at the expense of (rather than *in conjunction with*) subjective contributions. Furthermore, habitus' dialogic properties have been criticised for allowing it a self-affirming, internally referential and 'safe' position in sociological terms. For instance, Margolis suggests that Bourdieu's account of a 'logic of practice' seems to rely itself on notions of binarism that Bourdieu proposes to challenge (1999, p.5). The logic of practice explains activity as something neither 'wholly unconscious nor simply the result of rational calculation [it] is akin to the individual's sense of play…[and] requires permanent invention on the part of the player to adapt to infinitely variable situations' (Wolfreys 2000 online). Margolis suggests that more work needs to go into explaining Bourdieu's 'logic of practice' as a feature of cognitive processes (and hence communication systems) rather than using the 'logic of practice' as a descriptive term, labelling and limiting behaviour. He argues that a more 'logical account' of what he calls 'the microprocesses of cognition in the world of practice', two of which he sees as 'referential and predicative competence' (1999, p.5), need to be teased out to show how habitus is built and applied. This point is taken up by Watkins in her application of Bourdieu's theory to learning environments and the formation of a scholarly habitus when she states: 'If the dispositions within the habitus

merely replicate given social structures, the concept is merely a cog in the process of social reproduction, and Bourdieu's sociology is overwhelmingly structuralist in orientation' (2005, p.551).

These criticisms of Bourdieu's constructivist-structuralist position in explaining autonomous action *within* systematic frameworks, focus on negative perceptions that within society, a lack of interventionist opportunities for individuals arise. In other words, critics consider that social action (including individual choice-making and behaviour) is necessarily dictated by objective social structures that leave little or no room for intervention or alteration, let alone possibilities for subjective 'invention'.

> [Bourdieu] felt he had been misunderstood (by what he called "fast readings" of his work) to imply that resistance was impossible and that social life is determined by the structures of domination; at the same time, he felt misunderstood by those, alternatively, who thought his work implied a theory of rational action, to which he was adamantly opposed. (Reed-Danahay 2005, p.17)

Margolis, Nash, Watkins and others, call for a deeper analysis of Bourdieu's proposition that social subjects contribute to dynamic socio-cultural environments at the same time as they are constrained by them, to grasp habitus' theoretical worth. 'It is an open system of dispositions that is constantly subjected to experiences, and therefore constantly affected by them in a way that either reinforces or modifies its structures' (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, p.133). They suggest that the key to validating habitus' reciprocal functions as a 'structured and structuring' (Calhoun 2004 online) blend of social arrangements, is situated in its specific application to communication and learning contexts. Consequently, employing habitus as the key theoretical foundation for research into the production and interpretation of Newcastle's cultural narratives, illuminates the bearing the theoretical framework has on shaping story structures, the agency involved in their construction, and the communication processes influencing their interpretations.

Much criticism of Bourdieu's works arises from attempts to either consider them as a collective body of work or conversely as instances of unrelated revelation 'apprehended in 'bits and pieces'' (Bourdieu & Wacquant cited in Beasley-Murray 2000 online). The issue of homogenizing or tailoring Bourdieu's ideas to suit individual research purposes

which contravene theoretical integrity, is taken up in *Bourdieu and Culture* (2000):

> Consumers of his works have found grounds for criticising them either because they have synchronised them or because they have atomised them. Scrutiny of the secondary literature certainly confirms that many critics have responded to single texts in isolation or have thematically aggregated several texts without reference to the sequence of their production. (Robbins 2000, p.121)

Bourdieu argues these critics are misguided in that they critique his works outside the context of their production; they do so without an understanding of the conditions that allowed his ideas to flourish. He explained that:

> Some of my readers "synchronize" in a way, different moments of my work. They thus uncover apparent contradictions that would vanish if they replaced each of the theses or hypotheses in question back in the movement, or even better, in the progress of my work. (Bourdieu 1993b, p.264)

He further contends that in analysing his works many critics disregard the contextual environment they themselves are operating in 'their disciplinary "tunnel vision"' (Van den Berg 1995, p.275). So at the same time as they are assuming an objective approach and disparaging of Bourdieu's 'pseudo' objectivity, they are belying their own subjective interests and goals, a practice which is apparent in the following:

> American cultural and literary theorists often deeply distort his theory by linking it with the French postmodernism of Baudrillard, Lyotard, and Derrida, and then deploying it as one more trendy French philosophical flavour of the month with which to perform exercises of transgressive textual interpretation. (Shusterman 1999, p.10)

Crossley in *The Social Body: Habit, Identity and Desire* (2000), teases out the complexities of these interpretations and suitably clarifies Bourdieu's position:

> If Bourdieu explains the subjective structures which generate objective structures in terms of prior objective structures, it is only in so far as he equally accepts that those prior objective structures are themselves generated by subjective structures and so on. (p.112)

With Bourdieu sitting inside an old and well-established tradition of empirical sociology critical efforts to dismiss the philosophical dimensions of his many

traditionally scientific research methods also centre on notions of his supposed non-reflexive intent. Habitus has been criticized as being a 'conceptual straightjacket that provides no room for modification or escape' (Giroux 1982, p.7). But those who think along these lines misunderstand Bourdieu's ideas. They consider his focus on pre-dispositional activity as something that is mostly enacted in tightly structured circumstances, offering small opportunities for change or difference. Consequently, their understanding of habitus is that it functions more as a predetermined system of acting in the social world, than an open system of potential subject positions *available* for identification and occupation, which is what Bourdieu proposed. 'While critics are correct to say that Bourdieu remains objectivistic, objectivism is not necessarily deterministic-reductionist' (Lau 2004, p.370).

Occasionally Bourdieu's interdisciplinary approach to particular research endeavours has also been discounted by sociological purists:

> …we have a tendency to look for a mechanism where there is none, and to believe that an adequate explanation can only be found at that level. What seems obvious in the case of the word "understanding" should equally apply to the majority of terms we employ to designate the various psychological or social forms of *habitus.* [original emphasis] (Bouveresse 1999, p.62)

However, in developing the habitus, Bourdieu both bridges and merges pre-existing boundaries in terms of rigid academic disciplines and analytic conformity.

> In *The Craft of Sociology*, Bourdieu and his collaborators suggest a variety of ways to break with available prenotions, all of which require detailed attention to method, reflection on choices of language and descriptive mode, and the use of carefully constructed sociological concepts to describe the phenomena under analysis (rather than using the available clichés). (Sterne 2003, p.369)

In this regard, Bourdieu made deliberate efforts to account for his research methodologies and make their purpose explicit with a view to encouraging other researchers to do the same. 'Bourdieu argues that sociologists cannot understand structures merely theoretically. Rather, in understanding the social practices that both reproduce and threaten social structures we can begin to unravel them' (Holmes, Hughes & Julian 2003, p.19). His intention was to be as transparent as possible about the processes included in his research, and to demonstrate the impact transparency may

have on the ways his research outcomes were received. As a result, Bourdieu's social research techniques are punctuated with attempts at objective methodologies he subjectively accounts for, in his planning and findings. He 'couples the virtues of pragmatist and hermeneutical approaches to social and political inquiry. Recognizing the limits of formal thought, he is concerned to remain true to the exigencies of political life' (Topper 1997 online). Subsequently, Bourdieu's awareness and appropriation of interdisciplinary strategies prior to, and throughout his research, cultivated a climate in which systematic enquiry and unpredictable findings could co-exist.

Instances of Bourdieu's use of empirical and statistical methodologies that allowed him to strategically develop structuring principles for *non-scientific* actions relative to conventional practice are available (Broady 2001, p.46; Robbins 2000, p.8; Shusterman 1999, p.8). For example, in entering research into cultural analysis he acknowledged the limitations of the discipline in not 'questioning its own value – by deliberately presenting himself as a scientist' (Robbins 2000, p.xvii). Some definitions to clarify distinctions between science as a mechanism for 'truth' and science as a method for discerning knowledge are useful at this point.

In *What Is This Thing Called Science?* (1999) Chalmers defers to two distinct schools of thought to explain how 'common views of science' as a 'structure built on facts' have been historically appropriated (pp.1-3). Beginning with a discussion of empirical research which favoured a definition of 'scientific' information as knowledge garnered from what could be seen, heard or touched, Chalmers explains how ideas centering on 'scientific knowledge' as representative of 'natural' and 'observable facts' as opposed to opinion and speculation developed (ibid). He then provides an overview of theories of 'logical positivism' where researchers aim to derive facts from 'experiences' of the 'natural world' by 'observing' forms of relationships between existing data through experimental 'testing' (ibid). 'Positivist approaches aim to create scientific descriptions of reality by producing objective generalizations' (Hill Collins 2002, p.326). Consequently, there is a supposition that 'knowledge' produced through these kinds of activities may be deemed to have been *objectively* acquired, therefore the results may be considered *valid, reliable*, and potentially *repeatable*. According to Bourdieu this limited understanding of 'scientific discourse' as a 'direct reflection of reality, a pure recording' constitutes a 'naïve realist vision' of how knowledge may be acquired (2004,

p.76). Research in these contexts calls attention to practice and empirical enquiry with an emphasis on knowledge based on perceptual experience and not on intuition or revelation. It amounts to a system of instruction and action with the intention of certainty: 1) that science is the highest form of knowledge and that philosophy therefore must be scientific; 2) that there is one scientific method common to all science, and 3) that metaphysical claims are pseudoscientific (Hjørland & Nicolaisen 2005 online). Essentially, the positivist view 'has been called 'the invisible philosophy of science' because its adherents regard it as the solely scientific approach and tend to avoid or ignore philosophical problems' (ibid).

As stated previously, Bourdieu's version of socially scientific 'truths' seeks to overcome 'specialization that is glorified by the positivist model' (1990a, p.39). In the past he has been critical of narrow, objectified, sociological inquiry for building a research paradigm legitimating its operations by using 'rational instruments' and empirical data, aimed at 'getting the scientific truth about the social world in return' (ibid, p.51). Bourdieu explains that this dogmatic approach to deciphering social knowledge is similar to work carried out in the 'hard sciences' where the 'scientific field is a game in which you have to arm yourself with reason in order to win' (ibid, p.32). This perspective of objective knowledge 'discovery' through scientific methodologies demanding ideological field validation, is useful to a point, yet problematic to a fault. Barker and Galasiñski point out that:

> Science [meaning logical positivism] is itself a mode of thinking and a set of procedures that produces certain kinds of understandings. It is not an elevated god-like form of knowledge that produces universal objective truth. No universally accurate picture of the world is possible, only degrees of agreement about what counts as truth. (2001, p.66)

For, as Bourdieu elucidated, knowledge about social reality, definable meanings, and culturally endorsed social 'truths' is constructed out of agents' practices within historically conditioned systems. As Bhaskar and MacLennan emphasize, there is a 'reality', but that 'reality' can be accessed only through social knowledges: facts may exist but they have to be interpreted' (cited in Roscoe & Hight 2001, p.10). Crotty also takes this view when he argues that 'social constructionism is at once realist and relativist. To say that meaningful reality is socially constructed is not to say that it is not

real…constructionism in epistemology is perfectly compatible with a realism in ontology' (1998. p.63).

Within his own research, in using quantifiable data, Bourdieu did not limit the possibilities of research outcomes as positivistic results. Rather, his appropriation of methods originally based in the 'pure' domain of natural science where repeatable facts are the primary goal, highlighted the relativism of congruent contextual results.

> Bourdieu's sociology is consistently scientific in the most classical sense of the word. His passion for the truth was greater even than his understanding that truth is, by its very nature, a relative and ephemeral concept. He was driven by a zealous intellectual curiosity, a fundamental belief in the power of logic and a readiness to accept unavoidable conclusions no matter how much they conflicted with his own personal interests and emotional needs. (Kustaryov 2005 online)

As such Bourdieu demonstrated the capacity for diverse fields of academic rigour to inform each other, without denying their foundational codes of operation.

> The notions of social space, symbolic space, or social class are never studied in and for themselves; rather, they are tested through research in which the theoretical and the empirical are inseparable and which mobilizes numerous methods of observation and measurement – quantitative and qualitative, statistical and ethnographic, macrosociological and microsociological (all of which are meaningless oppositions). (Bourdieu 2002, p.267)

In this sense Bourdieu's original purpose demonstrated the bound yet relativistic possibilities of integrating studies of anthropology and social enquiry to contribute to the field of cultural sociology (Dreyfus & Rabinow 1999, p.85; Mesthrie, Swann, Deumert, & Leap, 2000; Robbins, 2000, p.xviii). Fowler in *Pierre Bourdieu and Cultural Theory: Critical Investigations* (1997), comments on the 'uneasy combination' of Bourdieu's 'pincer-like attack on both objectivism and subjectivism' which 'proposes a theory of practice…based on both collective and individual strategic activity' (1997, p.22). She is one of many academic and social commentators who acknowledge that Bourdieu's reflections on the duality of structure where 'rules and resources are drawn upon by actors in the production of interaction, but are thereby also reconstituted by such interaction' (Giddens 2002, p.239), may have positive applications in the domains of cultural research and theory, especially in relation to capital accumulation and exchange values (Fowler 1997, p.23). Lau describes this

duality of Bourdieu's habitus as an 'overall non-reductionist objectivist theory of agency…[which] should be conceptualized as practical sense emergent, in the critical realist sense, from experience' (2004, p.370). Webb, Schirato & Danaher in *Understanding Bourdieu* (2003), illustrate the ideological implications of cultural capital accumulation through experience across cultural contexts, when they discuss a business marketing scenario:

> In business, for instance, a corporation might advertise itself as a 'family company', in order to increase or maintain their share of the market. The positive capital associated with such a move is that it personalizes the company…[making a] product attractive by associating it with supposedly familial and other 'agreeable' values…in different circumstances, however, designating oneself as a 'family company' might constitute negative capital…it might connote insularity, a lack of ambition, or anachronistic values. (2003, p.22-23)

This example demonstrates the idea that dispositional decision-making and (in this case) business activity is not completely restrained by the contextual demands of market operators. Rather, important choices about enterprising and 'profitable' practices are best made when 'insiders' who experience the micro-habitus of company protocols, consider the subject positions and perceptions of company 'outsiders', to gauge a distanced view of appropriate business behaviour. Doing this fosters a range of capital acquisitions and enables practitioners to inhabit social spaces that they otherwise may have limited access to.

> Habitus is a structure in the sense that it is a set of relations between perceptions, values, beliefs, and tastes, all of them linked to a certain position which groups and individuals occupy within what Bourdieu calls *social space*. This structure therefore has close ties to social differentiation. It is socially embedded and the result of the accumulated history of power relations within society. It is also structuring because it organizes the way each individual processes experience, takes decisions, finds his position in relation to various issues ranging from taste in arts and food to politics and religion. [original emphasis]
> (Vilhjálmsdóttir & Arnkelsson 2003, p.140)

What is required then, to grasp the process of habitus as a limited yet generative means of socio-cultural *structuring* which enables action, is an appreciation of the terms which drive it – according to Bourdieu and others (Calhoun et. al 2002, Shusterman 1999, p.10; p.262; Sterne 2003, p.375; Zevenbergen, Edwards & Skinner 2002 online). Dealing with some of the *details* of habitus' constitution will demonstrate the theory's

capacities to accommodate the systematic construction of Newcastle narratives and the relativistic *imagined* interpretation of them, which is the intention of this thesis. In this case elaboration of the key terms and ideas includes an exploration and explanation of the conceptual structures connected with the theory. These dynamic frameworks which both sustain and alter the general theory environment they operate in include the acquisition of cultural capital; an appreciation of symbolic capital, and the identification of fields which establish, foster and produce symbolic and cultural capital.

In terms of his use of the notion of 'capital' - Bourdieu objects to economic theory that focuses entirely on capital as merely the basis of economic exchange. In *'The Forms of Capital'* (1986) he suggests that for economics 'the whole universe of exchanges is reduced to mercantile exchange…whereas all other forms of exchange are conceived as non-economic and therefore disinterested' (Schugurensky 2002 online).

> While Bourdieu accepts the Marxist claim that cultural practices function to legitimate and perpetuate class inequality, he resists focusing on the symbolic dimension of social life as separate and derivative of the more fundamental material components of social life. He in fact rejects the Marxist infrastructure/superstructure conceptual distinction, which he believes to be rooted in the classic idealism/materialism dichotomy that must be transcended. (Swartz 1997, p.5)

Bourdieu's ideas indicate the value and influence that different yet co-operative forms of capital have in informing each other. 'Cultural values are 'fiduciary' in nature; they are a kind of credit. 'Symbolic capital', the kind of value with which social agents and institutions become endowed, is also defined as 'credit'' (cited in Verdaasdonk 2003, p.361). He does not consider the realm of economic capital *solely* as a discrete and isolated instrument for class domination, although he recognises its propensity to function in this way (Bourdieu 1986; 1991; cited in Wright 2005). As Broady explains 'economic capital is not only shares and bonds and material goods. It is also know-how on how to handle monetary assets and how to behave in the world of corporations and finance' (2001, p.49-50). Additionally, orthodox Marxism explains capital as the mode of production which separates the working-class from the capitalist class through labour-power relationships to extract profit. 'Regarded as exchange-values all commodities are merely definite quantities of *congealed* labour-time' [original emphasis] (Marx 1981, p.30). Bourdieu, however, argues that:

> Capital is anything capable of being culturally valued by people in general and whose possession establishes group distinctions and thus motivates competition and rivalry over the "symbolic profits" accruing around accumulated and habitualized social status markers. (Tumino 2002 online)

Consequently, rather than exclusively limiting notions of capital as a means of domination and subjugation, Bourdieu's ideas reveal the inclusive and adaptive nature of his capital schema (Verdaasdonk 2003, p.58). While theorists such as Coleman (1990) and Putnam (2000) propose a more deterministic position than Bourdieu does in their accounts of social capital acquisition and its propensity to dictate causal relations in terms of economic disadvantage and social inequalities, others see a more interdependent and holistic system of capitals. Silva and Edwards propose:

> The Bourdieusian approach encompasses three fundamental forms of capital: economic, social and cultural. All of these forms can be sources of social advantage and social class differentiation…In contrast to Coleman and Putnam, Bourdieu sees a more interdependent relationship…his understanding of social capital is different from theirs. Bourdieu sees social capital as a resource or asset derived from social connections that can be cashed in terms of social mobility…possession of different sorts and of different levels of particular sorts of capital place people differently in the social hierarchy. A classic example is the comparison between teachers, who have a high cultural capital and low economic capital, and industrialists, who possess low cultural capital and high economic gain. These two groups have different capabilities of drawing from and generating resources, and are differently placed in the social class structure. (2004, pp.2-3)

Consequently, Bourdieu claims that sociological distinctions about class and social categories which originate in terms of occupation and income still exist, but are now part of a symbolic order of thinking rather than a purely economic one (Beasley-Murray 2000). Earnings may symbolize one (possible) part of the process of attributing distinction and taste judgements. Bourdieu was thus engaged in developing a perspective that 'proposed the development of a general science of the economy of practices, capable of examining capital (understood as power) in all its forms. Hence, in addition to economic capital, Bourdieu identified cultural and social capital' (Schugurensky 2002 online). In this sense Bourdieu's appropriation of capital *worth* encapsulates behaviours, practices, activities and materials which are not solely derivative of or motivated by, attempts at economic gain and ideological dominance. He argued, people 'ascribe meanings to actions that reflect their social class, their culture,

and their personal beliefs as they view events in relation to their own understanding of the issues' (cited in Desmarchelier 2000, p.238). However, it must be taken into account that these behaviours, practices, activities and materials are nonetheless influenced and shaped by economic and ideological motivations. In several contexts Bourdieu has outlined the notion of cultural capital as:

> ...the dominating form of symbolic capital in societies where a centralized school system and the art of writing are developed. In such societies, symbolic capital acquires a persistent character and is objectified in for example books, and institutionalized in titles, such as DPhil. (Broady 2001, p.50)

It is apparent then that Bourdieu's notion of capital does not dismiss the presence of market forces and power relationships that underpin ideological domination, the accumulation of wealth and afford class status (Verdaasdonk, 2005). Rather, his explication and application of capital extends beyond its economic conception to include immaterial and non-economic forms, specifically cultural, symbolic and social capital (Hayes 1997 online). However, Silva & Edwards also point out that:

> Economic capital does not work like cultural capital or social capital. We accumulate and invest in all forms of capital, yet the effects of accumulation and investment are not the same throughout. In addition, they must be thought of not simply in terms of accumulation or investment processes because power and control are conferred and legitimized through particular possessions of capital. (2004, p.3)

As Holmes, Hughes and Julian reiterate, individuals acquire from their families a capital inheritance; 'a bank of knowledge and understanding, about communication, culture and power in the society in which they live, and how to become successful' (2003, p.236). This knowledge involves symbolic capital which takes a range of forms capable of functioning interchangeably, 'for example, educational capital, political capital, and of course economic capital' (Hesperos n.d. online) to further advance ideas about power relationships and one's place in the world. But, as Webb, Schirato and Danaher also point out, 'it is important to remember that cultural capital is not set in stone or universally accepted, either within or across fields' (2003, p.22). There is no denying the importance that economic *capital accumulation* has in granting an individual (or group of individuals) elevated social status, but what needs to be equally considered is the *acquisition* of cultural and symbolic capital resources which also yield power

distinctions and communicate conceptions of social capital.

> Social capital, in Bourdieu's approach, consists of all actual or potential resources linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition (connections to certain individuals and groups). It is a personal asset that provides tangible advantages to those individuals, families or groups that are better connected.
> (Schugurensky 2002 online)

What Bourdieu sought to bring to attention were the 'naturalisation' processes involved in socio-cultural categories of distinction which do not necessarily pit different groups of people *against* each other (as in class divisions) but which nonetheless indicate on an individual and societal level, the value judgments made about ourselves and others. These value judgments have a tendency to dictate how people may be predisposed to engage and interact. To reinforce Bourdieu's stance, a capital:

> …is any resource effective in a given social arena that enables one to appropriate the specific profits arising out of participation and contest in it. Capital comes in three principle species: economic (material and financial assets), cultural (scarce symbolic goods, skills and titles), and social (resources accrued by virtue of membership in a group). A fourth species, symbolic capital, designates the effects of any form of capital when people do not perceive them as such…The position of any individual, group or institution, in social space may thus be charted by two coordinates, *the overall volume and the composition of the capital* they detain. [original emphasis] (Wacquant 1998, p.221)

It can be understood then that the influence of different types and amounts of capital, accrued through engaging in an array of social relationships and activities, further effects the acquisitive 'potential' for capital endorsement. So in this sense recognition of the classificatory tendencies of capital 'species' suggests an understanding (if not complete awareness) of their socio-symbolic implications. 'Bourdieu's understanding of social capital suggests that it is related to the extent, quality and quantity of social actors' networks *and* their ability to mobilize these' [original emphasis] (Blackshaw & Long 2005, p.251). It's also apparent though that the amount and type of capital gain (economic, cultural, social, symbolic) depends on 'networks of objective positions, occupied by agents' in 'multidimensional space differentiated into distinct fields' (Formosa n.d online). So effectively, even though individuals and groups may appear to be bound by social capital generally, and inherently predisposed to function in

consensually classified ways, their capacities to do so are not entirely pre-determined.

> The notion that the expectations of dominated social groups reflect their social position and are, in this sense, realistic, does not imply structural determinism. On one level Bourdieu is simply claiming that agents come to expect and predict that which they find themselves repeatedly subject to, that such expectations are often collectively produced and shared. (Crossley 2001, p.112)

Taking on board Bourdieu's theory of social reproduction it's clear that the habitus and its constituents (social, cultural, and symbolic capital) may best be understood as guides for understanding behaviour, that sustain models for thinking and doing, *while accommodating* flexible and dynamic patterns of acting and reasoning. Webb, Schirato and Danaher explain that 'there are also a number of other important points that can be identified in Bourdieu's definition [of habitus]...conditioning associated with a particular type of existence, based on shared cultural trajectories, produces the habitus' (2003, p.40). Habitus in this case develops and is developed by:

> A 'social actor's' practical sense of knowing the world …the social actor's *doxa* values or 'doxic relation' to the world, which Bourdieu identifies with that tacitly cognitive and practical sense of knowing of what can and cannot be reasonably achieved. [original emphasis] (Blackshaw & Long 2005 p.251)

Consequently, according to Bourdieu and others (Grenfell 2004; Sterne 2003; Watkins 2005) it is through practical experience, work techniques and 'the rhythmic enactment of ritual and symbolic performance' (James cited in Probyn 2004, p.339) that strategies, rather than hard and fast rules for operating in the world, become known and incorporated into daily life. This ensures:

> A certain consistency of practice, and as a shared way of being, produces norms, beliefs and values which are internalised, which are generally accepted as true and natural. Thus, in a community predicated on social contract, individual members will be endowed with a habitué that predisposes them both to believe the stories of society that this discourse produces, and to comply with the discourse. (Webb 1996 online)

The 'stories' Webb refers to are the socio-cultural narratives dictated through discursive practices that reinforce differential positions in social hierarchies. And this is an extremely important issue to grasp in discerning social relationships and categories of

distinction generally. Specifically, in keeping with the theme of this research, the 'stories' Webb alludes to would also include the culturally produced and mediated representational forms of literature and films featuring Newcastle. Webb's broader use of the term 'stories' highlights the important point that community accord filters and adapts *acts of recognition* related to socio-cultural identities. The significance of this point in relation to the appropriation and confirmation of Newcastle's cultural identity through multiple textual forms will become evident further on in the thesis.

Webb (1996) (along with Bourdieu and others: Inghilleri 2003; Myles 1999; Probyn, 2004; Verdaasdonk 2003) explains that socio-cultural knowledge is practically enacted, conceptualized and communicated through contexts that offer a framework of stability and routine. The stability and routine does not necessarily equate with domination, although it depends on the particular social issues one is dealing with as to the extent of this position. As Bourdieu contends 'bringing together on a single site a population homogenous in its dispossession strengthens that dispossession, notably with respect to culture and cultural practices' (Bourdieu 1999, p.129). Webb, Schirato and Danaher illuminate this point by explaining Bourdieu's position on 'misrecognition' and 'the function of 'symbolic violence' [where] agents are subjected to forms of violence (treated as inferior, denied resources, limited in their social mobility and their aspirations) but they do not perceive it that way' (2003, p.25). Furthermore, the contextual restrictions may function to produce ideas and assumptions that are accepted as 'the natural order of things' (ibid):

> For the most part, individuals are not fully aware that everything they do is expressive of the habitus they have been socialized into. Instead, the habitus disguises itself by making people see the world in common-sense ways, and these ways do not allow actors to turn their critical reflection upon the habitus. People just experience things 'as they are', generally without realizing that what they experience as 'common-sense' is actually the result of their habitus. This common-sensical view of the world is what Bourdieu (1977:80, 164) calls *doxa*, the unexamined ways of acting that are at the root of each group's mode of being in the social world. [original emphasis] (Inglis & Hughson 2003, p.167)

What doxa amounts to is the unquestioned logic of perceptual knowledge to 'fit' with pre-conceived notions of what to expect in a given situation so that what occurs and is able to be recognized seems naturally conditioned and presented. The doxa is 'a set of cognitive and evaluative presuppositions whose acceptance is implied in membership

itself' (Bourdieu 2000, p.100). This means that social agents (individuals and/or groups of individuals) willingly engage in contexts that are familiar to them because they are able to identify their limitations and capabilities and hence, a sense of themselves and their social position in relation to others. A recognition of community traits and attributes thus develops so that 'a certain coherence, cohesion and continuity' (Morley & Robins 1995, p.71) prevails:

> Collective identity formation is a delicate process and requires continual investments. As it comes to resemble more institutionalized forms of social action, collective identity may crystallize into organizational forms, a system of rules, and patterns of leadership. (ibid)

In this case 'Bourdieu [1990b, p.67] holds that participation in a specific field or society or culture requires an act of belief without which participation would be denied' (Verdaasdonk 2003, p.361) [author's insertion]. He uses the metaphor of a game arguing that 'it is through their [social actors'] 'feel for the game' of the field that they come to see the social world and the position of themselves and others in that world as unexceptional' (Blackshaw & Long 2005, pp.250-251).

Bourdieu also proposes another term, the *illusio* (St. Clair, Rodriguez & Nelson 2005, p.146) to explain the investment social actors engage in when taking part in these recognition and classification processes:

> The illusio, most frequently defined as a 'belief in the game', is possessed by the player…in both the economic and psychoanalytic sense…[and] goes hand-in-hand with an unconscious, invisible, collective collusion, a readiness to be 'taken in by the game' that comes as the result of the very adhering to the belief in the game and valuing its stakes. (Lipstadt 2003, p.399)

With an illusio in place class values and their legitimacy become a concern as the general idea that attributions of cultural legitimacy arise from participant members being institutionally and individually 'hailed' (Althusser in Webb et.al, 2003, p.9) to take part in established social schemes, raises significant issues in terms of power relationships, autonomy and access to capital. Yet it is beyond the scope of this thesis to focus (completely) in a material sense, on aspects of social inequality and division that categories of economic distinction perpetuate. Instead, as previously indicated and further reinforced in the analyses which follow, this research draws on Bourdieu's

understanding of social class *divisions* as various sites for cultural and symbolic capital appreciation, to highlight possible opportunities for social mobility and to point out the struggles a lack of resources may present. Many researchers (Broady 2001; Diamond, Randolph & Spillane 2004; Lipstadt 2003; Myles 1999; Verdaasdonk 2003; Vilhjálmsdóttir & Arnkelsson, 2003; Watkins 2005; and Webb, Schirato & Danaher 2003) have taken a similar path to:

> …understand the nature of social class and social class divisions in a complex world in which production has largely given way to consumption. For Bourdieu (1984) social class, like 'race', ethnicity and gender, needs to be understood as much by its *perceived* existence as through its *material* existence in the classical Marxist sense. Social capital cannot be understood in isolation and it, along with the other kinds of capital, is indelibly linked with field and habitus. [original emphasis] (Blackshaw & Long, 2005, pp.250-251)

Consequently, the concept of social class as an economically divisive term is certainly not dismissed throughout this research; rather, it is used *in conjunction with* cultural and symbolic capital frameworks to explain the discursive communication of Newcastle's cultural identity through various types of mediations. Woodward asserts 'identities are forged through the marking of difference…[this] takes place through the *symbolic* systems of representation, and through forms of *social* exclusion. Identity, then, is not the opposite of, but *depends on*, difference' [original emphasis] (1997, p.29). Subsequently, explicating the capital acquisitions that writers and filmmakers have attributed to *narrative* characters to portray class distinctions, requires more than a description of their particular socio-economic circumstances. It demands an understanding of how their encoded material identifiers serve to naturalise their social positions and interactions with others, so that readers and viewers are able to 'confer status on and legitimate particular sets of values, beliefs and discursive practices' (Inghilleri 2003, p.245). Additionally, interrogating the connections between capital categories and the construction of a generative habitus enables:

> A conceptualisation of cultural identity…as a matter of "becoming" as well as of "being". [Hall] does not deny that identity has a past, but acknowledges that in laying claim to it we reconstruct it and that the past undergoes constant transformation. This past is part of an 'imagined community', a community of subjects who speak a 'we'. (Woodward 1997, p.20)

To gain a deeper level of understanding about how social actors gain and refute various types of social, cultural and symbolic capital, it is necessary to examine the *locations* where capital creation, production and validation occur. For without a contextual foundation to negotiate a range of capitals, capital identification and application are meaningless. As Bourdieu himself declared 'a capital does not exist and function except in relation to a field' (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p.101). This point is expanded on in Calhoun, Gerteis, Moody, Pfaff and Virk when they argue:

> By conceptualising capital as taking many different forms, Bourdieu stresses (a) that there are many different kinds of goods that people pursue and resources that they accumulate, (b) that these are inextricably social, because they derive their meaning from the social relationships that constitute different fields (rather than simply from some sort of material things being valuable in and of themselves, and (c) that the struggle to accumulate capital is hardly the whole story; the struggle to reproduce capital is equally basic and often depends on the ways in which it can be converted across fields. (2002, pp.262-263)

Especially in regard to *understanding* social relationships as opposed to simply *knowing* of them Bourdieu and Wacquant argue that:

> The concept of field must be used because it works as a 'memory-jogger', much like a Post-it note, to remind us of the 'first precept of method', which is not to take the world as it is found, in a 'substantialist manner', but to 'think relationally'. (cited in Lipstadt 2003, pp.393-394)

Bourdieu's concept of a social field then is a metaphor for representing sites of cultural practice and includes a series of:

> Specific institutions, rules, categories, designations, appointments and titles which constitute an objective hierarchy, and produce and authorise certain discourses & activities…and the conflict which is involved when groups or individuals attempt to determine what constitutes capital within that field, and how that capital is to be distributed (Schirato & Yell 2000, p.37).

Lipstadt provides an example of capital *activity* to clarify the potential for field functionality and uses the field of academia to explain:

> Think of the changes that occur within an entire discipline when an 'academic star' decamps for another university; the perceived rankings of all the self-styled comparable departments – professors and graduate students alike – as well as of the abandoned and accepted one are all objectively transformed. (2003 p.398)

Her reflections on (tertiary) field participation highlight the subjective power that an individual operating in the field may have in relocating their position in the field. The personal adjustment is made possible because of the cultural and symbolic capital the successful academic has accumulated which is generated through the field. They have been systematically validated through their practices and knowledge building *within* academia to progress. Importantly, other field members and field structural qualities are influenced by the dispositional changes in this person's habitus also. With regard to the textual productions chosen for this research, field activities connected to script and screenwriting, film production and direction are examined in the following chapters to explain how individual position-takings and power relationships have also influenced field relationships, and vice-versa. These accounts will demonstrate that 'field and habitus are locked in a circular relationship. Involvement in a field shapes the habitus which, in turn, shapes the perceptions and actions which reproduce the field' (Crossley 2001, p.101).

From 1971 onwards Bourdieu and his research partners conducted collaborations to investigate studies of social fields. The focus for them was 'no longer on cultural capital as such but on specific species of capital; academic and scientific capital within academia, political capital within the political field, artistic capital within the fields of art and literature etc.' (Broady 2001, p.56). Bourdieu defined these relational social spaces as 'fields' 'populated by members who share interests and struggle for positions within that field' (Singley 2003, p.498). As Singley stresses, it is important to note that Bourdieu's understanding of field conditions means 'not a fixed domain but a dynamic potentiality or 'field of forces''(Harker, Mahar & Wilkes 1990, p.8). Bourdieu found through his appropriation of types of capital and their potential to infiltrate and impact on each other, the need to further develop the 'relations between culture and social structure' (Swartz 1997, p.4). And once again, to bridge these networked relations and understand them as systems of objective relations structurally shaped yet fluidly formed, he refined his concept of 'field' in such a way as to go beyond structuralist explanation (Blackshaw & Long 2005; Calhoun & Wacquant 2002; Crossley 2001b; Webb, Schirato & Danaher 2003). Crang reinstates Bourdieu's field theory's bridging potential when he says 'this notion of field is also instrumental in establishing the nexus of autonomy and engagement' (cited in Cloke, Crang & Goodwin 1998, p.54).

These complexities of the formulations of the notion of field are specifically indicated in Lipstadt's research into architecture and art professions when she explains:

> Fields are an abstraction used to apprehend and describe the relatively autonomous social microcosms that in relationship to each other make up social space, the relational notion that replaces the reified one of society in Bourdieu's sociology…Fields are structured configurations or *spaces* of objective relations between both *positions* and *position-takings* and each other. Positions, both formal jobs and tasks and roles, are objective, being characterized by the capital or the amount and species of real and symbolic resources needed to achieve and maintain positions and which endow a given position with the weight needed to dominate other positions, or lacking that weight, to be dominated by them… Position-takings are the stances, practices and expressions of agents, including artistic expressions. [original emphasis] (2003, p.394)

As Lipstadt and others indicate (Blackshaw & Long 2005; Inghilleri 2003; Myles 1999; Probyn 2004; Schirato & Webb 2003) agents are involved in the construction of the 'fields' within which their actions 'have meaning and receive recognition' (Robbins 2000, p.xiv). This point is reinforced by Formosa when he suggests:

> A field is a social system, which appears to be functioning with its own logic or rules. To establish legitimacy within a field, it is necessary to 'comply' with the rules and logic established and recognized within the field at any given time. However, this is not to conceive of the field as static, but rather it is a dynamic arena. (Formosa n.d. online)

Therefore, on the one hand a field can be identified due to its (but never exclusively by) constituent agents – the people who participate in it and partake of it through various positional shifts. Yet the deterministic content 'is viewed as an arbitrary realisation of the power relationship between acting subjects and their position within the social structure' (Inghilleri 2003, p.46). These conceptions relate to the earlier discussion regarding *illusio* and *doxa* and reinforce the binding aspect that being in a position to acknowledge the 'rules of the game' (a field's internal structure) both constrains and enables a social actor's role. 'To gain authority and power, agents take on board the culture, or the habitus of the field, and as they amass more capital they become more powerful, gaining more control and legitimacy' (Zevenbergen, Edwards & Skinner 2002 online). In terms of 'Bourdieu's theory of the field of cultural production…the set of social conditions of the production, circulation and consumption of symbolic goods'

have distinctive bearings on field agents' capital accumulation or otherwise (Johnson 1993, p.9). The quest for the acquisition of cultural, social and symbolic capital constituted within generic field structures facilitates 'force relations' which help to construct the particulars of a social reality 'a patterned set of organizing forces and principles imposed on all those entering its parameters' (Bourdieu & Wacquant1992, p.97). So at the same time as agents take stances, involve themselves in practices and produce expressions which add weight to their field membership, they may simultaneously endow themselves with capital depreciation pertinent to alternative fields, through a 'long, slow process of autonomization, reflecting the stratification of contemporary society into distinctive sectors' (Bourdieu 1990b, p.67). Sennett studied some of the implications of negative field effects on individuals when he considered:

> …an Irish American in Chicago who moved up in social status…receiving a position at a local bank…he was accepted as a colleague and was treated as a member of their social class…the problem was that although he was accepted , he did not feel that he belonged…he felt that he was an outsider. In Bourdieu's terminology, the individual left his social Habitus to enter into a new social class that possesses a different social Habitus.
> (cited in St. Clair, Rodriguez & Nelson 2005, p.152)

Bourdieu asserts that a 'relational analysis of social tastes and practices' is a means to a pragmatic understanding of 'the dynamic relationship between structure and action' (Calhoun et al. 2002, p.260). Relational analysis therefore, helps to make sense of the 'acculturation of workers' the 'persistence of old values in new behaviour' and the activities displaced individuals engage in to construct collective values (Robbins 2000, p.28). So, although an agent (in this case an Irish American banker) through their habitual work, engages in a community of practice that affords them capital value in a field of relationships, this does not always equate with positive experience. Evidence of this kind of outcome is explained in the analysis of the playwriting workshops for the theatrical texts that eventuated in the making of the film *Blackrock*. In Chapter 8 the field 'manipulations' bestowed upon a local resident who took part in production processes with the intention of assisting local community relationships is discussed. This discussion reveals that within the field of cultural production, judgements attributed to capital acquisition may in fact result in subordinate or 'outsider' distinctions that the agent may not anticipate or indeed, seek.

In summary then fields operate as configurations and catalysts for socio-cultural practices to persist and communication systems to evolve. An explanation of their role in the instigation and development of Newcastle's identity as a profitable symbolic construct, (an authentically represented mediation) is thus critical. Without going into too much detail at this point but to flag some more of the original analyses that follow in this thesis, an example of a *cultural field* in relation to Newcastle's narrative construction would include the film, publication and local media industries involved in textual productions. An interrelated *field* would include the mediated discourses involved in the production of Newcastle texts. These fields are like ' "markets", a metaphor which captures the centrality of capital exchanges within them and allows us to make sense of the "invisible hands" or "forces" which emerge and have effects within them' (Crossley 2001b, p.100). A form of *cultural capital* and value associated with systematically authorised tastes, attributes, skills and awards would be the Australian Film Industry (AFI) Award nominations for the films *Aftershocks* (1998) and *Blackrock* (1997). As well, an example of *symbolic capital* that emphasizes the relational features and evolution of capital forms is the *winning* of an AFI award. The 1999 award to *Aftershocks'* Jeremy Sims for Best Performance by an Actor in a Leading Role in a Television Drama (*AFC* online) confers status on the film text (and the actor) in new ways. Another example of cultural and symbolic capital which emerged from the field of cultural production that included the making of *Aftershocks,* is an English Curriculum Study Pack about the film, now used in a practical educative capacity as part of the Australian Secondary School syllabus (Carrodus 1999). The Study Guide is accessible through Ronin Films, an Educational DVD and Video Sales Company which also sells copies of the actual film (*Ronin Films* online). The interlinking of a number of relational fields through the activity enacted by the communication practices involved with the film text, demonstrates a crucial aspect of Bourdieu's thinking about capitals and this is:

> …the idea that we live simultaneously in multiple synchronic fields…the three forms of capital interact in different ways…they are continuously transferred, as well as being transformed…it is impossible to single out one form of capital and a framework of interrelationship between capitals. (Silva & Edwards 2004, p.3)

Aftershock's narrative content, stylistic form and construction techniques are therefore considered (within the field of education) to represent capital worth. This differs from

its economic worth as a commercial media product with the purpose of gaining maximum film industry distribution and financial success. [20]

These examples of field-instigated and field-related praxis (Bourdieu 1990a, p.22; St. Clair et al. 2005, p.149) generate understanding about the power relationships and valuation contexts of cultural production and performance. Bourdieu's ideas about theories of practice that emanate from *actual* routines and activities, and not from objective considerations of what should or may be likely to occur through practices, define his notion of praxis. As Schirato and Webb outline, Bourdieu's ideas about praxis reinstate his holistic consideration of the inter-relationships (rather than discrete fixed positions) of objective-subjective activities and knowledges:

> For Bourdieu there is no such thing as pure agency; but a kind of (limited) agency can be identified, not as subjective or individual action, but within a logic derived both from cultural fields and from the aporia, or lag, that always characterizes the relationship between the objective structures of fields and their practices. In other words, subjects are able to negotiate the rules, regulations, influences and imperatives that inform all cultural practice, and delimit thought and action, precisely because fields dispose them to do so. (2003, p.540)

According to Bourdieu, practices involve the creation of products and acts of behaviour which produce structures that are concrete (Ernste, Pignone & Winkels, R 2006, p.4; St. Clair, Rodriguez & Nelson 2005, p.149).

> Practices are produced by Habitus and these routines go on to reproduce themselves. They create evolving patterns of behaviour that reproduce themselves…practices cannot be discovered by looking at the context of the situation, but they tacitly exist as social practices. Habitus has social and cultural agency, but that agency does not exist in any one individual. It exists in tradition, practice and other forms of tacit knowledge.
> (St. Clair, Rodriguez & Nelson 2005, pp.149-150)

Specifically in relation to this research, in terms of the cultural production surrounding the theatrical, film and intertexts chosen for analysis, some of the traditions and understandings suggested above would include scriptwriting assessments; film producers' finance strategies and publicity rhetoric; critical reviews of the products in

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[20] *Blackrock* is also used extensively in a number of pedagogic contexts at Tertiary and Secondary School level for study and/or examination.

media discourses etc.[21]

Wacquant argues that through constructivist strategies that incorporate personal attributes and experiential relationships socio-cultural distinctions are shaped ((cited in Webb, Schirato & Danaher 2003, p.32). In the context of this research *specific narrative characters* (written into literary and film texts, *and* positioned in the fields of cultural production they are immersed in) are given 'insider' and 'outsider' roles to enact by the cultural producers who construct them. Their individual field positions (subjective identities) within the constructed narrative world are conditioned and shaped by their interactions with other people and the communities they 'live' in. Consequently, the close and detailed analyses of actual character traits and behaviours through the texts chosen for this research, is indicative of a more general understanding of field/agency limitations and opportunities. They generate an understanding of how and why particular writers and filmmakers construe 'life possibilities in…central characters…deftly handling issues like historical shifts in cultural values that in turn change the valuation of cultural and social capital' (Pileggi & Patton 2003, p.322). Schirato and Webb in their online journal entry '*Cultural Literacy and the Field of the Media'* (2006) tender some explanations for how habitus may be encoded to address transformative capital 'circumstances' that readers and viewers may identify with, because, like their narrative counterparts, they too need to operate using a number of cultural literacies:

> …individual cultural fields are consistently in communication with, influenced by, and exposed to, the discourses, values, logics, meaning systems, economies, ideas and forms of capital associated with or emanating from other powerful fields (such as business, government, the legal field and, perhaps most pervasively, the media). Regardless of the field or fields to which we belong, we are required to negotiate, and be literate with regard to, different fields, media and modalities, and be able to read, relate and contextualize visual images and other media texts. In other words, we are required to possess wide (cultural) literacies. (ibid online)

Schirato's & Webb's ideas are also conspicuous in Singley's article 'Bourdieu, Wharton and Changing Culture in *The Age of Innocence'* (2003) where the author examines

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[21] Additionally, within the textual analyses of the actual films' contents, evidence of characters' practices that also create routines and constitute traditions and 'naturalized' systems of knowing are explored in detail.

social conventions, competing field demands and the individual habitus of fictional characters to explain the interconnected worlds of authorship, narrative schemas and cultural knowledges:

> Culture is both something already in us *and* something we achieve or create. Such a view assumes neither that individuals execute their wills freely, nor that they are powerless over circumstances. Rather, it acknowledges the power and continuity of social structures *at the same time* that it incorporates the self-interested, creative forces of subjectivity. [original emphasis] (Singley 2003, p.498)

Singley's examination of Edith Wharton's novel partially parallels some of the analytical strategies undertaken for the textual deconstruction in this research. Craine and Aitken in their article 'Street Fighting: Placing the Crisis of Masculinity in David Fincher's *Fight Club*' (2004) also use Bourdieu's habitus to explain social constraints and transcendent acts, represented through characterizations, and character interactions in the film *Fight Club*. Their focus is on the film *space* as a vehicle for the critique of masculine tendencies and identities relative to social and physical locations:

> For a film like *Fight Club*, one that actively resists categorization using even standard *film* criticism, it is useful to draw on geographical critiques that broaden the spaces of cultural production, taking into account social divisions, social class and especially the central role of ideas of cultural capital and symbolic violence. [original emphasis] (Craine & Aitken, 2004, p.3)

Craine and Aitken's work uses the film *Fight Club* to deconstruct socio-cultural distinctions about perceptions of masculinity, which are manifest in the phenomenological experiences of the film's characters. Their analysis features discussion about the 'reordering and reconstruction of the landscape' (2004, p.2) locations in the film, which reveal that space is 'actively constitutive of the practices of authority and resistance, of grounding meaning and re-placing meaning' (Pile & Thrift, 1995, p.49). Furthermore, it can be posited that the habitus of Craine and Aitken (academics in the Department of Geography, California State University) has influenced their critical interest in notions of masculinity interpellated (Althusser cited in Webb, Schirato & Danaher, 2003, p.9) through film form, from a socio-spatial perspective. Their everyday work involves environmental mapping; their inquiry draws on important co-dependent concerns between individual physicality and what Bourdieu has described as 'social topography' (Grenfell, 2004, p.98). Within the theoretical

framework of human geography and its application to a film text's content, these authors have sought 'to make explicit the truth of primary experience of the inscribed relationship of familiarity with the familiar environment, the unquestioning apprehension of the social world' (Bourdieu 1977, p.24). Craine & Aitken therefore have approached their investigation into the constructed representation of naturalized gender roles with *spatial relationships* in mind. In this regard, their inscribed dispositions (their habitus') have generated interdisciplinary questions connecting film form & location devices, socio-cultural codifications, landscape psychology, geography, and personalized activities. It can be noted that these matters of spatially-based links between 'natural' and constructed environments, narrative and film design, phenomenological experiences, and socio-cultural activities will be considered in relation to the 'authoring' and communicating which took place during the making of *Aftershocks* and *Blackrock*, in terms of their story-worlds and the habitus of both the cultural producers and the habitus of the characterizations they produce in those story worlds.

For Bourdieu, individual habitus is formed through encounters with structured spaces that are physical, social and differential (Grenfell 2004, p. 27). Some of the socio-cultural and categorically distinct 'spaces' where habitus occurs and develops have already been referred to earlier in this chapter in terms of field and capital contexts. 'Fields are an abstraction used to apprehend and describe the relatively autonomous social microcosms that in relationship to each other make up social space, the relational notion that replaces the reified one of society in Bourdieu's sociology' (Lipstadt 2003, p.398). These external 'sites', 'structured configurations or spaces of objective relations' (ibid) are certainly important in this analysis. The emphasis at this point of the discussion however, necessarily turns to the individuals *involved* with fields which offer a 'conceptualization of the subject, as socially embedded, as embodied dispositions, shaped by one's location within social fields' (Kenway & McLeod 2004, p.525).

The consideration of corporeal sociology (Shilling 2004, p.473), that is the personally embedded and socially constituted *bodily ways* of being in the world, is crucial to understanding the development and manifestation of habitus generally. Importantly, as earlier chapter content has suggested, for the purposes of this research into *how* Newcastle's cultural identity may be *constructed* and *perceived* through textuality, it is

especially significant. 'For Bourdieu, the body, exemplified in habitus, is a practical mnemonic, on and in which the foundations of culture are produced and reproduced' (Jenkins 2005, p.353). Gunn has argued that the habitus is also:

> A somatic collection of norms, rules, economies of value, and codes of conduct that collectively, and largely unconsciously, structure material engagements with the social world…because it is embodied, one's habitus is visceral…a tacit normative, political and intellectual performativity akin to what the ancient Greek rhetoricians termed doxa, but only insofar as it exists, literally, in bodily movements and practices. (Gunn 2003, p.370)

In this regard Bourdieu uses the term hexis to explain how knowledge may be embodied in individuals, who through their activities and practices (their natural physical attributes and behaviours) display and perform understanding about their place in the world. 'Bodily hexis, a basic dimension of the sense of social orientation, is a practical way of experiencing and expressing one's own sense of social value' (Bourdieu 1984, p.474). His ideas about 'comportment, accent, manners' (Crossley 2001a, p.107), 'gesture, movement, eating, language' (Hofmeister 2000, p.6), 'the way a person walks, talks, types, plays a musical instrument, drives' (Sterne 2003, p.375) propose that individuals acquire routinized *tangible characteristics* indicative of their social status, and furthermore, that these characteristics are enacted in ways that are structurally determined.

So Bourdieu acknowledges the causal relationships between lifestyles and physical development when he says 'physical capital (in the form of body shape, gait, and posture) is largely socially produced through – for example, sport, food, and etiquette' (Wainwright & Turner 2003, p.4). Because of this focus on the materiality of the body's activity, that is 'what is 'learned by the body' is not something one has, like knowledge that can be brandished, but something, that one is' (Bourdieu, 1990b, p.73), Bourdieu's use of hexis has been criticized as being too mechanistic and inflexible (Noble & Watkins 2003). Most of the criticism centres around an interpretation of Bourdieu's hexis as *habits* that consist of involuntary repetitions (Burns-Ardolino 2003; Malikail 2003); automatic affects (Hofmeister 2000); non-reflective practicality (Lau 2004; Noble & Watkins 2003); physiological action lacking emotional depth (Probyn 2004) and capital appropriation of physical capabilities (Shilling 2004). Each of these criticisms discusses the relationships between subject positions, physical demeanours,

behavioural attributes and psychological processes, highlighting the complexities of thinking about hexis solely as a systematically inscribed corporeality. The main issue these theorists and others grapple with is the notion that for Bourdieu 'arms and legs are full of numb imperatives' (1990b, p. 69), which for them suggests a level of unconsciousness exempt from contexts requiring practical activity and bodily 'doings'. As Hofmeister argues, 'for him the 'unconscious' is never anything other than the forgetting of history…the unconscious is more than just forgetting history' (2000, p.3). However, Noble and Watkins point out that Bourdieu's initial interest in hexis had to do with bodily capital as an expression of class. For him, the *unconscious* aspect of bodily bearing was directly connected to 'ontological complicity' (2003, p.524) and not to the dissolution of subjective awareness. Malikail (2003) suggests that the confusion between understanding hexis as naturalised bodily dispositions, and judging the concept as devoid of cognitive transactions, occurs when ideas about *embodied* knowledge and social activity are conflated so that practical dispositions are misconstrued as contextually ruled, prompting a 'corporeal automatism' (Lau 2004, p.382). The manifestation of this misunderstanding occurs mostly when the terms habitus and habits are conflated. The earlier discussion from Fiske (on page 93) demonstrates how a cultural theory perspective of habitus as 'habits' may 'underestimate and/or simplify the extent to which subjects' practices are 'spoken' by their cultural fields and trajectories' (Schirato & Webb 2003, p.540). Although aspects of habitus (especially in terms of physical acts and responses) may be thought of as patterned and somewhat predictable with a 'sedimented aspect' (Casey 2001, p.409) embodied expressions do not simply equate with complicity and a lack of intention. 'Habitus is not mere routine, it is improvisational and open to innovation' (Setten 2004, p.406).

A more accurate understanding of '*hexis*, locally distinctive shared ways of being in the world, the complex nonverbals of human practice' [original emphasis] (Jenkins 2005, p.353) demands an appreciation of the collective, socially reproductive environments which encourage it, as well as the individual social agents who do not only adopt, but *adapt* it. Focussing on hexis as a 'habit' of habitus is problematic, as Lahire explains:

> Talking about habits in terms of affects, routines, or constraints is misleading in that this obscures the fact that behavior manifested by individual social agents is nothing but the externalization of the result of the internalization of social constraints. In taking this stance, we would disregard important nuances in the

> degree to which habits are internalized and established, in the conditions under which this occurs, in the modalities of their acquisition, and in the conditions under which they come to 'function'. In considering mention of choice, desire, passion, and spontaneity as purely commonsensical or ideological in nature, we would be led to ignore fine-grained dimensions of conditions, modalities, and effects of socialization. (2003, p.341)

Instead, as Lau (2004) and Noble and Watkins (2003) suggest, a better way to comprehend routine responses to evolving situations involving practical application, is by implementing a shift 'from Bourdieu's notion of embodied capital to bodily capital to incorporate phenomenology and the levels of consciousness involved in 'agentic reflection'' (2003, p.526). Their approach to understanding practical action in contextual predicaments, considers the individual's sensibilities, their corporeal persuasions and cognitive directions *within* their field-based activities. These ideas demonstrate that 'habitus has a genius for mediation' (Casey 2001, p.409) between 'things and…minds…outside and inside agents' (Catt 2006 online). These concerns are employed throughout the upcoming analyses, to explain how multiple cultural producers (who themselves are corporeal field-based practitioners) use bodily capital, phenomenological experiences and cognitive processes that are socio-culturally sanctioned, to communicate *through* narrative contexts, an 'embedded' Newcastle identity.

Chapter 5 - Newcastle: A Socio-spatial Location for the Communication and Cultural Production of Place Perception.

'Cities have a habitus: that is certain relatively enduring (pre) dispositions to respond to current social, economic, political or even physical circumstances in very particular ways…' (Lee 1997, p.127)

'I cried for three weeks when I came here as a girl from Sydney. Then I discovered its appeal. It is a special town, a special warm town.'
(Newcastle Lord Mayor Joy Cummings cited in Stephens 1979, p.9)

Newcastle is a port city on the east coast of Australia. Contemporary discourses of Newcastle's 'distinct' and 'recognizable' qualities prominently feature ideas and rhetoric centering on an inexpensive lifestyle; post-manufacturing employment; business investment and educational opportunities; and the natural landscape. Newcastle is also this author's birthplace and home. The interest in representations of the 'local' and the kinds of socio-cultural praxis that has the potential to authenticate, endorse, and/or challenge ideas about Newcastle's meanings began simply, through the reading of a fictional novel, which used Newcastle as one of its settings [22]. *Lovers' Knots: A Hundred-Year Novel* (1992) was written by Newcastle born author Marion Halligan. As a student of communication, this resonant reading experience prompted a multi-disciplined effort for the researcher, to examine a range of Newcastle texts and to research the following questions:

Is it just because I too was born and bred in Newcastle and am familiar with many of the sites and areas (buildings; street names; beaches; institutions) that the city *truly resonated* through this work?

What is the qualitative difference between a *known* city and a place known *only through its representation*? - Because people who *do not* have insider knowledge of the city also respond to its representation through engaging with cultural productions.

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[22] Canberra in the Australian Capital Territory and Paris, France are also featured locations.

What societal and cultural practices are *naturalized* in Newcastle narrative contexts and how might they reinforce the idea of a 'knowable community'?

How may a highly personalized engagement with a cultural text such as a novel, play or film *involve* dispositional responses that may *differ* between individuals, yet rely on *collective understandings* to make sense of a represented 'community'?

Mindful of my subjective position, yet eager to uncover the mechanisms and schemas present throughout the production of Newcastle stories which aid in their socio-cultural endorsement, or alternatively, their critical review, I chose to pursue the research from the stance of ''distant intimate'…[in a concerted attempt to] be objective in a milieu that was familiar' (Bourdieu cited in Reed-Danahay 2005, p.74).

For a person unfamiliar with Newcastle the following descriptions of the city, designed to operate as information directories and/or travel guides, offer a general overview:

> Newcastle is located at 32.56 South 151.46 East on the eastern seaboard of Australia at the mouth of the Hunter River. Founded as a penal colony coal deposits quickly led to Newcastle becoming a shipping and commercial centre by the 1860s. Industrialization increased after iron and steel mills were built in 1915. Newcastle today is a modern thriving centre and is Australia's sixth most populated city. (Eldridge n.d. online)

> The Newcastle metropolitan area is the second most populated area in the state of New South Wales…Situated 162 kilometres (101 mi) NNE of Sydney, at the mouth of the Hunter River, it is the predominant city within the Hunter Region. Famous for its coal, Newcastle is the largest coal export harbour in the world. (*Media Man* 2002-2008 online).

> The second largest of New South Wales cities, Australia's Newcastle lies on a peninsula bounded by the Hunter River in the north and by the Pacific Ocean in the southeast. Nobbys Head, at the tip of the peninsula, is where the Hunter and the Pacific meet. (Rivera n.d. online)

> Built around a large working harbour, Newcastle boasts a famous university, ten magnificent beaches and picturesque parks offering ample recreational opportunities including surfing, beach fishing and swimming in the fabled Ocean Baths. (*Newcastle Travel Guide* n.d. online)

These descriptors help to situate Newcastle's environmental specificity in terms of its geographical characteristics. Importantly, they also partially communicate the history of relationships *between* the region's natural landscapes; its major employment activities; the local economy: and, export exchanges - be they *originally* convicts from England, or more recently, international coal trade (Cushing 1996; Docherty 1983; Dunn, McGuirk & Winchester 1995; Metcalfe 1993; Metcalfe & Bern 1994; Stevenson 1998). 'Since the European founding of the city as a convict settlement in 1801, Newcastle's identity has been inherently masculine and overwhelmingly working class' (Rofe 2004, p.195). Through various historical representations Newcastle has often been referred to as 'the heart of the nation, a point made explicit when politicians call it the 'heartland' of the Australian Labor party' (Metcalfe & Berne 1994, p.659). Former Labor Party Prime Minister Gough Whitlam in his preface to the Newcastle bicentennial publication *Novocastrian Tales* stated, 'the Hunter Region has produced many models for Australia in the industrial sense' (1997). So in one regard the city's political affiliations, industrial culture, and demographic distribution have been considered as indicative of 'archetypes deep in [Australia's] cultural unconscious…' that have enabled it to be:

> …widely regarded as an ideal place for market research because the people are considered statistically representative of "typical" Australians'… while it is not clear what 'heartland' and 'typical Australian' connote, there is no doubt that Newcastle has born a semiotic and poetic load to match its heavy industrial workload. (Metcalfe 1993, p.1)

Newcastle's socio-economic heritage has apparently been *used* within broad political and commercial fields for gauging and interrogating urban development closely related to manufacturing enterprises, on a national level. Coinciding with these issues, two schools of thought have emerged: one is that Newcastle community ideals revolving around traditionally patriarchal, parochial, and vernacular sensibilities may be considered insular, detrimental, and unproductive; the other viewpoint is that these affects and capacities are generated through localized praxis, hence contributing to identity discourses, represent strength, resourcefulness, and commitment, and are therefore endearing and of value. These contrasting positions demonstrate that any 'city image is a complex and dynamic structure, whose encoders are found throughout society. All readings are somehow negotiated' (Jansson 2003, 464). The dissimilarities between generalized perceptions of Newcastle's community contexts reveals that '…we

‘read’ and ‘write’ the city as we have learned to think, speak and behave in (class- and culture) specific ways’ (Blondeel 2005, p.1).

Dunn, McGuirk and Winchester in their article on the ‘place-making’ of Newcastle through symbolic representations, single out five distinct ‘identifiers’ for the city’s constitutional characteristics (1995). These categories include: home of the Awabakal indigenous peoples; Prison of NSW (early convict settlement); Coally seaport (convict labour, coal extraction, and exportation); Steel city (the 1913 construction and commencement of the country’s first integrated steelworks); and Problem city (1970s mine closures, industry job losses) (1995, pp.155-156). These categorizations indicate that the meanings attached to the place of Newcastle have varied over time but are intrinsically connected to socio-cultural activities conditioned largely, but not exclusively, by its landscapes. Newcastle is:

> The third oldest city in Australia…Originally the settlement was called Coal River, or Hunter’s River after the current Governor, but once mining started, almost immediately, it was fated to be named after its mining namesake in North-Eastern England. A seam of coal had been found at the mouth of a large river by Lieutenant Shortland in 1797, and the Governor had ordered convicts to be camped there and the coal to be mined. (Croft 1999 online)

As Dunn, McGuirk & Winchester argue, Newcastle and its identity are not solely a composition of material elements, but the ‘city’ is also the product of a ‘rich and layered vernacular landscape, together with symbolic representations’ (1995, p.150). For the purposes of this research thesis the focus on the development of Newcastle’s identity discourses post-settlement is significant. This approach is in no way meant to deny the important contributions of the indigenous population (the Awabakal people) who were the original inhabitants, and who ‘lived’ the area well before the claims made through British occupation became apparent:

> For many thousands of years before the arrival of white men, Aboriginal tribes lived along the cedar-lined banks of the Hunter. Kangaroos and emus wandered freely on what would later become the streets of Newcastle and the industrial heartland of our nation. (Whitlam cited in Walsh 1997)

Rather, the emphasis on the multi-field circumstances of Newcastle’s identity construction considered through the framework of ‘understanding modern industrial

society' (Metcalfe 1994, p.659) enables distinct socio-economic relationships between the city's natural and human resources to be revealed. Lee refers to this grasping of local history as 'the cumulative product of the dialectical interaction between the objective conditions of existence and the city habitus as each form and re-form in response to the other' (1997, p.134). Consequently, the features of Newcastle's historical makeup that highlight its employment traditions and altered working conditions have had and continue to have, strong impacts on the city's community dispositions from *both* resident and non-resident perspectives. Blondeel refers to the development of these 'spatial' and 'localized' variations in habitus as the 'founding assumption' or 'core practice' of a given neighbourhood. This practice is named 'core' as it structures and organizes in a certain part of a city a multitude of routines and daily practices, not only of occupants but also (the perceptions of) passers by' (2005, p.2).

Newcastle's de-industrialization and urban development, particularly throughout the 1980s, 1990s, and this first decade of the 21st Century, have had constructive effects on residents' ideas about local identity, on what it may *mean* to be a Novocastrian [23], and have also challenged perceptions of the city considered by 'outsiders'. 'The depictions and landscapes of places are often interpreted differently, such as between insiders and outsiders' (Dunn, McGuirk & Winchester 1995, p.150).

> Newcastle has long been mythologized, both externally and internally, as a town of 'hard men', of 'working-class heroes' with a tradition of intransigent unionism, of battling sturdy survivors who have overcome constant reverses (economic and natural) by drawing on their sense of community spirit.
> (McGuirk & Rowe 2001, p.56)

Alluding to the limiting aspects of these kinds of perceptions Whitlam argued, 'the physical and spiritual beauty of Newcastle has long lain hidden to outside eyes under the pall of industrial smog that is now more imagined than real' (cited in Walsh 1997). This was a sentiment that had been expressed previously by Tony Squires, a *Sunday Telegraph* newspaper columnist and media personality (who incidentally grew up in

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[23] In 2007 a local radio station encouraged listeners to share their favorite name for their town (Newcastle or suburb of the Hunter Region). 'A quick trawl around the internet defines the Latin term [Novocastrian] as one which can equally be applied to residents of any place called Newcastle' (*ABC Newcastle Radio*).

Newcastle)[24] when he suggested that negative images of Newcastle as a tough and violent town 'clouded by images of coal dust' were not in keeping with 'the reality of beautiful beaches with easy access, open spaces and a tangible community spirit' (Squires 1994, p.16). Squires spoke from a twofold position in that his personal habitus included the kind of insider capital having been a resident of Newcastle afforded him, for as Urry claims 'individuals are constituted who are aware of their presence as subjects residing within a particular spatial location (street, town/countryside, region, nation)' (1985, p.32). Plus, his occupational role as a journalist and media practitioner enabled him to disseminate more positive information about the city's qualities in a public forum, within the constraints of his field of work, because '*habitus*…is acquired during childhood, at home and in school and later on during the professional lifetime' [original emphasis] (Blondeel 2005, p.1). In some respects Squires' comments are reflective of what Dunn, McGuirk and Winchester (1995, p.156), and Metcalfe (1993, p.15) refer to as 'defense narratives' contributing to notions of 'Novocastrian solidarity'. 'This place thrives on adversity. It began as the place for the very worst convicts from Sydney, and it's had to brawl its way to get where it is' (unidentified former local journalist cited in Metcalfe & Bern 1994, p.661). The prevailing view of Newcastle's 'deep and profound community ethos' (Metcalfe cited in Dunn et al.; McGuirk & Rowe 2001;) emerging from situations of hardship and subsequent stories of endurance, has been enculturated through the everyday phenomenological experiences of city residents. In his discussion on *'Body, Self, and Landscape: A Geophilosophical Inquiry Into the Place-World'* (2001) Casey highlights the valuable relationships between the enactment and embodiment of habitus in circumstantial *and* site-specific areas which provides one's self with a 'placial bearing' (2001, p.410). He argues that a phenomenological perspective, that is, 'the actional dimension…needs to be added to Bourdieu's analysis' of the 'mediatrix of place and self", and explains that 'we do act on the basis of habitus, and action is something that is both lived (i.e., consciously experienced) and intentional (i.e., involves an aim even if this is not explicitly formulated' (2001, p.412).

[24] 'Originally from Newcastle, Tony has worked on stage, music, radio and television with a number of his Novocastrian mates' (*Andrew Taylor Management* n.d. online).

Consequently, the 'specificity of the interactions which [have occurred] at [a certain] location' that in Newcastle's case may have included a coal mine; a heavy industry site; or a harbourside workplace, have enabled 'a 'place'…[to be] formed out of the particular set of social relations which interact at a particular location [and] in turn produce new social effects' (Massey 1992, p.12). The actuality of hard physical labour can clearly be aligned with 'the tangible form of the city [which] encompasses a stationary landscape reflecting culture, history and architecture' (Middleton 1999, p.119). Therefore, it may be argued that developing an understanding of Newcastle's 'defensive identity' as being historically constituted through the phenomenological experiences of its residents is a relatively simple task. Nonetheless, more abstract ideas about shifts in perceptions of Newcastle's 'personality' need further investigation. Crang contends that, 'identity can be defined as much by what we are not as by who we are…'us' and 'them' groups are often territorially delimited' [original emphasis] (1998, p.61). This is a view that Winchester, McGuirk, Parkes and Dunn also reiterate in their discussion of specifically 'localized' relationships *within* a particular sub-community of a Newcastle suburb (1996). The authors speak of 'insider' and 'outsider' discourses as manifest in notions (either positive or otherwise) of community. 'A group of people who define themselves as a community are inevitably defining those outside that group as 'other' on the basis of locality or of other characteristics' (1996, p.80). These are matters that will be considered at length in the forthcoming analyses and should reveal as Porteous argues, that 'places have long been recognized as possessing personality. Imaginative literature is a source for exploring the complexities and changes in that personality, as well as the duality of insider and outsider interpretations (1985, pp.118-119). Evidence of some of the changes in Newcastle's 'personality' particularly in relation to cultural production (in contrast to industrial manufacturing) activities were addressed by Joyce Morgan in her front page *Sydney Morning Herald* article *'Cool Steel City: the Rebirth of Newcastle'* (1999). In this report Morgan stated that 'a future embracing the arts seemed inconceivable when [she] arrived, in 1968, in the city that would be [her] home for nearly 15 years. As inconceivable as BHP losing $2.4 billion' (ibid, p.1).

During the late 1980s and 1990s industries such as 'coalmining, shipbuilding, textiles, and steelmaking' that for many years had had profound effects on the construction of 'Newcastle's identity in the Australian cultural system of space' went through major

downsizing phases and restructuring (McGuirk & Rowe 2001, pp.55-56; Albrecht & Markwell 1996; Homan 2005; Kirkwood 1999; Scanlon 1999; Stevenson 1998) [25]. Subsequent dramatic structural and systematic changes in what Lee refers to as 'internal' and 'external' facts had the potential to radically influence Newcastle's habitus:

> 'Internal' facts may include: the city's physical geography; its climate; the demographic composition of its population (class ratios, ethnic and racial mix, gender balance and age composition of its inhabitants…); the status and types of industrial and commercial activity; the character of civic, legal and political regimes… 'External' facts…are composed of all those 'outside forces', whether deriving from regional, national, international or global origins, that a city has to negotiate (national government funding, the character of contemporary capital, the character of contemporary labour). (Lee 1997, p.135)

These geographical, economic and general socio-cultural changes meant that a transitional reorientation of the city's identity began to take place. 'Advertising strategies seeking to position Newcastle more competitively with regard to attracting investment capital and tourism…[utilized] images of consumption and leisure activities previously not associated with Newcastle' (Rofe 2004, p.193). Mainstream media practices of a favourable kind also highlighted the city's 'lifestyle' attributes. In 1992 survey results published in the *Australian Business Monthly* revealed Newcastle as 'the best city in the nation' (Riley, 1992, p.15):

> The findings were made on a wide range of economic, social and physical criteria, such as employment, wage rates, standards of education and health facilities, affordability of housing, availability and standard of recreational facilities, and beauty. (ibid)

Interestingly, the positive promotion of the city in this particular instance was emphasized in a feature story on the Newcastle and Hunter Region reported in the metropolitan broadsheet the *Sydney Morning Herald*. The title of the article was *'The Best City in the World Is One with True Grit'* (1992) and significantly, the rhetorical language used conveyed aspects of an *embedded* (material and conceptual depth) and *authentic* (verifiable*)* Newcastle community identity, with the report having the added

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[25] McGuirk & Rowe (2001) discuss these issues at length within the context of local authority and community anxieties over a revision of Newcastle's mainstay perception as a place of manufacturing productivity, to a post-industrial community environment.

advantage of appearing in a non-Novocastrian publication. For although as McGuirk and Rowe argue 'local newspapers…are important constituents in place promotion, having a vested interest in the continued prosperity of their…audience base' (2001, p.53), the critical support of the town generated through a *Sydney-centric medium* had the capacity to confer a status on the 'place' of Newcastle it did not ordinarily have attributed to it. This example demonstrates one of the central concerns of this thesis, which is that (as well as literature, plays and films) mainstream 'media…plays a fundamental role in discursive battles over place identity and, especially, attempts to establish new identities for places' (ibid, p.55).

At a 1996 University of Newcastle multidisciplinary symposium on the 'imaging' of the city, Dr Howard Dick proposed that:

> Any newcomer to Newcastle soon realizes how much the identity of 'us', 'Our Town', is defined in relation to 'them', meaning above all Sydney (The State Government) and Canberra (The Federal Government). Novocastrians are acutely aware of being twice removed from the centres of power. (1996, p.47)

Dick's statement taps into the socio-political category of distinction that for many years has underscored resident expectations *of* and responses *to,* government and systematic support for, the local economic infrastructure. It re-appropriates similar concepts expressed by Docherty about the emergence of a community ideology founded on perceptions of institutionalized indifference to the maintenance of regional prosperity:

> The sharp changeover from mining to heavy industry after 1912 made little difference to the kind of work Newcastle offered its people, and the decisions which governed the city's economic life continued to be made elsewhere. The largest coalmining companies were based in London or Sydney. BHP was run from Melbourne. The result has been that throughout [the 20th century] Newcastle…remained a heavily working-class city dependent upon a single industry sensitive to economic fluctuations and controlled by outside interests. (Docherty 1983, pp.163-164). [26]

[26] Docherty's *Newcastle: the making of an Australian city* (1983), developed from a PhD thesis on the geographical and urban transformation of the city throughout heavy industry expansion in the 20th Century.

It's important to note that both Docherty's and Dick's understandings of a predominant Newcastle identity shaped by 'subordinate' dependence on external authorities, come from the standpoint of urban-economic academic enquiry. '[The] lack of local control over the city's economy must surely be the outstanding feature of Newcastle's history' (Docherty 1983, p.164). Dr Dick's article '*Walking backwards into the future: is Newcastle ready to turn around yet?*'(1996), considered the power that local political leaders had at a time of economic uncertainty to effect positive change. He suggested that by overcoming a ''cargo cult' mentality that [had] sapped local initiatives' the cynical 'victimized' perception of a 'self-indulgent' community could be altered through strong civic leadership' (1996, pp.47-57). In some quarters both Docherty's and Dick's proposals of a perpetual community ethos founded on a lack of autonomy may (since Newcastle's de-industrialization) be classed as outdated or field-specific, and therefore narrowly focused. But the idea that Newcastle's 'character' is likely to feature an 'inferiority complex' and a recurring *expectation* to substantiate the local worth of its environment and its people, remains a consistent discursive theme in its *ongoing* identity construction through various representations.

A relatively recent example of the *requirement* for endorsement of Newcastle as a worthy socio-cultural 'category' can be seen in the *Newcastle Herald* feature story *'Underground Exposure'* (Scanlon 2005, p.14). The article included information about a '[recently] released novel by Broadmeadow author Greg Bogaerts titled *Black Diamonds and Dust*' (ibid) [27]. The novel is a work of fiction and the author drew on his personal habitus, his familial connections, and his concerted interest in local coalmining histories to create a complex narrative that '[goes] beyond the novel's coalmining setting and explore themes of community, the struggles of a real outsider and wider issues of society' (ibid) [28]. The novelist's cultural production *and* his narrative construction invite readers to ponder how socially constituted categories of distinction may contribute to 'the construction of identity…[which] is itself in response to difference, or more simply, the recognition of an 'us' and 'them'…' (Mouffe cited in Duffy 2000, p.115). Significantly, Bogaerts' experiences with the publishing trade also showed evidence of persistent field constraints that judged his 'insider' position and

[27] Broadmeadow is an inner-city suburb of Newcastle.

[28] 'Bogaerts admits in past decades to having been a schoolteacher, solicitor, BHP laborer and taxi driver' (Scanlon 2005, p.15).

hence his productive output, as parochial and insular, suggesting creative changes were required to meet 'outsider' demands:

> A number of NSW publishers were interested but rejected it out of hand. They wanted me to rewrite it and have it set in Sydney. As I said then, it's pretty difficult to write a novel about Hunter Valley coalmining set on Bondi Beach. (Bogaerts cited in Scanlon 1995, p.15)

As the preceding discussion shows, local and national media representations featuring 'Novocastrian' attributes of working-class tenacity and determinations have the potential to be interpreted in ways that reflect either positively or negatively on portrayals of the city's identity. Either way, these meanings and perceptions contribute to what Rigney refers to as a 'social constructivist' approach to the development of cultural memories where 'cultural memory is not so much a reservoir in which images of the past are gradually deposited by some ongoing spontaneous process. Instead, it is the historical product of cultural mnemotechniques and mnemotechnologies' (2004, p.366). A powerful example of Rigney's concept is discussed in McGuirk & Rowe's 2001 article *'Defining moments' and refining myths in the making of place identity: the Newcastle Knights and the Australian Rugby League Grand Final'*. In this publication the researchers critique the roles various local and national media enacted in reconstituting a positive imagery for Newcastle out of the local rugby league team's success in the 1997 national competition. The article implies that working-class mythologies which at the time of de-industrialization (early 1990s) had been aligned with city degradation, and a culturally obsolete, 'dirty' past, were re-appropriated in 1997 through media practices:

> The team's struggle against the odds, 'home grown', working-class pedigree, team spirit and 'larrikin' personality, were juxtaposed repeatedly with the received narratives and images of a provincial heavy industrial city distinguished by a beleaguered community spirit, solidarity, and tenacity through adversity. (McGuirk & Rowe 2001, p.56)

Subsequently, within the communicative framework of sporting symbolic capital, these mythologies came to be represented as *beneficial*, *progressive* and *valuable* community signifiers.

The temporal framework for the Newcastle football team's achievement was also significant to the Newcastle community in terms of what Williams refers to as a 'structure of feeling…the culture of a period…the living result of all the elements in the general organization' (1965, p.64). 1997 was the year that Newcastle celebrated its bicentenary of European discovery:

> For the city's 1997 bicentennial commemorations the Newcastle City Council established its own Bicentennial Events Corporation (BEC)...[which] developed a program of events…focusing on supporting the visual arts, theatres and small community-based initiatives…this attempt to emphasize the arts came in the context of economic change, de-industrialization and a conscious attempt to re-imagine the city's identity. (Eklund 2007, pp.138-139)

Consequently, throughout this time frame a number of local cultural productions proliferated to not only draw widespread attention to some of the artistic practices themselves, but to the themes and messages they conveyed, especially in regard to the communication of Newcastle's cultural identity. For example, the aforementioned *Novocastrian Tales* project 'a collection of short stories contributed by 43 Hunter-linked authors' was touted by then NSW Deputy Premier, Health Minister and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Dr Andrew Refshauge as being 'representative of a place where unity between people matters' and a project that provided 'an inspiring example of community cooperation' (cited in Scanlon 1997, p.3). Dr Refshauge's comments about 'community' ideals and aspirations were pertinent for a number of reasons. The *Novocastrian Tales* Project had a broader goal then simply commemorating 'Newcastle and the Hunter Valley's Bicentenary' (*Newcastle Herald* 8 September 1997, p.5) or serving the reading needs of Newcastle residents and/or wider audiences for the product. In May 1997 the project had 'received a boost when the Australian Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation [had] awarded it a NSW State award in a national contest designed to recognize efforts at reconciling black and white communities' (*Editorial* 1998, p.10). From its inception, the proceeds from the sales of *Novocastrian Tales* had been slated for the construction of 'Yallarwah - the name means `resting place' -…a hostel for Aboriginal relatives of patients at [Newcastle's] John Hunter Hospital' (*Editorial* 1999, p.6) 'designed by Aborigines to cultural specifications' (Waldren 1997, p.28) with the NSW State Government pledging additional financial support for the building. So, from the outset this cultural production had the potential to disseminate very positive perceptions of a 'Newcastle' community ambition with altruistic

intentions 'another case of Hunter people doing their bit to make life easier for people in need' (*Editorial* 1999, p.6), especially in regard to Indigenous patients and their families. Interestingly, the production itself met with what could be construed as a significant 'local' systematic constraint in the sense that funding had been 'knocked back by the Bicentenary Events Corporation (BEC)' (Watson 1999, p.9) mainly because the 'plans to put profits towards the…Aboriginal Accommodation Centre' contravened the BEC's charter prohibiting charitable donations (Quinn 1997, p.8). However, as Newcastle reporter Roderick Quinn proclaimed despite this setback 'the volunteers persevered' finally producing:

> …a handsome, meaningful volume that weaves stories of the black and white Hunter experience, marks for posterity the Bicentenary, sidesteps political correctness and literary elitism and makes a bricks-and-mortar contribution to the Aboriginal community and the city. (ibid)

Local media played a strong role in promoting the book by publishing excerpts from it (Worthington 1998, p.2) [29]; holding short story writing competitions that were judged by the editor and awarded by contributing authors (*Newcastle Herald* 2 December 1997, p.2; Toddhunter 1998, p.17); and providing information about purchasing details and book signings (*Newcastle Herald* 13 December 1997, p.2; *Newcastle Herald* 17 December 1997, p.18; Bentley 1997, p.8). The *Newcastle Herald* reported on the book's 'strong pre-publication sales' as indicative of Novocastrians having 'a proud reputation for supporting their own, whether it be charitable causes or football teams' (*Editorial* 1997, p.12). *Novocastrian Tales* editor Paul Walsh explained that 'the Knights and the book [had] really put Newcastle in the national focus' describing both the Rugby League Grand Final win and *Novocastrian Tales* as events 'that [had] come out of the community, created from the area…[and attracted] national attention' (*Newcastle Herald* 24 September 1997, p.2) [30] . Some of the 'national attention' came through external newspaper sources. In *The Australian* journalist Murray Waldren reported that:

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[29] Author John Doyle's contribution: 'The town that changed my life' was also published in the *Sydney Morning Herald.*

[30] In his article 'Stories of Australia's Heartland', *The Canberra Times* journalist Christopher Bantick stated the 'material in the book [demonstrated] the diversity of ways that Newcastle and the Hunter Region [had] impacted on the literary imagination' (1997, p.27).

> The Newcastle spirit so evident in the recent rugby league grand final has literary echoes - despite tough times, the city is turning books into bricks. The recently released *Novocastrian Tales*, a series of essays and stories by local indigenous writers and contributors with a link to the Hunter region… has sold 7000 copies in the city. 'So what?' you may ask. Writers, publishers, printers and retailers all donated time and talent to the publication. (1997, p.28)

The article proceeded to explain the fundraising impetus for the project with an emphasis on the communal aspects of the production activities for a socially sanctioned outcome. It's the author's contention that the project's commitment to indigenous support was a predominant reason for a book of stories 'with a Hunter flavour' (*Editorial* 1998, p.10) that represented 'a celebration of Novocastrian life' (Quinn 1997, p.8) to have 'external' appeal beyond a local readership. In terms of sales, this interest in 'Newcastle' stories was realized when the 'first stocks in ABC shops in Sydney, Canberra and Melbourne…sold out' requiring a third and final print run to occur (Bentley 1997, p.8). Eventually 'more than 13000 copies' of *Novocastrian Tales* were sold which was described as 'a remarkable result for a book with a relatively narrow appeal' (*Editorial* 1998, p.10). It may be argued that these sales provided testimony that stories *of* Newcastle carry value and meaning beyond the scope of the city, and this was so also for a theatrical work centering on a Newcastle narrative, that was performed during Newcastle's Bicentenary year.

Essington Lewis: I Am Work, was performed at Sydney's Belvior Street Theatre in July 1997 [31]. According to *Sydney Morning Herald* Theatre Critic Angela Bennie, since its first 'Hunter Valley Theatre Company production in Newcastle in 1981' and its 'Sydney Theatre Critics' Circle Award in 1985… *Essington Lewis* [had become] known as the "Newcastle play"' with the protagonist's steel industry work ethic symbolizing a definition of the place as 'a city created around a job…at BHP' (1997, p.13). In speaking of its authorship Bennie stated that the play had been 'written by a true blue Novocastrian' (John O'Donoghue) and that its 'tragic dimensions' were 'cloaked with song, dance and vaudevillian knockabout comedy found in workers' clubs around the world' (ibid). Her appraisal of the production continued to signify identifiers of

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[31] *Essington Lewis I Am Work* also had a season at Newcastle's Civic Theatre in 1997 (Longworth 2002, p.48).

constructions of Newcastle people as hardworking, adaptable, resilient, honest, and authentic 'types' with a strong thread of community-mindedness embedded in their lifestyles. Referring to Newcastle's theatrical scene more generally, Bennie argued that a 'particularly Novocastrian' trait connected to local theatre was that it seemed 'to spring as a direct response, from its artists and its citizens, to its perception of itself as a group, a community' and especially as 'a direct response to communal trauma' (1997, p.13). Both of the films chosen for analysis in this thesis developed from theatrical pieces that were predicated on local community responses to tragic events that had had devastating regional effects. These were instances when Newcastle's sense of itself was re-awakened through extraordinary local events attracting exceptional 'outside' attention. Both of these 'events' occurred in 1989. The first was the November 3 killing of a 14-year-old Stockton girl who had attended 'an unsupervised birthday party held at the old North Stockton Surf Club' (Milsom 1998b, p.7) [32]:

> The rape and murder of Leigh Leigh was an extraordinary crime in terms of its sheer brutality, and the immaturity of the victim and perpetrator. Unusual too was the volume and duration of the discussion which has been generated by the case. The Newcastle and Sydney mass media, perhaps intrigued by the victim's exotically homographic first name and surname, reported Leigh Leigh's death widely, and with greater than usual persistence.
> (Morrow & San Roque 1996, p.474)

Leigh Leigh's homicide served as a catalyst for multiple interpretations of Newcastle's community reputation/s to be presented for public scrutiny. A significant outcome of the original crime and the discursive content generated from it was the production of two plays: *A Property of the Clan* (1994) and *Blackrock* (1996), and the film *Blackrock* (1997, S. Vidler *Dir*.). In Chapter 8 of this thesis the cultural production activities surrounding both plays and films are explored through the application of Bourdieu's habitus to explain how predominant 'Newcastle' meanings have been communicated through these practices. Similarly, in Chapter 9 the actual film is analyzed, again by applying habitus to explain how perceptions of Newcastle's 'identity' may continue to

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[32] 'Stockton lies at the end of a peninsula, cut off from Newcastle by the port and the Hunter River to the west. It's a ferry ride from Newcastle or roughly 20 km away along the only road into town. With about 2,000 residents, it's more a country town than a suburb of NSW's second city' (Rose 1997, p.13).

be conveyed through the film story.

The other 1989 Newcastle event which had a profound and protracted effect on the city's people and its community character/s was the December 28 Newcastle earthquake. 'At 10.27 am on Thursday, 28 December, 1989, the City of Newcastle was devastated by a ML 5.6 (Richter magnitude) earthquake. This was one of the most serious natural disasters in Australia's history' (*Newcastle City Council* 2006 online) Just as the aforementioned local crime propagated a raft of mediated content and the purposeful production of related cultural texts, so too did this natural disaster. The play *Aftershocks* was 'conceived by the Workers Cultural Action Committee as a community arts project in response to the 1989 Newcastle earthquake' (Brown 2001, p.vii). Author and actor Paul Makeham explained the potential of the play to convey Novocastrian meanings, stating that the phenomenological aspects of the production were powerful communicative tools:

> While the text makes many references to Newcastle as a complex of autonomous built structures (albeit many of them in ruin), the city itself emerges as more than the sum of its physical parts. Both as a location and an idea, it becomes closely aligned and in some senses inseparable from the individuals who live in it. (1998, pp.168-169)

This narrative material was also re-appropriated and became the chronicle foundation for the 1998 film *Aftershocks* (G. Burton *Dir*.), In the next chapter the cultural production activities involved in the making of the play and film *Aftershocks* are examined within the theoretical framework of habitus to explain how meanings pertaining to the city's culture have been generated through these practices. Likewise, in Chapter 7, the film itself is analyzed, again to explain how perceptions of Newcastle's identity through representation may continue to be understood. As Williams suggests:

> Since our way of seeing things is literally our way of living, the process of communication is in fact the process of community: the sharing of common meanings, and thence common activities and purposes; the offering, reception and comparison of new meanings, leading to the tensions and achievements of growth and change. (Williams 1965, p.55)

Both *Blackrock* and *Aftershocks* were filmed during preparations and celebrations for Newcastle's Bicentenary when the city's self-perception *and* its external regard were

given a heightened level of interest through additional cultural productions, and through increased media attention. The contextual production of these films and the initial play texts, plus the roles they played and continue to play in communicating various Newcastle 'insights' and in contributing to the city's habitus, is the subject of the analyses that follow.

Chapter 6 – *Aftershocks*: Producing Culture Through Practice

'You can't cement a text in concrete…it's got to move and grow and there's [sic] different creative teams dealing with it in every manifestation and I recognize that, because you can't stabilize things in that way. But there's this human element…'
(WCAC Arts Administrator 1999, pers. comm., 29 October)

This chapter of the thesis analyses some of the cultural production processes involved in the making of various incarnations of *Aftershocks*, to understand how communicative agents connected with its textual construction, contribute to the representation of the city's habitus, and subsequent perceptions about Newcastle's identity. The discussion includes important background information regarding the life-changing experiences of *Aftershocks'* protagonists, to explain how the 'authorship' of the text developed through collaborative community relationships, some of which existed prior to the story-making practices, and others which emerged through the 'space of possibilities' (Bourdieu 1996) the text's conception and design accommodated. Considering the dispositional activities that have influenced *Aftershocks'* 'assembly' from its inception, highlights the pivotal role that habitus, praxis and capital acquisition have played in the shaping of *Aftershocks*, and the role they continue to play in the ongoing 'anticipated knowledge of [its] probable reception' (Bourdieu 1996, p.197). As outlined in the earlier research methodology and literature review chapters, the following data has been drawn from inter-textual sources (scripts, reviews, newspaper articles and other published and online materials) and is combined with excerpts from my original interviewee transcripts to '*reconstruct* (no doubt a little artificially) the logic of the labour of writing [involved in the production of *Aftershocks*, within the] structural constraints of the field[s]' it materialized in [original emphasis] (ibid). The analysis tracks the production of *Aftershocks* from its 'seed' as a collection of localized, ordinary, and anecdotal mini-narratives (albeit instigated by an extraordinary geo-scientific event – an earthquake!) through to production-driven research interviews; scripting workshops; eventual theatre performances; a television docudrama; a contemporary dramatic play; and as a secondary and tertiary education resource.

In hindsight it's doubtful that most of those involved in the original play production of *Aftershocks* would have anticipated the multiple 'uses' the text would be put to, or foreseen its future functionality as an element of disparate field participations (media

discourse, academic research, dramatic performances) and hence, ongoing cultural productions: [33]

> Conceived by the Workers Cultural Action Committee as a community arts project in response to the 1989 Newcastle earthquake, *Aftershocks* has been a set of taped interviews, a stage play, a touring production, fragments of radio, the subject of popular and academic writing, and a feature film.
> (Brown & WCAC 2001, p.vii)

In its conception phase, the initial impetus for the narrative to develop as it did came from those citizens directly involved in the earthquake of 28 December1989. While the earthquake which occurred at 10.28am that day was, in a relative sense, of a minor magnitude, registering 5.6 on the Richter scale, it was the first in Australian history to record a loss of life with 13 people falling victim to it. Eleven of those died at the nationally iconic Newcastle Workers Club. In addition there were also approximately 160 people injured. A number of ordinary working-class people had endured what was for them unprecedented hardship and suffering of both a physical and/or psychological nature. For those Workers Club-focused residents for whom the site held very personalized meanings, their place of work and recreation had been destroyed, requiring immense psychological and physical adjustments. One of them, '[Lyn] Brown had been a club employee since the age of 19' (Joyce 1998b, p.6), another had 'been there two and a half years, [and] knew everybody who was killed there that day, workers and customers' (Turnbull cited in Harford 1995, p.13). Following the earthquake, what appeared to be *disinterest* on the part of institutional bodies to address local needs, was an extra hardship to overcoming the catastrophic events of late 1989:

> Sluggishness by governments and insurance companies, insurance rorts, lack of funding for emergency reconstruction, dislocation from homes or workplaces and grief all hit home. There was a desire for closure in Newcastle – for the story of the earthquake to end. (Brown & WCAC 2001, p.viii)

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[33] Paul Makeham, an original cast member and researcher on the project published a Chapter: 'Community stories: *'Aftershocks'* and verbatim theatre' in V Kelly (ed.) *Our Australian theatre in the 1990s*, in 1998. An interview with Makeham about his early involvement in *Aftershocks* appears in a 2005 Audiovisual Kit: Stinson, M & Wall, D, *Dramactive*, McGraw-Hill, Sydney. The *Aftershocks* film can be ordered online through Ronin Films – an 'Educational Video & DVD Sales' distributor. A hyperlink to Carrodus' Study Guide pdf is included on the site: <http://www.roninfilms.com.au/video/1886377/0/1832052.html>

Significantly, within the framework of perceived bureaucratic complacency, anecdotal conversations about the earthquake's effects, as well as its *affects* began to gain potency. As Pennells points out, 'more than a third of the city had taken out an insurance claim or legal action and a coronial inquiry had just taken place' (1998, p.5).

In this context, in 1990, the ideologically motivated Workers Cultural Action Committee responded to hearing about ordinary stories of local people whose daily living had been adversely affected by the earthquake in a number of ways:

> The committee itself, as a collective, had thought after December 28, 1989, that it would be a good idea to have some sort of response to the earthquake in Newcastle cultural terms because its brief was along the lines of art work and projects, so…we thought it would be a good idea if other people in the community wanted to, do a project about the earthquake - specifically as it related to workers, members and their families. So that's where it started. Some people were concerned about wider perceptions of Newcastle in the quake and wanted to be heard that way. Other people just wanted it [their story] to be heard amongst the club community. (WCAC AA, pers. comm.)

The team behind the *Aftershocks* project started as a 'voluntary sub-committee of Newcastle Trades Hall Council in 1974' with a mandate to make artwork and create dialogue through 'collaborative arts projects' facilitating 'strategic ventures between unions, working people and the broader community' (*WCAC* 2004 online). The Workers Cultural Action Committee is affiliated with several local organizations and individuals (Trades Hall, Newcastle Workers Club, University of Newcastle, individual artists) comprising a 'network concerned with cultural development among Newcastle workers and their families' (Brown & WCAC 2001, p.viii). As the WCAC's title suggests, one of the key characteristics of the group's field position within the parameters of Newcastle's labour history relationships, has been to offer a forum for working-class locals to be *heard*, through artistic expression embodying ideological underpinnings. From a sociological standpoint the activities of the WCAC demonstrate that 'social essence is the set of those social attributes and attributions produced by the act of institution as a solemn act of categorization which tends to produce what it designates' (Bourdieu 1991, p.121).

Paradoxically, it could be argued the WCAC's position as an organization committed to *supporting* the subordinate working-class of Newcastle, reconstitutes the 'defense narrative' aspect of Newcastle's identity, *at the same time* as it seeks to address disempowerment issues on behalf of the city's residents. These particular social-cultural conditionings illustrate that:

> Subjects in and of a field are shaped, constrained and disposed towards thoughts and actions through their immersion in, and their incorporation of, the (explicit and implicit) rules, procedures, rituals, mechanisms, capital and values of the field. (Schirato & Webb 2003, p.545)

So while the WCAC's primary 'charter' had been to facilitate sociologically-driven artistic production within the Newcastle community, the group's habitus continued to instill notions of regionalized oppression. The ongoing practices of the WCAC may, in effect, remind Novocastrians and 'outsiders' that Newcastle working-class people are dominated institutionally, potentially endowing them with a 'sense of incompetence, failure or cultural unworthiness' (Bourdieu 1984, p.386).

Frustrated by official constraints outside of their control, some 'disenfranchised' citizens made decisions to participate in the *Aftershocks* project. These citizens were keen to make known some of the 'invisible' events connected with the earthquake which could have been 'misinterpreted by the mainstream media' (Phillips cited in Pennells 1998, p.5) In Bourdieu's terms it could be argued that those people whose motivations for telling their stories were community-minded yet philosophically-grounded, adapted to their 'conditions of existence' and developed a 'defense against them' (1984, p.395). This concept was evident in Scriptwriter Paul Brown's discussion of the production intent when he explained that 'in devising *Aftershocks* we wanted to devise a story about a struggle not yet won, rather than any romantic conclusion about community spirit conquering all' (Brown 1995, p.451).

> We got funding…and we got it very enthusiastically actually. Once the whole thing started and we got the a-ok, then I asked those people [the Workers Club constituents] to form, I formed a steering committee so they had control over it. They were telling me who to talk to - in terms of stories. So there was always this committee of people who were effected, who steered the whole thing, and they'd tell me who to go to talk to and who they'd like to tell their story. And then I'd arrange all that according to them because that was my job. It wasn't a case of the

> committee thinking up an idea…'we want to do a play about the earthquake', because, that would just be for us, and it's not our project.
> (WCAC AA, pers. comm.)

The above explanation of some of the shared relationships involved in the initial development of the *Aftershocks* story show that throughout various production stages, the Arts Administrator had a highly-developed sense of their own professional position, an awareness of their habitus, and an appreciation of the dispositions of other project participants, As Greenwood and Levin argue:

> Practitioners of *techne* do engage with local stakeholders, power holders, and other experts, often being contracted by those in power to attempt to achieve positive social changes. Their relationship to the subjects of their work is often close and collaborative, but they are first and foremost professional experts who do things "for", not "with", the local stakeholders. [original emphasis] (2005, p.51)

Despite the various position-takings involved in the storytellers' 'intentions' there was strong belief that at this stage of the narrative development, 'the workers at the club were really doing this for each other…others got a really developing sense of wanting Newcastle as a whole to know' (WCAC AA, pers. comm.). The stories being told at this stage revealed individual distinctions between *Aftershocks'* participants, indicative of their personal habitus':

> Habitus designates the system of durable and transposable *dispositions* through which we perceive, judge, and act in the world. These unconscious schemata are acquired through lasting exposure to particular social conditions and conditionings, via the internalization of external constraints and possibilities. This means that they are shared by people subjected to similar experiences even as each person has a unique individual variant of the common matrix.
> [original emphasis] (Wacquant 1998, p.221)

This habitus, and the stories that each person was disposed to tell as a result of holding it, became the basis for the genesis of the stage play which was to evolve as a piece of verbatim theatre.

From its inception, the circumstances of *Aftershocks'* growth and the substance of its material, were directly centered on its classification as a co-operative blending of community stories. Because of these conceptual and cultural demands, it was decided

that the most adequate formulation for the treatment of the personal recounts was to design them in a verbatim performance mode. 'One of the things that witness-based work can do is remind people that their own stories, and the stories of people in their own world, are anything but untouchable' (Millar cited in Marchand 2008, p.5). Because of its 'testimonial' style verbatim performance is often referred to as 'documentary-on-stage' (Wynhausen 1993, p.38; Burchall 1995, p.20), with the process of its construction also contributing to perceptions of storytelling 'truths'. 'Although mediated by a complex process of recording, transcription, editing and performance, the authenticity of these accounts remains relatively uncompromised' (Makeham 1998, 168). According to Paget, verbatim theatre is a genre style, 'firmly predicated on the taping and subsequent transcription of interviews with "ordinary" people, done in the context of research into a particular region, subject area, issue, event, or combination of these things' (1987, p.317).

Aftershocks' specialized co-authoring has been the subject of much media discourse about the text, most of which presents the verbatim process in a positive light:

> Unpaid volunteers including committee members, trade unionists, club workers and management, started interviewing survivors. More than 250,000 words of transcript from 50 hours of tape were handed over to writer Paul Brown who turned it into a play using a string of stories and conversations as its narrative. (Pennells 1998, p.5)

> The script is a distillation of more than 300 hours of taped accounts from survivors. (Carroll 1995, p.7)

> Brown and eight researchers compiled hundreds of hours of taped interviews. (Burchall 1995, p.20)

Paget explains that within docudrama styles 'writers and producers often claim 'voluminous research' as an article of faith in their pursuit of the authentic' (2002, p.35) and this has been so, as demonstrated above, in terms of the cultural intermediaries who reported on the play's development.

Aftershocks' genre categorization as a product of verbatim methods was something that its institutional funding support was based on but this was not the only reason for the style to be adopted. As the Arts Administrator for the Workers Cultural Action

Committee venture explained:

> Even before Paul [Brown, the scriptwriter] came onto the scene…we went out and talked to people who worked in the Workers Club, 'cause the Workers Club was where [most] people died. And they were our constituency in terms of our constitution and charter, if you like. So, we talked to those people, various people around, who worked in the club, and that was my first job, to go and talk to people and say, 'Do you want anything done about this? How do you feel about this? Would you like a cultural project about this?' - not even saying 'play', and the response overwhelming [sic] was 'yes'. (WCAC AA, pers. comm.)

Once the decision was taken to proceed it's clear that practices of administrative exclusion inclined some *Aftershocks* contributors towards allowing their experiences to enter the public realm, with a view to the stories presenting an otherwise *unrepresented* perspective on the earthquake's community impacts. Disenchantment with local authorities was a catalyst for some people to participate, as was a distrust of 'the media's' ability to accurately or appropriately report content that was in the community's interest. 'John Constable [was not] named in any of the contemporary reports and articles about the quake published in the *Newcastle Herald*' (Phillips 1998, p.198) [34]. However, within the field of *Aftershocks'* production context *itself*, some exclusionary practices amongst the storytellers (which interestingly, eventually featured in the narrative content of *Aftershocks*) also occurred:

> I was a researcher on it [the *Aftershocks* original project] as well as the Arts Organizer. For instance a guy I interviewed had never got to tell his story before because he was outside Newcastle when it happened and he was flying back. And one of the first things that I'll never forget, when I interviewed him, one of the first things he said to me was, 'I haven't talked about this before'. And I realized then how there was this exclusion thing going on. People felt that [they] didn't really have that big a right to talk if they weren't there. So it was quite a cathartic thing for him I think when he first talked, and he actually broke down when he told us in the interview. (WCAC AA, pers. comm.)

> I was working away in Western Australia temporarily for 3 months…Qantas bent over backwards for me. I had excess bags, and they didn't charge me. And I got back here Saturday morning because the jet, the plane leaving Perth broke down on the tarmac…People raise their eyebrows I know that. 'What the stuff's he got to do with it? He wasn't here!' But they said it added another dimension to it.

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[34] John Constable was employed as a cleaner at the Newcastle Workers Club and was on duty at the time the earthquake struck. He took part in a number of rescues including that of his supervisor Lyn Brown.

(ES 1999, pers. comm., 14 October)

This particular interviewee has a strong background in industrial relations, trade union negotiations and a strong socialist disposition. Additionally, he had been employed as a waterfront worker and was 'in Fremantle at the time of the quake, and we were loading a ship' (Character E, Act 2, Scene 14, p.31). He also held the position as a former Newcastle Workers Club Board Director. Despite his spatial dislocation at the time of the earthquake, and his perceived marginalized status as a worthwhile contributor to the early *Aftershocks* research, ES' personalized histories of 'fighting the cause' (through his industrialized habitus) held him in good stead to 'add another dimension' of socio-cultural depth to the project's narrative. This potential was recognized during the research process, when the Workers Cultural Action Committee Arts Administrator 'interviewed ES, whom she knew from Trades Hall committees' perpetuating an 'established relationship' (Brown & WCAC 2001, p.xiii) founded on collectivist principals of inclusion.[35] 'I really think he felt he didn't have the right to speak about it' (WCAC AA, pers. comm.).

Additionally, throughout the author's interview with this person his politically-motivated and community-focused ethos was also exposed when he stated:

> Well I've asked why he [John Constable] didn't get a medal. I've asked how you go about him being recognized. And the person I asked, who is a Member of Parliament, has just conveniently forgotten. If any person wants to get it, he should get it - one who deserves to get it, not wants, deserves to. And he does - not some of the people who came in later. (ES, pers. comm.)

It appears as though a large part of ES' dispositional drive had been (and continues to be) predicated on actions and dialogue enabling social equity issues to be questioned. In this regard his inclinations draw 'attention to the extent to which actions can become

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[35] In the author's interview with the WCAC Arts Administrator they revealed that they'd: 'dragged [ES] into being a spokesperson a lot' and 'he'd done a lot of public speaking for the project, so he was more practiced…We went to an *Oral History Association of Australia Conference* together, he, Paul [Brown] and I' (WCAC AA, pers. comm.). ES's acquisition of extended cultural capital fits with Zevenbergen, Edwards & Skinner's explanation of how one may attain symbolic capital: 'agents take on board the culture, or the habitus of the field, and as they amass more capital they become more powerful, gaining more control and legitimacy, so becoming empowered to speak for others' (2002 online).

un-reflexive practices, and even deeply embedded habitual behaviours, without ever losing their strategic properties' (Peterson 2005, p.131). These personal traits were also apparent in the response ES gave when the author posed a question asking how important it was for the Newcastle community's earthquake experiences to be shared in the first place:

> Well, modern media today doesn't get to the real core issues, and what I mean by that is that they don't talk about the real people, they gloss… Where you tell the truth about a story, is to me more important, and that style [of *Aftershocks'* preparation and process] that method to me, will deliver a clearer picture to the public than…all that other Hollywood and television today…which is what - 5 seconds of your life? (ES, pers. comm.)

ES' lack of confidence in the mainstream media to produce appropriate community-interest rather than industry-induced content, aligns with Bourdieu's ideas about the 'decentering of sense and meaning in TV journalism' where 'media language sets up oppositions: for example: rich/poor, bourgeois/the masses – notions which go to the heart of the worker movement' (Grenfell 2004, p.94). Importantly, in relation to the author's own research imperative, ES' personal opinions, expressed within the context of the WCAC's research and production activities, and eventually encoded within *Aftershocks'* textual representation, also embody 'defense narratives' pertinent to the way Newcastle may be perceived. In a more generalized sense, the scepticism surrounding the likely potential for inaccurate media representations of the city to prevail, has also predisposed Novocastrians to participate in acts promoting public unity, reinforcing perceptions of a city that collectively 'stands together'.

A key dynamic of the WCAC's production intent was to enable ordinary Newcastle people to speak of their experiences and to do so within a relatively 'safe' environment they were naturally accustomed to. 'Agency is always the result of a coming together of the habitus and the specific cultural fields and contexts in which agents 'find themselves', in both senses of the expression' (Schirato & Webb 2003 pp.540-541).

> The WCAC said: 'anyone who wants to give a brief account of what actually happened in the earthquake could they see such and such'. They [the interviewers] made certain times, and supposedly most people talked for half an hour, an hour, or 10 minutes or whatever. Four and a half hours later - I finally finished telling what I had to say about the earthquake. (laughs)

(JC 1999, pers. comm., 15 October)

Even though initially there was a relatively 'open' system for the story research to take place 'it did involve anybody who wanted to be involved. I mean some people didn't want to be involved at all. They couldn't stand the thought of reliving it' (JO 1999, pers. comm., 5 November), at the outset, the WCAC made certain stipulations as to the conditions under which the storytelling would transpire. Essentially, the members from the WCAC conducted their own 'interpretive research' which according to Deetz:

> …appears motivated to save or record a life form with its complexity and creativity before it is lost…The concern with community is often connected with the maintenance of a traditional sense of shared values and common practices. (2001, p.23)

In keeping with the WCAC's concerns to respect the sensitivities of those people who were willing to let their story be known, it was decided that a 'one-to-one relationship [would be] established between interviewer and interviewee…all the interviews in some way depended on the dynamic produced by [familiar] relationships' (Brown & WCAC 2001, p.xiii). Commenting on some of his own research practices, Bourdieu spoke of the beneficial outcomes of personal interviewing, arguing, 'it is the uncovering of immanent structures contained in the contingent statements of a discrete interaction that alone allows one to grasp the essential of each [person's] idiosyncrasy and all the singular complexity of [their] actions and reactions…' (1999, p.618).

> Not only did I set up a steering committee, I got together a team of researchers to go and do the interviews. And I chose those people that understood the theory and practice of community theatre and community cultural development, so they were all…had all even done Honours or whatever in it - in the drama department, and had practical experience. (WCAC AA, pers. comm.)

While the interview relationships generally involved understandings of a shared community agenda and a social benevolence, from the WCAC's position, they also combined the specialized habitus of individuals skilled in the practices of communicative critique. These operational contingencies had direct bearings on the information the storytellers felt 'comfortable' disclosing. When asked by the author about how much the WCAC researcher guided him throughout the original *Aftershocks*

interview process, one interviewee replied: 'She allowed me to ramble on through it, because as now, as then, it was emotional for me…she had set questions but it [the dialogue exchange] just expanded on each one' (ES, pers. comm.). Consequently, the conversational intimacy established throughout the interview stages of *Aftershocks'* development, continued to enhance the production work to follow, eventually complementing the textual effectiveness of the final script.

> With the nature of this particular type of project, it's not one person like a producer or a creative team, a director, writer deciding 'we want to get this up in performance and then tape it to go on the street and then it can go to Melbourne, and then it can be licensed out, and then we'll go to film'. It was never in a small group of hands…and that's been the incredible thing, the challenge about it. (WCAC AA, pers. comm.)

The prospect of *Aftershocks* developing as a noteworthy cultural artifact beyond the scope of its initial production was promising but from this point the WCAC guided the project toward acquiring professional expertise.

> We were meeting [writers] who had expertise in community and cultural development, art and reading life etc. We wanted someone who was experienced in community cultural development, performance projects…it couldn't have just been a playwright per se. (WCAC AA, pers. comm.)

> In consultation with some representatives from state and federal funding bodies, arts funding bodies, [we said] 'we're looking for a writer with all these things, who would you recommend?' And then we got a big list, and we approached them…He had a really strong CV of understanding the principles of that kind of work rather than the more traditional, common sense or mythical understanding of a writer who just...thinks something themselves and writes it by themselves. He was very strongly aware of community participation and control, in the process, which is what we wanted. (WCAC AA, pers. comm.)

Paul Brown was employed as 'Community Writer in Residence in late November 1990' (Brown & WCAC 2001, p.ix). As Fowler argues, 'within the huge field of symbolic goods, value is related to the time a product lasts or its felt durability, criteria which are intricately linked to the distinction of either producers or consumers' (Fowler 1997, p.161). As far as Paul Brown was concerned symbolic value had been attributed to the newly employed *Aftershocks* scriptwriter through the cultural capital he'd previously acquired working with sociologically-focused and regionally-based community groups

[36]. Brown's credentials as a 'distinctive producer', established through his praxis, then impacted on the ways *Aftershocks'* planning and intended coding was proposed to funding bodies by other field participants: [37] 'A…grant application to the Literature Board of the Australia Council' stipulated 'that the play he would write would not be a conventional one, but a piece of verbatim theatre' (Phillips 1998, p.208).

Consequently, the writer's prior 'community theatre work in which local stories were the fundamental building blocks of the drama' (Brown & WCAC 2001, p.xii) had a bearing on institutionalized decisions made about the economic viability of the project getting started, *as well as* opinions about the suitability of his position in its formulation. Furthermore, it was anticipated that Brown's dispositional sensitivities would show that he knew 'in a non-logical intuitive way the nature of emotions' and could therefore help to create 'forms that [would] enable the true expression of these emotions' producing through joint efforts an *Aftershocks* text embodying 'objectified feeling' (Codd 1988, p.10). One of the strategies designed to evoke 'feeling' was to implement original storytellers' recollections that included what Wetherell, Taylor and Yates refer to as 'emotion metaphors':

> Emotion categories are not graspable merely as individual feelings or expressions, and nor is their discursive deployment reducible to a kind of detached, cognitive sense making. They are discursive phenomena and need to be studied as such, as part of how talk performs social actions. (2001, p.242)

In the following scene of the play, a husband and wife (Workers' Club maintenance worker and patron recreation activities coordinator respectively) describe the events when the earthquake struck:

```
ACT 1, SCENE 3:
                                Character FA:
      'And as I went to walk away, everything started to shake
      and shudder. I'll never forget the noise. And the timbers
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[36] Brown 'started out as a scientist in geo-chemistry' co-founded 'Sydney's Death Defying Theatre…worked on documentaries, in community theatre (Coal Town, Murray River Story) and coordinated the campaign division of Greenpeace Australia' (Burchall 1995, p.20).
[37] 'Grants from the Performing Arts Board of the Australia Council, and the NSW Office of the Ministry for the Arts, provided the money for a professional production to be mounted' (Phillips 1998, p.209).

and that coming down.'

Character BA:

'The death of a building.'

Character FA:

'It was like a building in pain, like screeching, and groaning…and then total silence, as everything just settled. It came slowly. It was…it was agonizing. It was a terrible feeling.'

(Brown & WCAC 2001, p.7)

These are direct examples from the text that provide strong evidence for the 'power' of the language to communicate *Aftershocks'* highly personal and experiential stories in ways that may accommodate collective recognition. 'For a sense of place to emerge from a set of experiences, there needs to be a complex interplay of feeling and understanding which is then communicated' (Cameron n.d. online). Many reviews of *Aftershocks* emphasized the communicative potency of the play's dialogue:

> To invert the old cliché, it's a case of a word creating a thousand pictures. The survivors' statements are phlegmatic, understated, often ironic, funny, rarely sentimental but moving and disquieting. (Carroll 1995,p.7)

> The language is all verbatim transcription; and what vigorous, vivid language. (Payne 1993, p.135)

When one of the *Aftershocks* storytellers was asked to comment on the way the story dialogue was compiled post-transcription she stated: 'it was very, very verbatim. It was very verbatim. It was exact what was said. And nothing was tempered [sic] with at all' (EG 2000, pers.comm., 17 January). Interestingly, this exchange between the author and the former Newcastle Workers Club employee revealed precisely how some of the narrative 'ingredients' for the *Aftershocks* script may have revealed themselves (via recording analysis), and generatively, gained entry into the text:

> We added to the transcripts many of the sighs, laughs and other non-word sounds

> that accompanied the storytelling on tape. It is indeed the repetitions, convolutions, pauses, malapropisms, idiom, vocabulary and non-word sounds that make each character's voice as distinctive as a fingerprint.
> (Brown & WCAC 2001, p.xiv)

Some of the idiosyncratic dialogue that's been encoded in the text includes a Workers' Club cleaner who took part in the rescues: 'And I turn around and look back at the Club, and my jaw drops in unbelief you know. I can't believe what had happened' (Character JC Act 1, Scene 5, p.11); as well as a female bar attendant who assisted with first aid: 'I was thrown from the beer panel, and I hit the fridge. I must have lost my footage and I fell to the floor…' (Character KI Act 1, Scene 3, p.5). Furthermore, in responding to the author's questions about the 'ordinariness' of *Aftershocks'* language, and the collaborators' focus on speech patterns and dialogue, the Workers Cultural Action Committee Arts Administrator explained:

> That's implicit in the verbatim theatre model. You've got like a voiceprint. So whereas in conventional play writing terms someone might go interview someone and go write up dialogue and make up a character, they might ignore that person's idiolect completely. We try to respect the idio. (WCAC AA, pers. comm.)

This attention to 'the idio' aligns with Rosaldo's ethnographic approach to understanding 'the cultural construction of the self and the emotions' where the researcher claimed that 'cultural idioms provide the images in terms of which our subjectivities are formed' (1984, p.100). Similarly, Burman and Parker proclaim that 'language contains the most basic categories that we use to understand ourselves; affecting the way we act as women or as men…and reproducing the way we define our cultural identity' (1993. p.1). While Silverman claims that a 'stock of ordinary words comprises a 'natural sociology', a shared set of common-sense conceptual understandings' (1997, p.81.) In this regard, it may be argued that by adhering to the 'ordinariness' of the storytellers' idiolects resonant connections between their social positions, their personalities, and their experiences were meaningfully applied. 'It was…up to Brown, subject to the "authenticity control" of a steering committee of club workers and other unionists, to cull [the] mass of oral history and structure it into dramatic form' (Hoad 1993, p.82).

Much has been made of the scripting techniques' capacities to authentically embody the 'essence' of the storytelling characters and their testimonies, and these were used

extensively by Paul Brown. From the perspectives of the first-hand storytellers, Paul Brown's 'track record in community consultation processes' (WCAC AA, pers. comm.) and his ability to be 'totally diligent and responsible and thoughtful in keeping the words of the original people without embellishing them in any way' (JO pers. comm.) singled him out as a practitioner who brought to the production of *Aftershocks,* a degree of artistic integrity and an appreciation of the social power of 'ordinary' storytelling techniques. In terms of being trusted by the 'custodians of the story', the writer had 'also lived in Newcastle' which, according to the film's producer, meant he was 'not like the wicked outsider (laughs)…coming to steal your identity and take it and reuse it' (JO, pers. comm.). His habitus enabled him as an 'interlocuter-compiler' to develop a 'textual simulacrum of direct oral expressions' including '*popular speech and the devices of oral storytelling'* to create 'what semioticians call a "reality effect"' [original emphasis] (Beverley 2000, p.557). For, as Davis articulates, 'the strict verbatim form gives a sense of immediacy and authenticity' (2007, p.108). These proximal evaluations of narrative fidelity were concepts that were also endorsed by reviewer Tim Burvill when he proclaimed that 'this play centres in the grain and timbre of people's own telling, and the classed and gendered understandings those tellings constitute' (1995, p.156). Rundle also shared this view when he suggested that the 'economy' and 'plain beauty of much of the expression' resulted in 'well rendered representations of the accents and attitudes of a working town' (1995, p.19).

Brown's 'community' qualifications, and the valuable experience his professional habitus could bring to the production process, therefore influenced the potential for the 'felt durability' of *Aftershocks* to persist due to the shape it was likely to take and the relationships involved in its construction. These were issues that also impacted on the play's structural design and production logistics. 'The decision to create a play which could 'travel' meant crafting a reasonably tight piece for no more than six performers that could be performed in almost any space' (Brown & WCAC 2001, p.xiv) so that *Aftershocks* could become transportable and subsequently, its narrative longevity could be achievable.

Various *internal* performances of the play were then enacted in the scripting workshops that preceded the Novocastrian premiere, providing valuable input and leading to textual adjustments:

> We'd do readings of the play and then the people who gave their stories would comment on it, and that was all recorded and transcribed and then fed back to them and all the changes taken on board. Paul had 250 pages of interview transcripts that came down to 75. And people would say, 'Oh no, I really think this bit should go in…take that out and put that in' - so in that sense there was a growing developing sense from them [the original interviewees] because they were in touch with it a lot through these control mechanisms, like having meetings and feedback sessions. (WCAC AA, pers. comm.)

The shared dispositions of the *Aftershocks* team exemplified a working-class ethos that has also manifested itself in the final text. The process of achieving longevity for the narrative then gained significant impetus on its first public performance. A critical feature of the verbatim theatre genre is that productions are 'fed back into the communities (which have, in a real sense, created them), via performance in those communities' (Paget 1987, p.317). The kind of symbolic 'homecoming' Paget describes occurred when the *Aftershocks* play, worked up from interviews and reworked at rehearsals and readings, featured at the Newcastle Civic Playhouse in 1991, as Greg Burchall explains, 'Brown said opening night in Newcastle was a "doozy" with the actors and the people they were playing mixing in the foyer afterwards' (1995, p.20). The reviews were kind and, significantly, by making the details of *Aftershocks'* generation publicly known, media practitioners themselves also became engaged in reconstituting perceptions of Newcastle people as hard-working and irrepressible community-centered individuals.

However, once discharged from the site of its relatively 'safe' local position, *Aftershocks* was subject to a more extensive set of field relationships, some which may have diminished the text's symbolic potential and damaged positive perceptions of its local flavour. In *The Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field,* (1996) Bourdieu speaks of the kind of mediated activity the play met with as indicative of a *'problematic'* within a *'space of possibles'*, arguing 'the very effect of [a writer's] work may transform the conditions of its reception' [original emphasis] (p.233). One of the outcomes of crafting a play with essentially localized 'roots' for wider distribution, was that *Aftershocks'* mode, content and socio-cultural relevance were harshly judged, rather than favourably received once it left the confines of the locality it was rooted in. For example, in a review of a Melbourne (Victoria, Australia) play performance, Rundle

stated: 'community theatre rarely travels well because it is a community speaking to itself about itself…out of context it becomes shapelessness, its localism, parochialism' (1995, p.19). Also, in a review of the same performance, Kohn was critical of the play's 'documentary genre' and suggested 'the urgency on which the piece depends has faded with its removal from Newcastle (where it was first staged) and with the years' (1995 p.36). In direct reference to the site-specific natural disaster *Aftershocks'* narrative covers, Rundle argued: 'at this remove of time and space, the deep and searching examination of the psychological effects of the event seem almost excessive, a sort of community theatre meets *Oprah*' (1995, p.19). Nugent's review followed a similar line when she proposed: 'community theatre of this type attempts to please too many masters. It provides little more than post-trauma group de-briefing for participants and a particular audience' (1994, p.21). Apparently, these negative assessments found the detailed particularities of *Aftershocks'* stories, to be limiting rather than liberating. One critic suggested that 'it's not a play but testimony as theatre' (Carroll 1995, p.7) while another argued that, 'the telling of those tales can become self-indulgent and unworldly' (Rundle 1995, p.19). These accounts indicate that polysemic interpretations of *Aftershocks* are possible, as outlined previously, and that 'all texts stand on moving ground' (Kohler Riessman 1993, p.15). Perhaps more importantly, these discursive opinion-pieces show theatre critics as possessing 'embodied capital' which is 'incorporated in the individual and represents what they know and can do' within the field of media representation (Hayes 1997 online).

In terms of power relationships, this dispositional activity can mean that the valorization or the rejection of a cultural text such as *Aftershock*s, rests in the hands of its mediated treatment so that 'the media …takes on a special role as a site for contesting the authenticity of…representations' (Grenfell 2004, p.88). As well, reviewing practices, and indeed other media discourses related to *Aftershocks'* construction and reception, demonstrate that 'those who criticize the culture are those most likely to benefit from it, criticism presupposes cultural mastery' (Fowler 1997, p.24).

Payne in her article *'Reviewing theatre in draughty halls'* (1994), points out that although *Aftershocks* had already established a performance history, and Paul Brown had previously acquired 'a most impressive record as a community writer', that it wasn't until the play's mainstream run at Sydney's Belvoir Street Theatre (in 1993),

that he was 'hailed as a new writer, and much was made of the novelty of his verbatim theatre method' (1994, p.483). In this situation, the presentation of *Aftershock*s in a place outside of Newcastle did not see it meet with condemnation. Rather, in keeping with Bourdieu's conceptualization of a cultural object's possible 'reactivation' and 'mediation', as an 'object of the past' the play was not only 'preserved in its material substance…but rescued from symbolic death…and kept alive…as an object of contemplation and speculation' (Bourdieu 2000, p.212).

The larger metropolitan staging of *Aftershocks* at Belvoir Street Theatre, its removal from its city of origin where 'the 'characters'…or at least their words, were spoken by fellow members of the Newcastle community: activists, actor-academics, sharers of the communal shocks' (Burvill 1995, p.155), thereby encoding the text (and its performance) with a very *localized* kind of symbolic power, enabled *Aftershocks* to become an object of scrutiny within the field of theatrical practices:

> *Aftershocks*…instigated debate on the effectiveness, artistic force and viability of verbatim theatre *because it was at Belvoir Street*. The wealth of verbatim theatre that had been happening for years in community and regional venues had rarely attracted press comment. (Payne 1994, p.484) [author's emphasis]

Importantly, Payne's article stresses that appreciation of *Aftershocks'* discursive accomplishment, its style, structure and composition, gained wider professional recognition when a performance of it occurred at a 'mainstream theatre' in Sydney (ibid, p.483). Significantly, a Sydney-based endorsement of the text enabled it to acquire a capital status that the production had not previously been granted. This situation exemplifies the issue raised earlier in the thesis, that the deferral to external sources to validate Newcastle's cultural standing (in this case through textual sanctioning within the theatrical field), remains an ongoing feature of the city's identity construction.

In respect of localized sense-making assumptions based on Newcastle's 'inferior' relationship to the larger capital city, this perception was also embedded in Greg Burchall's play review, particularly as he recapped personal *Newcastle* responses to the actual earthquake: 'When the 'quake hit, there was a strange provincial reaction. People assumed it was the aftershock of a bigger shudder that had hit Sydney. Everything came

from Sydney' (1995, p.20). It was also encoded in Phillips' description of local media reports excluding earthquake-related content: 'It was not until 13 July 1993, when the [Newcastle] *Herald* featured an article on a Sydney theatre's production of the play *Aftershocks* that John [Constable]'s heroism was given adequate coverage' (1998, p.198).

Despite these implicit manifestations of the 'cultural cringe', scriptwriter Paul Brown's cultural capital had not *only* equipped him with 'empathy towards, appreciation for, [and] competence in deciphering cultural relations and cultural artifacts' (Johnson 1993, p.7), and was thus extremely pertinent to the creative conditions involved in the making of *Aftershocks*. It situated *him* and the *work* he and the Workers' Cultural Action Committee produced within fields where symbolic capital could be bestowed. For example, in 1999 one of the film's actors - Jeremy Simms (who played John Constable in a Sydney Theatre Production as well) won a 'Showtime Award for Best Performance by an Actor in A Leading Role in a Television Drama' (*Screen Australia* n.d. online)

> To the extent that awards measure 'value' and 'ownership'…in 1999…the film version of *Aftershocks* was honoured twice, once when the Australian Writers Guild awarded it Best Adaptation from a stage play to a telemovie, and again by being nominated for the NSW Premier's Literary Award. Previously, the play received the Newcastle Condor awards for its script and direction, and following the 1993 Belvoir Street production, it was nominated by the Sydney Critics' Circle as one of the best plays of that year. (Brown & WCAC 2001, p.xxv)

Significantly, with the exception of Simms' telemovie role, most of the symbolic capital associated with *Aftershocks* has been aligned with its classification as an innovative and unconventional literary text, because of the verbatim techniques involved in its original construction.

In the eighteen years since its first public performance in a 'three-week season' at the 'Newcastle Playhouse' (Brown & WCAC 2001, p.xix) *Aftershocks* has continued to be represented and reproduced in a number of different ways. Potentially, some of the meanings its content conveys about Newcastle and its people, for example the idea of community solidarity in the face of adversity supposedly typical of Newcastle, exemplified by character M declaring 'Wayne stayed actually inside the Club, and he kept going back in. Endless times…rescuing people' (Act 2, Scene 15, p.34), as well as

the idea of Newcastle as a place built on industry, exemplified by character E declaring that 'Lenny's been an old waterfront watchman' (Act 2, Scene 14, p.31), and character K stating 'my husband John's a miner's deputy' (Act 1, Scene 3, p.7) all have the capacity to be culturally endorsed within more recent communicative systems.

As an example, a review of a Queensland (Australia) theatre performance of the play, suggests that 'the…recollections of staff and patrons of the very popular Workers Club…provide a tapestry of the best and worst of the human psyche and spirit in the face of disaster' (Finney 2001 online). This review by Ron Finney categorically constructs Newcastle's working-class storytellers as 'survivors', rather than 'victims', thereby reinforcing the frequently circulated Novocastrian community 'qualities' of stoicism and endurance. Given the nature of the real events which were the catalyst for the later *Aftershocks'* stories, 'structured on the memories of survivors of the Newcastle earthquake which struck the then Steel City at 10.28am on 28 December 1989' (ibid), it's not a difficult task to identify the representation of Newcastle people generally, through this reviewer's work, as robust and resilient types. In terms of contemporizing the play's relevance, Finney's professional habitus enables him (especially as a non-local) to contribute to the construction and perceptions of Newcastle's identity by linking a distinct 'cultural narrative' (the actual 1989 earthquake and community responses to it) within the context of a play performed *outside* of Newcastle, well after the initial events, and the cultural production which began shortly after them. This praxis demonstrates that 'our world is suffused with stories. Consciously or not we use them continually to make sense of the mass of incoherent facts and sensations that immerse us' (McCalman 2000 online).

As a cultural intermediary working within the media industry, 'engaged in forming a point of connection or articulation between production and consumption' (Negus 2002, p.503), Finney's dispositional tendencies draw on global events (this version of the play was in rehearsal when the September 11 terrorist attacks in America took place in 2001) to place the significance of *Aftershocks'* stories *beyond* the original locale of their telling, and the temporal framework that generated them.

In a mainstream press article published on the 15th anniversary of the Newcastle earthquake, the 'news' of an earthquake occurring in Southeast Asia was contextualized

within the framework of the original Newcastle earthquake narrative. In the feature report, Newcastle Lord Mayor John Tate is quoted as saying, 'apart from the closure of BHP it was probably the most recent time when the community banded together and demonstrated we care for each other', with Newcastle Council's General Manager suggesting that, 'people in Newcastle would feel very sympathetic towards people in Asia' (cited in Vallejo 2004, p.420). This example demonstrates the blending of the 'local' and the 'general' in terms of socio-cultural narrativity and reveals *Aftershocks'* potential to touch on universal themes such as: 'how do people respond to crisis, assume leadership, deal with death; what language do these people use, when confronted with disaster, and what do all these answers tell us about our culture?' (Wilkinson 2007, p.37).

Bourdieu describes these kind of integrative field operations as facilitating 'cognitive construction' and 'conditioning', as 'practical activity…engendered by a habitus…[in] an act of temporalization' (Lohman n.d. online). Clearly his ideas are pertinent to media journalism of a general nature and those media practices such as reviews and cultural critique more specifically geared towards publicizing creative works. They also align with Thompson's discussion of the socialization aspects of media engagement:

> While communication and information are increasingly diffused on a global scale…appropriation of media products is always a localized phenomenon, in the sense that it always involves specific individuals who are situated in particular social-historical contexts, and who draw on the resources available to them in order to make sense of media messages and incorporate them into their lives…the practical contexts of everyday life. (1995, p.174)

The positioning of artistic work within an expanded socio-cultural framework (occasionally, but not always temporally bound), for example, when the work is *first* published, released, or performed, is common practice amongst reviewers generally. 'Reviews…assess the [product's] social relevance, and hence bring it explicitly into the realm of the social' (Mee & Dowling 2003, p.187).

Early play review content of *Aftershocks'* predominant natural disaster theme, also places it in the context of broader and distant societal circumstances: 'the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe had started spinning into turmoil…Iraq's Saddam Insane was threatening to blow up Israel' (Hoad 1993, p.82). The discursive style of integrating a

communication device that enabled 'stories of an age or culture [to] take place within its world' (Crites, 1997, p.31) continued in part when the film *Aftershocks* (1998) was released, generating further inter-texts.

Evidence of this generative production can be seen in Gripper's detailed review of the film, which will be dealt with shortly, where she states, 'On the Richter scale of human suffering, the Newcastle quake was small enough: one in Tangshan, China in July 1976 took an estimated 240, 000 lives' (1998, p.4). Additionally, within this particular appraisal, the reviewer also encodes *actual film dialogue* from one of *Aftershocks'* characters which significantly, includes a descriptive analogy connecting the actual 1989 local earthquake *scene* with remote horrors – 'We were lining up like you see in a war zone, carrying people across the street. We had to stop the bleeding with our hands' (ibid). In the play script, a different protagonist to the one quoted in Gripper's review describes the chaotic situation immediately following the Newcastle Workers Club building collapse:

ACT 1, SCENE 10

Character EG:

'As soon as I turned Union Street, into King Street, there was a dead person laying in the gutter. It had a sheet over it, but there was a dead person laying [sic] there. It was like…stepping into your TV…to see something in Beirut or somewhere. It was just unrealistic.'

(Brown & WCAC 2001, p.25)

Paget refers to these kinds of communication practices as 'braided mediatisation[s] of the popular conscious and subconscious' and suggests that a 'vivid indicator' of this concept was 'contained in the reactions of eyewitnesses to the events in New York on 11 September 2001. Many of them compared the collapse of the Twin Towers to disaster movies' (Paget 2002, p.40).

When one of the original storytellers for the *Aftershocks* project, who was working at

the Workers Club on the day of the earthquake, was asked by the author who she thought the audience for the film was likely to be, her reply was: 'people are very interested in earthquakes and same as with tidal waves, because we don't expect them…even today in Mexico, after that earthquake, they've got 60 dead, at the moment from the flood' (EG, pers. comm.). Moreover, this interviewee's husband 'cleaner and bar worker Howard Gibson' (Burchall 1995, p.20) explained that there'd be common curiosity about the *Aftershocks* story because,

> It's a dateline if you like. When people refer to a report, they refer to before the war or after the war, or Vietnam, now it's, the earthquake. 'Oh it happened before the earthquake', or 'it happened after the earthquake'. It's a, a sort of a milestone you know along the way. (HG, pers. comm.)

Peterson's appraisal of these types of exchanges encompasses an understanding of *how*, media, meanings, and ordinary communications intersect by considering 'an anthropology of media that attempts to describe and explain the meanings of media in a society or community…to explain how cultural meanings are encoded in media texts…[and] the ordinary uses of media in social interaction' (2005, pp.136-137). Another example of these kinds of everyday dispositions has been written into the text of *Aftershocks* in the following scene:

```
ACT 2, SCENE 23
                                Character KI:
      'There's times when my husband's at work in the mine,
      and  the kids are in bed, and I'm reading a book,
      and I'm visualizing the lounge room walls coming in.
      And the next day on the news you hear there's an
      earthquake somewhere in the world. And it really
      freaks me out.'
```

(Brown & WCAC 2001, p.51)

This dialogue also operates to convey the working-class coal mining occupation of the Novocastrian resident's family member, an employment position indicative of Newcastle's industrial foundations.

These repeated instances of the 'blending' of micro-narratives with macro affairs, reveal that *both* conversational and more formalized communication structures (such as newspaper publications) used in raising peoples' awareness of important cultural episodes, integrate indirect social events to make sense of current ones. This is one important reason why the text *Aftershocks*, although temporally and spatially removed from its early production contexts, retains elements of its creative construction and continues to make connections with various 'audiences'. It also partially accounts for why people unfamiliar with the specific place of Newcastle may still acquire certain perceptions of it. For example, Kohn describes, 'the shattered Workers Club, a blue-collar shrine in a blue-collar city…Newcastle is a union town' (1995, p.36); Hoad sees the same city as 'a tightly knit community' (1993, p.82); while Burchall sees Newcastle as a 'a tightly spliced town' (1995, p.20). What may aid them in their perceptions is a participation in communication exchanges featuring some *detail* about the city's culture, expressed along with more common inter-textual concepts they may already share. As Scott-Norman argues, '[the play's] lack of artifice reveals much of the Australian spirit, sense of humour and identity' (1995, p.79). Consequently, in communicative terms, through acts of 'protention and retention', experiences of Newcastle become 'temporally organized' so that 'there is always the presence and persistence of the past in the present moment of awareness' (Throop 2003, pp.231-232) when textual encounters featuring the city happen, building on how the place may be perceived, thereby contributing to *its* habitus.

Furthermore, in relation to how these kinds of exchanges may have engaged (and continue to engage) theatre-goers in forming perceptions about Newcastle's identity, Makeham offers the following: 'through the interweaving of a variety of spoken perspectives, the city is communicated to audience members who serving in a sense as interlocuters, also become participants in the performance' (1998, p.168) thus drawing the process of meaning making and cultural production full circle. However, current 'audiences' for *Aftershocks,* as meaning makers, are unlikely to be especially interested in the communication of a distinct Newcastle identity through its various representations. Instead, what may appeal is 'the universality of those stories…the actual extraordinary heroism of people who were totally unequipped in any way, wherever they come from…to deal with a disaster of this magnitude' (JO, pers. comm.). The potential for people who do encounter the text (and/or discursive material derived

from it) to acquire knowledge about the city and the identifiable characteristics of the 'locals' who live there is probable, simply through interest in *Aftershocks'* narrative. This view aligns with Peterson's ideas about 'media and mediated social relations in the contemporary world' (2005, p.137), he argues:

> Intertextuality [should not be treated] as a property of texts but as a social strategy…one among many strategies – reflexive and tactical as well as unreflexive and habitual – by which people use the mass media as part of their cultural capital, as part of the symbolic stuff they need to construct social identities and to accomplish the ordinary tasks of everyday life. (ibid p.136)

Despite and/or because of the trans-historical evolution of the original *Aftershocks*, and the participatory systems of communication established throughout its various productions, the *Aftershocks'* narrative persists in conveying universal messages that people inside and outside of Newcastle may connect with. For example, in summing up the shared stories and extended cultural narratives the text has the capacity to 'tell', film reviewer Ali Gripper (writing for the *Sydney Morning Herald)* stated:

> At its least, it is a terrific record of Australian vernacular, with tales of bravery and hilarity unfolding as naturally as two people having a yarn over the back fence. At its best, it is a riveting record of how a group of people behave in a time of crisis. (1998, p.4)

One of the first public readings of the play script in progress prompted the response, 'the things about each of those real people that come out is I think what makes it universal. And that's what a lot of people outside Newcastle can most relate to. They probably know someone like that*'* (Unidentified interviewee in Brown & WCAC 2001, p.xvi). When the film's producer was interviewed she reiterated this point by explaining that 'we had the elements that would capture people's imaginations…an audience's imagination, because it was about people that they could identify with' (JO, pers. comm.). It was also recapitulated when *Aftershocks'* principal storyteller, a person who worked at the damaged Newcastle Workers Club and was involved in the rescue of people trapped at the site, was interviewed by the author:

> Like anything that's either a tragedy, or that brings out the best in someone, or in a lot of people, then it's always good to hear a real life story. You, sit there and you either think 'Oh wow I'm glad I wasn't there', or you think 'Oh you've been through so much'…human interest stories, people love it. (JC, pers. comm.)

Possibly because of these universal resonances the *Aftershocks* story presents, it has now been included as an educational resource where it has been summarized in the following way:

> *Aftershocks* is a film examining the experiences of eleven people who were in the Newcastle Workers' Club at the time of a serious earthquake in December 1989. Neither a re-enactment nor a documentary, the film uses the words of these survivors, interspersed with TV news film to construct a compelling examination of the impact of such an event on the people who were touched by it. The words of the eleven survivors featured in this film are spoken by actors, but there is a sense of immediacy and credibility that makes it difficult to believe that the speakers were not the actual participants in this drama. (Carrodus 1999, p.1)

The above film synopsis has been sourced from an *Australian Screen Education* Study Guide document. This document demonstrates that over time, *Aftershocks* (both the play and the film version) has established a position within the field of 'pedagogic discourse' (Bernstein 1990, pp.183-184) as both a literary and dramatic work worthy of deconstruction, 'I used to lecture on it, in the drama department. It's studied at secondary and tertiary study levels, it's a set text' (WCAC AA, pers.comm.), offering significant 'learning experiences in English, Geography, Social Studies, Psychology, Media and Drama' (Carrodus 1999, p.1). Judging from this categorical list of interdisciplinary approaches to studying the text, it may be argued that within the field of education, *Aftershocks* has been constructed as valuable educational material used for a close examination of social relationships, cultural environments, coded languages, and cognitive dispositions to take place [38]. The latter categories for analyses (English, Geography etc.) are pertinent for high school and tertiary students to adopt when they investigate *Aftershocks'* textual properties and likely effects, in Bourdieu's terms they constitute 'principles of division' and provide students with 'instruments of perception' (1996, p.313) to consider its encoded content and to interpret and critique its features. The former categories for analysis of *Aftershocks* (social relationships, cultural

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[38] This would account for its inclusion in the 2008 Senior External Examination in Drama Syllabus (© The State of Queensland, Queensland Studies Authority). <http://www.qsa.qld.edu.au/downloads/assessment/see_drama_07_syll.pdf>
Aftershocks is also listed on the NSW Board of Studies Higher School Certificate 2010-2012 Course Prescriptions for Drama 6 – Topic 8 – Verbatim Theatre: 'students consider notions of authenticity and authority derived from direct testimony and community involvement' (2008, p.13).

environments etc.), have been implemented by the author in the following chapter, specifically in relation to the film, to explain how this filmic version of the text has been produced to communicate strong perceptions of Newcastle's 'identity'.

Using a combination of intertexts, interviewee data and the application of Bourdieu's theory of habitus this chapter has discussed communicative imperatives and production praxis at the centre of the WCAC's *Aftershocks* project. It has described some of the localized political motivations for 'ordinary' stories of Newcastle earthquake experiences to be formalized within cooperative frameworks of community focus. These 'common' purpose objectives have given insight as to how working-class and socialist ideals may be embedded in cultural activities designed to circumvent traditional power relationships. In considering the ideological intent of the production team, explanations have been given as to *why* the scriptwriter was chosen, *how* the storytelling information was gathered, and *why* the processes dictating the shape the text took as a performative genre developed. Additional information regarding the attribution of symbolic capital in relation to the text's construction and its performance has also been included. The attention to the practices involved in the styling of *Aftershocks'* content has clarified the bearing that familiarized relationship exchange had in extracting resonant and relational life stories for persons to *experience*. The experiential dimensions of the text, especially in relation to its incorporation of *generalized* themes and *particular* traumatic detail has been prevalent in media discourses which emerged initially, and which have also been generated contemporaneously. Consequently, the discussion reveals that the text still maintains a high degree of cultural currency, and this is also exemplified by its appropriation within pedagogic fields of inquiry. The important role that vernacular language has played in disseminating city detail in terms of Newcastle's socio-cultural heritage and industrial history, and in offering vivid accounts of its residents' first-hand dilemmas has been explored, using actual play dialogue and review content to recapitulate. How these stories based predominantly on *oral* strategies for deployment have been *visually* accounted for, and what effect this may have on the dissemination of perceptions of Newcastle's cultural identity, is the subject of the next chapter's analysis.

Chapter 7 – *Aftershocks* – Producing Culture Through Texts

'*The fact that it happened to be set in Newcastle wasn't for me the most important thing. I know it was to the people of Newcastle - it has a totally different resonance and that I understand and appreciate…Stories are important rather than the locales. The locale in this case, the thing that's important is that this is Newcastle and it is an event that caused…was very important in the social fabric of Novocastrian history and life…What is important for the rest of the world is the people, and how they survived.'*
(J Overton 1999 [*Aftershocks* Film Producer], pers. comm., 5 November)

Having established in the previous chapter that the production of *Aftershock*s developed through a series of localized social relationships in very specific cultural contexts, applicable to the original storytelling accounts and the range of discursive practices emanating from them, this chapter explains how those familiarized conditions have been re-appropriated throughout the film adaptation of *Aftershocks*. The film version of the story was designed primarily as a movie destined for television release, variously known as a telemovie or TV film (*Illawarra Mercury* 27 November1998, p.3; Overton 2000, p.123; Williams 1998, p.21), and it attempts to convey a distinctive 'Newcastle' story whose resonant effects extend beyond the immediate locale of its production. According to scriptwriter Paul Brown, from the beginning of the process, in an effort to stay true to the verbatim mode, it was decided to construct the film as:

> a series of first-person dialogues from actors talking to camera…augmented by reconstructions of the storytellers' points of view, using highly stylized close-ups and extreme detail shots of objects that people [talked] about…[interspersed with] archival video fragments such as news coverage of events at the time.
> (Brown 1995, p.456)

The primary motivation for the film's development was for characterizations of the storytellers themselves to 'tell' the intimate details of their own and their friends and workmates' disparate and shared earthquake experiences, just as they had in the stage productions. As film producer Julia Overton explained 'We're telling a real story. It's not really a documentary because [we've used] actors…it is a drama. Film is a medium of creating images rather than substantiating, it's creating a space…it isn't a documentary' (JO, pers. comm.).

Despite this disclaimer *Aftershocks* does, however, incorporate documentary-style

features together with re-creations of the protagonists' memories to build a persuasive narrative 'based on true stories…combining fact and fiction' (Lipkin 2002, pp.ix-x). Bill Nichols in his discussion of documentary modes of representation criticizes the use of dramatic re-creations arguing that they 'diminish the authenticity of the "lived experience"' (cited in Lipkin 2002, p.34). Lipkin suggests that by adopting this view Nichols falls 'into the binary oppositional stance of fact-truth-objectivity/creation-mediation-subjectivity' (ibid) thereby discounting the myriad of interpretive possibilities blended texts such as *Aftershocks* may generate. As ES, one of the original WCAC storytellers, asserts:

> It was an intention by the director's decision [sic] to be that form, that style and form, sort of documentary style…One person made the comment, 'Oh, it will never sell', and I said, 'Well I don't know whether it's supposed to sell like a Hollywood-Bruce Willis-Arnold Schwarzenegger type of thing.' I said, 'I don't think it's designed for that market for one and I wouldn't worry about it. It's not going to be the world's bestseller anyway.' (ES pers. comm..)

ES also became privy to some of the financial limitations imposed on the film's production when the narrative was 'filmed on a shoestring budget' (Johnston 1998, p.5). Julia Overton, the film's producer, has stated:

> The film was produced for a tiny budget of less than half a million dollars, and was only made possible with the involvement of SBS Independent and through the care and passion of Bridget Ikin and Barbara Masel. We also had generous support from facilities people with whom Geoff and I had established relationships over the years, Hans Pomeranz and Rachel Farrow. I was able to repay them on the next film, *Cut.* (2000, p.123)

The film's comparatively 'modest budget of $500 000 put up by the Newcastle Workers Club, SBS production arm of SBS Independent, the NSW Film and Television Office' (Joyce 1998b, p.6) while providing limited funds to shoot with 'would be seen as prohibitive by most filmmakers' (Brown & WCAC 2001, p.xxviii). But, as the film's scriptwriter Paul Brown commented, the small amount of economic capital allocated to the project while restrictive in some regards, conversely, enhanced the film's representative outcome both in relation to the final structure and design of the text and in respect of its symbolic value as a 'production at the autonomous pole' involving artistic 'imagination, truth and freedom from social or economic influence' (Webb, Schirato & Danaher 2003, p.160). It can be seen that throughout the film's production

there has been evidence of a type of 'autonomous' approach to the systematic limitations imposed on *Aftershocks'* production, which suggests that a propensity for informal networking between professional positions, in contrast to formal industry protocol, occurred. Yet, in spite of Bourdieu's claims that 'the expected audiences for work produced under [a] set of [autonomous] values is the *cognoscenti* – other artists, art critics, those who have acquired…specialist education' [original emphasis] (Webb, Schirato & Danaher 2003, p.160) it's the author's contention that this 'qualified' audience was not the singular target for the *Aftershocks* film. Rather, due to the derivation of the content of the original play outlined extensively in the previous chapter, the author argues that the production essentially appeals to 'everyday literacies, and targets the general public as [its] audience, [reviews, mainstream press, advertising]' but certainly not at the expense of specialist viewers (ibid).

In terms of potential profitability and market distribution it may be argued that monetary constraints inhibited *Aftershocks'* production values and therefore its commercial success. Yet, this deterministic view of economic limitations denies the potential for these field constraints to also be enabling. For example Janet Wolff argues that:

> It does not follow…that in order to be free agents we somehow have to liberate ourselves from social structures and act outside them. On the contrary, the existence of these structures and institutions enables any activity on our part…all action, including creative or innovative action, arises in the complex conjunction of numerous determinants and conditions (1981, p.9).

Bourdieu describes the economic-determinist view of the 'field of cultural production' as the 'heteronomous pole' where:

> …artistic production is treated much like any other form of production: the work is made for a pre-established market, with the aim of achieving commercial success. Producers at this end of the field are not as concerned with looking within themselves or to one another for inspiration; rather, they obey pre-existing demands for particular types of work, and use pre-established forms.
> (Webb, Schirato & Danaher 2003, p.159)

But this supposed binary distinction that posits 'artistic' production as an individual enterprise irreducible to a notion of creative practice generated through systematic

conditions and relationships, is problematic. It constitutes the Romantic view of cultural production that devalues collaborative work and denies the potential for opportunistic developments that perceptible constraints may facilitate (Sawyer 2006; Watson 2005).

Yet, some of the field conditions in which the *Aftershocks* film emerged demanded heteronomous distinctions of the kind Bourdieu articulates to be made which was expressed by the film's producer when she explained to the author:

> It's important to tell Australian stories, but they also have to have something - because of the amount of money involved, that's going to attract an audience, and that audience has to be worldwide. [*Aftershocks* is] not really a documentary because we're using actors. But you know, we're telling a real story…we had, this discussion come up quite a lot with the funding bodies who didn't know where to put it - whether to put it in as a documentary or a drama. Some people wanted it to become more of a documentary style, but it never was - it is a drama. And we would have to have all over it: 'THIS IS A RE-CREATION, THIS IS A RE-CREATION, THIS IS AN ACTOR USING THE WORDS OF…' which is why we didn't do that. The way we chose to make the film, certain constraints have to come in. We had less than half a million dollars, so we had to make compromises obviously. (JO, pers. comm.)

Consequently, one of the significant reasons why the *Aftershocks* film has been designed the way it has is due to budget limitations. The agents involved in its production had to 'be reflexive in taking into account the very rules and resources of the productive situation itself…and become innovation-intensive [and/or] design intensive' (Lash 1993, pp.204-206). For, as prominent Australian actor Jeremy Simms who plays the lead role in the film commented, 'it [was] pretty hard trying to get finance for a film about an earthquake that doesn't have an earthquake' (cited in Johnston 1998, p.5).

Despite the limitations presented by the budget one advantage of this constraint was to increase the identification with the perceptual categories associated with workers or 'battlers' [39]. Since the circumstances and amount of the film's funding became publicly available through media reports disseminating information about them (Joyce 1998b), further perceptions of shared, localized relationships, a common community purpose, a

[39] 'Battler' is an Australian slang term for 'someone working hard and only just making a living' (*Australian Slang* 1997-2009 online).

heightened autonomous industry regard, and a general egalitarian ideological intent continued to be linked to the making of this 'Newcastle' film.

Using this supposed egalitarian perception as a basis, coupled with the foundational emphasis on the strength of 'ordinary' words used to connect with *Aftershocks'* audiences through the original verbatim theatre performance, it was decided that for a visual representation to adequately integrate the 'honesty and emotional power of the extraordinary text' (Burton cited in Joyce 1998b, p.6) a docudrama genre style was the most fitting codification system for the task. Lipkin argues that as far as docudramas are concerned 'representation of the real is only part of what drives [the genre style]; the work's other basic purpose is to envelop us in the experience of its story' (2002, p.ix). In *Aftershocks,* the 'representation of the real' appears in pre-recorded vision of actual local news footage of rescue operations at Newcastle Workers Club, shortly after the earthquake struck (Johnston 1998).

In order to add to the realism of the story Director Geoff Burton used 'archival television footage to set the scene' (*Illawarra Mercury* 27 November 1998, p.3) of *Aftershocks'* film narrative which Newcastle local television station NBN 'were very supportive [of]. They gave us the material for a much, much reduced rate' (JO, pers. comm.) [40]. Using the local media supplied resources, film director Burton encoded pre-existing material evidence of the physicality of the earthquake's effects into the film version of *Aftershocks,* and in doing so his praxis has generated a number of communicative cues designed to apprehend audience members. As a built form the Workers Club site possessed 'a certain resonance as a repository of social, cultural, or personal significance' containing 'traces of the past that [were] visible in [Newcastle's] townscape [as] a kind of materialized memory' (Berleant 2003, p.49). Through the archival newsreel imagery of the club's twisted metal, shattered glass, split concrete pylons, large piles of rubble, and dust-clouded spaces, the catastrophic destruction of the building's architecture is given immense visual and sensory substance.

For film viewers unfamiliar with Newcastle's geographical layout and therefore where

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[40] This production-community-industry collaboration is not a regular occurrence and in this instance it may be argued it was indicative of the localized reciprocal relationships and ritual dimensions of the *Aftershocks* film project.

the Workers Club was formerly positioned, the recorded 'live' action of the traumatic post-earthquake scenes evoke a deep appreciation of the alarming circumstances. Importantly, as well as showing 'on the spot' reactions, whether they be the stupefied shock of injured citizens or the pragmatic activities of trained police, ambulance and fire brigade officers, these scenes epitomize the perception of Newcastle's egalitarian 'community spirit'. The images of 'ordinary' people caught off-guard yet willing to forego the risk of personal harm to assist those in need, working alongside those whose cultural capital positions them to provide professional relief, have the capacity to reinforce perceptions of a shared community regard as well as individual practicality. Furthermore, as 'live action' recordings, these archival scenes embody 'the eidetic quality of the technologically produced media image…received as a form of direct perception' (Gaines 2002b, p.10-11). Together with the visual content, the audio accompanying these images features vehicle sirens, the harsh sounds of rescue apparatus and machinery, two-way radio communications, helicopter rotor blades and 'urgent' instructional dialogue. Consequently, the archival images of emergency staff and everyday citizens working collaboratively amongst the wreckage to assist the injured and recover the dead, evocatively transmit to *Aftershocks* viewers, an understanding of the immediacy of the situation and an appreciation of the proximate danger – the prospect of further 'aftershocks'. Although viewers may not have had first-hand experience of a natural catastrophe, they may still be positioned to absorb the archival scenes embedded in *Aftershocks* by 'using their media knowledge of comparable programs and the various information sources available to them, to construct a relationship with the [film] in the context of their cultural lives' (Bignell 2002, p.174). Thus the familiarized framing of the pre-recorded imagery used in *Aftershocks,* enables viewers to draw on their dispositional experiences of news filming conventions, without detracting from the more 'personalized' conversational style of the remainder of the film's story [41]. Gaines argues that the kind of resonant communication these types of tele-visual constructs enable,

> …literally brings distant places close while emulating a *cultural space* from another time and place. What is critical about TV is that the technology

[41] In one of *Aftershocks'* scenes Character EG talks about her and her husband's fears of potential 'aftershocks' saying: 'It was a terrible hot night. We sat up all night. We didn't talk much…we were sort of waiting for a report on the TV to tell us what to do.'

> obfuscates the remote locations of events because viewers experience television programmes in their homes, so meanings are interpreted locally. [original emphasis] (2006, p.176)

Given that *Aftershocks* (as a production entity) was designed as a 'telemovie' (*Illawarra Mercury* 1998), 'tele-feature' (Overton 2000) and/or TV film (Williams 1998) as distinct from a feature film destined for cinematic release, an 'intimate' audience experience has been a likely proposition for the text's reception, an idea suggested by SBS [42] Film Reviewer Margaret Pomeranz when the film first screened on Australian television in late 1998:

> At first you think this is more a documentary than anything else, it certainly has that feel of reality to it, but then the characters emerge so we get to know these ordinary people who had to deal with an extraordinary event. And it is, by the end, a tremendously moving experience. (Pomerantz 1998)

The 'feel of reality' the reviewer speaks of has been further encoded in other *Aftershocks* scenes which also sit within the category of 'archival' material, yet portray a different kind of visual proximity and hence communicative activity to that of the damaged Newcastle Workers Club footage. These scenes involve recorded 'live' transmissions of an NBN television news journalist (and others) at the actual time that the earthquake struck. The live events these scenes portray contribute to the immediacy of the situation and position viewers to engage with the text at a heightened level of interpretive attention. Couldry describes the potency of 'live' media production methods in a general regard when he argues:

> Liveness can be understood as a category crucially involved in both naturalizing and reproducing a certain historically distinctive type of social coordination around media "centres" from which images, information and narratives are distributed and (effectively simultaneously) received across space. (2004, pp.353-354)

Recorded live transmissions of natural catastrophes are a regular source of the mediated habitus of news production on a global scale. Couldry's appraisal hints at the socio-cultural constructions at work when widespread media coverage of such phenomena

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[42] SBS Special Broadcast Service is Australia's independent multicultural and multilingual free-to-air broadcast service.

emerges. Gaines (citing Lemert) reiterates when he suggests 'the culture of news production is analogous to Bourdieu's habitus as a way in which enduring social things achieve spontaneous expression in practical life' (2002b, p.6). The 'spontaneous expressions' resulting in the 'live' images captured by the local Newcastle TV team and later incorporated into the *Aftershocks* film, necessarily evolved because the earthquake *happened*, an extreme and unpredictable incident. However, the NBN news team was already acting in its capacity as 'live' media producers addressing more localized spontaneous socio-cultural concerns, when the larger issue arose.

It just so happened that an interview recording was taking place at the precise time of the earthquake's impact, not far from where much 'suburban' damage occurred. Subsequently, the unexpected events enabled the journalist's and technical staff's professional habitus to be generatively activated so that the original 'news story' was abandoned and the 'breaking' news could take precedence. These practices demonstrate that 'liveness…is a category whose use naturalizes the general idea that, through the media, we achieve a shared attention to the "realities" that matter for us as a society' (Couldry 2004, p.356). Clearly the Newcastle earthquake was a 'reality that mattered', especially to Novocastrians, but also, as alluded to above, to a much broader national and international television audience. But the 'captured' live coverage of the actual earthquake event (contained in the following scene breakdowns) would not have materialized had it not been for the attention paid to a more localized 'reality that mattered' the subject of which was underway when the earthquake struck.

In the archival vision supplied to *Aftershocks'* producers, a television journalist begins his report by interviewing a Transport Workers Union Delegate on site at the local bus depot to discuss workplace negotiations and recent strike action on the part of bus drivers. The NBN news producer's inclination to feature the union spokesperson at the workplace rather than having a reporter give a second hand overview or 'voiceover' of the industrial action, may signify the local media's imperative and/or response to reporting on working-class issues, thereby contributing to the ongoing perception of Newcastle as an industry-focused blue-collar town. Morley and Robins contend that 'regional and local media are seen as fundamental resources of both democracy and identity [they] appeal to the kind of situated meaning and emotional belonging that seem to have been eroded by the forces of internationalization and globalization' (1995,

p.179. Their conviction carries weight within the actual 'media' content that has been encoded in the film. Thematically, details of the bus strike have also been interwoven into *Aftershocks*' conversational dialogue at a later stage in the narrative. As one of the hospitalized storyteller's articulates, 'I came in [to Newcastle] a bit early that day 'cause the buses were on strike. My husband took me in. I'd just come in to play Hoy at the Workers Club' (Character NB). The original archival footage used in *Aftershocks* featuring the Bus Depot interview plays out as follows:

FOOTAGE:

Begins with a black and white film of a bus depot employee directing public buses into designated bay parking [squeaking brakes sound as vehicles slow]. A man (union delegate) waits to be questioned. A broadcast news journalist [with his back to the camera] asks a direct question of the interviewee [facing the camera at 90 degree angle waiting for the question to be completed].

Journalist:

'Union-management relations though, how would you describe them?'

Another bus depot employee passes in the background of the scene simply going about his business, not paying attention to the interview taking place in the foreground – [sound includes incidental extraneous depot employee conversations].

Union Delegate:

[long pause before responding]

'…Terrible!'

The interviewee is preoccupied and distracted – his expression indicates that something is amiss [loud rumbling; thunder; crunching sounds]

Union Delegate:

'Holy!'

He looks beyond the journalist towards the sky. The image slants out of kilter and the interviewee needs to steady his balance to stay on his feet.

At this point in the film *Aftershocks'* director and editor have encoded some structural adaptations. The moment where the interviewee hears the foreign sounds and looks skyward for confirmation as to what may be causing them is repeated twice in slow motion, with the interviewee's exclamation audibly distorted. What follows are a series of chaotically angled shots of building corners and cars, followed by hurried work-boot clad footsteps.

[sounds of breaking glass; two-way radio conversations]

Voice 1:

'Don't worry about it now we'll drive you…'

[metal crunching; glass breaking]

Voice 2:

'It was in the whole buildin'!'

[helicopter rotor blades]

Voice 1:

'Christ…get the car' – 'we're in it now mate.'

The scene fades to colour footage of a helicopter approaching the Newcastle coastline.

Graphic Caption: AFTERSHOCKS

The camera zooms in on a number of damaged sites. [ominous/discordant piano sounds]are juxtaposed with 'shaky' aerial views of damaged buildings and collapsed awnings in the suburb of Hamilton. The surrounding streets appear deserted and

what cars there are, are stopped in their tracks, some with their doors left open and parked at odd angles in the middle of intersections. The vehicles have been abandoned. There are not many people, a few isolated individuals and small groups of people are clustered around particular damaged sites.

Graphic Caption: SCREENPLAY PAUL BROWN

A suited journalist speaks straight to camera with a handheld microphone. There are four men in his immediate background picking up bricks from a large pile where an awning and part of a building has collapsed. One man – an emergency crew person wears white overalls, the others are ordinary T-shirted citizens.

Journalist:

'Take it away?' *[to cameraman off camera]*

Graphic Caption: ASSOCIATE PRODUCERS KINGSTON ANDERSON - JULIE PAVLOU KIRRI

Cameraman:

[to technical assistant]: 'Yes.' 'Get the make-up title.'

The inclusion of the on-camera professional dialogue and the off-camera practical instructions at this point, heighten recognition of the extraordinary situation that has just arisen and which is currently being filmed. Ordinarily, the viewing audience is not privy to the 'mechanics' of broadcast journalism practice. However, despite their concerns, the journalist's and camera operator's professional habitus dictates that they follow the story as it unfolds and use their dispositional knowledge to disseminate 'breaking' news.

Journalist:

'This is Beaumont Street, Hamilton just minutes after the blast, or the explosion or the earthquake' *[open hand gesture of inquisitiveness – requiring confirmation. He*

looks behind him to the men clearing rubble] 'and it looks as though a bomb has hit, bombs have hit all along here.'

Graphic Caption: MUSIC PAUL CHARLIER -

The scene cuts to an exterior street level scene outside the devastated Newcastle Workers Club. Two men walk purposefully across and out of the frame, they're deep in conversation, one wears a hard hat, T-shirt, and shorts and appears to be briefing or instructing a senior police officer – his hand gestures signify explanatory speech is occurring. A uniformed police officer also guides a woman out of shot with his hand supporting her lower back – she too wears a uniform – perhaps she is a Workers Club or local office/business employee. Emergency sirens of a parked police rescue vehicle are sounding, police tape and 'witches hats' cordon off the area and emergency crews – an approximate group of fifteen people, [some wearing hard hats or overalls, some carrying a stretcher] enter the damaged building at ground level.

Journalist:

'It's like a war scene, people standing around just dazed.'

Cut to Police Rescue Squad and Firefighter personnel carrying an injured person on a stretcher from the steel and concrete tangled wreckage of the Workers Club car park.

Journalist:

'There has been some loss of life it appears…'

Graphic Caption: PRODUCTION DESIGNER LOU AUSTIN

Journalist:

'…and buildings up and down the street have just collapsed into the roadway.' –

One of the Police Rescue Squad member's takes off his hat and shields a stretcher-prone elderly woman's eyes from the harsh early morning sunlight –

Voice [off camera]

'Come on you'll be right' *[this comment can't be attributed to any one individual but is 'heard' by the viewer and could be spoken by any of the people helping in this scene].*

Three lay people [judging by their clothing] assist an elderly woman to walk from this area by clearing a pathway through the scattered building material, shouldering her weight, holding her elbows, guiding her to safety.

Graphic Caption: EDITOR FRANS VANDENBURG

Another stretchered patient is removed from the scene with a combination of ordinary folk and ambulance paramedics/police rescue squad staff working to render assistance. The professionals use lots of pointing gestures instructing other people on the scene - not the actual patients but other service personnel.

Graphic Caption: DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY LEILANI HANNAH

Two 'ordinary' men assist a middle-aged woman who is silent but appears to be in a deep state of shock to walk out of the site – the woman is totally supported by these men. This recording switches to slow motion as the woman looks directly into the camera lens and it appears she is so traumatized that she cannot make sense of anything going on around her – including the news crew filming [there is lots of extraneous noise and emergency sirens with a piano 'bridge' to the next scene].

Graphic Caption: PRODUCER JULIA OVERTON

In terms of imparting a series of distinct visual identifiers, because of its documentation of 'reality' and its stylized embedding in the film's construction, the archival material used throughout *Aftershocks* serves to involve viewers in 'utilizing psychological, physiological and social resources as a means of not only making sense of, but *experiencing*…the text' [original emphasis] (Perrott 2002, p.72).

Throughout the film the literal images of the building's physical destruction, emergency personnel activity, and club patron and bystander distress are repeated several times and have been embedded by the film's director Geoff Burton to provide what original storyteller and former Workers Club employee HG described in conversation with the author as:

> …a natural link between all the other parts of the movie, if there had been a makeup, a mock-up earthquake, there wouldn't have [been] an impact. The film records, archives…that made it authentic, it's far more enhanced by the footage. You talk about the Titanic going down and so forth…but the movie [*Aftershocks*]…you get a real grasp from it once you've seen it.
> (HG, pers. comm.)

Burton's decision to encode the film with 'archival news footage' (Johnston 1998, p.5) meant that, as well as enabling viewers to connect with the dire predicaments of individual characters, stylistically, the narrative events are situated within the broader landscape of the city they occur in:

> As a form, the play, like the movie, can accommodate the crowd of fascinating individuals who inhabit the city; but the screen alone has the ability to show in detail, in all their fantastical variety, the locations that shape the city's life, imagined as well as real, relating the physical bodies of the human protagonists to the shapes of the urban environment and the body politic. (Thomas 2003, p.402)

This detail constructed in the film's locations, is crucial to the story's manifestation as filmic content. In explaining some of the formative distinctions between the *Aftershocks* story as a theatre performance event in contrast to its film representation, JC – *Aftershocks'* predominant original storyteller, explained to the author:

> I mean the movie sort of, I actually thought brought it home a lot more, as in as far as the eerie feeling and, and because of the sound effects and the special effects and all that sort of stuff. It was more of an eerie feeling watching the movie than it was the play. I mean the play felt like what had happened, but the movie was actually like sight, like a visual of it. The visual actually sort of made it more gripping…you watch the walls fall and that sort of thing in the movie. I mean, [it] sort of…scares you that little bit more. [One of the survivors] went to the opening [film premiere] at the Workers Club and she actually walked out. She said it was just too moving for her. I mean it was just too much for her. I sort of can understand it from her perspective because she was one of the ones who actually fell down and then was trapped and had concrete and rubble…all around her and [sic] been pinned - where I was one of the ones who was crawling around in the rubble actually pulling people out. She was one of the ones that was actually stuck in the dark. (JC, pers. comm.)

A number of the walls falling away in the film version of *Aftershocks*, the concrete and rubble JC refers to, belong to the Newcastle Workers Club which was 'the scene of most casualties of the earthquake as parts of three floors collapsed into basement carparks. About 30 staff and many elderly patrons were in the club, built in 1949, when the quake struck. Nine people died after being buried in the rubble' (Gripper 1998, p.4). The archival footage of the Newcastle Workers Club rescue scenes functions on several levels to convey strong and detailed messages about Newcastle to Novocastrians, especially those who recall the actual earthquake event, and to non-specific film viewers as well. The club building, on a connotative level, 'represented specific distinguishing qualities' of Newcastle's working-class ethos, symbolizing through a range of 'shared interpretations' local community concerns, and operated as a site for their socio-cultural manifestation (Gaines 2001, p.120). Through more personalized storytelling aspects of the film presented in dramatic form the significance of the club as a 'focal point of local identity' (Berleant 2003, p.48) is given weight. This significance is discussed further on in this chapter using extracts of film dialogue, explanations of character positioning and scenic details to elaborate, but in terms of what is being discussed here, since the 'personal' scenes have been combined in the film's construction with actual footage filmed by Newcastle crews on the day the earthquake happened, according to one of *Aftershocks'* testimonial contributor's, 'there isn't much fictional part in it' (HG, pers. comm.).

When questioned by the author as to the possible impacts on *Aftershocks* viewers of the adapted local TV content featuring the immediate aftermath of the earthquake and the

extensively damaged Workers Club, a former employee and narrative protagonist JC remarked, 'the real footage and that was authentic I guess. Well it's all real. That's why it [the film] became a docudrama, because there's actual real footage, and then the rest is drama where it's telling about what we did' (JC, pers. comm..). Roscoe and Hight describe *drama-documentary* (their modification of the genre style's 'name') as 'the form [whose] basic impulse is simply to tell a mass audience a real and relevant story involving real people' [original emphasis] (2001, p.43). *Aftershocks'* producer Julia Overton expressed her understanding of how the film's construction fits with Roscoe and Hight's definition, telling the author, 'it's that mixture of something that is quintessentially local and Australian but also has a universality - like all great stories do really. It's a great story' (JO, pers.comm.).

Interestingly, the assertions of an intense level of audience engagement are in contrast to comments made early in the original *Aftershocks* (scriptwriting) project by a storyteller who was averse to the life-stories receiving technologically mediated treatment: 'if you put it on television…it becomes incredibly trivial and just doesn't have the emotional power that this has' (unidentified WCAC Steering Committee Member cited in Hoad 1993, p.82). An alternative view was expressed by theatre critic Peter Kohn when he argued specifically *for* the formalized mediation of *Aftershocks'* testimonial content: '[it] should have been offered to a judicious TV news editor who would have known exactly how to turn out the type of "grabs" that could have made the play more compelling' (1995, p.36). Film producer Julia Overton offered in dialogue with the author, 'there'll always be people who won't be happy with the representation. All you can do is present a piece of work and people can say what they like and obviously the closer they are to it the less likely you are to satisfy them' (JO, pers. comm.).

Lipkin asserts that, 'in its blending of documentary material and melodramatic narrative form, docudrama emphasizes its strategies of articulation, because these, in the fashion of melodrama, articulate the moral meaning of the material of the real that has impelled the story being told' (2002, p.137). *Aftershocks* is an unconventional film in that it draws attention to its construction by amalgamating 'real' images with a unique dramatic performance mode. As an earthquake survival story featuring the aforementioned archives of everyday people literally handling building wreckage and

other debris, moral meanings attached to local community assistance ideals and 'instinctual' group participation have, through the film's construction, been made visually apparent. But it was also the filmmakers' goals to foreground the individual *Aftershocks* stories (born of the earthquake proper) so that personalized accounts of the larger story could also acquire effective visual appropriation and subsequent audience appreciation of these particular Novocastrian events. *Aftershocks'* producer Julia Overton spoke to the author about reactions to the film, revealing 'some people have criticized us, but it's not a film about a disaster, you know, because we didn't have the money to make a disaster, recreate the disaster…and anyway that wasn't what we were about' (JO, pers. comm.). According to the producer, what the filmmakers *were* about was 'to share the story of the experiences of people who speak with authority and remarkable good humour on how we might all face uncontrollable and tragic circumstances - not least of all how to rescue the heroes' (cited in Johnston 1998, p.5).

Overton's and the other filmmakers' narrative objectives correlate with Lipkin's earlier ideas about the meaning potential docudrama generates by materializing the 'real', from a number of different standpoints. One standpoint strategy director Geoff Burton chose to 'materialize the real', to compose *Aftershocks'* unique style, and to bolster the narrative's likely effects on viewers, was to guide the actors in a distinctive performance mode of direct address. 'I have known Geoffrey for an enormous number of years and known that he has always been interested in this sort of actor-camera-stuff' (JO, pers. comm.) suggested Julia Overton, the film's producer. Burton himself stated that 'the relationship of actor to audience is something that has preoccupied my thinking about film since completing *The Sum of Us*' (cited in Joyce 1998b, p.6). Burton's principal schema for enveloping viewers 'in the experience' of *Aftershocks'* film story has been to instruct 'actors [to deliver] a series of to-the-camera monologues based on the words of those who were at the Newcastle Workers Club when it collapsed like a pack of cards' (Gripper 1998, p.4). He explained to a Newcastle journalist at the time of *Aftershocks'* filming that the technique of direct address 'through the lens of the camera' has the potential to promote 'a most extraordinary emotional journey for the audience' through the 'composite effect of [the] confronting eyeline, [together with] the power of the dialogue, [and] the power of the performance' (cited in Joyce 1998b, p.6). In an interview with the author, original storyteller ES gave his assessment of Burton's distinctive approach when he stated:

> I found it [the film's style] interesting…I didn't know it was going to be that type of style. I don't know what style you call it but it came across to me as like a semi-documentary. I found it interesting, I didn't mind it actually. I'm not a Hollywood type of person, I don't like those type of movies anyway, I didn't mind it in that respect, though it was new to me, that style, that method. I thought it was ok because I thought it gave a bit more insight into to the actual people. (ES, pers. comm.)

Performance efficacy in the docudrama mode is crucial to narrative engagement. As Paget argues, 'the actor works as if from the first-hand; the audience, if convinced, reacts in similar terms – "suspending disbelief"…and operating imaginatively as if it were present in imaginary actions' (2002, pp.32-33). The communicative contract between performer and observer that Paget describes has been consolidated in *Aftershocks* through its distinctive film direction. Storytellers have been physically positioned to face 'their' viewers, which subsequently, stylistically predisposes film viewers to become *listeners*. In Bourdieu's terms *Aftershocks'* characters' 'performative utterances' (1991, p.111) invoke a story situation that demands attention by grounding 'a relation of familiarity or ontological complicity with the familiar world' through conversational mechanisms (Bourdieu 1996, p.329). In this regard the visual language of *Aftershocks'* docudrama style, much like its verbatim theatre predecessor, invites audiences into the story-world by incorporating 'the elements that capture peoples' imaginations, an audience's imagination, because it's about people that they [can] identify with' (JO, pers. comm..). As Paget also argues, '[it's a] kind of unfussy, understated performance that audiences readily take to as a token of first-handedness…a style that…eschews the overtly theatrical, plays 'ordinary'' (2002, p.33).

Much of the 'ordinariness' of *Aftershocks'* stories centers on how their oral dissemination is *acted out* in the film because the stories themselves are by no means 'ordinary'. For example, a former maintenance worker at the Workers Club (played by actor Ned Manning in the film) assisted people who were trapped and relays the following experience:

Character BA:

'She was covered in dirt and dust…you could see her *[Workers Club]* uniform, but you couldn't tell who it

was…One of the rescue workers said: "We're not worried about the dead ones – we're worried about the live ones – get them out first!"'

Character BA is seated with his wife at a backyard table with character HG and his wife who appear to be around the same age. The two men have just finished describing their movements shortly after the earthquake hit:

Character HG:

'I was lucky 'cause my arms were still free and you know, I could dig my way out from where I was stuck.'

Character BA:

'I was confronted by all these mounds of tables and chairs that were stuck in this room. I'm fairly cool in that sort of situation…' *[HG raises his eyebrows and smiles slightly as if to indicate that BA has an abundance of self regard]* '…still alive and that sort of thing, so I knew where the door was. I'd been there for 25 years I knew exactly where the door was…' *[wives off-camera laugh affirmatively]* 'so I climbed over the chairs and it took me a couple of minutes and I finally got out and then down the stairs…'*[HG interjects]:*

Character HG:

'Yeah we went through the kiosk where they serve the poker machine change and find nothin' but rubble. See – there's a 20 cent Carousel there, then you've got a line of 10 cents across there and another line of 10 cents there, well the crack came right through there *[chopping gesture]*…so you lost the 20 cent Carousel and then half the 10…'[43]

[BA interjects]:

[43] Carousel is a brand of poker machine/slot machine for recreational gambling.

Character BA:

'The 10 cent line went across and half of them had gone…'

Character HG:

'Yeah, and then you've got your other 20 cent Carousel there…I mean all that had just gone…gone straight down…' *[shakes his head in disbelief].*

HG uses his index finger to 'draw' a map of the gaming room's layout on a checked tablecloth as he speaks. As per Geoff Burton's direction, although the characters are in dialogue with each other, each of the actors is positioned slightly angled towards the camera, as though an unseen fifth party is privy to the conversation. It's as though they've shared the story between them many times before and now their natural dispositions are to let others know what took place in minute and personalized detail within the comfort of their domestic context.

The effect of this 'staging' and enactment is to present to film viewers uninhibited expression of the storytellers' habitus, 'a system of models for the perception and appreciation of practices' (Bourdieu 1990a, p.131). The dialogue patterns are indicative of the 'interpersonal component of meaning' that Halliday suggests is performed in the 'tenor of discourse' and 'refers to who is taking part…the nature of participants, their statuses and roles' and their 'mutual relationships' (cited in Ifversen 2003, p.65). It's clear from the structure of the scripting in the above scene that BA and HG's conversation embodies naturalized and familiarized turn-taking positions that their working conditions and friendship have endowed them with. Additionally, by including simple props such as cans of beer and a basket of buttered bread, *Aftershocks'* production designer, Lou Austin, enables the characters to communicate to viewers in a very subtle manner, how:

> …agents classify themselves, expose themselves to classification, by choosing, in conformity with their tastes, different attributes, clothes, types of food, drinks, sports, friends, which go well together and which they find agreeable.
> (Bourdieu 1990a, p.131)

And although the above scene detail is minimalist in terms of the length of the scene, the amount of dialogue spoken, and the design of the backyard context which includes a clothesline in the background and inexpensive outdoor furnishings, the likely effect of the micro-story within the broader scope of the *Aftershocks* narrative is quite profound. This is because the film's direction and the performance of its actors present a set of narratives where:

> The structures of life, relevant expectations, orders within which action is framed, the moods and senses of living are relatively seamlessly melding into each other, eased perhaps, and often subconsciously, by rules or mini-rites of entry and egress. This… dimension…of ordinary lived processes constitutes the reality of actuality. (Kapferer 2004, p.48)

All throughout *Aftershocks*, the storytellers' scenes take shape in inconspicuous surroundings which are representative of the protagonists' social positions as working-class Newcastle residents. The characters' 'routine-lived spaces and practices…as exercises of the habitus, whereby the dispositional schemes of life are reproduced' (Kapferer 2004, p.49) have been encoded by the production team to signify the 'workers' natural inclinations and their individual personification as well as their relationships and community orientations. For example, although they're short in duration the first eight scenes of the film are loaded with content which divulges an extraordinary degree of Novocastrian experiences through interpersonal communication tendencies:

SCENE 1 – [Time: 23 seconds]

The middle-aged couple is seated at a kitchen table, drinking coffee. The décor of the room is unpretentious and there are family photographs attached to the side of the refrigerator. The wife does most of the talking. Her husband listens attentively to what she says, nods in agreement and rotates a writing pen between his fingers:

Character EG:

'My Dad was a foundation member of the club. I was also on the May Day floats. They all said it was wonderful from the social aspect, dances on Wednesday and Thursday nights, Saturday night performances…'

Character HG:

'But it felt safe you know, there was no agro. I never saw anyone tossed down the stairs, I know there was, I know there was people tossed down the stairs…'

Character EG worked in the 'poker machine room' at the Newcastle Workers Club, 'she was not on shift at the time of the quake, but became involved when [her husband – HG] walked home injured' (Brown & WCAC 2001, p.xxix). She explained to the author how her experience became part of the original *Aftershocks* construction:

> I was the last person to be interviewed, because I really wasn't…on the earthquake day, I was at home but I think because when people went around and taped the people and they were getting this feedback they thought 'Well who's this Elaine Gibson that sort of…?' And people sort of must have been mentioning…and they thought, 'Well we better go and talk to this Elaine Gibson'. I think that's how I ended up into it, whereas people were like, 'Oh she's Howard's wife.' (EG, pers.comm.)

Even though this specific storyteller was not an 'eyewitness' to the earthquake (as her husband was) through a range of conversations with others (during the WCAC's research process), her talkative disposition as a valuable storyteller was recognized by the original text's producers, and again it was utilized by the film's production team. When the author asked EG and HG about their usual conversational dynamic and whether they believed it was accurately portrayed through character EG's verbose interjections, they replied:

> EG: 'Yeah, probably.'
> HG: 'Yeah.' (laughs)
> EG: 'It is…that's what I said.'
> HG: 'And they [the actors, director, script/screenwriter] didn't know, so that was very weird. ' (EG & HG, pers. comm.)

Of course the professional actors and producers were in a position to identify markers of social interactions gleaned from the interview transcriptions gathered by WCAC

members, because of their field training and practice-based capital acquisitions.

In Scene 1 (described above) EG's mention of her family's Workers Club connections and her memories of taking part in past May Day activities, a 'day of labour movement celebration [which up until 1964] was officially gazetted as a public holiday in the Newcastle and northern coalfields area' (Phillips 1998, p.26) reveal within the limitations of a short verbal 'burst', how 'we are socialized initially within the immediate group where we are physically raised' and that 'humans inter-generationally create the conditions within which they are conditioned' (Robbins 1991, pp.171-174). EG's recall of her familial relationships with the Newcastle Workers Club and its socialist activities reinstate recurring motifs used throughout *Aftershocks* of Newcastle's identity as a working-class city.

A different kind of motif is implemented in Scene 2 of the film when a maintenance worker at the club (who helped with the 'inside' rescues) and his wife (who regularly assisted with the recreational card game Hoy) (Brown & WCAC 2001, p.xxix) describe their immediate responses to the earthquake.

SCENE 2 – [Time: 11 seconds]

Character BA is seated with his wife FA in a backyard context. There are beer cans and a glass of beer on the table. FA's demeanor is animated, but her husband's is sombre and contemplative:

Character FA:

'Yeah when it all collapsed you didn't know what it was, you thought they'd dropped the atomic bomb!'

Character BA:

'Yeah, they'd finally gone mad and done it…'

Character BA and FA's shocked responses to the natural catastrophe actually happening, have disposed them to equate the unprecedented event with one that's been

widely circulated as an international cultural narrative. 'When we say a thing is unreal, we mean it is too real, a phenomenon so unaccountable and yet so bound to the objective fact that we can't tilt it to the slant on our perceptions' (De Lillo 2001, pp.1-2). In this regard, the characters' dialogue is representative of more universal perceptions of monumental societal impacts, thereby communicating through a *generalized* schema, the implausibility of the earthquake's occurrence.

The incredulous reaction to the earthquake has also been expressed by character SG who was 'the Bingo and Hoy caller at the club…and 'rode' a floor down and was injured quite severely' (Brown & WCAC 2001, xxix). He features in Scene 3 of the film:

SCENE 3 – [Time: 11 seconds]

SG sits on a beach sand dune with a bottle of beer in a cooler by his side. A dilapidated beach shack is in the background of the scene and the ocean can be heard nearby:

Character SG:

'Put me in the garage…the Waterboard garage…even then I said, 'What happened?' – "Oh…there's been a bloody earthquake, came all the way from Sydney…"'

SG's intonation & gestures change to impersonate a non-descript person talking about where the earthquake originated.

SG's manner and tone of voice is disparaging of the authoritative direction he was given to leave his vehicle at a particular location. His dialogue articulates the sense that a Sydney-based origin for the earthquake is an absurd proposition (in his opinion) and that those making the claim are ignorant of the 'inside' Novocastrian-based story. In a very nuanced way, the metropolitan-regional dichotomy that pervades Newcastle's cultural identity is represented through SG's storytelling. SG's formative dispositions as a community-minded and Workers Club focused individual are epitomized in this scene. He seems unconvinced of the accuracy of the information he's received. Consequently, SG's 'habitus, as a description of [his] everyday lived reality, has

generated practices, frames for positioning himself in the world, and indeed ways of inhabiting the world' (Probyn 2004, p.336).

In Scene 4 of *Aftershocks* storytellers KI and MT are positioned in what appears to be a 'working' world they're used to inhabiting:

SCENE 4 – [Time: 23 seconds]

The two women are seated next to each other at a hotel counter. On the bar are cigarette packets, an ashtray and a schooner glass of beer. As Workers Club bar staff employees they seem to be in familiar surrounds and comfortable in the licensed space. They are both reflective. The woman not speaking [Character KI] appears to look into the distance beyond the camera lens and frowns slightly several times throughout the other's dialogue. It appears as though she is listening to what's being said but is distracted. Her concentration on what her friend is saying [to the anonymous, silent, yet imaginatively present viewer beyond the camera] is fractured, and her facial expression suggests she requires a determined mental effort to slip into the context she is in, several times. This gives the viewer the impression that Character KI is not imagining the events MT speaks of, but remembering and reliving them:

Character MT:

'It's amazing what you can do when you have to…'

Character KI:

'Oh yeah…'

Character MT:

'They talk about adrenalin and all that sort of thing, and you cry or scream or do whatever else while you're doing it, and I don't know where it all came from, but it did, and it all came at the right time *[looks to friend]* I suppose?'

Character KI:

'Hmm…'

Again, although this scene has minimal dialogue, the knowledge it enables viewers to acquire about the storytellers' personas has also been embedded within the material landscape of the production design. In *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (1984), Bourdieu discusses the working class' propensity for regular alcohol consumption as a means for persons to socio-culturally distinguish themselves from the social hierarchy. He argues, 'especially industrial workers maintain an ethic of convivial indulgence…[they] are capable of entering into the generous and familiar…relationship that is encouraged and symbolized by eating and drinking together…' (p.179). In this scene the purpose of KI and MT's 'drinking together' is not for festive reasons, however, the shared bonding they accomplish is generated within a space usually attributed to the conditions Bourdieu describes, which are indicative of Newcastle's working-class ethos. In conversation with the author, original storyteller ES explained that the Public Bar setting 'gave a bit more insight into the actual people' (ES, pers. comm.).

Character KI is almost totally silent in the scene above, yet her cognitive dispositions have been made apparent through the actor's embodiment of her character. Consistently throughout *Aftershocks* when people are finished speaking or when they are partnered with someone who speaks, an element of silence has been encoded. Noble argues that silence too is a language and 'in many situations silence is already automatically interpreted by the [viewer]. Reading the meaning of silence in a text intimately involves the [audience member's] subjectivity and the context in which he or she is positioned' (1999, p.191). Or as *Aftershocks'* main protagonist offered, 'what's a pause for? For people to think about something I guess…to think about what they actually saw and take it in. So, I mean if it works in the film, the people actually think about something a bit stronger because they get a chance to think about it' (JC, pers. comm.). In Scene 5 of the film an 'incidental' character provides a silent contrast while his wife tells of her personal earthquake experience:

SCENE 5 – [Time: 21 seconds]

An elderly woman sits upright in a hospital bed. Her husband is seated near a window and distractedly drinks a cup of tea and gazes outside. The 'patient' wears a dressing gown, and she is knitting. Her disposition is talkative and animated, and she appears eager to relay her position at the Workers Club and what her plans for the day were:

Character NB:

'I had a few 5 cent pieces in my purse so I thought *[winks]* here goes *[she seems excited imagining her potential winnings]* I'll go down the 5 cent machine and put some in…I came in a bit early that day 'cause the buses were on strike. My husband took me in…I'd just come in to play Hoy at the Workers Club…'

This character's dialogue seems to serve a mostly pragmatic function at this stage of the film. The discursive content simply accounts for why the woman was present on the day, and what her activities would involve with the express intent of explaining her 'ordinary' participation as a recreational Workers Club member, who happened to be slightly inconvenienced by the local Transport Workers Union stoppage. Earlier in this chapter the pertinent culturally identifiable functionality of NB's remark about the bus strike was considered. Within the context of the entire film, NB's relatively 'modest narrative communication' demonstrates that 'the mundane stories are also among the most important means by which people articulate and clarify their sense of [the] world' (Crites 1997, p.31). In the following scene the perspective of a more emphatic and direct proponent of Workers Club principles plays out:

SCENE 6 – [Time: 18 seconds]

This time the storyteller is seated (unaccompanied) at the bar of what appears to be a generic local hotel or licensed club. There are playing cards, a schooner glass of beer, and packet of cigarettes on the counter – ES smokes as he talks. Behind ES there are poker machines and a Trade Union/ Industry banner (or

poster) for a gas-fitting company. The caricatures on the banner display 'men at work' and an iconic representation of prominent campaigner for indigenous rights, athlete Cathy Freeman.

Character ES:

> 'I was staying at the Cricketers Arms *[a local hotel several blocks from the Workers Club site*] and one day I came downstairs and immediately ran into a table of some of the people that I knew *[he is a well-known local person in terms of club/hotel patronage]* and they started telling me some of the stories *[ES scratches his ear, smiles and gives an incredulous chuckle]*…I mean it blew me out of my tree actually…about the Workers Club…and by that time a lot more information had been revealed about what the staff did…*[the actor portraying ES gesticulates using (at various stages) the flat palm of his hand and splayed fingers. He also uses his cigarette as a pointer for emphasis]*…on the day of the earthquake.'

The socialist dispositions of storyteller ES have been addressed in the preceding chapter, as well as his 'displacement' at the time the earthquake occurred and his burgeoning need to return to the city, and these predilections are also manifest in later scenes in *Aftershocks*. The design aesthetic of this scene is particularly effective in contextualizing meanings pertaining to union membership and 'club' activity. The material codes embedded stylistically in the scene above, serve to symbolically reinforce viewers' understandings of ES as an advocate for working-class concerns. In this regard, together with the character's spoken recollections they constitute what Fisher refers to as '*affirmative rhetoric*…the kind of discourse that is designed to overcome doubt, to gain unity of belief, attitude, value and action in accord with [an] idea, ideology, or practice' [original emphasis] (1997, p.319). This affirmative rhetoric is also communicated through ES' choice of terminology when he refers to the employees who experienced the earthquake as 'staff', despite knowing most of them intimately. Furthermore his euphemistic response ('blew me out of my tree') to hearing about employees' stories conveys a sense of pride and collegial admiration indicative of a united 'membership'. As Hanks argues euphemistic language,

> …helps shape the habitus of speaking agents, both their own expressive dispositions and their evaluations of others' expression. To euphemize one's speech, consciously or not, is to self-regulate: The individual is fitted ever more closely to his or her position in the field. This is one of the mechanisms by which the habitus is formed at the point where actors engage in fields. (2005, p.77)

JC, who is the main protagonist of the *Aftershocks* film is a dynamic and engaging character whose exuberant personality and propensity for swearing mean he communicates in very descriptive ways and is occasionally required to modify his terminology [44]. In conversation with the author, the real JC described the actual chaotic scenes that the previously mentioned archival footage recorded immediately after the earthquake and during the interview, he implemented the conscious self-regulation that Hanks refers to:

> I mean like when, when the actual, when it was actually happening, I came out and all that sort of stuff, the media sort of came running up to me because they saw me with the Workers Club outfit on. I mean all I did was, excuse my French, but all I would do as they pointed a camera or microphone in my face, I'd just go fuck off! I'm not interested! (JC, pers. comm.)

> And I mean so they couldn't, they couldn't ever use me, and so nothing was ever said about me. So I thought well maybe I should let someone know exactly what happened. But I never thought it was going to go into a play or a movie and all this sort of stuff. (JC, pers. comm.)

> Yeah I just thought it was going to be a record of the event. I mean, I mean but in hindsight I mean I'm glad that they, it has turned out the way it has and I'm glad I did actually tell my story. They said without my story they wouldn't have been

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[44] In conversation with the author original storyteller EG said of JC, 'he's a bubbly type of person. He'll bowl you over with personality, as long as you can contain his swearing!'(laughs) (EG, pers. comm.). Speaking of the transition from stage to screen, JC told the author, 'round about it was exactly the same. Like all the swearing and all that…I mean, if you just saw a building fall down well you do tend to do a little bit of that! So I mean all that was pretty well to the point and pretty well right.' He also used emotion metaphors to explain: 'I mean the blood was boiling and the adrenalin was rushing' (JC, pers. comm.). In terms of responses to the film's narrative and the vulgar language included, original storyteller and interviewee ES explained to the author that 'one particular woman said, "Oh I don't know that they [film producers] portrayed it correctly", and I said "Ah". She said something about the language, and I went "Well, that's reality". This woman would never swear in her life. She was in the hospitality industry, you hear it on the other side of the bar all the time! I was …sort of taken back [sic] by that' (ES, pers. comm.).

> able to make the movie...because there wasn't enough information. So that's why they used so much of my information. (JC, pers. comm.)

These comments 'straight from the protagonist's mouth' reveal much about his personage and hence about the representation of it through actor Jeremy Simms' performance, 'It was a great project for me to do and to have John's words to speak…made things very easy' (Simms cited in Johnston 1998, p.5). JC's 'words' and his dialogic delivery convey a sense of his energetic and humane disposition, particularly in regard to the adrenalin-charged atmosphere of the immediate post-quake events, and especially in relation to his 'selfless' acts of rescue [45]. Evidence of these traits have been encoded consistently throughout *Aftershocks* beginning with 'JC's' initial storytelling in the following scene:

SCENE 7 – [Time: 31 seconds]

The following dialogue (or rather monologue) plays out in an empty industrial warehouse building. The production design includes a grungy metallic aesthetic and there is one plastic chair in the space and two windows in the distant background filtering daylight. JC has such a strong personality that the set schema requires only minimalistic detail to contextualize a communicative schema for his distinctive habitus to emanate:

Character JC:

'And anyway…*[viewers witness this scene when it appears as though the storytelling has been already going for some time]* as soon as I got to the top of the fire escape, the first set, the fire escape, there-was-nothin'! *[JC shrugs and his mouth is downturned indicating perplexity]* Bar 4 *[his eyes dart and he appears as though he's scanning across the space in front of him]* -was-not-there *[he uses a staccato speech pattern for emphasis, snorts and*

[45] In a review of the film published in the *Sun Herald* Jeremy Simms stated 'He was a hero on that day, but he didn't plan to be. People just act a certain way and many of them can't always explain why. Constable never wanted to be part of it [the media interest] afterwards. He just wanted to forget about it. That's why his story is so powerful' (cited in Johnston 1998, p.5).

looks sideways] and Lyn's on the next flight up, and I've gone 'oh no!' *[rolls his eyes]* and I've looked up *[the actor shifts in his seat]* and there's just this small little pigeonhole *[he gestures with both hands and fingers pointed to 'draw' a small imaginary frame mid-air. He also audibly emphasizes the spatial contraction using a change in his tone of voice when he says 'small little pigeonhole' with a raised pitch]* and that's where Lyn's office was you know, I come up the fire escape there *[again he uses both his hands in an angled framing gesture that he scrutinizes closely to recreate a visual of the confined area for the out-of-shot 'listener']* and it broke off there *[indicates a perpendicular angle]* and there's this very thin little ledge *[again the actor uses a high pitched tone and 'traces' the line of the imaginary ledge using an extended 'pinching' motion to demonstrate the fragility of the structure, emphasizing the danger of the situation]* and I've gone *[he rolls his eyes again, his hands are upturned and cupped in a surrendering/fatalistic pose – asking through his gesture – what do I do now?]* fuck no! *[he grasps his temples and his hair in an action that speaks of frustration and desperation]* fuck-fuck-fuck-fuck-fuck! *[he moves his head from side to side coinciding with each expletive as though he's searching for an answer – expressing his state of anxiety, fear and helplessness at the time].*

This is a particularly evocative scene for many reasons. Simms' communication of JC's person through the display of his hexis and the articulation of his speech is a very powerful enactment of what may be construed as the individual character's 'authentic behaviour'. Kernis and Goldman suggest that 'authenticity is reflected…in the free and natural expression of [one's] core feelings, motivations, and inclinations' (2005, p.33) and 'JC's' actions (albeit in a heightened state of the recollection of trauma) in the

scene above, appear to epitomize these authors' claims.

Bourdieu explains that hexis is a form of embedded capital that constitutes 'social necessity made second nature, turned into…bodily automatisms' (1984, p.474). JC was employed as a cleaner at the Workers Club and much of his *Aftershocks* story is punctuated with details of the practical duties his 'body' performed that gave him an intimate knowledge of the 'materiality' of his workspace. 'I've been in the roof, on the roof, underneath stages, above stages, up where the chandeliers are in the big auditorium' (Character JC Act, 1, Scene 1, p.2). Subsequently, his character's general capacity to enable film viewers to partially 'picture' the Workers Club prior to its collapse, through the articulation of his bodily knowledge and the gestural nature of his expressive accounts is very effective. Additionally, it may be argued that JC's bodily hexis imbued the *real person* with a 'readiness' to act once the earthquake struck, which would account for his extraordinary rescue efforts.

In contrast to the other characters in the film, JC stands out as one whose abundant physicality can barely be contained, and this is evident in his agitated body language and overt gestural mannerisms. Combined with the minute descriptive details and the emotional depth of his spoken words, Simms' portrayal of JC presents a performative schema for viewers to respond to that evokes empathy *and* provides 'entertainment':

> He's [Jeremy Simms] met me personally a few times…so he sort of knows the sort of character I am. And I think that sort of helped out...And also, he said to me after we watched the opening, I said to him, 'Oh man, you made me look like a mad man', and he said, 'Well if I made you look like a boring little fart no-one would have enjoyed it.' I said, 'Yeah, good point. I'll accept that!' (laughs) (JC, pers. comm.)

The narrative of JC's actions on the day of the Newcastle earthquake are told through a number of strategically designed production and performance styles that have the likely possibility of presenting 'him' as an honest and natural storyteller, according to what Fisher refers to as the concept of 'characterological coherence':

> Determinations of one's character are made by interpretations of a person's decisions and actions that reflect values….character may be considered an organized set of actional tendencies…coherence in life and literature requires that

> characters behave characteristically. Without this kind of predictability, there is no trust, no rational order, no community. (1997, p.316)

For, despite the 'unpredictability' of the earthquake's happening, it may be argued that the ways the *Aftershocks* survivors responded and the stories they told, permeated as a community of concerns that also reflected their individual habitus':

SCENE 8 – [Time: 37 seconds]

The following dialogue/monologue plays out in the same empty industrial warehouse building in the scene preceding it. The earlier scene began with a full body shot of the seated JC, this scene begins with an extreme close-up of the storyteller's face:

Character LB:

'And it suddenly…suddenly it just struck me… 'Oh gee – I'm not goin' to work tomorrow!' Up to that moment I honestly thought I was goin' to work the next day and I was goin' to clean it all up. I didn't think *how* I was goin' to do it – I just knew that I had to…*[LB speaks directly to the camera/listener. Her face is framed in extreme close up, her left hand is slightly clenched with her index finger in the corner of her mouth in a contemplative gesture]*…and I thought, You fool! 'You know…it was just the thing, I went there everyday, it was a part of my life, and when it suddenly struck me that this is [sic] no club there I was lost *[LB shakes her head in a gesture of inconceivability/disbelief]*…I *really* was lost, I couldn't imagine it…*(she frowns as she remembers]*…

This scene features JC's boss recalling her shock and dismay at the way her 'ordinary' working world had been disrupted by the earthquake, once she was able to 'take in' the after-effects of the extraordinary event she had so literally experienced. The metaphorical terminology this character uses to explain how she came to realize that her 'familiar life' had changed so dramatically is particularly poignant. It expresses a physical blow to describe the 'jolt' of her psychological revelation about *her*

displacement, and subsequently communicates to viewers in terms of a sensory projection, the strong impact the earthquake had on her everyday circumstances. When LB makes it known that her immediate natural response was to think about 'fixing the mess' (and berates herself for it) she exhibits the pragmatism of physical capital that Bourdieu has proposed in terms of 'habitual action' that is:

> …based on the establishment in the individual's past of a coincidence between the norms and structures of a social field, the successful undertaking of practical activity, and a process of personal reflection resulting in the perpetuation of a body schema associated with routinized action. (Shilling 2004, p.481)

Additionally, her personal inclination to fix what had happened at the club that was so much 'a part of [her] life' is representative of:

> …the 'materialist' dimension of habitus – the way day-to-day material conditions 'turns you' into a certain person…[and] produces both a particular kind of body and set of dispositions and values, so that the agent comes to feel, in Bourdieu's terms, 'like a fish in water'. (Webb, Schirato & Danaher 2003, p.18)

LB was in her office completing staff rosters at the time the earthquake hit. Because of the damage to the building LB had become trapped, with efforts to rescue her hampered by debris and obstructions. Eventually JC 'risked his life to save her' (Sharpe cited in Phillips 1998, p.193):

> …he jumped over into my office, and just grabbed hold of me, and then…don't ask me how I got over to the ladder but I had to get over to the ladder, and he just held my arms…sort of outstretched, and I had to get my feet over onto this ladder which wasn't quite stable… and John manoeuvred me down this ladder, and he held my hands while I went down probably about half-a-dozen rungs.
> (Brown cited in Phillips 1998, p.193)

This account of LB's rescue features later in the film when both she and JC share a scene. Through informal conversation that bears the traces of their working relationship and the 'bonding' their shared earthquake experience enabled, the minute and extreme details of their dire predicament are relayed. However, to explore further scenes from *Aftershocks* is beyond the scope of this thesis.

The scenes that *have* been analyzed above including the archival footage, last in total for a duration of *only* 5 minutes and 46 seconds. The film's narrative structure commences with Scenes 1-8, followed by the NBN recordings of the Bus Depot interview, the Beaumont Street, Hamilton street scene, and the Newcastle Workers Club rescue footage. Following the slow motion fade of the rescue scenes, the film cuts to an interior scene of a woman (LB in silhouette) seated with her legs crossed and one shoe hanging loosely as she swings her foot. This sets up the contrast for the stylized (fictionalized) material damage that transpires. Although the film scenes described above are short in duration, it may be argued that they enable evocative longevity in terms of their exceptionally layered potential for the communication of Newcastle's identity.

In summary then, this chapter has discussed *Aftershocks'* transformation from a verbatim theatre production to a television docudrama. Drawing on comments from industry personnel and original *Aftershocks'* storytellers, explanations have been given for how some of the structural determinants such as funding, shaped the film's 'acquired' content and influenced its design. Subsequently, what these implementations meant for: appraisals of the film as a collaborative production; the development of the film's genre style; its aesthetic dimensions in terms of its representation of Newcastle's earthquake 'images'; and its dramatic narrative potentiality, have been explored. Analysis of the bearing the director's habitus has had on the staging and performative aspects of *Aftershocks'* characters has been undertaken. Drawing on Bourdieu's concept of habitus, especially in terms of occupational, familial and expressive dispositions; social capital accumulation; and the practical application of working-class ideals, this analysis has revealed how a text originally centered predominantly on the 'spoken' word has been expanded to accommodate visual cues, aspects of material culture and physical embodiments that appear to be 'natural', with the potential to be engaging. Particular attention has been paid to combinations of these encodings to understand how they may portray *and* convey, features of Newcastle's culture using Bourdieu's theories and ideas to elaborate.

Chapter 8 – *Blackrock*: Producing Culture Through Practice

`It's as though her death has now become part of the Newcastle culture, unfortunately.'
(Murder victim Leigh Leigh's Aunt Toni Maunsell cited in Milsom 1998c, p.20)

This chapter of the thesis investigates some of the cultural production processes involved in the making of two plays, *A Property of the Clan* (1994) and *Blackrock* (1996), which were written by 'one of Australia's most significant and most successful playwrights' the late Nick Enright (Pender 2006, p.84). It also considers production activities surrounding the re-development of the original play texts into the screenplay *Blackrock* (1997). This discussion then leads into the cultural production involved in the cinematic representation of *Blackrock* (1997) by 'first time director Steve Vidler' (Urban 1997 online). The plays partially, and the film predominantly, undergo textual analysis in the next chapter. However, before these analyses are broached, it's important to understand, within the limited scope of this thesis, why and how the play texts and film evolved, in terms of what circumstances instigated their emergence in fields of cultural production linked to Newcastle. The reasoning for this approach is that investigating the practical activities involved in the plays' and film's beginnings and transformations, considerably reveals how they and their affiliated texts, have contributed to perceptions of Newcastle's cultural identity, and continue to feature in the construction of the city's habitus.

Like their textual counterpart *Aftershocks*, the ideas for *A Property of the Clan's* and *Blackrock's* linked narratives also came about due to, in a similar manner to the earthquake and the *Aftershocks* stories, a distinct 'Newcastle' event that occurred in the area in late 1989. However, the trigger for these representations to emerge was a brutal and catastrophic disjuncture in social relationships, as opposed to seismological ruptures in the city's landscape, as one of *Aftershocks'* storytellers explained to the author:

> Well I mean this was nature. The earthquake was nature and you can't do much about nature, and it was about people helping people - whereas this [*Blackrock*] is about people hurting people. (EG, pers. comm.)

EG's comments specifically relate to the film representation of criminality and its repercussions featured in *Blackrock* and speak of the human suffering deliberate acts of violence impart. The 'this' EG alludes to is *Blackrock's* narrative appropriation of a shocking crime that has previously been referred to in the earlier chapter *Newcastle: A socio-spatial location for the communication and cultural production of place perception*. This crime happened in the suburb of Stockton on the outskirts of Newcastle in November 1989:

> The rape and murder of 14-year-old Leigh Leigh chilled an Australian summer. It was the end of 1989 and at a party in an old surf clubhouse in Newcastle Leigh suffered a series of violent attacks that culminated in her murder. She was raped, kicked, and spat on, then raped again, strangled and finally bashed to death with a rock. (Morris, *ABC Radio* 1996)

Prior to her death the young teenager was brutally sexually assaulted by a number of youths [46]. It 'was a peculiarly horrifying crime, with traumatic effects on an entire community' (Williams 1997, p.11). Due to the horrific circumstances of Leigh Leigh's killing:

> …the story of her life and death have been written and rewritten many times. The media has generated a constant stream of sensational newspaper and television reports about the crime, etching the so-called 'Leigh Leigh case' into the Australian public consciousness. This media chronicle, together with the police records, court transcripts, reports of the various inquiries into the police investigation, and a series of academic commentaries on the case, creates a considerable, and contradictory record of what happened to Leigh.
> (Brien 1999, pp.115-116)

One reason why the Leigh Leigh murder likely attracted so much publicity beyond Newcastle's geographical limits was because of the public outrage at the ferocity of the attacks on Leigh, and the timely implementation of a new state of New South Wales parliamentary law introduced in early 1990 which saw '18 year old Matthew Webster', the Stockton youth who confessed to killing her, as 'the first murderer to be sentenced

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[46] 'There's evidence as many as 10 young men took part in the attacks against her' (Eastley, *ABC Radio* 2004).

under "truth-in-sentencing" legislation' (Morrow & San Roque 1996, p.475). This legislative change, which had already been under assessment prior to Leigh's murder, and the robust socio-political exchanges it prompted, correspond in some ways with Bourdieu's 1994 account of 'how the murder of a young provincial girl, an event which might warrant no more than local interest, was drummed up by the media leading to debates in parliament and calls for the return of the death penalty and the establishment of life-sentencing' (Grenfell 2004, p.95). Along the same lines as Bourdieu's original observations, within a French context, following Matthew Webster's prosecution for Leigh Leigh's murder, vigorous NSW parliamentary debate also took place. When the then NSW Attorney General Mr Dowd was asked, 'in view of grave community concern, particularly in the Stockton community, following the sentencing of Matthew Webster for the murder of 15-year-old [sic] Leigh Leigh, what action does the Government intend to take?' (Martin cited in *NSW State Parliament* 25/10/90 online). The Attorney General responded with a lengthy explanation that, 'through the truth in sentencing legislation…the public for the first time knows precisely the date from which this person is eligible for release…every one of us can get a cheap headline by saying that we want the maximum penalty imposed for crimes' (O'Dowd cited in *NSW State Parliament* 25/10/90 online) [47]. Consequently, extensive media coverage of Matthew Webster's criminal predicament within the fields of legal and political enquiry, simultaneously situated his identity within the realm of 'public opinion', at the same time as it continually positioned him as a local Stockton murderer – a personal label that's been institutionally classified, yet within the suburb itself, was difficult to make sense of and accept:

> I knew Matt through the school bus and that…Matthew Webster was an amazing guy as far as, to, to think that he actually did that was just mind blowing I mean because Matthew Webster was just this quiet guy who used to sit on the bus, you know, go to school, get his work done, get on the bus and go home. I would have thought he was a quiet, pleasant guy. And as far as I was concerned, I mean this guy took the wrap for what I believe was only the tip of the iceberg.
> (*Aftershocks* storyteller JC, pers. comm.)

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[47] When the film *Blackrock* was released in 1997 it 'was watched by 120 MPs in a special screening at State Parliament' (O'Shea & Roach 1997, p.5). This viewing context attests to the film's narrative currency in terms of formalized socio-political evaluations of its culturally 'loaded' content.

According to Morrow and San Roque, another reason why the local murder may have received so much media notoriety was because of the 'the seaside landscape in which Leigh Leigh died' (1996, p.485, footnote 63). Numerous newspaper headlines including beach and coastal signifiers attest to these authors' claims: 'Girl slain in sandhills' (Timbrell 1989, p.7); 'DNA test for Stockton Beach murder suspects' (Riley 1989, p.1; 'Beach party still the focus of investigation' (*Newcastle Herald* 13 November 1989, p.1); 'Murder on the beach…silence on the streets' (Lovell 1990, p.16-17). Many reports about the murder had the capacity to communicate wider perceptions of Newcastle's identity as a beach culture by featuring 'the incompatibility of the setting with expected norms of human behaviour' (Bumiller 1990, p.129) serving to reinforce the seemingly irreconcilable fact that a vicious homicide in Newcastle happened at a place representative of 'Australia's' mythological status as a beach-loving nation.

Kristen Bumiller also suggests that symbolic representations of especially violent crimes against women, capture the imaginations of readers and viewers because 'the language describing the setting of the crime creates a picture of the personalities of the actors and sets the framework for popular interpretations' (1990, p.129). She further argues that certain treatments within media discourses of the 'place' a crime occurs 'resonate with images of victims and thus form the context for interpretation' (1990, p.129). In this regard, mediated accounts of the 1989 Leigh Leigh 'beach slaying' work on a number of different levels to disclose topographical, and by association, geographical and cultural descriptors of the Stockton landscape [48]. Berleant asserts that these descriptive codes provide 'a special sense of [the] physical *identity* that a location can convey' [original emphasis] (2003, p.43). They also project symbolic meanings about the *cultural geography* of the actual scene of the crime, and position the crime site within the subset of the 'distinctive' Newcastle suburb of Stockton, which as well as being Leigh Leigh's home, was also the:

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[48] In an online synopsis of Stockton's history it's explained that 'Stockton was isolated from Newcastle itself by the Hunter River and so developed as a dormitory suburb, serving initially the local coal mine and industries, then the shipbuilders and finally BHP. Access…was limited to boats with a ferry service…commencing in 1845…until the construction of the Stockton Bridge which opened in 1971' (*History of Stockton* n.d.).

> …home town of the offenders…an unusually located community, situated across the harbour from the Newcastle central business district connected by a regular ferry service…The township is like an island cradled among billowing chimneys and cranking machinery. One side is bordered by beach, another by the harbour (Hunter River) and another by the BHP industrial landscape.
> (Carrington & Johnson 1994, p.8)

Applying Berleant's general views about 'place' identifiers and perception formation, because Stockton is partially 'surrounded by water' with 'a harbour' as one of its 'central reference point[s]', the suburb's physicality could have the propensity to predispose residents towards the construction of a unified community identity (2003, p.43). Yet as Carrington contends 'it would be a mistake…to assume that Stocktonians share the same…values…attitudes…and beliefs simply because they live in isolated proximity to each other' (1998, p.8). On the other hand, Scott argues that when geographically bound cultural relationships are considered 'anthropologically, localism can be viewed as territorialism important to the self-preservation and well-being of the clan; it can also be a unifying force that may bond communities together to invest in, develop and protect common interests' (2003, p.6). Certainly aspects of the territorialism Scott describes, such as protectionism, were revealed throughout Leigh Leigh's murder investigation when Stockton's community, the 'home' of both the innocent victim and the youthful perpetrator, encountered what Bourdieu refers to as "the logic of stigma":

> The logic of stigma reminds us that social identity is the stake in a struggle in which the stigmatized individual or group…can only retaliate against the partial perception which limits it to one of its characteristics by highlighting, in its self-definition, the best of its characteristics. (1984, pp.475-476)

Within the context of Leigh Leigh's murder, Stockton's otherwise endearing 'best characteristic' of community support in the face of adversity, a strong constituent of Newcastle's cultural identity, came to resemble a staunch and unyielding, localized defence narrative. The suburb's, and by association Newcastle's, reputation became stigmatized by 'principles of inclusion and exclusion that [established an] "us" against "them"' mentality (Morley & Robins 1995, p.72) as emotional responses to the actual crime, and to the disparate reporting of it continued to shape Stockton's 'social

habitus…in terms of "we-feelings"' (Elias cited in Reed-Danahay 2005, p.104) [49]. Furthermore, it may be argued that the 'terrible sore on the community's sense of moral hurt' (Bennie 1997, p.13) continues to present itself within more recent media discourses. This was evident during a 2004 ABC national radio interview with former Stockton resident Mark Constable [50], who coincidentally, happened to be directing a Sydney Theatre Production of *Blackrock* at the time, 'it certainly created a lot of damage and it's still, it's still there. I mean, you know, I go up home, after a few beers, the topic comes up again' (cited in Eastley, *ABC Radio* 2004).

At the time of Leigh Leigh's killing especially, much media discourse about the circumstances of her death focussed on the fact that it 'took place at a teenage party; a party…which was free from adult supervision…with teenagers celebrating a 16th birthday' who were mostly 'Year 10 students from Newcastle High' (Morrow & San Roque 1996, p.475). Bourdieu would attest that this kind of social context allowed the young partygoers to 'revel in the specific virtues of youth…virility, enthusiasm…enjoying the freedom of irresponsibility' (1984, p.478). Consequently, within the framework of the police investigation into the murder, and its subsequent widespread media coverage and public commentary, a general perceptual schema arose suggesting in part, that parental inadequacies linked to demographic disinclinations, that is,' the parenting standards within the Stockton community' (Morrow & San Roque 1996, p.481) [51], were largely to blame for Leigh's demise:

> We have received not one telephone call from anyone in Stockton with any sort of information which could help – It is disturbing. There were a lot of kids, a lot of people in the area where Leigh was murdered on the third of November yet no one sees anything. (Unidentified detective cited in Carrington 1998, pp.99-100)

The lack of adult guidance on the night Leigh Leigh died became a trope that featured prominently in formalized fields of cultural production such as media contexts and legal

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[49] In a *Daily Telegraph* article about Leigh's mother's responses to the film production of *Blackrock*, O'Shea and Roach emphasize that 'the murder, and the persistent suspicions that some of Leigh's killers were never charged, left deep scars in the coastal village of Stockton' (1997, p.5).

[50] 'The play's director, Mark Constable, grew up in Stockton and was friends with many of those at the party where Leigh Leigh died' (Eastley, *ABC Radio* 2004).

[51] (Morrow & San Roque 1996, p.478; Sydney Morning Herald 7 November 1989, p.1; *Sydney Morning Herald* 25 October 1990, p.10; Riley 1990, pp.8-17)

proceedings, as well as in informal dialogue surrounding the case [52]. Implicit in these discussions was the notion that 'teenage male sexuality [is] a dam about to burst, an imminent explosion, a disembodied force which only a parent can hope to restrain' (Morrow & San Roque 1996, p.479). This 'force' is written into the powerful title of the play *A Property of the Clan* which was drawn from the criminal trial proceedings of Matthew Webster, when psychiatrist Dr Strum gave evidence that the murder victim had been completely sexually objectified as a 'property of the clan' (Squires 1995; Morrow & San Roque 1996). The playwright, Nick Enright, who came to write the piece described the psychiatrist's remark as a 'gift' – 'I thought it was fantastic, and there's a hidden pun…it's about maleness and the explosion of testosterone that happens in adolescent males' (Enright cited in Kelly 1994, p.68).

Given the severity of the crime and the fact that 'there's evidence as many as ten young men aged between 15 and 19 participated in the attacks' on Leigh Leigh (Morris, *ABC Radio* 1996), a position that discounts the limiting aspects an (albeit hypothetical) adult presence at the ill-fated party may have had, is untenable. However, imaginary proposals about the conditions that may or may not have prevented Leigh Leigh's murder are not the focus of this research. What is the focus is developing an understanding of how the communicative and communal defence strategies local people and various cultural producers enacted because the crime occurred, have been invested in and prevail, through many textual productions linked to the case. For, as *Aftershocks* storyteller HG proposed in conversation with the author more than a decade after the murder:

> Yeah well it hasn't gone away yet. It's still brewing out there, still festering…I think there's a few stories there to be told. (HG, pers. comm.)

The dominant cultural narrative at the core of the original local murder investigation, and communication about it forms the basis for *A Property of The Clan's* and *Blackrock's* 'themes'. This narrative resonates with Lohrey's claim that 'Police allege

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[52] Eventually this trope was also embedded into the dialogue of *A Property of the Clan*, when the character Diane says: 'I work at the nursing home down the bottom of your hill. And one old dear, she collared me, knew I was from over Black Rock, and she says, 'what a terrible thing, but wasn't that kid asking for it, going to a party like that?''(Enright 1994, p.41)

they were hindered by a "wall of silence" and the community's lack of co-operation' (1998, p.B04). The underlying local cultural narrative centres on the 'untold' story of what happened the night Leigh Leigh was killed, and the types of sub-cultural relationships that may have predisposed individuals with important knowledge to withhold information [53]. In *Language and Symbolic Power* (1991) Bourdieu explains that abstaining from verbal communication, or 'acts of silence', may occur due to a number of social conditions and conditionings. Depending on the circumstances, 'maintaining a silence' could be understood as: a linguistic incompetence due to poor educational standards (p.22); a 'modality of practice' or a secret code 'silent and insidious, insistent and insinuating' for negotiating 'crises characteristic of the domestic unit, such as marital or teenage' relationships [54] (p.51); a strategy enacted in situations where 'dominated individuals [may be] under the potential jurisdiction of formal law (p.71); or, in less formal daily exchanges, refraining from dialogue could be an indication of a fear of embarrassment, intimidation or correction by dominant speakers (p.99). The cultural narrative attributed to the community of Stockton post Leigh Leigh's murder was likely due to a combination of the 'silences' Bourdieu's concepts render [55]. As such, an attempt to address the consequences of these silences, 'the more emotional dimensions' (Carrington 1998, p.152) which led to divisions and 'community fracture, family fracture' (Enright cited in Hunter 2008, p.87) within Stockton and its surrounds, prompted one local resident to take her own communicative action.

> What's interesting is that there's a connection between *A Property of the Clan* 'slash' what was to become *Blackrock*, and *Aftershocks*…One of my researchers who worked on *Aftershocks*, worked on that, on [sic] *Property of the Clan*, and she was a resident of Stockton. (WCAC AA, pers. comm.)

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[53] In Shane Homan's chapter 'Soundscapes of surf and steel: *Blackrock* and *Bootmen*', the author explains: 'the arrest and sentencing of teenager Matthew Webster for Leigh Leigh's murder did not silence those who believed he did not act alone at the beach party' (2005, p.23).
[54] A teenage son's unwillingness to discuss matters with his mother is a predominant narrative code within the play and film *Blackrock.* The following quote is sourced from a synopsis printed on the back cover of the published screenplay: 'Diane, fighting her own fears, battles with Jared's stubborn silence as he refuses to talk about the fateful night' (1997 Sundance Film Festival).
[55] In a 1997 Review of the play *Blackrock* Chan states: 'The agony of not having words to express the horror, the suspicion, the gap between the young people and their parents, the knowledge of some, the ignorance of others. It's all laid out in words: the said, the unsaid and those ever-present secret agendas' (1997, p.31).

Carol Myers, a mature-age drama student who did initial research for the play provided valuable 'first-hand involvement' in previous 'community theatre' (Carrington 1998, p.154) such as the *Aftershocks* project, together with her insider status as a Stockton person. This collection of attributes afforded her a distinctive kind of embodied habitus – a strong interest in the 'cultural construction of emotion' (Reed-Danahay 2005, p.100). Subsequently, the localized tendencies Myers encountered in the aftermath of the Leigh Leigh murder, combined with the capital she'd acquired through her study and work in drama, predisposed her to use her individual agency in a way that, it was anticipated, could benefit the local community. She has since stated that 'it wasn't the murder itself that sparked my interest but the ongoing consequences and the need for some of these issues to be dealt with that [weren't] getting dealt with any other way…so I thought, let's take this to the schools' (Myers cited in Carrington 1998, p.152).

Designing a story around the socio-psychological ramifications of the 'local' crime was, because of the circumstances mentioned earlier in this chapter (parental blame; teenage rebelliousness; perceived 'insular' relationships; a 'code of silence') fraught with challenges and difficulties [56]. However, as Myers proposed, positioning a dramatic narrative about these issues within a pedagogic framework meant that a play could likely function to educate young people and also adults, about moral standards, gender interactions and the consequences of risk-taking behaviours in their own terms. This was clearly a conception that Newcastle-based Freewheels Theatre-in-Education Director Brian Joyce responded to when Carol Myers presented her creative suggestions to him in 1991 [57]. Significantly, Carol Myers' pivotal role in precipitating what eventually became *A Property of the Clan* has been relegated to almost complete obscurity within published representations about why and how a theatre piece ('inspired by'; which 'germinated in'; 'in reaction to'; 'in response to'; 'based on'; 'that arose from'; the 're-telling' of the 1989 Stockton events) developed in the first place.

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[56] The mother of Leigh Leigh, Robyn Leigh, had attempted to prevent *A Property of the Clan* being produced but failed 'as it had the financial backing of a government education department' (Carrington 1998, p.154). In a 1999 tribute to Freewheels Theatre-In-Education Director Brian Joyce who helped produce *A Property of the Clan*, Newcastle theatre critic Ken Longworth stated: 'Joyce persevered with developing and staging this shattering play against considerable resistance and opposition' (1999, p.54).

[57] 'It was Carol Myers' idea – she was the one who first presented it to Freewheels, who then contacted the playwright' (Carrington 1998, p.157).

Throughout the author's in depth research of the plays, and numerous reviews, interviews and academic critique pertaining to *A Property of the Clan* and/or *Blackrock*, only six sources refer to the local resident's participation in the early stages of the project [58]. The most recent source is Mary Ann Hunter's article 'Youthful presence: Nick Enright as Teacher and *A Property of the Clan*' published in a 2008 anthology of papers about the playwright's work. Hunter states:

> Enright went straight from completing the script of *Lorenzo's Oil* with George Miller to participating in multiple interviews in Newcastle with Carol Myers, a woman studying community theatre at the University of Newcastle and whose children went to the same school as Leigh Leigh. (p.83)

In a 1994 interview with academic and theatre critic Veronica Kelly, Enright described the conditions under which he agreed to participate in the specifically regional cultural production, explaining that Myers 'was our conduit to the community':

> Brian Joyce who runs Freewheels in Newcastle, had invited me to write a piece for the company…I thought that would be a nice idea because I'm from that area, and I hadn't done a theatre-in-education piece for fifteen years…We were very fortunate in finding a woman called Carol Myers who was not only a member of the Stockton community but a mature-age drama student at Newcastle whose specialty was community theatre, so she had a particular reason for wanting to be involved. (cited in Kelly 1994, pp.66-67)

From the author's perspective, it's interesting to note that from the scant detail available communication about Carol Myers' role, and therefore Nick Enright's connection to the developmental stages of production for *A Property of the Clan* (*APOTC*), vary. These variations seem to depend on the power relationships at stake in various field practices. For example, where there's a chance that Enright's close and/or direct involvement with the Stockton community may be construed as imposing, exploitative and/or 'self-interested', Ms Myer's field position has been elaborated. This 'defensive' strategy is evident in Dr Kerry Carrington's book *Who killed Leigh Leigh?: a story of shame and mateship in an Australian town* (1998), where the criminologist's discursive intent was

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[58] Nick Enright's preface to *APOTC* makes reference to Carol Myers: 'Many people in the Newcastle community helped in the research for this play. I offer my thanks to them, and particularly to Carol Myers and her family' (Enright 1994), as does the preface to *Blackrock*, 'I thank…Carol Myers who arranged and guided the research interviews' (Enright 1996).

to get to the "truth" of the murder investigation [59]. However, most representation of Enright's Stockton community engagement overlooks Carol Myers' crucial participation, thereby emphasizing the playwright's purposeful praxis. Perceptions of a shared, and common production purpose thereby suffuse the man and his work on *APOTC,* as well as *Blackrock*, with socio-cultural values and artistic merit. Enright himself has claimed that 'nearly all the…high spots in my work have been communal and collaborative' (Enright 2002, p.6).

Rather than assume that Carol Myers, through representational neglect may have been the subject of symbolic violence, denied a level of artistic legitimacy and reduced to an inferior status she was 'naturally' uncritical of [60], it is this author's contention that Ms Myers' 'practical knowledge about [her] world' gave her a 'practical mastery' (Calhoun, Gerteis, Moody, Pfaff & Virk 2002, p.259-260) of her place in *APOTC's* creative process enabling her to enact her 'feel for the game':

> The habitus…enables the infinite number of acts of the game – written into the game as possibilities and objective demands – to be produced; the constraints and demands of the game, although they are not restricted to a code of rules, *impose themselves* on those people…who, because they have a feel for the game, a feel, that is, for the immanent necessity of the game, are prepared to perceive them and carry them out. [original emphasis] (Bourdieu 1990a, p.63)

As mentioned in the research methodology chapter, all the 'cultural producers' connected with *APOTC* and/or *Blackrock* who were approached for interview declined, so the author can only speculate as to why Myers' early participation has been either disregarded, possibly misinterpreted, or in the case of all mainstream and some specialist media about the projects' origins, totally ignored. One explanation could be that Ms Myers' habitus, which incorporated 'an educational and creative, not just punitive, response to the social problems' had the effect of negatively re-positioning her inside her own sub-cultural community (Carrington 1998, p.158). She has since stated

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[59] Dr Carrington's publication criticized the original police investigation into Leigh Leigh's murder and includes a chapter 'Playing With Fact and Fiction', pp.151-158. *Sydney Morning Herald Journalist* Amanda Lohrey's lengthy feature article – 'Crimes of the clan' *about* Dr Carrington's book release also mentions Carol Myers' vital role in the early production process.
[60] See page 109 of Chapter 4 for expanded explanations.

that, 'I copped a bit of flack for my involvement' (ibid) [61]. However, a more likely scenario is that upon entry into what was to become *APOTC's* 'field of forces' (Bourdieu 2002, p.290) the discursive conditions Ms Myers encountered, which were initially, the pedagogic field of the Freewheels Theatre-in-Education entity, followed by the expanded symbolic field of Freewheels' commissioning and endorsement of renowned Australian 'writer, director, actor and teacher' Nick Enright (Pender 2006, p.84), meant her role was realigned. This realignment allowed Freewheels Director Brian Joyce to therefore act as a middle-man, and eventually, as a 'symbolic banker' by 'proclaim[ing] the value of the author' recruited to write *APOTC* (Bourdieu 1993a, p.77).

'Joyce, a multiple CONDA winner [62], persuaded Nick Enright to write *A Property of the Clan* for Freewheels, in reaction to the Leigh Leigh murder' (*Newcastle Herald 25 November* 1999, p.41). Prior to his recruitment Nick Enright had 'established a varied, consistent and energetic career in performance and writing; as director, screenwriter, translator, broadcaster and playwright' (Kelly 1994, p.58). In 1993 his and George Miller's screenplay for the film *Lorenzo's Oil* 'was nominated in the category of Best Screenplay for the…Academy Awards and the Writer's Guild of America Awards' (Kelly 1994, p.59). So it's apparent that for a practitioner of Enright's capital standing to agree to 'invest' in a small, regionally based cultural production, the project itself needed to resonate strongly with aspects of Enright's habitus that were driven by symbolic meaning exchange rather than purely economic goals.

One of the playwright's 'lesser-known and most appreciated roles was that of teacher' (Colvin, *ABC Radio* 2003). Enright's employment as an effective educator, especially in relation to performing arts training in professional, tertiary and secondary school institutional settings has been well documented (Pender 2008; Simon & Stewart 1997; Vickery 2008). A willingness to motivate opportunities for learning about social relationships has filtered through much of his writing so that it strongly features 'family…and the fate of the young…[because] our own preoccupations and

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[61] The notion of a storyteller facilitating narrative development 'from the inside' possibly having a *detrimental* effect on community identity, is in direct contrast to perceptions emanating from the 'insider' storytelling practices involved in the *Aftershocks* productions.
[62] CONDA – City of Newcastle Drama Award

obsessions…were implanted long before we were aware we were going to be an adult' (Enright cited in Kelly 1994, p.63). Therefore, inscribed in Enright's own habitus was a desire to draw other peoples' attention to theirs, through diverse channels of cultural production involving interactions with field participants such as Freewheels' Director Brian Joyce:

> It was while they were discussing a relevant subject for a musical for primary school children that they got on to the then big issue in Newcastle: the sexual assault and murder of Leigh Leigh and the subsequent trials of the young males involved. (Longworth 2004, p.23)

In an interview with *Sydney Morning Herald* journalist Tony Squires, Joyce suggested that 'Nick, having been from the region, knew the politics of the region, knew the maleness of the region. And being a gay writer, he would understand male violence' (Squires 1995, p.8A). In other words, according to Joyce, Enright's homosexuality equipped him with experiential knowledge of the 'threat' of masculinity and ways to possibly decipher and deconstruct it. This view has also been supported by *The Australian's* reviewer John McCallum who argued, 'Enright's sexuality helped him to achieve wisdom and compassion' because 'he [had] no axe to grind as a parent, no position to defend in the sex war' (1996, p.12). In an interview with the *Sydney Morning Herald's* Stephen Dunne, the playwright himself professed, 'as a gay man, I have the experience of being in a public place and seeing a group of young straight guys, teenagers or early 20s, and my immediate response is fear, or self-preservation' (1995, p.17). He further explained in an interview with Kelly, 'When you grow up gay – certainly as a man…you learn to read codes very quickly, to encode every response of your own and to decode other people's responses' (1994, p.72). Subsequently, Enright's personal encoding skills were attuned to the potentialities of aggressive, dominating, and/or coercive *gendered* communication styles. This awareness apparently impacted on his ability to re-create these forms of expression in *A Property of the Clan*, described by lighting specialist, theatre critic and academic Geoffrey Milne, as 'a seeringly [sic] authentic reconstruction of [the] much-publicised gang-rape and murder that took place in Newcastle' (1998, p.165). Apart from being 'a great storyteller and great dialogue writer' Brian Joyce argued that Nick Enright also 'had good insight into class and social divisions in a city like Newcastle' which held him in good stead to write a narrative exposition involving the kinds of localized power relationships Leigh Leigh's murder

and its aftermath presented (cited in Longworth 2004, p.23).

> Nick Enright…[grew] up in the area. He had an overview of the wider social context and politics of the area…there was a class element within the incident that happened. There was a class element within the response to that specific incident. There was very much a "this happened to them"…to those people across the river. (Joyce, *ABC Radio* 1993)

Joyce's position was that Enright's knowledge of local social dynamics, combined with his professional expertise would enhance Freewheels' chances of producing an educationally significant and sub-culturally relevant piece of theatre. Initially however, Enright declined to participate:

> I said I couldn't take it on, it horrifies me too much…what kind of response can you have to rape and murder but the conventional one? And he [Brian Joyce] said this fantastic thing: 'you don't understand what's happened in this community as a result of that event; there's a whole group of sixteen and seventeen-year-old kids who cannot speak to each other, or to any adult about the issues that it raised for them.' (Enright cited in Kelly 1994, p.66)

As a result of his discussion with Joyce, Enright travelled to Newcastle in late 1991 to conduct 'research' within the Stockton community in preparation for his theatrical construction. In this regard, together with Carol Myers who 'felt it was really important to have the kids talking directly to the scriptwriter' (cited in Carrington 1998, p.153), the playwright participated in ethnographic research, to gauge and extract local story substance which shaped his writing. 'I listened to mothers talking, to kids talking and out of that came the notion of the play' (Enright cited in Longworth 2001, p.25). When queried about the evocation of place in his writing generally, and the suggestion that *APOTC* represents a 'Newcastle community story' Enright told interviewer Veronica Kelly, 'we keep saying that, but when [we've] performed it in other communities many of them assumed it was about some local event. In Newcastle you can't get away from the profile, though the play itself is set in a fictional town' (1994, p.68).

Mitchell argues that in a general sense 'ethnographers acquire memories during fieldwork and convey these memories of their informants when they write' (cited in Reed-Danahay 2005, p.127). Enright's story design and final scripting for *APOTC* demonstrates evidence of Mitchell's memory appropriation concept, which may also

account for the playwright's early claims that the 'basis of his dramatic material' [was] an "authentic" community response, and that his play [*APOTC* was] therefore, very close to the bone' (Morrow & San Roque 1996, p.486). The 'fictional' codes Enright has embedded in *APOTC* are clearly derivative of conversations which occurred throughout the local interview processes where 'the issue of the murder came up…because [the school students] wanted to talk about it [but] they were actually directed towards relationships – sexuality and violence…peer group pressure, and alcohol and abuse…' (Myers cited in Carrington 1998, p.153). Before and after consultation with several 'community sources' which also included 'counsellors and school-teachers' and 'mothers', Enright decided that his narrative focus would be on 'the responses of a group of ordinary kids' to the rape and murder of their friend, relative or acquaintance, who were torn between their loyalties to their peers and their sense of moral and social responsibilities (Kelly 1994, p.67). Or, as Brian Joyce elucidated, the pedagogic goal of the dramatisation was to explore the issues of 'cause and effect in such a crime: the point of view of the witnesses' (Longworth 2001, p.25) [63]. Consequently, the 'witnessing' aspect of Enright's production has driven the narrative of *APOTC* in a number of significant ways: it enabled him to centre the story's dramatic arc on the dilemma of the teenager Jared, who sees Tracy's sexual assault yet does not act; it helped him create the character Diane (Jared's mother) who observes her son's trauma, but because of his lack of communication, is powerless to help him; it stylizes dialogue so that perverse language about young women's appearances is frequently expressed [64]; it surveys community rifts due to suspicion and speculation; and it predominantly scrutinizes male peer relationships in terms of bonding issues and power relationships.

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[63] *APOTC* is described by Morrow and San Roque as being 'distinctly pedagogic, having been commissioned by the Australia Council and produced by a "Theatre-In-Education" company in Newcastle; it embodies a speedy and direct response to the crisis precipitated by Leigh Leigh's rape and murder' (1996, pp.485-486). The script of *APOTC* also includes pedagogic contexts in that it features classroom scenes – *not* included in *Blackrock*. *APOTC* opens with a high school History lesson where students consider societal prejudices against Indigenous Australians. Further 'lesson' scenes include Jared's presentation about the Nazi domination. In the context of *APOTC* these pedagogic elements meant that broader issues of social denigration combine with gender inequities to tell the story, and specifically situate the play's narrative in ways that the *youth audience* it was focussed on would be likely to respond to.

[64] The character Ricko (who is eventually revealed as the killer) says to Jared (about Tracy): 'the way she came with a bottle of bourbon, and her little earrings bobbing, and her tits poking out of her T-shirt. She was up for it…' (Enright 1994, p.30).

In keeping with the playwright's plans and the Theatre-in-Education company's mandate, *APOTC's* content is decidedly 'male orientated', and for this reason it has received some degree of criticism (Joyce [*ABC Radio*] 1993; Hall 1995; Morrow & San Roque 1996). The most prevalent argument raised is that like Leigh Leigh, the young woman at the centre of the 'real' story whose personhood was subsumed by the murder's media representation, within *APOTC'S* narrative structure, Tracy's role is subordinated at the expense of a 'mateship' trope. However, professionals who collaborated with Enright on the project have vigorously maintained that:

> He didn't want to deal specifically with the Leigh Leigh case, because it was so upsetting for so many people, he couldn't stop thinking about the wider issues it involved. In particular, he was interested in the young males of that community, how they become the way they are, and how they would respond to such a situation. That, he told Freewheels, was the story he wanted to tell.
> (Roach 1997b, p.34)

Consequently, one of Enright's textual strategies was to accentuate misogynistic and sexist tendencies that have the capacity to 'damage' young men and therefore, their relationships with, and treatment of, young women. And this is how the 'male' perspective, for which the work has been both praised and condemned came to dominate *APOTC's* narrative [65]. The playwright has encoded an increasingly tense relationship between 17 year-old Jared and the 'older' Ricko to exacerbate the pitfalls of 'masculine domination' within a distinctly 'youth-focussed' narrative.

In *APOTC* Brett "Ricko" Ricketson is a 19 year-old Black Rock local who after an unqualified length of time, returns to the suburb following a surfing trip 'up north'. The younger 'Blackos' look up to the youth who appears to embody the physical and social freedoms they aspire to. He's an erratic driver, a skilled and knowledgeable surfer, drinks alcohol, takes drugs, and boasts about his sexual prowess. For them, his reckless abandon and risk-taking behaviours signify strength and appeal. Most of the girls are

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[65] *APOTC* was the 1992 winner of the CONDA (City of Newcastle Drama Award) for Best New Play Written for a Newcastle Company. It also won a number of AWGIES (Australian Writers Guild Awards) in 1993 for: Community Theatre; Best Theatre-In-Education Play; Best Script in Any Medium (*Guide to the Papers of Nick Enright* 2004 online). In a lengthy feature about Enright's praxis and *APOTC*, author Sandra Hall argued that 'the strength of his writing lies in the thoroughness with which he knows [male] characters…his most deeply felt characters are those who use words to deflect feeling and obscure truth' (1995, p.36).

attracted to or in awe of him, and the boys, especially, idolize him. Ricko throws himself a party at Black Rock Surf Club to celebrate his arrival, which is the backdrop for the fateful events to unfold.

For Newcastle audiences particularly, the 'familiar' components of Enright's play, some of which are analysed in the following chapter, were very confronting. Also, institutionally, the cognate material was extremely difficult to rationalize, even in the name of education. For example, at Newcastle High 'school authorities refused to allow their students to see it' (Carrington 1998, p.152), 'they said it was too soon after the event to open a wound' (Joyce cited in Cochrane 1996, p.13) and 'did not book the play' (Brien 1999, p.118) [66]. Therefore, Newcastle High effected 'a censorship constituted by the very structure of the field in which the discourse [the cultural production of *APOTC*] was produced and circulated' (Bourdieu 1991, p.137). Some local parents were incensed by this restriction, responding as though the school's imposition paradoxically also reflected the 'code of silence' that some Stockton residents were believed to be operating with, and Freewheels and the playwright, through producing *APOTC*, had actively sought to dismantle [67]. The play was, however, performed at other local schools and toured inter-state for twelve months before production on its 'successor' *Blackrock* began (Longworth 2004, p.23) [68].

One of the biggest distinctions between *APOTC* and *Blackrock* is that in *APOTC* there are only two adult characters, Diane – Jared's mother, and Marian – Rachel's mother. Within the context of a Theatre-In-Education production, this kind of 'containment' had a two-fold effect. Structurally it encompassed the benefits of a small cast number for touring purposes, and narratively, it allowed the drama of the piece to centre on the

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[66] In Amanda Lohrey's 1998 feature article *Crimes of the Clan* the journalist incorrectly states '*A Property of the Clan* (1992) by Nick Enright was widely performed for high-school students including at Newcastle High, where many witnesses to the crime were in the audience…' (p.B04).

[67] 'The school maintained that putting the play on would raise issues that they thought had already been hidden under the carpet' (Myers cited in Carrington 1998, p.152).

[68] Numerous Secondary Schools & Tertiary Institutions continue to make use of *APOTC* and/or *Blackrock* in their curriculum studies and in teacher education programs. Some of these are listed in the Appendix at the end of the thesis.

teenage conflicts that underpinned the original production intent [69]. But for the writer, in terms of ongoing production, theatrical field endorsement and commercial viability, a main stage version had also been anticipated. Enright expressed this potentiality in an interview with Veronica Kelly when he explained that 'Freewheels want to take it [*APOTC*] further…and one way or another…it will surface in a main stage venue somewhere' (cited in Kelly 1994, p.68). Subsequently, it may be argued that as a 'seasoned' and symbolically ratified playwright, Nick Enright's 'habitus' and 'presuppositions' throughout the production of *APOTC* oriented his writing as well as personal comments about it 'towards the still-to-come' (Bourdieu 1996, p.329). His predilections therefore allowed him to design a story that could accommodate narrative extension, and therefore, symbolic field expansion.

After seeing *APOTC*, actor John Howard [70] and The Sydney Theatre Company's (STC) director Wayne Harrison 'offered a chance to develop the material (and particularly the adult characters, only notionally represented in [*APOTC*] with a cast of four)' who played seven roles (Enright 1996, p.vii). 'Harrison and David Berthold at the STC offered the company's resources to rework the material as a main stage play for adult as well as young audiences' (Enright 2002, p.6). In Mary Ann Hunter's view this textual expansion had the 'effect of divesting the original work of its central focus on youth' (2008, p.89). Over a year, the play *Blackrock* was developed 'through four or five workshops at STC' (Rose 1997, p.13). The play *Blackrock* had its 'first performance in August 1995', three years after *APOTC's* debut in Newcastle (Rose 1997, p.13). The title of the play comes 'from the name of the fictional town in which the events take place' (ibid), the same town featured in *APOTC* [71].

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[69] In her discussion of both texts as pedagogic enterprises Hunter argues that, 'distinct from *Blackrock*, *A Property of the Clan* works for both what is said and what is not said' (2008, p.91).

[70] John Howard plays the role of Jared's father and Diane's estranged husband Len in the film *Blackrock* (1997).

[71] In an appraisal of the screenplay in *Australasian Drama Studies*, Dawson explains that 'the site of Nick Enright's morality play, 'Blackrock', the fictional and mythologized battler's suburb over the water, has also a real existence as Black Rock, a middle-class Melbourne seaside suburb'. Dawson argues that the 'business of 'naming' in drama and film is fraught with semiotic potholes' (1997, p.207). In terms of Enright's play and screenplay, and Vidler's film, the author/researcher contends that a symbolic reference to *how* Leigh Leigh actually died has been encoded in the texts' titles since 'she was raped, kicked, and spat upon, then raped again, strangled and finally bashed to death with a rock' (Morris, *ABC Radio* 1996), graphic and descriptive detail which has been widely disseminated in media reports.

Significantly, as the symbolic field for his production of *Blackrock* grew, the 'distance' the playwright sought to make between the collaborative efforts of the original *APOTC* project, its implied local story schemas, and the new play's direction, also increased. Evidence of these attempts at 'separation' can be seen in Sandra Hall's feature article about Enright's work where she reports, 'both [Brian Joyce] and Enright make the point that neither play is based directly on the Leigh Leigh story' (1995, p.38). However, this attempt at generating perceptions of production autonomy was somewhat undermined by the playwright himself when he stated in an interview with *The Canberra Times'* Jeremy Eccles, 'my original Newcastle research showed that the girls had a bit of self esteem…but the boys were never given a reason to think about, let alone question, their actions' (1996, p.11). Juxtaposed with this ethnographic detail were the playwright's assertions that 'mateship, dobbing, self-esteem [and] peer pressure…[had become] the universal issues' that shaped the plays' narratives (ibid, p.11). These were generalist concepts that Brien argues, the playwright and his collaborators chose to persist with; 'Enright and the Sydney Theatre Company [stressed] that even though it was 'developed' from *APOTC* which was inspired by the Leigh Leigh case [that] *Blackrock* [was] a completely fictional story' (1999, p.118).

Within most reviews and articles about *APOTC* and *Blackrock* the terms 'inspired by' and 'inspiration for' have been frequently encoded to explain the story genesis of the cultural productions. It is the author's contention that these terms have been embedded as a rhetorical strategy to engage readers with the circumstances of the story beginnings by juxtaposing a term that generally connotes positive outcomes with the details of a horrific true crime. In this regard, media practitioners who employ the terms 'inspiration for' and 'inspired by' practice what Bourdieu describes as 'wordplay' – 'the play with the palpable forms of language [that] is most accomplished when it bears on pairs of terms rather than isolated words, i.e. on the relations between contradictory terms…to exploit them both as palpable forms and as forms of classification' (1991, p.147). As well as constituting strategic literacies for theatre 'audiences', review readers and others to decode, occasionally these 'word games' also featured 'professional' errors that had the potential to complicate meanings associated with the texts in terms of 'realist' conceptions.

Stephen Dunne's pre- STC debut performance review of *Blackrock*, misspelt Leigh Leigh's surname claiming 'the play is loosely based on the story of Leigh Lee' (1995, p.17) this was an error that was also published in Sandra Hall's 1995 feature about the playwright's work (p.34). Eccles' feature article *'Enright Gets The Most Out of His Past Works'* (1996) made mention of the 'terrible events that occurred in 1991' (p.11), Simmonds' review of STC's production mentioned the 'infamous 1991 rape and murder of 14-year-old local girl Leigh Leigh' (1995, p.95), and in a 1997 review of the film *Blackrock*, *The Australian* newspaper's Evan Williams stated 'the "inspiration" for the story – if that is the right word – was the rape and murder of a Newcastle teenager Leigh Leigh, after a surf club party in 1991' (1997, p.11). Eccles, Simmonds, and Williams incorrectly list the year of Leigh Leigh's murder as 1991 [72]. In general, these may seem insignificant details, however, as Bourdieu argues, 'journalists work under pressure and at speed. With fast thinking and fast decision-making 'nuance' is lost…the loss of detail and subtlety leads to a situation where their absence is not noticed' (cited in Grenfell 2004, p.95) [73]. But inaccurate details pertaining to the texts' origins have not been limited to the journalistic field. For instance, several academic papers have also included false information. One example is Helen Thompson's *Australasian Drama Studies* review of *Blackrock* where the year of Leigh's murder is also listed as 1991 (1998, p.149). It is the author's view that journalistic discrepancies and contradictions within the discursive fields that *APOTC's* and *Blackrock's* content has been mediated in, should be considered for the potentially damaging repercussions that *falsely reported* information may have had for the localized parties affected by these 'misrepresentations'.

Reported disclaimers that *APOTC* and *Blackrock* were derived from circumstantial rather than 'situational' communication contexts gained increasing momentum, especially as interest in the film got underway. 'Enright stresses that the actual events were just the launch pad [for the story]' (Stewart 1997a, p.23):

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[72] An online review of the film also lists the year of the murder as 1991 and additionally, describes the film's story as 'a credible account of misguided youth and general disaffection set against the working class environment of Newcastle, on the coast of New South Wales' (*Cinephilia* n.d. online).

[73] Evidence of this occurring can be seen in Killorn's published reviews of theatre performances of *Blackrock* in North Queensland in 2002 where he also emphasizes the 'factual' basis for the piece and incorrectly lists the date of the 'rape and murder of a young girl in a beachside suburb of Newcastle' as 1995 (Killorn 2002a, p.24; 2002b p.103).

> When I was asked to write *The [sic] Property of the Clan*, the first play that all this material was based on, I deliberately stayed away from the actual case. I didn't talk to any of the participants, I didn't talk to anyone who was in any way involved in the investigation; that wasn't my interest. My interest was what happened to a group of kids who are around such an event.
> (Enright cited in Stewart 1997a, p.23)

In conversation with the author about the playwright's defensive strategies in relation to the story constructions and permutations, the Workers Cultural Action Committee Arts Administrator for the *Aftershocks* play commented:

> Well there's a big conflict…between Nick and the community…and that says something about the process. Nick was doing disclaimers on arts programmes about it [*Blackrock*] saying, 'This isn't about Leigh Leigh.' And Leigh Leigh's mother would be on the same programme saying, 'This is about Leigh Leigh.' And then he'd say, 'No - *Property* is about Leigh Leigh, *Blackrock* is loosely based on her.' There was incredible stuff going on there…because there's been that much, so much public controversy around that. I mean particularly every radio programme I turned on, on ABC, had something about that at that time. So you know, he obviously was under, (well from his perspective), he would have seen it as being under a lot of pressure…about him, or his dramatisation of it. But it's not so much even about the fact that a girl was raped and murdered - that wasn't causing the controversy. The controversy was him claiming that it wasn't about that. And the controversy also, (in my opinion) seemed to me to be about the process of him dealing with those people from Stockton.
> (WCAC AA, pers.comm.)

In a critique of Enright's fictionalization of the 1989 Stockton/Newcastle events, Donna Lee Brien argues 'that alongside his international fame, Enright, having grown up in Maitland (only some 30 kilometres from Newcastle), was welcomed and trusted in a way that an outsider might not have been' throughout production for *APOTC* and *Blackrock* (1999, p.117). Brien contends that a precedent of 'authentic and honest' community story-building had prevailed throughout the *Aftershocks* project – especially during the research stage, generating (for Novocastrians) a similar set of positive expectations for Nick Enright's playwriting process. Perceptions of his collaborative praxis resonated with local community ideals, especially during a time when 'external' support for the specific area was desperately needed amongst residents. Because of the crime and Stockton's stigmatization, many local residents believed they had been symbolically violated, 'treated as inferior and denied the kind of trust that they could

manage…for themselves…naturalising their feelings of inadequacy, because their own kind of truth about 'how to go on' [did] not fit into the existing order' (Blackshaw & Long 2005, p.250). Combined with Carol Myers' 'insider guidance' it may be argued that Enright's entry into the Stockton scene offered residents who were struggling a perceived pathway for negotiating their way through community issues, not to mention allowing an exceptionally localised forum for the playwright's creative practice to progress.

Beyond the production of *APOTC* however, it may be argued that Enright's original ethnographic 'logic of practice' had served its function, disposing him to respond to the 'demands and influences' of *Blackrock's* cultural field in ways that on the one hand, from the playwright's perspective, minimized local community input, yet on the other hand, in terms of narrative codings and interpretive dispositions, maximized the city's links with the 'adapted' text (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, p.81). Evidence of this occurring can be seen in various reviews of *Blackrock* such as Clews' *'Issue Overload'* where the reviewer states that, 'based on a real incident, *Blackrock* is a play solid with issues' developed through a 'great deal of research and a thorough workshop process' (1997, p.76). Similarly, Wilkie's review reports that '*Blackrock*, based on an actual rape and murder in Newcastle, is a gritty and realistic account of what happens within a community when a crime of this nature occurs' (1996, p.20). Additionally, Browne's review in the *Sun Herald* acknowledges that '*Blackrock* was inspired by the tragic murder of Leigh Leigh, the teenager who was raped and bashed with a rock at Stockton Beach in Newcastle in 1989' (1996, p.21).

Early in *Blackrock's* developmental stages Enright's 'old friend and colleague Steve Vidler, after more than a decade as an actor, had…emerged from film school, and was searching for a project' and although the playwright was 'nervous about the notion of plays becoming movies', he 'reminded Vidler of *A Property of the Clan* and invited him to [participate in] the first STC workshop of the new play' (Enright 1997, p.vii). During his formative training Vidler had been one of Nick Enright's acting students at the National Institute of Dramatic Art (NIDA), a position which enabled the former 'suburban, working-class boy' (Litson 1995, p.12) to hone his performance craft and aspire to produce meaningful, experiential stories that were not merely representational but *identifiable* (Vickery 2008, pp.205-206) [author's emphasis]. Early on the pair forged

a friendship and an appreciation of each other's professional capabilities.

At the time he was asked to join *APOTC's* re-working into *Blackrock,* Vidler had already acquired a repertoire of skills through his immersion in theatrical, television, and film production fields. These skills came about through his training, and performative experiences, where he established a network of relationships for future collaborative work. These aspirations came to fruition during his participation in the field of *Blackrock's* STC cultural production when Vidler asked Enright to *also* construct the narrative as a screenplay (Simon & Stewart 1997, p.11). 'Over close to two years, [the collaborators] developed the screenplay in tandem with the play' with material 'discarded' from the play script eventually adding 'deep background' to the screenplay text which Enright wrote, and Vidler edited (Vidler in Enright 1997, p.x). Some of the 'deep background' embedded in the screenplay's adaptation of *Blackrock's* story is analysed in the following chapter's critique of the film, particularly in relation to its coding of Newcastle's cultural identity.

Given the production histories outlined above, the transformation of *Blackrock* from stage to screen was inclined to attract interest and attention from theatre and film industry funding and sanctioning bodies, for whom Enright's work carried marked symbolic capital. An example of economic and subsequent symbolic field endorsement of his writing can be seen in the Australia Council's (AC's) Annual 1996-1997 Report [74]. The report reveals that Performing Arts Publishing House Currency Press was awarded a Grant of $25344 and that Nick Enright's *Blackrock* project was one of the beneficiaries (Seares 1997, p.103). The AC's report also shows that Freewheels Theatre-In-Education Company received a Program Grant of $142,000 to develop its productions, and that *Blackrock* was one of these recipients (ibid, p.113) [75]. As well as *Blackrock's* production activities receiving financial support, the actual text and its authorship also gained 'capital consecration' and enhanced symbolic appropriation throughout these developmental stages (Bourdieu 1993a, p.75). For example, in July 1996 *Blackrock* was awarded the Australian Writers' Guild Award (AWGIE) for Best

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[74] The Australia Council is a Federal Government Body designed to fund art projects, to develop policies, and to foster and promote the arts in Australia (AAC).
[75] Freewheels TIE Company had earlier received a $5000 grant in September 1995 through the NSW Ministry for the Arts to further develop the *Blackrock* Project (*NSW State Parliament* 18/10/95 online).

Original Stage Play [76].

On receiving the award Enright commented that 'Freewheels did a main-stage production of *Blackrock* in Newcastle earlier this year, so you could say it has come full-circle' (cited in Cochrane 1996, p.13). This was an interesting observation for the playwright to make known, since throughout the play's transition he had repeatedly articulated that *Blackrock* was a 'generic story' and that when writing it he had been 'more interested in the issues which really [had] nothing to do with Newcastle, or with that area…' (cited in Rose 1997, p.13) and chose to concentrate instead on 'why any group of boys abuse any girl' (cited in Worthington 1996, p.13). It's the author's contention that by generating perceptions that *Blackrock's* focus was on societal issues that were *not* place-specific, Enright sought to remove himself from any suggestions of moral impropriety in terms of exploiting Leigh Leigh's story for capital gain, *and* strove to establish a wider audience for the story to *achieve* capital gain.

The notion that *Blackrock's* narrative potential needed to be relayed in general terms, rather than as a specific manifestation of localized events, was also expressed by *Aftershocks'* Film Producer Julia Overton. In conversation with the author/researcher Overton speculated about Enright's authorial intent suggesting that 'what attracted Nick to that story was its universality, you have to have a universal theme otherwise you can't make something that works' (JO, pers. comm.). As an experienced film producer Overton understood the pressures involved in pitching a *'Blackrock'* story that would 'work' for investors, film practitioners, distributors and eventually audiences. Like Enright, her observation typifies the idea that 'the artistic field [constitutes] a *universe of belief*' [original emphasis] (Bourdieu 1993a, p.164) and demonstrated an appreciation of the financial stakes involved in 'selling' a story's worth 'because once an artwork is recognized as 'excellent', people will be more inclined to purchase it or reproductions of it' (Webb, Schirato & Danaher 2003, p.161). To aid the 'purchase' and 'reproduction' of *Blackrock* in terms of its screen representation, Enright and director/script editor Steve Vidler invited film producer David Elfick to join the film's

[76] The AWGIE coincided with the Sydney Theatre Company's 'return season of the play as part of its schools program' (Cochrane 1996, p.13).

production team (Colbert 1997):

> [His] background encompassed a wide range of dramatic material, from successful surfing features such as *Crystal Voyager* and the multi-AFI award winning drama *Newsfront*. His affinity with youth and surf culture, combined with his preference for working with first-time directors…meant he was able to bring another experienced perspective to the *Blackrock* project. [77]
> (Simon & Stewart 1997, p.11)

Vidler and Elfick had worked together previously when the former had performed in two of the latter's films that Elfick had also directed; *Harbourbeat* (1990), a film in which Vidler played a 'Sydney cop, but a country boy at heart' who loves surfing (*Palm Beach Pictures* online), and *No Worries* (1993), a film about 'the traumas of drought in rural Australia and forced relocation' (Colbert 1997, p.3). On Enright's and Vidler's behalf, Elfick 'approached the NSW Film and TV Office for money to develop [*Blackrock's*] screenplay' (Enright 1997, p.viii). In an interview with the *Australian Financial Review's* Mary Colbert, Elfick described the agency involved in these kinds of film industry negotiations:

> Sometimes ideas that are a bit confronting or unusual take a little longer for people to see their commercial value. *Blackrock* was a difficult film to get going but the harder it is the more it makes one examine the reasons for making it in the first place. The NSW Film and TV Office sought permission from Arts Minister Bob Carr to double its usual investment in *Blackrock*…to get the $3.3 million project off the ground. [78] (1997, p.3)

Elfick's statement alludes to the fact that the substance of the *'Blackrock'* story was, and remained 'contentious' and 'controversial'. Almost every review/article/critique about the play and/or film *Blackrock* describes the narrative by these terms, regularly linking the story with the circumstances of the original crime that was *APOTC's* 'catalyst'. These terminologies have several effects: they position the story as one that

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[77] AFI is the acronym for the Australian Film Industry. Elfick was also renowned for producing *Morning of the Earth* (1972) - a 'surf lifestyle' film that became an Australian classic. Its soundtrack has become 'a multi-platinum best seller' (*Palm Beach Pictures* online). In 2007 & 2008 *Morning of the Earth* live-in-concert shows were staged nationally where many of the original music artists performed while the 'full-length film played as the backdrop to performances' (*Chugg Entertainment* 2008 online).

[78] Other funding included 'a distribution advance for Australia/New Zealand from Polygram Films, which also did the soundtrack' with contributions also from the FFC – Film Finance Corporation and 'private investors' (Colbert 1997, p.3).

by its 'controversial' nature *should* be told; and they communicate to a broad audience that producers' efforts to 'do the telling' mean the professionals are taking risks to get an important story made. In this regard the terminology that ritually and stereotypically classifies *Blackrock* in these ways, constitutes a 'performative magic' (Bourdieu 1991, p.106).

Furthermore, Elfick's statement implies that due to its provocative content, decisions made about reproducing *Blackrock* have involved (as Enright also claimed they did) a level of both professional and personal intent on the part of those who've participated in its ongoing production. For instance, in speaking about *Blackrock's* subject matter Elfick argued that it was 'very relevant and contemporary…it doesn't preach: it raises questions the audience must consider and talk about' (cited in Rose 1997, p.13), a particular view he'd most likely partially developed having himself 'lost a friend as a result of a rape and murder on a beach' (Worthington 1996, p.13).

In terms of his own habitus and its influence on his response to *Blackrock's* messages, director Steve Vidler also shared affinities with the story and its characters, explaining to *Sydney Morning Herald* journalist Ruth Hessey, that he had 'vivid memories of being a 17-year-old working-class kid from the western suburbs where life was about hooning around in cars, looking for a party to crash' (1997, p.4). He also relayed to *The Australian's* Jo Litson, that the 'quintessentially Australian story [had] struck a real chord with him' and that he'd cried upon seeing a theatrical performance of *Blackrock* (1995, p.12). These aspects of the filmmakers' habitus' demonstrate, as Bourdieu's concept of dispositions does, that 'feeling or emotion [are] connected to all social action' (Reed-Danahay 2005, p.101). Plus, the filmmakers' textual perceptions indicate that 'there is no distinction between cognition and affect [when] social agents operate (and compete) within fields of symbolic power' (ibid). During the project's instrumental period the filmmakers' personal dispositions came to be communicated as collegial views with the aim of promoting *Blackrock* as 'a psychological exploration of why young men would put loyalty to their mates above anything else - even telling the truth about a rape or murder' (Vidler cited in Roach 1997b). Furthermore, as a visual rendition of a 'lethal mix of sexuality, drugs, alcohol and freedom' (Elfick cited in Urban 1997 online) couched within a 'culture of surfing…as an escape' (McFarlane

1997, p.45) [79] it was argued that the film medium could offer a dramatic 'energy…created by the montage of images and pictures' (Enright cited in Stewart 1996, p.19) which were 'beyond the range of a realistic representation on the stage' (McFarlane 1997, p.45). This combined communicative focus was the *Blackrock* 'story' that Enright, Vidler and Elfick proposed to film industry personnel with the express purpose of gaining capital investment.

Having a film producer on board whose credentials included *Newsfront* (1978) which had won 'eighteen international awards' and *No Worries* (1993) which had won five (*Blackrock* Media Kit 1997, p.10), not to mention Nick Enright's prestigious authorship, meant that through these collaborative arrangements Vidler's directorial debut elicited some of the benefits of social capital accumulation. Bourdieu argues that social capital is:

> The aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition [with group members sharing] the backing of collectively-owned capital. [80] (1986a, pp.248-249)

Vidler's capital acquisitions resulted in 'an invitation to premiere [*Blackrock*] at the Sundance Film Festival' in January 1997 (Colbert 1997, p.3), providing the first-time director with an international forum in which to 'make his name' and 'leave his mark' by 'achieving recognition…beyond the positions [he'd previously] occupied' (Bourdieu 1993a, p.106) as a film, television and stage actor, and writer (Litson 1995, p.12). As a result of the invitation the Australian Film Commission (AFC) awarded Vidler a $5000 Travel Grant to attend the Sundance Film Festival (*AFC* Appendix G, 1997 online). The Sundance invitation was unexpected and was actually made 'before the film was

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[79] *Sydney Morning Herald* journalist Tony Squires wrote a 1995 feature article about the STC's debut season of *Blackrock* in which he tracked its early stages as *APOTC* and explained that Brian Joyce 'through his work in schools and contacts in the surfing world, knew [the community damage from the Leigh Leigh murder] was the story that was most affecting the population' (p.8A).
In a lengthy feature article about Enright's work and upbringing, he explained what a culture shock it had been for him when he `went straight from a Sydney boarding school to a surfing town in southern California in the 1960s…that was a mind-blowing experience' (cited in Longworth 2001, p.25).
[80] In his preface to the *Blackrock* screenplay, Vidler states that Enright wrote the script 'for about a tenth of his going rate' (1997, p.ix).

finished' (Kaufman 1997, p.11) thereby positioning the anticipated *Blackrock* as a worthwhile 'social artefact, the product of a field' in which the completed film could 'come into existence through a process of field-specific competition' (Webb, Schirato & Danaher 2003, p.152).

In addition to possibly enhancing professional filmmaking reputations and achieving commercial success, the opportunity to screen *Blackrock* at the January 23 Sundance Festival bestowed upon the production team a distinct set of temporal constraints for their filming and editing activities. Producer David Elfick explained some of the practical responses this situation demanded, 'when you're offered a world premiere slot, you have to make it…the production had a tight and ambitious six-week shoot and it was an enormous challenge to get the film ready' (cited in Colbert 1997, p.3). Significantly, the limited timeframe set for *Blackrock's* material production had a strong bearing on the film's visual aesthetic and design-style; it affected its narrative rhythm; it affected its story power, and, it ultimately structured the viewing content presented to Sundance's 'test audience' which was subsequently modified for general release (Kaufman 1997, p.12). These matters are discussed in the forthcoming textual analysis of some of the film's scenes and their interpretive potential as they had a direct effect on the way the film text was put together.

Yet prior to the analysis of the film's 'structuring dimensions', especially in regard to the symbolic generation of Newcastle's 'social matrix' (Webb, Schirato & Danaher 2003, p.159) attention must be paid to the extensive cultural literacies activated throughout *Blackrock's* textual production (Schirato & Yell 2000, p.1). This socio semiotic analysis offers an 'integrated perspective, which sees [*Blackrock*] as bearing traces of [its] contexts of production and [expected] reception' (Yell 2005, p.14) so its theoretical worth for understanding the conditions which shape/d the product and some of its interpretations is considerable.

Tinkcom and Villarejo argue that viewers 'cannot usually make an infinity of meanings out of a given film, but are constrained by what a film offers; and what it offers depends in great measure on who made it and under what conditions they did so' (2003, p.301). These authors' concepts are applicable to the film industry schemas that influenced *Blackrock's* content, and, importantly, to the broader socio-cultural conditions of

Blackrock's pre-production preparations, its 'shooting' period, and its mainstream release. Analysing these conditions offers a pathway to understanding *why* certain detail has been encoded into the film, and, *wha*t the filmmakers (and other cultural producers) had to say about it. These communicative practices expose some of the 'principles of vision and division' pertinent to *Blackrock's* categorization as a 'Newcastle' text (Bourdieu cited in Webb, Schirato & Danaher 2003, p.156). For example, Peter Fray writing for the *Sydney Morning Herald* upon the film's May 1997 release, commented that *Blackrock* was an 'energetic, honest, and mainly convincing exploration of mateship and morality, set against Newcastle's industrial landscape and surfie subculture (1997, p.2), while Michel McGirr described the setting for the film as 'an industrial city, on the beach, the kind of place where you [would] expect to find kids with problems' (1997, p.48). Similarly, Jonathan Dawson's appraisal of the *writing* for the film argued that 'redneck and recidivist…values…seem[ed] to be at the isotopic core of [the] screenplay, which may or may not [have been] based on the actual 1989 rape [sic] murder of Leigh Leigh at a Newcastle beach party' (1997, p.207) [81]. Other cultural producers classified the film more broadly as a 'social issue movie' (Martin 1997, p.C40), a 'moral film' (Drewe 1997, p.16), a film 'about mateship above all else' (Butterss 1998, p.44) and a 'riveting and graphic piece of cinema' (Stewart 1997b, p.25) [82].

These more generalist film descriptions suited the many rhetorical disclaimers the producer David Elfick used when he argued that the film was 'not inspired by, but developed from the Leigh Leigh tragedy' (cited in Armstrong 2002, p.24). Several days after the Newcastle premiere of *Blackrock*, a *Newcastle Herald* article featuring the film's two main protagonists Jared (Laurence Breuls) and Ricko (Simon Lyndon), quoted the actors' responses to feedback that *Blackrock* was a film that exploited a true crime and the place it occurred in for commercial gain. Lyndon paradoxically stated,

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[81] In a review of a 2002 Tasmanian performance of the play *Blackrock* Genevieve Read wrote that 'many would remember the 1997 Australian film *Blackrock*, a reworking of Nick Enright's play loosely based on the 1989 NSW murder of Newcastle school girl Leigh Leigh' (2002, p.27).

[82] Apart from the actual filmmakers' strategies to 'label' the film, various genre descriptions have been used to market its content. These genre categorisations include: 'drama; psychological drama detective film' (*Vanguard International* 2009 online); 'muddy and uneven drama about Australian teens' (Null 1999 online); 'crime drama; buddies; rape; Down Under; surfing; true crime' (*Movie Reviews* n.d. online); 'drama, thriller' (*IMDB* n.d. online); 'youth movie' (Smith 1997, p.21) and 'stylish 'burb rage based on a real-life murder' (Lowing 1997d).

‘we all know it was inspired by Leigh Leigh, but it isn’t her story’ and Breuls suggested that viewers [felt it was] ‘something that happened just around the corner in their town’ (cited in Mulley 1997.p.8). Both the actors’ claims and Elfick’s rhetorical disclaimers also supported director and script editor Steve Vidler’s repeated attempts to disassociate *Blackrock’s* story from any local ties by proclaiming, ‘the only thing I can keep saying over and over and over again, is that we’re not telling the Leigh Leigh story’ (cited in Roach 1997b, p.34). Although on a number of occasions, especially when he discussed the film’s visual style as ‘cinematic realism’ the director’s comments contradicted his original position-taking; ‘a big mistake often in making a reality-based film is to make it look like a cruddy documentary’ (cited in Urban 1997 online). Overall, the filmmakers’ renunciations were frequent and emphatic and relentlessly backed up by their efforts to position *Blackrock* thematically as a film about ‘a boy, a witness, who fails to act’ (Vidler cited in Lowing 1997a, p.12), ‘a protagonist…torn between loyalty to mates and obligation to a wider community’ (Enright cited in Colbert 1997, p.3), and ‘a powerful look at what goes on among 15-to-20-year olds’ (Elfick cited in Lowing 1997a, p.12). In this regard prior to, during, and after *Blackrock’s* film production, the practitioners continued to enact the critical defence narrative Enright had proposed throughout his early writing processes; that *Blackrock* was a story born of broader societal circumstances than those encountered by Newcastle residents. It’s the author’s contention that apart from the moral dilemmas involved, one of the main reasons why *Blackrock’s* ‘producers’ sought to distinguish it from close affiliations with *APOTC* may have been because of concerns about profitability and ‘industry’ accountability. For example, in a 2007 review of Newcastle’s Theatre Scene Malcolm Beattie stated that:

> While theatre is not a lucrative business, very occasionally a new play emerges that resonates with audiences everywhere and goes on to become a goldmine for its producers…Nick Enright was commissioned by Freewheels Theatre Company to work with local actors and residents to write [sic] *Property of the Clan*. This play has become an enduring classic and is still performed by companies and in schools everywhere. (2007 p.5)

Consequently, any negative attention gained by linking *APOTC* with the later production could have had potentially damaging effects on an already established theatrical entity for which the playwright had received critical acclaim and which remained financially viable. Yet ‘risky’ relationships between the transformed

productions were not limited to more 'public' perceptions of their shared substance, as Matthew Rimmer's account of contractual discrepancies between the STC and the filmmakers reveals:

> [STC Director Wayne] Harrison sought to protect the investment of the Sydney Theatre Company in the play *Blackrock*. He drafted the production contract to cover any film or television adaptation. Originally the playwright Nick Enright wrote *A Property of the Clan* for Newcastle's Freewheels theatre-in-education company. Nick Enright then reworked the material into a new play called *Blackrock* for the Australian Peoples' Theatre and for a production at the Wharf Theatre. He developed the piece through six drafts and four workshops at the Sydney Theatre Company, with assistance from the dramaturge Harrison and the director David Berthold. The contract for the creation of *Blackrock* specified rewards to the Sydney Theatre Company for any on-sale to film or television. However, the producer of the film version of *Blackrock* refused to pay the royalty to the Sydney Theatre Company. Fortunately, the playwright Nick Enright paid the fee out of his writer's royalty. There was no litigation because the ethics of the playwright circumvented the law. (2002 online)

Therefore, it may be argued that in order to 'defend their own positions' the filmmakers produced communicative 'weapons' in the form of 'operational definitions' (Bourdieu 2002, p.294) to justify their industry praxis and to promote *Blackrock* as a film with universal messages rather than presenting it as a visual representation of historically located and memorable incidents [83].

In the lead up to and during the film's production, general critical interest in *Blackrock's* construction (both as a theatrical piece and as a cinematic work) was maintained, particularly but not exclusively, amongst the Newcastle community. One of the most significant reasons for the ongoing and heightened interest in Enright's text and Vidler's cinematic adaptation of it was that *while these texts evolved*, legal and political strategies had been enacted to have the investigation into Leigh Leigh's murder re-opened (Milsom 1998b) and these were widely represented throughout various media. The premise of these actions was that the original police investigation had been flawed, and consequently, unidentified young men believed to be responsible for

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[83] A 2001 *Newcastle Herald* review of the play *Blackrock* stated that the 'Nick Enright play that arose from the 1989 Leigh Leigh murder and its impact on the Stockton community, [was] galvanising audiences on the Central Coast because its attack on macho male clans [had] local echoes' (*Newcastle Herald* 22 March 2001, p.23).

Leigh's sexual assault had not been brought to justice (Morris, *ABC Radio* 1996). These assumptions had prevailed in the Stockton/Newcastle community ever since Leigh Leigh had been killed. The claims had also been anecdotally supported by some local university students studying a 'Youth Culture and Delinquency' Course in 1993-1994, which prompted their lecturer Dr Kerry Carrington to embark on in-depth research into the Leigh case, from the discursive perspective of 'crime and local culture' (Milsom 1998a, pp.6-7). When the *Newcastle Herald* published a report on Dr Carrington's research, she was contacted by Leigh's mother Robyn, and subsequently, advocated on her behalf for a re-investigation to be implemented (ibid) [84].

In May 1995, Leigh Leigh's mother and younger sister Jessie had been awarded victim's compensation payments with the presiding Judge (on review of existing evidence) finding 'that there were people involved in the crime who [had] not yet been detected' (Moore cited in Milsom 1998a, p.7) [85]. With support from the Newcastle Legal Centre, lawyers for Robyn Leigh prepared a case for the NSW Attorney-General who in July 1995, urged NSW Police Minister Paul Whelan to reopen the investigation (*Newcastle Herald* 5 June 2004, p.22). On 15th October 1996 in the NSW Legislative Assembly the Police Commissioner announced that the NSW Crime Commission would review the 1989 investigation arguing:

> It is time for those who know what happened to come forward; it is time to stop the lies and cover-ups and to set the record straight; it is time for the truth to out. I would urge anyone who can assist to speak up, to come forward and tell us what they know in confidence. (Whelan cited in *NSW State Parliament* 15/10/96 online)

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[84] In August 1998 Dr Carrington's book *Who killed Leigh Leigh?: a story of shame and mateship in an Australian town* was published. It received widespread media attention and excerpts were published in the *Newcastle Herald.* The book was scathing of the original police investigation and the author was also accused of 'Newcastle-bashing' by some members of the local community. Dr Carrington claimed that the rigorous research for the book and its contentious subject matter left her exhausted and that it was only because she 'felt a duty of care to the victim's family' and was contacted by former students who were annoyed by the film *Blackrock* upon its release, that she persevered with the publication (Milsom 1998a, p.6).

[85] Justice Moore heard an appeal from Robyn and Jessie Leigh over a $30 000 Victim's Compensation payout they had been awarded in April 1993 (Bearup 1998, p.2). In 1993 Jessie had been awarded $5393, an amount Mrs Leigh described as 'an insult for what she had been through' (Milsom 1998a, p.7). When Mrs Leigh was awarded a revised sum of $150,000 and calls for a re-investigation into the crime gained momentum, some local talkback radio callers suggested that advocates for a re-investigation were motivated by 'blood money' (Carrington 1998, p.149).

Only two weeks before Minister Whelan's impassioned announcement, an ABC Radio National Program *'Sticks and Stones: The Killing of Leigh Leigh'* had been broadcast. The program integrated several readings representing statements from doctors and detectives involved in the case as well as dramatic 're-enactments' of police interviews with teenage witnesses. It also included audio recordings of Judge Moore's findings; a brief statement from the State Ombudsman's representative; dialogue from Newcastle Legal Centre Representatives and Criminologist Dr Kerry Carrington; conversations between the reporter/narrator Kylie Morris, Robyn Leigh, a Leigh family spokesperson (Hilda Armstrong), a close friend of Leigh's, some unidentified Stockton teenagers, and a few local parents. Some of the program's content provided vivid and graphic detail of the violent injuries Leigh had sustained (Morris, *ABC Radio* 1996). At the close of the broadcast reporter Kylie Morris pointed out that Leigh Leigh's death had 'taken on a fictional life' as the 'subject of a film and 2 plays' stating that as the program went to air, a Sydney Theatre Company season of *Blackrock* was being staged [86] (Morris, *ABC Radio* 1996). Significantly, the only 'cultural producer' associated with *APOTC* and/or *Blackrock* who made a contribution to the ABC program was Freewheels Director Brian Joyce. On behalf of those responsible for creating the plays and/or film Joyce 'resorted to rhetorical strategies intended to 'twist the stick in the other direction' (Bourdieu 2002, p.291) so that close links between the events of Leigh Leigh's death and the plays might be minimized, and new links between the productions' themes and other *places* might be maximized. In attempting to achieve this euphemistic 'dislocation' Joyce reiterated that although *APOTC* had been 'researched inside the Stockton community…Leigh's death wasn't its only inspiration', and by recounting regionalized responses to the plays, he also sought to generalize the dramatic content:

> In a North Coast town, we performed at they didn't have any knowledge of the incident that happened in Stockton, and they actually thought it was about an incident that happened at their town that had received no national publicity…Similarly, at a town in South Australia, where a young woman was dumped for dead, after being sexually assaulted, they thought, 'Oh this was us,

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[86] In a review of the STC's performance of the play published in the *Sun Herald* on 1st September 1996 reporter Rachel Browne stated that '*Blackrock* was inspired by the tragic murder of Leigh Leigh, the teenager who was raped and bashed with a rock at Stockton Beach in Newcastle 1989' (p.21).

only you put it at the beach'. (cited in Morris, *ABC Radio* 1996) [87]

It's important to realize, as Joyce's comment above reveals, that both *APOTC's* and *Blackrock's* narratives use a combination of generalized social themes with particularized content, that may resonate powerfully for non-Novocastrian audiences. However, specific encodings that *identify* the texts as having originated from highly localized sources cannot easily be dismissed, nor can their potential for communicating aspects of Newcastle's identity be denied and these issues are explored in the textual analysis contained in the following chapter.

Throughout *Blackrock's* film production in July, August, September, and October of 1996, the efforts to universalize rather than particularize the textual 'ingredients' of *Blackrock's* story appeared to have initially fallen upon Brian Joyce as the representative 'voice' of the 'original' project. His position as *'authorized representative'* [original emphasis] (Bourdieu 1991, p.111) usually entailed clarifications as to Freewheels' and Nick Enright's aims to create the plays *APOTC* and *Blackrock* around central societal issues of 'gender violence and politics, lack of male role models and isolation between age groups' (Worthington 1996, p.13). Essentially Joyce's practices at this time revolved around him speaking for the playwright's works and defending their early productions as opportunities for local people to 'move on' from the circumstances of Leigh Leigh's murder. Yet as the productions themselves had 'moved on' Joyce had found that especially in the context of the Sydney Theatre Company's performances, interpretations of *Blackrock's* content eventuating in

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[87] In a 1993 ABC Radio National broadcast where he discussed reactions to *APOTC* Joyce commented, 'People are taking this play as what happened on that night. I grew up on Dee Why Beach, and I remember a young girl being killed on Dee Why Beach. When we played the play at Taree [NSW North Coast] they said, "Yes, the same thing's going on up here." These incidents are common' (Joyce, *ABC Radio* 1993). Film producer David Elfick stated *on location in Newcastle* 'unfortunately, that event happens all over Australia. We wanted to take the events of that murder and many other murders.' (cited in Worthington 1996, p.13) [author's emphasis]. Immediately prior to the film's release in May 1997 director Steve Vidler argued in an interview published in the *Daily Telegraph* that 'although there are similarities [to the Leigh Leigh incident], unfortunately there are many other cases that have parallels' (Roach 1997b, p.34).

negative perceptions of Newcastle's cultural identity had proliferated [88]. Joyce expressed these concerns in terms of his personal dispositions when he explained to *Newcastle Herald* reporter Jane Worthington at the time of the film's shooting:

> As I have seen it go over time I have felt a level of remorse, given that I was the person who initiated this…I've been very disappointed and disheartened with the way it has been treated because I think people have focused on "that incident" and "that community" and "that group of people". (1996, p.13)

Joyce's individual views about *Blackrock's* appropriations mirrored some of the fears expressed by other Novocastrians as to how the textual reproductions could potentially, negatively impact on perceptions of the city and its people, as the 'universe of coexistent works' applicable to the plays, the film, and the myriad of texts related to them continued to evolve (Bourdieu 2002, p.290) [89]. For example, in a *Daily Telegraph* report entitled 'Crime film re-opens old wounds' (which incidentally included a widely disseminated photograph of a smiling Leigh Leigh in profile, as well as an image of film director Steve Vidler and seven *Blackrock* cast members at Bronte Beach in Sydney), former Newcastle Deputy Lord Mayor Frank Rigby argued, 'actors and plays are there to build dreams, not to distort the truth' (cited in Delvecchio 1996, p.4) thereby anticipating that the film content would be detrimental to the Newcastle community. In the same article, Dr Kerry Carrington spoke of the 'explosive' responses the film's production activities would evoke since community 'feelings [were] absolutely intense', although she also held the opinion that 'art [had] a very legitimate role to play in making a social comment' (cited in Delvecchio 1996, p.4) [90]. This perspective was also shared by Steve Vidler who stressed in the same report that, 'the

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[88] These kinds of communicative assumptions were not limited to Sydney however. Gareth Griffiths, a reviewer for *The Australian* said of a Perth Production of *Blackrock* in August 1996, that the 'attitudes of the characters occasionally feel a little dated. I suspect young people no longer behave in quite such an overtly sexist way as this suggests, *even in working-class* Newcastle' (p.9) [author's emphasis]. Griffiths' comment entertains the 'possibility' that Newcastle youth may indeed act in these ways, and it directly connects the real city of Newcastle with the 'fictional' location of Black Rock, the setting for the play.

[89] At the time the film was being shot a review of a Perth performance of the play (entitled 'Gang-rape, murder as rites of passage') described *Blackrock* as a 'potent dramatic brew that [had] the added edge of being based on a true, if tragic, story of teenage rape and murder' (Banks 1996, p.5).

[90] At the time this article was published on 22nd August 1996, Dr Carrington had left Newcastle to take up employment at the University of Western Sydney and her own 'artistic' endeavour - created in response to Leigh Leigh's murder, was well underway. Upon its release Amanda Lohrey described Carrington's book as belonging to the 'honourable genre of the non-fiction crime story, the true-life whodunit, which sets out to uncover truths that various forms of social anaesthesia have caused to lie hidden' (1998, p.B4).

initial story [had been] commissioned by a community group in Newcastle who felt the community hadn't dealt with that [Leigh Leigh] event' (ibid). By conflating *Blackrock's* early development with *APOTC's* and positioning its creative origins within a discursive framework of community input, the film director implemented a suggestion that 'locals' needed to bear some responsibility for the textual outcomes and their perceived links with 'real' circumstances [91]. At the same time however, Vidler also expressed that he had '[felt] a great deal of responsibility' and would not have chosen to do the film if he'd thought it 'in any way exploit[ed] the pain of anyone involved' (cited in Delvecchio 1996, p.4). Shortly after Vidler stated these claims, David Elfick presented his own by stressing that *Blackrock* was 'purely a fictitious story – not based on any true event' (cited in Peters 1996, p.20) continuing to perpetuate the notion as Enright had before him, that 'all of the characters in *Blackrock* were inventions as unlike the identities of those in the Leigh Leigh case as possible' (cited in Simon & Stewart 1997, p.11; *Blackrock* Media Kit 1997, p.6). Yet the declaration that the fictitious *Blackrock* characters bore *no* resemblance to Newcastle teenagers lost any credibility it may have had when the film's production company advertised in the local newspaper (the *Newcastle Herald*) for 'extras': 'WANTED: Young Novocastrians with shaved heads, dreadlocks, mohawks, long hair or technicoloured locks…surf lovers between 15-25 with outstanding hair' (Watson 1996, p.39) [92]. This published request also gave times and dates for auditions which were held at Caves Beach Surf Life Saving Club and the Beach Hotel in Merewether [93]. Interestingly, apart from the overt appeal to recruit local participants directly for the film's making, other information in this piece 'invited' Newcastle readers to positively respond to the production by

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[91] In an interview with the *Sydney Morning Herald's* Colin Rose published one week before the film's May 1997 release, Enright stipulated that 'the original brief from Freewheels [had] actually governed all of the material in all its various forms' and that he had 'never researched the Leigh Leigh story [but had] picked up the general outline of it and used its mythological shape as the starting point for the piece' (Rose 1997, p.13).

[92] An article published in the *Newcastle Herald* on 3rd September 1996 reported that a Newcastle hairdressing apprentice had gained valuable (voluntary) experience working on hair and makeup for the film's actors 'grooming herself and other Novocastrians for movie careers' (Burrows 1996, p.5). It also mentioned that '12 Newcastle teenagers were chosen from hundreds of young hopefuls to play extras or members of a gang that live in Black Rock' (ibid).

[93] Caves Beach is located approximately 25 kilometres south-east of Newcastle's CBD and derives its name from 'sea caves in the headland at the southern end of the beach' (*Lake Macquarie NSW* 2005-2008 online). Merewether Beach is located 5 kilometres south-east of Newcastle's CBD and is the most populated inner city suburb (*Newcastle City Council* 2006 online). It is also the 'home of four times World Surfing Champion Mark Richards' (*Australian Explorer* 2000 online).

explaining *Blackrock's* story as a 'contemporary drama penned by Maitland-born playwright Nick Enright' (Watson 1996, p.2). As well, although he emphasized that *Blackrock* was 'not a dramatisation' of events surrounding Leigh Leigh's death, on this occasion film producer David Elfick professed that Enright had been motivated to develop a storyline based on a 'community torn apart by a senseless tragedy' (cited in Watson 1996, p.2). As such, Elfick emphasized the ritualistic potential of the film's dramatic schema, rather than the individualistic film story about 'the world of the young Australian male' he'd accentuated at other times (cited in Colbert 1997, p.3). These 'adaptive strategies' and 'improvisations' (Bourdieu 1990a, p.63) reveal that the filmmakers *needed* the Newcastle community to support the project literally in physical and material ways, and to endorse it culturally and ideologically. Therefore, the practitioners attempted to 'produce an ethos that relate[d] all the practices produced by' the film's making 'to a unifying set of principles' (Garnham & Williams 1986, p.120).

The need to generate perceptions that the film's production could have positive connotations was not limited to the local community however. In October 1996, while filming for *Blackrock* was underway the '300-page review of the police inquiry' into Leigh Leigh's murder (later tabled by the Police Minister in the NSW State Parliament) was released by Newcastle Legal Centre (Roach 1996, p.5). Local and metropolitan news outlets provided extensive coverage of the key issues the review sought to address. These issues predominantly revolved around 'inconsistencies' between the forensic evidence pertaining to Leigh's assault(s) and speculation that several people had been involved and/or knew what had happened on the night of her murder but had not spoken out (Barlass 1996a, 1996b; Gibbs 1996). Again, media content about the original case and its aftermath proliferated. These reports reinforced suggestions that a localized 'wall of silence' had existed in the Stockton/Newcastle community at the time of the murder (Gibbs 1996, p.5). Importantly, the media articles added another dimension to the notion of 'non-disclosure' by including details of alleged inadequacies related to the criminal investigation (Barlass 1996a; 1996b). These accusations implied that in their haste to prosecute someone for Leigh Leigh's murder, police had ignored vital evidence that could have identified other parties, and subsequently, this neglect had resulted in an institutionalized form of 'secrecy' pertaining to the case. Significantly, these public discourses gained momentum while *Blackrock* was being filmed, and, as a consequence, the filmmakers' tactics to fictionalize the product,

legitimize ‘realist’ appraisals of its aesthetic, and minimize negative responses to it, were met with a large degree of scepticism. Doubts as to the fidelity of the filmmakers’ intentions were summed up by Holland and O’Sullivan in their critical deconstruction of the film’s depiction of sexual violence and mateship tropes. The authors argued:

> The actual setting, the nature of the crime itself, and the fact that the film script is an adaptation of a play script based on the atrocities committed against the Stockton schoolgirl, Leigh Leigh, make it clear that this film does not share the same purely fictional status of less disturbing "fun in the sun" films. (1999, p.80)

Beginning with an overview of the circumstances of, and media interest in, a horrific local crime, this chapter has explained how creative practices were generated and instigated to assist a part of Newcastle’s local community in overcoming public humility and social stigma. The role that the area’s physical and cultural geography played in establishing and sustaining demographic distinctions that led to ill conceived and harmful media representations of Stockton’s and Newcastle’s social ‘distinctions’ were discussed. The bearing these discursive conditions had on perpetuating images of a ‘damaged’ community with limited social capital, had the tendency to overlook the experiences of traumatized residents. Consequently, efforts to address these concerns came about through a set of localized networks to develop a pedagogic response to issues connected to misogynistic behaviours, ‘misplaced’ loyalties, and general distrust. This led to the recruitment of a renowned cultural producer whose insider status, cultural capital and symbolic capital acquisitions meant that the work that began as an ethnographic process was likely destined to achieve recognition beyond the locale of its production, and, through its various incarnations, continue to draw attention to the place of its origin. Against the backdrop of affiliated socio-semiotic events such as legal proceedings, parliamentary activities, and ongoing media practices, the links between the ‘real’ story of the actual crime and the ‘fictional’ story of the play and film productions became more substantial, while collaborative filmmakers’ claims of production autonomy became more tenuous. Some ‘functionalist’ and ideological reasons for these activities have been offered that shed light on the habitus of the producers and the field conditions they operated in, and this has helped to partially explain the styles and content of the texts they produced.

Bourdieu described the ‘systematic [propensities] to favour certain aspects of reality

and ignore others' through symbolic production and reinforcement as the '*theory effect'* [original emphasis] (1991, p.135) In the case of *A Property of the Clan's* and *Blackrock's* productions and reception, conflicting messages as to why they were made, what they actually represented, and what their purpose was, meant that several contrasting 'theories' circulated, requiring the text's 'meanings' to be challenged and re-appropriated by the many socio-cultural fields they appeared in. However, despite conflicting accounts of the texts' narrative purposes and anticipated communicative outcomes, it is the author's contention that the myriad of sense-making practices enacted throughout their production contributed to dominant perceptions of Newcastle's 'cultural' identity. Furthermore, the author also suggests that the dialogic and visual codes embedded in the texts continue to disseminate overt and subtle messages that are able to be 'identified' with the city, and these matters are explored in the following chapter.

Chapter 9 – *A Property of the Clan* & *Blackrock* – Producing Culture Through Texts

'…it was asking a lot of Australians to expunge reality from their memories.'
(Drewe 1997, p.16)

'One radio review…recorded that the film documented the murder of Leigh Warner on Black Rock Beach near Newcastle.'
(Brien 1999, p.120)

In the previous chapter repeated assertions from *APOTC's* and *Blackrock's* producers that the plays' and film's narratives are fictionalizations of generalist social issues, as opposed to representations of local Newcastle community incidents and concerns were addressed. It may be convincingly argued that the texts *do* have the propensity to convey valuable universal messages, particularly in regard to teenage, familial, and gendered relationships, and this is one of the reasons why they remain contemporaneously viable as performance, viewing and education resources. However, the author argues that because of the events that precipitated the original story-making, details reminiscent of the ethnographic practices that helped to develop the productions, particularly in relation to localized knowledge of the 'stories' surrounding Leigh Leigh's murder and its aftermath, remain intact. This view aligns with Bourdieu's idea presented in Chapter 1 of the thesis and incorporated throughout the subsequent analyses, that the context in which a work emerges contributes to the work itself (Bourdieu, Chamboredon & Passeron 1991), which allows for productions to be adapted and re-appropriated, while retaining aspects of their original construction. Williams proposes a similar concept when he states that the 'arts of a period' incorporate the 'actual living sense, the deep community that makes the communication possible, is naturally drawn upon' (1965, pp.64-65). These notions have also been exemplified in an online review of the film to promote its debut screening at the Sundance Film Festival in which Rebecca Yeldham argues:

> *Blackrock* is as raw in its intensity as it is brutal in its authenticity. Though its themes strike a familiar chord, rarely have we seen a work that so exhaustively probes the impact of a single reprehensible act and its shattering impression on the soul of an entire community. (Yeldham 1994-2008 online)

The author therefore contends that together with the broader story themes that may have universal 'appeal' the specificity of local codes that have been dialogically and 'visually' embedded in *APOTC* and *Blackrock* have the capacity to 'situate' the narrative fictions as *representative* of Newcastle, and as communicative reminders and disseminators of its cultural identity.

In *'Landscape as Contested Topos of Place, Community and Self'* (2001), Olwig explains that 'the word *theatre* ultimately derives from the Greek word *theasthai*, meaning "to view", with the root *thea*, meaning "the act of seeing"…' [original emphasis] (2001, p.100). From their beginnings as theatrical works, each play has offered strong clues as to the constitution of Newcastle's social and topographical 'scenery', thereby enabling many theatre-goers to envision the city and become cognizant of a number of its defining features. For example, the setting for the play *APOTC* is 'a large Australian industrial city in the present day, between October of one year and the winter of the next year' (Enright 1994) [94]. The high school students from the fictional township of Black Rock attend school 'across the river', 'across the water' and 'live under the smokestacks' (Jared's dialogue, pp.23-24), meaning that they mostly travel by public ferry. These geographic distinctions have allowed the playwright to set up a socio-cultural dichotomy reminiscent of the Newcastle-Stockton, and Newcastle (regional) - Sydney (metropolitan) insider/outsider discourses discussed earlier in the thesis. The natural landscape features embedded in *APOTC's* story construction therefore enable powerful demographic distinctions to be conveyed. The reliance on ferry transport is encoded in a number of pertinent scenes in each of the texts including the following exchange between the protagonist Jared Kirby, his younger sister Jade, and his girlfriend Rachel Ackland. Rachel attends school with the Black Rock teenagers, but doesn't need to catch the ferry as they do because her affluent family 'live right up there…up on that hill. That row of lights' (Jared's dialogue, p.36) [95]:

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[94] Leigh Leigh was murdered on November 3, 1989 – late spring in Australia.

[95] In Newcastle 'The Hill' 'is the historic heart' of the city and 'the site of the first town plan', it is a 'precinct dominated by steep topography' and in the mid 1800s 'the city's rapidly burgeoning middle class chose the slopes of The Hill to build many large fine houses' (*Newcastle City Council* 2006 online).

JARED, JADE and RACHEL are at the ferry wharf, city side, with their school bags. They discuss going to Ricko's party on the upcoming Saturday night…
[In APOTC the Surf Club party is instigated by Ricko to celebrate the older 'Blacko's' limited return to his local roots.]

JADE:

'I'm going if Tracy's going. And Tracy's going.'

JARED:

'What if Tracy wasn't invited?'

JADE:

'She's been invited.'

JARED:

'Bullshit.'

JADE:

'She has. Scottie's asked her.'

JARED:

'Scott Abbott's a bloody little root-rat.'

JADE:

'He told her he likes her! And she really likes him.'

JARED:

'And she's a moll. A fucken'-'

She swings at him with her schoolbag.

JADE:

'Don't swear at me. I'll tell Mum.'

JARED:

'Yeah? Well, first you tell her you want to go to the Surf Club Saturday night, and see what she says. Zit-face.'

She swings at him again. He mock-threatens her and she goes.

JARED:

'Mum'll spew.'

RACHEL:

'You shouldn't call her that.'

JARED:

'Zit-face? She says worse to me.'

RACHEL:

'I mean Tracy. You called Tracy a moll.' [96]

[Tracy Warner is the Black Rock schoolgirl who is raped and murdered. Her character never appears on stage but is 'brought to life' through the performances and dialogue of the remaining characters.]

JARED:

'It's true.'

RACHEL:

'It's really off.'

JARED:

'You don't even know her.'

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[96] 'Tracey is Leigh Leigh's cousin's name', they were the same age and spent lots of time together. Robyn Leigh's sister 'Vicki Frost...asked Brian Joyce from Freewheels Theatre company to change the [character's] name Tracy to something else out of respect for the family' (Carrington 1998, pp.153-154). The name-change did not occur, and 'Tracy' still features as the murder victim in *Blackrock* (1996) the transformed version of *APOTC*, and in the film *Blackrock* (1997).

RACHEL:

'Do you?'

JARED:

'I get the ferry with her every day.'

RACHEL:

'It's leaving. You'd better hop on.'

JARED:

'I'll get the next one. I'll walk you to the bus stop. Look, Saturday night –'

RACHEL:

'Jared. We'll have heaps of time over Christmas.'

[Later in the scene] *They part. She sees a girl running for the ferry.*

RACHEL:

'God, Tracy, don't try and jump!'

(Enright 1994, pp.6-7)

Mary Ann Hunter described the language of *APOTC* as being predominantly constructed 'as a series of duologues' (2008, p.83) and the scene above provides evidence of this structure. Enright has used dialogue that epitomizes the 'big brother-little sister' familial relationship between Jared and Jade, as well as derogatory terminology implicating gendered power roles to expose Jared's opinions in relation to his female peers. These are value judgements that through vivid, expressive 'language [that] is pretty raw at times' (Banks 1996, p.5) are carried forward throughout the remainder of *APOTC* in various contexts, and appear prevalently in the *Blackrock* texts also.

In Sandra Hall's lengthy feature article *'The Enright Stuff'*, the reporter praised the playwright's ability to write 'plays enjoyed by high school children because of the accuracy with which they comprehend the idiom and culture of adolescent tribal life'

(1995, p.34). The playwright himself spoke of how he'd acquired the skills to inscribe the language of 'youth speak' in his work for *APOTC,* stating that research for the project had considered 'the idiom and background and recreational habits of [the] kids', explaining that he'd drawn from his experiences of growing up locally and 'working with high school kids all over [the] country' to construct the play's dialogue (cited in Simon & Stewart 1997, p.10). Consequently, Enright's habitus and praxis enabled him to write 'words' for each of the productions that, in Helen Thomson's view, have the 'speed, energy, and economy of precisely rendered realism' (1998, pp.149-150); show 'a fair ear for teenage argot' (Galloway 1997, p.9); demonstrate 'spot-on use of the Australian vernacular' and present 'a group of young people who speak today's jargon' (Chan 1997, p.31) [97]. According to most critics (and theatre patrons and film viewers) as well as encoding a level of 'authentic' peer interactions, through 'violent language and the language of intimidation' (Squires 1995, p.8A) the scripts are also considered to be indicative of adolescent communication that 'acts as a code to exclude adults' (Galloway 1997, p.9) [98]. Bourdieu describes theses kinds of especially 'male' language codes as a type of 'linguistic licence' that constitutes:

> …part of the *labour of representation* and of theatrical production which 'tough guys', especially adolescents, must pursue in order to impose on others and assume for themselves the image of the 'lad' who can take anything and is ready for anything, and who refuses to give in to feelings and to sacrifice anything to feminine sensitivity. [original emphasis] (Bourdieu 1991, p.94)

Interestingly, the terminology that Bourdieu uses to describe these kinds of articulations is not specific to textual constructions such as plays, but pertains to the 'natural' efforts and ordinary social performances that young males enact to assert their authority and set themselves apart from each other and their female counterparts. The scripting in each of

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[97] Simon Clews' review of *Blackrock's* play script was highly critical of the dialogue describing it as, 'strange, constantly evolving, seemingly foreign language spoken by young people – which only seems to work when it is spoken spontaneously on the street and which, as a result, is so hard to render convincingly on stage or on the screen' (1997, p.77). Ken Longworth was also critical of *Blackrock's* writing arguing that there was 'too much stating of the obvious, as when a more experienced teenaged girl tells a younger one, long after the fateful party has degenerated into drunken brawling and sexual aggression by the males, that "It always ends up like this"' (1996, p.6).

[98] In an audio recording about *APOTC's* production and responses to the play, an unidentified female teenage theatre patron exclaimed, 'I found this really hard to cope with. I'm still in shock. The way they describe things…yeah, my friends speak like that' (*ABC Radio National* 1993).

Enright's texts (as is apparent in the scene above) provides clear evidence of Bourdieu's 'masculine language' concept.

Interspersed with *APOTC's* direct character dialogue are evocative *indirect* and disparate 'voice performances' in audio form, speculating about what happened to the murdered girl:

> VOICES:
>
> 'She choked in her own spew, they reckon…'
> 'They didn't find her till…'
> 'It was a psycho from the hospital…'
> 'There was this black panel-van. Parked up the other end of the beach…'
> 'In the sand hills…'
> 'They found one of her earrings first…'
> …
> 'There was this car with Victorian number-plates. Nobody saw the driver…'
> 'Who found her?'
> 'In the sand-hills, half covered in sand…'
> 'They reckon about five blokes went through her, one after the other…'
> …
> 'What if you'd of been the ones that found her…'
> 'It was one of the maddies from the hospital…'
> 'What if it is a psycho? What if he's still around?'
>
> (Enright 1994, pp.17-18)

Within the design of *APOTC* the above encoding works structurally and symbolically to accommodate 'unseen' community members' (mostly teenagers) speculations about the circumstances and details of Tracy's murder. The skilful combination of 'unrecognizable' but identifiable conjectures, communicates to theatre audiences that rumour and suspicion surrounding the 'Black Rock' crime are rife. This scene harbours exceptionally pertinent meanings that could be construed as applying to any similar set

of criminal circumstances that have become public knowledge. Yet, because of the connection to the Leigh Leigh case they provide explicit interpretive cues for people who may be familiar with various aspects of the 'Newcastle' murder and its residual effects. *APOTC's* 'voice-over' suppositions about the type of person who may have committed Tracy's murder exhibit deep connections with Stockton's local community that are manifest in the dialogue. The Stockton Hospital/Centre is a mental health facility and has been a part of the suburb's built environment since 1911 (Craig 2004, p.26). 'A former naval base, the Hospital [is] situated on a large property backing onto Stockton Beach, with red brick and fibro buildings…separated by pine trees, ovals and grassland' (Klotz 2001, p.55). Its structure dominates the physical approach to the suburb from 'across' Newcastle, via the Hunter River, and despite its landscaped grounds it presents a foreboding institutional aesthetic. Enright's characters' suggestions that a 'psycho' or a 'maddie' [99] from the hospital may have killed Tracy draw on the playwright's insider knowledge of Stockton's unique cultural geography. They also embody similar 'local' community fears to those circulated at the time of Leigh Leigh's murder investigation about potential perpetrators, when Stockton residents shared a 'disbelief that anyone from their township could be responsible for such a heinous crime' (Carrington & Johnston 1994, p.9). Additionally, these fictional lines inculcate a series of particularities that are directly connected to the Newcastle murder.

For example, Leigh Leigh's body was found at approximately 9.30am on the morning after the beach party by a close friend of hers; Sara Porter, and 'several young boys' as well as 'a couple of young people' discovered her body (Porter cited in Carrington 1998, p.32-33). 'Leigh's body was found on the beach early Saturday tragically on the morning of her only sister, Jessi's sixth birthday' (Wendt 2004, p.21). When he was

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[99] In the play *Blackrock*, Cherie (who is Jared's cousin and Tracy's best friend) conducts several monologues by the dead girl's graveside. During Scene 12 she says, '…You should hear all the rumours. Someone seen a black Torana with Victorian number plates. It was a stranger in a Megadeth T-shirt, it was a maddie from the hospital…' (Enright 1996, pp.3-31). The screenplay includes a scene (which was not in the finished film) where two youths, Davo and Kemel 'speculate' with Ricko about Jared's loyalty and their part in Tracy's sexual assault: Ricko – 'You topped her? Davo – 'No! No way. That could have been anyone. Some fuckin' psycho…' (Enright 1997, p.39). In a scene that *was* included in the film where Jared is aggressively interrogated by detectives investigating Tracy's murder, he angrily retaliates, 'Somebody from the mental hospital! Or…guys saw this van with Victorian numberplates that night…' (Enright 1997, p.72).

interviewed by Detective Plant two days after the party, Matthew Webster, the youth who was eventually charged with her murder claimed, 'I've only heard two rumours going around about it all, one's about two guys in a panel van, and the other's about an old bloke who is meant to have done it' (cited in Carrington 1998, p.35). A teenage girl gave police a sworn statement that 'she had been told…that [Leigh Leigh] had been attacked by three males who were trying to force [her] into a red panel van' (Carrington 1998, p.100). Each of Enright's fictional scripts contains the same distinctive 'make' of vehicle the 'Newcastle' teenagers described.

JARED looks beyond the fence and sees BRETT RICKETSON passing in a van.

(Enright 1994, p.1)

In *APOTC* and *Blackrock* the protagonist Ricko drives a panel-van symbolizing the independent and risqué lifestyle the younger 'Blackos' aspire to. 'Mobility is an explicit issue for the young male characters, and Ricko's superior status at the beginning is marked by his possession of a van. The van becomes a complex sign of Ricko's simultaneously envied and feared masculinity…' (Kiernander 2006, p.80). In the film, the colour of the 'Holden Sandman, the 1970s panel van of choice for dedicated surfers' is red (Homan 2005, p.24). This 'key prop' was selected by production designer David McKay as it was deemed to be 'contemporary yet resonant' (*Blackrock* Media Kit 1997, p.8) and it corresponds with the youth's socialized 'systematicity' which, according to Bourdieu, 'is found in all the properties – and property – with which individuals…surround themselves' such as 'cars, spirits, cigarettes…clothes' (1984, p.173). Later film scene analysis explains some of the entrenched material, phenomenological, symbolic, and dramatic 'value' of Ricko's car.

Within *APOTC's* story schema, through a series of progressively tense conversations that reveal male 'bonds' underscored by a pervading sense of dread that is fuelled by deceit, Brett "Ricko" Ricketson is positioned as the primary murder suspect. As the drama intensifies he's exposed as the killer, when Jade (Jared's sister and Tracy's best friend) explains through a monologue at Tracy's graveside, that police have 'charged Ricko' (Enright 1994, p.45). This revelation is followed by Ricko's lengthy description of the predatory and sexist behaviour that led to his assault on Tracy. The scene has

been edited by the author for analytical brevity.

RICKO:

'…it was easy to catch up with her. She didn't hardly know which way she was going. One point, I thought she was going to walk into the sea. I sort of steered her back, but she pulled away from me. The way she'd always done round me. So there she is, carrying on about being pregnant, and hurting, and all this shit, when all she was was blind and legless...I said I'd had my eye on her for months, and how come she was putting out for everyone and not for Ricko? She said tonight was her first time, which had to be bullshit, same as everything else she ever said. I knew heaps of guys had been through her...If it was the first time, how come she always carried on like she was the greatest little slut in town ?...'

(Enright 1994. p.45)

Although both Ricko's and Tracy's *fictional* characterisations could be justifiably described as such, again, because of Enright's ethnographically 'informed' character dialogue, the speech content renders itself as representative of events that literally took place on the night Leigh Leigh died. Many of these incidents and accounts have appeared in a large volume of intertexts. A teenage girl who was at the beach party during which Leigh was killed explained to original investigators that Leigh was drunk and extremely upset during the course of the evening. When she and her friend had asked what was wrong 'Leigh said, "I'm pregnant"…And she said "Jed Jones…me and I'm bleeding and I'm pregnant"' (Carrington 1998, p.20). Additionally, Matthew Webster had stated to police, 'Leigh came in and she was complaining to me that she was pregnant and she kept going on and on with it – and I got the shits with it…' (ibid p.74). These investigative accounts of witness testimonies, plus the fact that Leigh was a virgin before the fateful night have been widely disseminated throughout media

discourses reporting on or referring to the case [100].

Despite Enright's pronouncement that he, 'wrote the new play without even looking at the text of *A Property of the Clan*' (Rose 1997, p.13), many mnemonic devices linking *Blackrock* to the original Theatre-In-Education piece have been strategically embedded in its narrative construct. Within *Blackrock's* 'fictional' dialogic material the highly sensitive personalized discourses attributed to Leigh Leigh's sexualized identity have also been encoded in an emotionally charged scene between Rachel and Jared. At this stage of the drama the young teenage couple have 'split up'. Rachel has a gift she'd started to make for Jared that she wants him to have since she'd 'made [it] already' (Enright 1996, p.60). This kind of disposition signifies a 'gesture of generosity' (Bourdieu 1991, p.24) in keeping with her thoughtful personality. For Jared, his inability to reciprocate the gift-giving is compounded by guilt, because of his anxieties over his loyalties to his mate (Ricko) and his 'hidden' fears for his mother's health.

SCENE 23

Kirby House. Midday. The room is empty. RACHEL IS HEARD CALLING. She comes in carrying a Christmas present. JARED appears.

RACHEL:

'The door was open. I wasn't sure you'd be here.'

JARED:

'Why'd you come over then?'

RACHEL:

'To leave this. I thought someone would be home. Making the pud, or…'

[100] In their *Australian Feminist Law Journal* article Carrington & Johnson speak of Robyn Leigh's frustrations at the way her daughter's reputation had been damaged through media reports that Mrs Leigh said had 'plastered everything ' about her 'all over the place, even the most personal thing like her virginity [was] plastered all over the place' (Leigh cited in Carrington & Johnson 1994, p.26).

JARED:

'Mum's in hospital.'

RACHEL:

'Oh. Is she alright?'

JARED:

'She gets out today. Suppose I should clean the place up a bit. I didn't get a pressie for you. I though you and me were…'

RACHEL:

'Yes. But I'd made this already. It's only the other half.'

JARED:

'Of what?'

It's a cup for the saucer. His name is on it.

JARED:

'Now I feel really off.'

RACHEL:

'That's not why I came. I don't know what to say.'

JARED:

'Nothing to say.'

RACHEL:

'No. But it's terrible.'

JARED:

'People break up all the time.'

RACHEL:

'I don't mean us. I mean about Ricko. It's awful.'

JARED:

'Get real. You'd like them to lock him up for life.'

RACHEL:

'Jared. He's dead.'

JARED:

'Ricko?'

RACHEL:

'They found him in his cell.'

JARED:

'Bullshit!'

RACHEL:

'It was on the morning news. He hanged himself with a belt.'

JARED:

'No way. No fucken' way. He wouldn't do it. Never.'

RACHEL:

'He did.'

JARED:

'Why would he? Why the fuck would he?'

RACHEL:

'I don't know. Guilt…'

JARED:

'Bullshit.'

RACHEL:

'Come on! You know what he did…'

JARED:

'It wasn't just him! She was in it too. People don't do things out of nowhere. Ricko's dead because some moll

didn’t know the limits.’

RACHEL:

‘You know she was a virgin?’

JARED:

‘Bullshit!’

RACHEL:

‘They told the world on TV. Tracy Warner was a virgin that night.’

JARED:

‘Then why didn’t she act like one?’

RACHEL:

‘How does a virgin act?’

JARED:

‘People should act the way they are. Not dress down and look like a moll and dance like – a moll.’

RACHEL:

‘She didn’t look like anything when I found her. She looked like everything had gone. Her body was twisted-‘

JARED:

‘Shut the fuck up.’

RACHEL:

‘He did the worst thing. He made someone die. What do you think was the last thing she saw? What did she see in his face?’

JARED:

‘What does it matter now? He’s dead isn’t he? It’s that easy. One rock. Wham. One night in a cell. Wham. It’s

that quick. Wham.'

He hurls the mug. It shatters.

…

(Enright 1996, pp.60-61)

The repetition of similar devices from *APOTC* to *Blackrock* can be seen most vividly here. Jared also smashes a mug in an equally charged scene with Rachel in *APOTC.* This scene also resonates with the actuality of the Leigh Leigh case. Leigh Leigh's aunt Vicki Frost went to the play's opening night in August 1992 and said: 'It just felt like I was there at Leigh's death…some things were related to the incidents that happened on the night of Leigh's death. In the play a fellow broke a cup and to me that just symbolized when the rock was thrown and my heart just reefed' (cited in Carrington 1998, p.153).

The powerful scene outlined above serves a number of narrative and communicative functions: it incorporates the notion that 'the media' operates to spread newsworthy information with a high degree of accuracy; it reminds theatre audiences that Rachel endured the horrific discovery of a murdered young person she'd actually known; it lets theatre audiences know that Ricko has died by his own hand and subtly suggests he'd been motivated by guilt to end his life; it displays Jared's adolescent angst and misogyny both linguistically and physically; and it overwhelmingly signifies his male peer priorities, especially in regard to his justification of his 'mate' Ricko's violence, by implying that he didn't act alone, and by denying Tracy's 'virgin' status and denigrating her reputation. The author argues that the parallels between Enright's fictional construction and many of the personifications, situations, and mediations directly attributable to the discourses generated *because of* Leigh Leigh's murder, substantiates *Blackrock's* identification as a 'Newcastle' story and therefore, cultural producers' efforts to refute these parallels should be considered as resolutely inauthentic.

In contrast to *APOTC,* in *Blackrock* there are a total of six adult characters, two of the women (Diane and Glenys) are sisters and their children Jared and Cherie attend the

same school as the murder victim, Tracy [101]. In the re-developed play Ricko's age has been boosted to twenty-two and he has a twenty-one year old girlfriend Tiffany. The remaining seven characters range in age from fifteen to eighteen. Jared's girlfriend Rachel Ackland, and her family still live 'across' from Black Rock in a more highly regarded part of town, where their 'physical location comes to express social location because individuals with a lot of symbolic and cultural capital are able to dominate and define the most prestigious locations' (Reed-Danahay 2005, p.135). This characterological trait (Fisher 1997) positions the schoolgirl and her family in direct contrast to the majority of the working-class Black Rock locals, and Enright has scripted *Blackrock's* narrative to repeatedly convey this dichotomy:

SCENE 13

Playground. Lunchtime. RACHEL *has a plastic bucket with coins in it.[She and some of the other girls are taking up a collection to plant a tree in memory of the slain girl.]*

DAVO:

'Hey, you. Yeah you!'

RACHEL:

'You talking to me?'

SCOTT:

'It's you doing all the talking, Ackland.'

DAVO:

'We're copping enough shit without some rich bitch ripping us off.'

RACHEL:

'I wasn't.'

[101] The 'sisters-aunts-cousins' encoding is reminiscent of Leigh Leigh's tight-knit familial circle. Leigh's maternal grandmother Margaret Hayman had raised her between the ages of four and seven. She was also close to her cousins, particularly Tracey, 'Her and Tracey were an inseparable pair…When we were on holidays everyone though they were twins. They were always together' (Hayman cited in Carrington 1998, p.126).

DAVO:

'You're slagging off the Blackos, man. You know what it's been like over there?'

SCOTT:

'You haven't got a fucken clue. Nobody does over this side.'

DAVO:

'People go dirty on you in the street. There's signs on the telegraph poles, 'Shame, Black Rock, shame.''

(Enright 1996, pp.30-31)

The setting for *Blackrock* is described in the preface to the script as: 'the present day, between late November of one year and early January of the next, in an Australian industrial city and its beachside suburb of Black Rock' (Enright 1996, p.x). As the above exchange emphasizes, perceptions of the natural environment and the cultural geography prevalent in various manifestations in the text, facilitate insider/outsider discourses that have a distinctive bearing on the way the *place* of Black Rock, and hence the protagonists *who live there* may be classified by theatre audiences and others. These classifications operate within the story world of the play to define character and location identities, to stipulate cultural distinctions, and to propel the drama. Bourdieu describes the socio-psychological divisions the above scene implicates as 'category differentiation' and argues that agents':

> …processes of accentuating differences…and reinforcing similarities…induces discriminatory behaviour favourable to members of the agents' own group and hostile to members of the other group, even if it has adverse effects for the former group. (1984, pp.478-479)

Evidence of his ideas, especially in relation to 'tacit contract[s]' that define 'us' and 'them' systems of community recognition, are consistently apparent throughout *Blackrock's* story (ibid, p.478). As 'Davo's' dialogue reveals, following the fallout from Tracy's murder in the local suburb, Black Rock's residents' fears and suspicions have been exhibited in material form with antagonistic signage appearing in public. Scollon and Wong Scollon argue that in general, 'a sign means something because of where and when it is located in the world. In this case it is called an *index*' [original emphasis] (2003

p.vii). In keeping with these authors' assumptions the anti-Black Rock postings as indexes, carry a high degree of significance since they represent a specific area's self-reflexive appraisal of its perceived 'flawed' characteristics on the part of one (or more) of its residents. Because of Tracy's murder, Black Rock's social capital has been marred, and as Enright's ongoing narrative accommodates:

> …the stigmatised area [continues to] symbolically degrade its inhabitants, who, in return, symbolically degrade it. Since they don't have all the cards necessary to participate in the various social games, the only thing they share is their common excommunication. (Bourdieu 1999, p.129)

Therefore, the posters embody a distinctive set of 'fictional' community (but not necessarily communal) concerns. The signs provide commanding moral messages that information *about* Black Rock that should be known has not been forthcoming, and that these communicative restraints present an indelible problem for the reputation and culture of the place and its people. For people familiar with similar activities that actually happened in the suburb of Stockton following Leigh Leigh's murder, the resonant potential for them to connect *Blackrock's* story with aspects of Stockton's/Newcastle's habitus is quite profound.

> "Murder town shame", ran the headline in *The Daily Telegraph* of November 21, 1989. Three weeks after the murder, the newspaper reported, posters had been stuck up on the telegraph poles of Stockton's main street. Crudely drawn and hand-lettered, the posters nonetheless made their point. Below the words "Shame Stockton Shame!!" was a picture of three men, one holding a rock dripping with blood, standing over a female figure lying face down in the sand. Below the drawing were the words: "Dob the gutless bastards in!!" [102] (Rose 1997, p.13)

Rose's print media discourse is but one example that includes information about the real, irrefutable activity that Enright imaginatively reappropriated for each of his three texts. The poster motif is threaded consistently throughout each of the plays and the

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[102] Graham Parsons was the local Stocktonian who created the posters 'at work' and 'ran off about 50 copies' of them. They had the words 'Shame-Stockton-Shame. Dob the gutless bastards in'. He mounted them at the local shopping centre (Morris *„ABC Radio* 1996). In a 1996 *Daily Telegraph* report published at the time of the film's shooting, which coincided with the NSW Police Minister's receipt of Newcastle Legal Centre's Report into Leigh Leigh's murder investigation, Stockton Surf-Life Saving Captain explained that 'When there were suggestions that Matty Webster was involved they put up posters saying Shame Stockton Shame…The young kids went around tearing them down again' (cited in Gibbs 1996, p.5).

film. In *APOTC* Jared describes the post-murder Black Rock mayhem to Ricko:

> JARED:
> 'It's a madhouse. Davo and them running around saying don't be a dobber, and then the posters on telegraph poles. Shame Black Rock Shame…'
>
> (Enright 1994, p.28)

Interestingly, in *Blackrock's* screenplay Enright has written a scene where a furious Jared walks the suburb's streets during the early evening and hears TV news featuring defensive audio 'grabs' of Tracy's father and Black Rock youths, emanating from a number of local living rooms.

Scene 109
…
Imploding in fury, Jared sees a home-made poster taped to a telegraph pole: a photo of Tracy over the legend, 'SHAME, BLACKROCK, SHAME'…
(Enright 1997, p.52)

However, this scene does *not* appear in the film. Instead, in a scene at the Kirby house where Jared, in a harried state, inadvertently sees part of a TV report about the criminal investigation into Tracy's murder, he hears a Newscaster state that*: 'Late last night a crudely lettered poster appeared on telegraph poles up and down the beachside suburb's main street'* (Vidler 1997). As such, Enright's and Vidler's patterned use of this narrative vector based on idiosyncratic and localized phenomena, again serves to link the facts of circumstances surrounding Stockton's Leigh Leigh murder, with the fictional contents of *Blackrock's* story world.

In *Blackrock*, Jared and Ricko are the central protagonists, with the surfing subculture underscoring their shared friendship and peer values. Jared's personal struggles with internal conflict, evident in *APOTC*, have again, formed the mainstay of the drama's narrative. Only in the revised text, the character's angst-ridden habitus has been

designed to incorporate a much larger role for his mother Diane. A script change includes Diane's breast cancer diagnosis and treatment, an issue she keeps from the troubled Jared, and a plot device that has been criticized as unnecessary and irrelevant by some social commentators (Garner 1997; Holland & O'Sullivan 1999; O'Sullivan 2008; Rooney 1998). Others, though, conceive of this narrative development as indicative of 'the crippled emotions and communications' between the two (Simmonds 1995, p.95) and 'an effective way of providing a capsule to sum up [the] mother-son relationship' (Lowing 1997c). In an interview with Olivia Stewart, Enright emphasized that from his perspective 'the real focus of the [*Blackrock*] story is a boy and his mother, a boy and his mother and his mate, an entirely invented relationship' (cited in Stewart 1997a, p.23) [103]. Theatre reviewer Gavin Banks claimed the single-mother/teenage son character developments lent *Blackrock* a familial depth, arguing that 'Jared's problems at home with his single parent mum…are fairly typical of 17-year-olds: a certain dissatisfaction with school, a fear of the future and an inability to express himself emotionally' (1996, p.5).

Jared and Diane's strained adolescent-youth/parental concern theme is also powerfully encoded in the film version of *Blackrock*, reinforcing, as Bourdieu asserts, 'that it [is] through continuous practical and symbolic work that intense affective bonds [are] formed among members of a family, transforming the obligations of love into a loving disposition' (cited in Reed-Danahay 2005, p.115) [104]. In designing these relationships and attributing a personalized degree of production authenticity to their construction, director Steven Vidler proclaimed that 'Nick [Enright] and I know quite a few single mums of teenage kids and most of the relationships have become like any couple living

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[103] The DVD of *Blackrock* includes in its extra menu options an interview with the film's director Steve Vidler who says of the mother-son theme: 'Chris Haywood who plays the 'copper' nailed it on the first day of rehearsal when he said, "This is a love story, there's a love triangle between this boy, his Mum and his best mate. And she's the person that he should be with."'

[104] The 'family loyalty' theme has also been written into the script and screenplay of *Blackrock* to accommodate Stewart Ackland's critical defence of his son Toby's part in Tracy's sexual assault. Stewart attempts to coerce his daughter Rachel into supporting her brother: 'He's eighteen. He'll be tried as an adult. If he gets a jail sentence, he'll be locked up with a pack of hoons who will eat him alive. You want to lock him away? A good-looking boy…' (Enright 1996, p.39).

together' (cited in Simon & Stewart 1997, p.12) [105]. The prioritizing of affective bonds connected with a sense of belonging, suggestions of reciprocal understanding and unconditional trust, predispose Jared to support his 'mate' Ricko and to conceal his knowledge of who he thought was involved in Tracy's murder.

Veronica Kelly's review of *Blackrock* argued that in comparison to *APOTC 'Blackrock* is blokier. It's a growing-up narrative, tracing the course and resolution of Jared's mateship with Ricko…[it] fills out adult relationships and has a more conventional structure' (1997, p.12). The adults in *Blackrock*, Rachel's parents Stewart and Marian Ackland; Jared's 'absent father' Len; Diane, and her sister Glenys, provide a means for Enright to incorporate dialogue pertaining to strained and gendered relationships of an occupational nature '…my wife Marian…hates everything I do in this industry, but will fight to the death for my right to make a packet out of doing it' (Enright 1996, p.26), and which speak of distinctive power roles. Some of these scenes involve the Ackland's son Toby, whose 18th birthday beach party propels *Blackrock's* drama. 'Toby and his family are "townies", yet he's still drawn to the more tribal surfing culture of Black Rock' (Dunne 1996, p.14).

The middle-class framing of the Ackland family encodes the party context with some extremely pertinent details, particularly for audiences pre-disposed to connect the fictional *Blackrock* play content with the coastal environment and the teenage birthday celebrations that immediately preceded Leigh Leigh's murder [106]. The Ackland parents agree to let 18-year-old Toby stage his party at Black Rock because *not* having it at their home means their expensive property, their 'house, furniture, paintings, books…clothes' that represent the 'generative formula of their lifestyle' will be protected from damage (Bourdieu 1984, p.173). Plus, as the youth points out, his mates will be more comfortable in the familiar surrounds of their Black Rock Point Surf Club. Due to the scheduled date of the party and their required attendance at a Modelling

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[105] Actor Simon Lyndon who plays Ricko in the film, and had played Jared in a stage production earlier has stated that he 'could really relate to Jared because [he] had a single Mum' (cited in Hessey 1997, p.4). Additionally, Laurence Breuls who plays Jared in the film 'lived with his mother for the first 14 years of his life…so he had the background to understand just what might make a character such as Jared tick' (Hessey 1997, p.4).

[106] Leigh Leigh was one of approximately 40 friends who had been invited to Evan Walsh's 16th birthday party at the North Stockton Surf Club (Carrington 1998, p.11).

Agency Awards night, the Ackland parents are not in a position to supervise the celebrations, which they forbid the younger Rachel to attend:

SCENE 2

Ackland house. STEWART in jogging clothes, sweaty; TOBY with gym clothes and bag.

MARIAN:

'Well, if you don't mind us not being there…

STEWART:

'I think he'll survive.'

RACHEL:

'Are you going to drive? Or will we get the ferry?'

STEWART:

'Who said you'd be going?'

RACHEL:

'I've got to be there! Come on, I backed you up.'

TOBY:

'I've got weight training.'

He goes.

RACHEL:

'I'm going.'

STEWART:

'Not to a beach party at Black Rock.'

RACHEL:

'It's my brother's birthday!'

STEWART:

'It's hoontown over there, Rachel.'

RACHEL:

'But you'll let Toby have his party there.'

STEWART:

'Toby's eighteen, Rachel, that's a big difference…'

RACHEL:

'Toby's got a dick. That's the difference.'

She runs out

(Enright 1996, pp.7-10).

Like the earlier scene between Jared and his sister Jade (in *APOTC*) this scene uses the older-brother/younger-sister vector to position the female character as inferior, insignificant, and unprepared for the kind of 'anticipated' party a function held at the Black Rock Surf Club would result in. By allowing his son to hold the party, and prohibiting his daughter from attending, Stewart Ackland demonstrates that his decision-making practice:

> …does not follow directly from orientations…but rather results from a process of improvisation that, in turn, is structured by cultural orientations, personal trajectories, and the ability to play the game of social interaction.
> (Postone, LiPuma & Calhoun 1993, p.4)

Enright appears to have shaped this character's identity to reflect the contradictory nature of his gendered dispositions and his problematic value judgements, especially in relation to his children. In terms of propelling *Blackrock's* narrative, this scene functions effectively: to position the Ackland family as socio-culturally distinct from the Black Rock residents; to reinforce the notion that the site of the party is problematic, yet functional in terms of the parents' middle-class priorities and supervisory responsibilities; to exclude Rachel from the festivities, emphasizing the incongruity of her relationship with Jared, which sets her character in motion to discover Tracy's body when she attempts to seeks him out; and to orientate Toby Ackland as one of the youths who later participates in Tracy's sexual abuse.

Nick Enright, Steve Vidler, and film producer David Elfick have each sought to

promote the *Blackrock* story as comparably representative of flawed middle-class *and* working-class attitudes towards the identification and treatment of women. Vidler claimed that:

> With *Blackrock* we amplified the role of the middle-class in this community. We thought it was very important that rape was not seen as a working-class crime…so the young men who are the rapists in the play and the film are very clearly delineated as a mix of kids from this community, and lack of parental guidance that all received is sketched in their background. (cited in Simon & Stewart 1997, p.10)

From the author's analysis of the scene above, it may be understood that Vidler's claim of *Blackrock's* class 'equity' in terms of the protagonists' iniquities, holds some weight. However, the cultural producers' collective allegations that in *this story* little distinction has been made between the 'community' of rapists in relation to their backgrounds and their propensity for acts of this kind, are incompatible with the ways the boys' roles have been quantitatively and qualitatively represented in the texts. This is a view supported by Eccles' who argued that 'a middle-class family's amoral attempts to keep its son out of jail look a bit simplistic beside the other complexities' (1996, p.11). Toby Ackland is the only middle-class youth written into the script and the screenplay, with his sister Rachel being the only middle-class girl. Hence, the author contends that the majority of *Blackrock's* young characters fail to constitute the 'mix' of 'community kids' Vidler alluded to. Toby's residential (hence socio-cultural) demarcation from the rest of the 'Blackos', as well as his familial support, positions him as an 'elite' criminal in direct contrast with the rest of those responsible for Tracy's abuse and this dichotomy is even more apparent in the visual representation of the text [107]. Film producer David Elfick, in a newspaper article published at the time of *Blackrock's* shoot proposed that, 'the group of kids [the young actors in their first film] would play,…and among whom the murder happens, are middle-class and not down-and-outers by any means…they have infinite possibilities' (cited Peters 1996, p.20). The author argues however, that the community of young people among whom Tracy's murder occurs, have not at all been personified the way Elfick described, but instead have been portrayed as being from 'the kind of place where you expect to find kids with problems' (McGirr 1997, p.48).

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[107] The late Heath Ledger made his movie debut when he played the role of Toby Ackland in *Blackrock*. 'Ledger had a small supporting role in the hard-hitting drama, which was shot in Caves Beach and the suburbs of Newcastle in September 1996' (Edwards 2008, p.4).

The powerful visual representation of these fictionalized region-specific concerns, and their bearing on generative perceptions of 'Newcastle's' cultural identity form the analysis of the film that follows.

> You can tell when a film is going to take off, when the momentum switches from what you've organized or paid for – the interviews, the ads – to something you've got no control over – talkback radio, other media comment. It's as though the film takes on a life of its own. (*Blackrock* Film Producer David Elfick cited in Kaufman 1997, p.12)

Immediately before *Blackrock's* May 1997 national release, Steve Vidler sought to convey ideas that the film's narrative embodied features of ritual types of communication when he suggested that the story might function as a 'kind of cultural therapy' (O'Shea & Roach 1997, p.5). Responding to peoples' concerns that the filmmakers had misrepresented 'the story of Leigh Leigh', he argued that those involved in the film's production went to 'great pains to point out [they were] not going anywhere near that' (O'Shea & Roach 1997, p.5; Roach 1997b, p.34) [108]. This was a critical statement for the director to make, and the 'spatial' terminology Vidler used to make conceptual distinctions between the filmmakers' intentions and *Blackrock's* output was profound, especially since the actual film was 'largely shot on location in the very places where Leigh Leigh had lived and died: Caves Beach, the Stockton ferry and Newcastle city' (Brien 1999, p.119) [109]. In the production notes the director cited

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[108] Reviewer Evan Williams paraphrased Vidler's (and Enright's) disclaimers in a May 3rd review of the film published in the *The Weekend Australian,* arguing that they did not have 'much conviction' partly because '*Blackrock* [had been] shot in Newcastle' (1997, p.11). In this article Williams incorrectly reported that Leigh Leigh was killed in 1991, an inaccuracy that may have offended local people with specific knowledge of the original case.

[109] Producer David Elfick pronounced on location at Caves Beach that the production had 'lost a few locations because of the Leigh Leigh thing' (cited in Worthington 1996, p.13). A *Daily Telegraph* article entitled 'Art imitates death: Leigh Leigh movie splits community' reported that the filmmakers spent 10 days filming in Newcastle where 'they were met with some resistance' and that both the producer David Elfick and director Steve Vidler had 'refused to comment' on local community responses to the filming (Roach 1996, p.5). In an article written by the same reporter (Vicky Roach) just prior to the film's national release, Vidler claimed 'we filmed in Stockton completely without incident' (Roach 1997b, p.34). However, in Brien's 1999 critique 'Urban shocks and local scandals: *Blackrock* and the problem of true-crime fiction' the author states that 'when the film crew arrived in Stockton in late August 1996 they found previously arranged locations suddenly unavailable' (1999, p.119). These assertions were sustained by local film viewer Leigh Rumble (who also happened to be the apprentice Newcastle hairdresser who had worked on the film) when she explained that 'when the film was being shot there were protests and petitions in Stockton, people wanted to put a stop to the film because they didn't want old emotions to be brought out again' (cited in Roach 1997b, p.34).

‘logistical reasons’ and proximity to Sydney to practically account for the choice of Novocastrian sites used in the film (*Blackrock* Media Kit 1997, p.8). He also deferred to Enright’s ‘river’ and ‘ferry’ script detail to explain why Newcastle had been selected to ‘achieve the unique mix of industrial [sic] and beach required for the town of Black Rock’ ((ibid). From producer David Elfick’s perspective, the ‘coastal effects’ the city offered validated the selection of Newcastle locations (Peters 1996, p.20). He also stipulated that the ‘contrasting landscapes and architectural styles were key elements in the choice of location’, and paradoxically divulged ‘you could say Leigh Leigh led us here, I suppose’ (Worthington 1996, p.13). Brian Joyce suggested that ‘artistically it [was] a sensible decision’ to shoot scenes in Newcastle. However, Joyce also stressed ‘that it was important for the filmmakers to acknowledge that Leigh Leigh’s tragedy had been the catalyst for the film’s creation’ as their repetitive disclaimers compounded the trauma for local people who’d been adversely affected by the crime and its fallout (cited in Worthington 1996, p.13).

Decisions to shoot the film (mostly) on location in Newcastle meant that much of the external scenic content draws on physical characteristics that are particular to the city and have remained relatively stable over time. Nowell-Smith argues that ‘there are...films whose representation of the city plays heavily on authenticity’ (2001, p.103) and it is this author’s contention that *Blackrock* is one of these films. Reviewer David Rooney suggested likewise when he wrote that Vidler displayed ‘an evocative feel for the Newcastle locations, playing up the contrasts between industrial steel town, bland suburbia and spectacular beaches’ (1998 online). Rooney’s appraisal of Vidler’s praxis reinforces Nowell-Smith’s assertions that:

> [cities] are there before they signify, and they signify because they are there; they are not there merely in order to be bearers of signification. The fact of being able to work with real materials, which retain their original quality however much they are artistically transformed, is a privilege which filmmakers neglect at their peril. (2001, p.107)

The author attests that Vidler’s propensity to use the ‘real materials’ of Newcastle’s physical and built environments for *Blackrock’s* setting, meant the director strategically anticipated that the discursive meanings attributed to the sites, *because* of Leigh Leigh’s murder, would enhance perceptions of the narrative authenticity of the fictional film.

Some of the 'landscape' attributes included in the film are: the Stockton Bridge; Kooragang Island Industrial Development; BHP Steelworks; the Hunter River and surrounding roadways; Newcastle Harbour; Newcastle City Ferry Terminal; residential streets; and several local surfing beaches that feature distinctive freighters awaiting coal shipment, which constantly line the area's coastal horizon: '*Blackrock* begins with starkly beautiful images of Newcastle steel yards shot in the gold light of early morning. Then it cuts to boys surfing, the golden light now on their young tanned bodies' (Smith 1997, p.21). It is critical to note here that this reviewer does not make a distinction between the first images attributable to '*Blackrock's'* story and the Newcastle location of their filming.

In his appraisal of the film's soundscape researcher Shane Homan speaks of later scenes in the film where Jared uses the surf to escape from his troubles, and inadvertently conflates the fictional waves of Black Rock beach with those off Newcastle's shore. The author argues that this combination of setting and story partially accounts for Shane Homan's *conflation* between the real place of Stockton and the fictional place of Black Rock when he states that, 'the surf subculture of the Stockton 'hoons' display their own coded 'slacker' identity: chequered flannelette shirts and long hair, and an aggression that is rarely articulated, but finds expression in moments of physical and sexual violence' (2005, p.32). Additionally, Colleen McGloin, in her 2005 Doctoral Dissertation *Surfing Nation(s) – Surfing Country(s)* also conflates the fictional contexts of Black Rock's story with 'real' parts of the Newcastle region arguing that, 'Newcastle steelworks and the local club where Jared's mother plays the pokies set the scene for a representation of working-class gender relations' and stipulates that Stewart Ackland's Modelling Agency was in a 'more "up-market" area of Newcastle' (p.245). Initially Homan also conflates the fictional town of Black Rock (which the ferry passengers would be returning to), with the *actual* suburb of Stockton. He states that the opening scenes in *Blackrock*, accompanied by an ambient soundtrack:

> …set up a mixture of waterscapes and water sounds: swimmers and surfers catching waves, with industrial sites in the background; kids catching the (ten minute) ferry from school back to Stockton; waves crashing amidst ship horns and passing freight cargo, reinforcing the city's seaport origins. (Homan 2005, p.24).

FOOTAGE: ON THE WATER – BLACK ROCK BEACH – EARLY MORNING
[Audio: Seagulls] *Brilliant sunset on the horizon with surfers paddling out on a calm sea* [Audio: sitar music plays][smooth edit] *Nobbys Headland at dusk with a coal ship and fishing trawler afloat on the harbour bathed in a 'golden light'.*

Graphic Caption: laurence breuls [grunge-style graphic type] [smooth edit] *Exterior of BHP steelworks with rusted buildings and heavy machinery with smoke billowing out.*

Graphic Caption: linda cropper [smooth edit] *Exterior shot of tiered levels of factory scaffolding with industry workers wearing overalls and safety hats.*

Graphic Caption: simon lyndon [smooth edit] *Five silhouetted surfers wait patiently on their boards with the sunset in the background. Scene changes to* extreme *close-ups of surfers paddling for a wave. The light clears and their faces become visible. A fishing trawler is in the immediate background. Underwater shots from an angled perspective show the surfers legs hanging loosely over their boards.*
[Audio: sitar changes to an electric guitar riff & rock song]

Animated Graphic Caption: – blackrock – [type design uses gold and black colours, the black resembles small chunks of stylized coal].
Two surfers catch a wave in to shore [lighting design uses golden, caramel tones].

For people familiar with the area these auditory and visual cues are instantly recognizable as 'captured' tokens of Newcastle's labour history, environmental waterways and cultural geography. 'Their beach is hemmed in by huge container ships' (Garner 1997, p.27). For viewers unfamiliar with the city and its surrounds, the images and sounds as 'indexical bonds' (Nichols 1991, p.151) juxtaposed with scenes of the 'mechanisms' of steel manufacturing, are indicative of a port-city surfing lifestyle and

industrial working-class demographic. Combined with the surfing subculture aesthetic, they invoke a distinct set of identifiably Novocastrian 'semiotic relations':

> Every system of social practices, linked in semiotic formations according to their meaning relations, is also a system of material processes, linked by physical, chemical, and ecological relations. (Lemke 1995, p.106)

As such, Vidler's establishing shots show 'spectators where the characters are in relation to each other and to important elements' of the setting, serving to 'anchor the space' of the film's narrative direction (Lehman & Luhr 2003, p.58). *Blackrock's* relatively luminous and 'gentle' start soon gives way to a series of fast-paced scenes overlaid with a 'pounding score' (McFarlane 1997, p.45).

FOOTAGE:

[Faster edits] *More film credits overlay a series of surfing action scenes. Jared and several other youths catch waves. Several underwater shots depict him revelling in the immersion* [110]*. Tracy attempts to ride a wave and 'wipes out' close to the shoreline, Jared (watching) cheers as she falls off her board. 3 youths tease each other affectionately as they leave the surf carrying their boards. They head for the outdoor shower.* [Audio: They laugh and shout together] *Tracy and Cherie exit the surf too and approach the shower area. One of the boys [Scottie] calls to them 'Hey girls!' He wears a towel around his waist but exposes himself to the girls when they react to his shouting. The boys laugh, the girls laugh and one of Scottie's 'mates' steals his towel, forcing him to chase after the thief while he's nude.*

Although the scenes described above last less than one minute, in terms of establishing interpretive frameworks for the film's portrayal of teenage gendered interactions and

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[110] In his appraisal of the film's soundscape researcher Shane Homan speaks of later scenes in the film where Jared uses the surf to escape from his troubles, and conflates the fictional waves of Black Rock beach with those off Newcastle's shore: 'Jared seeks escape from fights with his mother and moral quanderies presented by the surf party events; he enters another world under *Newcastle's* breaking waves' (2005, p.25) [author's emphasis].

power relationships, they're astute in their detail. Brigit Fowler's appraisal of Bourdieu's views on masculine domination explains that:

> The particular strength of the masculine sociodicy [or vindication of patriarchy] comes from the fact that it combines and condenses two operations: it legitimates a relationship of domination by embedding it in a biological nature that is itself a naturalized social construction. (2003, p.470)

Evidence of biologically founded categories of distinction that position males as physically, and therefore culturally superior to females, can be observed in the opening scenes of *Blackrock*. In the screenplay for *Blackrock,* Cherie asks her cousin Jared to teach her a surfing move which he says can't be taught but requires 'instinct' (Enright 1997, p.1). This dialogue is missing from the film, but the cheering and clapping Jared enacts when Tracy's unable to stay upright on her board reveals that he expected her to fail. The underlying conception is that girls don't have the physical prowess to match the boys who dominate the surfing scene. Additionally when Scottie 'flashes' himself in front of the girls while he's surrounded by his mates, he demonstrates that this particular kind of 'masculine domination is a characteristic…of specific symbolic structures associated historically with phallocentric presuppositions' (Fowler 2003, p.471).

The next set of scenes (that immediately follows the sequence described above) is a combination of fast-paced school-place and workplace exchanges that also introduce some of the positions the adults in the film inhabit.

FOOTAGE: THE HIGH SCHOOL
Cluttered schoolyard scenes. Jared and his girlfriend Rachel meet in the courtyard amongst the commotion. They share a simple kiss and hold hands.

[Edit: Cut]ACKLAND ADVERTISING AGENCY
Sombre looking models in modernist Advertising Agency waiting room with portfolios on their laps. Jared and Rachel walk up a set of stairs. [Audio: ambient muzak plays]*Professional modelling photos are scattered on the floor. Jared lies on his stomach admiring the images. Mr Ackland enters the room, his*

demeanour is disinterested until he sees some of Jared's photography.

Stewart Ackland:

'What – these yours? Not bad.

Mr Ackland scrutinizes some black and white photos Jared's taken of a skateboarder 'mid-trick', and partial images of industrial buildings and ocean scenes. Jared and Rachel question Mr Ackland about his next professional shoot and ask if they can be 'slave labour' on the Saturday night.[111]

'*Blackrock* opens with good possibilities for Jared, who is a keen photographer with acknowledged talent…the girlfriend is linked with his positive future: her father is a professional photographer and Jared is set to learn from him' (Butters 1998, p.45). This character extension adds a depth to Jared's intensity, sensitivity and aspirational tendencies that are absent from the play version of *Blackrock*. 'He has another life – he's a photographer, he's got some artistic ambitions, he does want to make something of himself. His mother…encourages him to do something with his life' (Enright 2003 DVD Interview). Consequently, this narrative strategy accommodates the working-class youth's propensity for a 'middlebrow art' (Bourdieu, Boltanski, Castel, Chamboredon & Schnapper 1990, p.68) in contrast to the lifestyle choices he and other Black Rock residents were born into where 'the dominated class *rejects* in art anything that is too concerned with *form or stylisation'* [original emphasis] (Fowler 1997, p.160). In later scenes the photography motif operates on several different levels, when Jared captures on film the exciting atmosphere of the Surf Club party, and upon developing the images, reflects on the fun time partygoers had, reminding himself of Tracy's life force. This view is inverted later in the film when Jared undergoes interrogation in an interview room at the Central Police Station (the exterior of which is a heritage building

[111] The 'Saturday' night in question ends up being the night that Jared hosts a welcome-home party for Ricko at the Black Rock Surf Club. 'Stewart Ackland, one of the parents in the film, conducts a photo shoot of young and scantily clad female models. The glamour photography depicted is not only socially acceptable but also highly valued. Indeed, this whole sequence, set in an abandoned warehouse and depicting the young models in various sado~masochistic poses-suspended by chains, or perilously positioned against the bars of upper window casements-in many ways anticipates the exploitative and punitive acts to be perpetrated at the beach party that same day' (Holland & O'Sullivan 1999, p.82).

– University House - in the heart of Newcastle's CBD). Detective Wilansky aggressively slams down coloured and black & white photos of Tracy's beaten and bloodied face down on the desk in front of him and asks: 'You're the photographer Jared…now what rating would you give those on your 'grunge' scale?' (Vidler 1997). The motif is also used in a later hospital scene where Diane unpacks an overnight bag in preparation for her breast cancer surgery the following day. She holds what appears to be a primary school photograph of Jared. In his discussion of familial ties and the structuring of 'loving dispositions' Bourdieu claimed that 'family photographs work to sanction and memorialize the family' (Reed-Danahay 2005, p.115) and at a point in the film when the adult is facing her own mortality this concept seems particularly poignant. This kind of affective poignancy is sustained throughout interior scenes of Jared's bedroom where coloured photographs of a smiling Rachel at the beach, and a black and white image of Ricko posing with his surfboard, are prominently displayed. These elements of 'mise-èn-scene' (McFarlane 1997, p.45) demonstrate Jared's passion for surfing, for photography, and for those dearest to him, and show that 'guided by one's sympathies…affections and…tastes, one makes for oneself an environment in which one feels 'at home' (Bourdieu 2000, p.150). For teenagers whose capacity for designing their own space is limited to their bedrooms, the material decorations embody significant codes as to their personalities and their interests. The scenes in which Jared's photos of his mate, his 'girl' and his love of surfing gain prominence, are fore-grounded by heated and agitated exchanges between mother and son. Diane senses Jared's withdrawal from her and suspects his underlying secrecy in relation to information about Tracy's murder. She simultaneously withholds from her son important information about herself and her personal fears, as evidenced in the next brief scenes that follow on from the Ackland Modelling Agency context.

FOOTAGE: DOCTOR'S SURGERY
Diane has a needle biopsy on her breast. [Edit: cut]
NURSING HOME HALLWAY
Diane is in uniform at her nursing home workplace attending to meal preparations. Urns, teapots, cups and saucers, meal trays and trolleys are her 'tools of trade'. Lesley Warner, the mother

of the young girl who is later killed, works alongside her.[112]

Lesley Warner:

'How did you get on at the dentist?'

[Edit: cut]

These scenes function for basic narrative continuity. The first exposes Diane's medical condition. The second frames her private concerns about her health, while simultaneously positioning the two mothers of Black Rock teenagers in similar employment roles as working-class members of the local community. In this regard their jobs operate as a 'limit marker, the habitus sets up stakes, indicates a domain, defines a locale or habitat (place of belonging), and establishes a post, rank, or station' (O'Connor 2002, p.153). Locale is defined in a more obvious Newcastle-centric mode as *Blackrock's* opening sequence gains momentum.

FOOTAGE: THE TOWN FERRY WHARF

The harbour ferry is just about to depart. Several school students including Jared and Rachel embark. Three boisterous youths push and shove each other. A ringleader calls to Rachel.

Youth:

'Hey Rachel come on and check out the real men.'

The Ferry Hand pulls up the gangplank and unties the mooring rope. Tracy's running late and sprints along the boardwalk. Cherie sees her.

Cherie:

'Trace!' [Looks to Ferry Hand] 'Wait!'

Tracy runs full pelt and leaps from the terminal edge as the ferry pulls away. She lands with her hands grasping the edge of the vessel and hauls herself up over the side. The raucous teenagers shout and cheer, the girls scream and squeal. Tracy and Cherie hold hands, jumping on the spot. The boys are very

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[112] Leigh Leigh's mother Robyn worked 'as an assistant in a nursing home' (Carrington 1998, p.125).

physical in this scene also, with their arms draped around each other's shoulders. One kicks his knees up in anticipation as Tracy readies herself for the jump to the ferry deck…

Berleant argues that. 'physical characteristics alone do not create place' and that in order to understand the cultural geography of an area the 'human factor' should be joined to certain features (Berleant 2003. p.43). He further claims that:

> Whether this connection comes about through actions, practices or institutions, or through the simple presence of a conscious, sensing person, it is in the interaction of human sensibility with an appropriate physical location that place acquires its distinctive *meaning*. [original emphasis] (ibid)

The scene above is an especially vivid rendition of Berleant's concept in terms of communicating the exuberant phenomenology of the Black Rock youngsters in relation to their immediate surrounds and each other. Cherie's verbal alert (Jade's in *APOTC*) also functions as a communicative index 'because it is meant to put [Tracy] in real connection with the object [ferry]' (Peirce cited in Buchler 1955, p.109) thereby providing for the protagonist, her school mates *and* film viewers, a warning of 'things to come in the fashion of a barometer…[that effects] a territorialisation' (O'Connor 2002, p.153). 15-year-old Boyana Novakovich who played Tracy in the film was a competitive gymnast. Vidler said that he cast her in the role because she 'had the physical strength as well as the dramatic ability to look after herself during the shoot' (Hessey 1997, p.4), skills that also aided her ability to endure the arduous rape scene analysed later. Bourdieu argued that the 'elementary actions of bodily gymnastics…charged with social meanings and values, function as the most basic of metaphors, capable of evoking a whole relationship to the world' (1984, p.474). Consequently, it may be claimed that the actual hexis of the actress informed her portrayal of the character, enabling her actions to authentically 'speak' of a dynamic young girl who was willing to take bodily risks by throwing herself at the moving vessel which was in reality, apart from its use as a prop in the movie, the actual ferry to Stockton.

Many of Newcastle's natural landscapes, built forms and transport services supply the backdrop for the dramatic action that takes place 'in' (or in transit to and from) 'Black

Rock'. Against these settings, displays of excessive physicality and the territorial marking out of sub-cultural relationships that define Black Rock's residents (and non-residents) occur. These cinematic encodings enhance the realist dynamic that Vidler and the production team chose to 'reflect the kind of energy of the kids…like a roller-coaster fun ride that went off the rails and just went completely beresk' (Vidler 2003 DVD Interview). The film's soundtrack also played an integral role in this process with Vidler keen to make 'the music like another character in the film, accompanying the narrative at key moments to create part of the world the [teenagers were] inhabiting' (Simon & Stewart 1997, p.12). In an interview just prior to *Blackrock's* release, David Elfick explained that through the film's 'music', 'energy' and 'surfing' the filmmakers' had hoped to construct a compelling story world which would show 'how exciting it [was] to be 16 years old with the whole world opening up for you' (cited in Rose 1997, p.13).

When the film's structure and audio levels were first 'tested' in front of a cinema audience at the Sundance Film Festival the sound was 'too loud, and interfered with one's ability to come to grips with [the story] making it too confrontational' (Elfick cited in Kaufman 1997, p.12). The filmmakers also found they needed to 'cut the beginning…to get into the story quicker' and chose to 'get more pace at the beginning' of *Blackrock* by using the 'music in bigger chunks' and repositioning it (ibid). These adaptations made for a 'montage' effect, which O'Connor describes as a cinematic method for developing 'forms of sociality' which create a 'habitus, or manner of looking' (cited in Dyrk 2003 online). Consequently, the first set of contrasting and disparate sights and sounds that 'present the audience with a montage of suburban 'lad culture': fights over girls, car burnouts…[beer] and the proud parading of Ricko's…panel van' (Homan 2005, p.24) reinforce the filmmakers' claims that '…teenagers were always meant to be the consumers of this film' (Armstrong 2002, p.3). In reviewer Margaret Smith's opinion however, the cinematic montages mean that the design of '*Blackrock* is certainly uneven, and its beginning suffers from overkill with the pumping music threatening to take over the soundtrack' (1997, pp.21-23). The next scene from the film that rounds off *Blackrock's* initial montage analyzed thus far, and encompasses some of the criticisms Smith makes, involves the ear-piercing and rambunctious arrival of local legend Brett 'Ricko' Ricketson.

FOOTAGE: THE ROAD TO BLACK ROCK WHARF

The scene depicts an aerial view of traffic on (Stockton)[113] *bridge with a red panel van speeding on the descent. The vehicle slows in traffic amongst a small suburban shopping strip. Ricko's seen from inside a cake shop where (gaping in surprise) Tiffany exits mid-service, and runs out after the car.* [Edit: cut] *The ferry full of teenagers is almost at its destination point across from the heavy industry that lines the river's edge when some of the boys spot Ricko's van. They leap over the seats to get a clearer view from the windows. Ricko's speeding van does burnouts at the edge of the car park where the ferry passengers disembark. The teenage boys and girls are totally over-excited, shouting and calling out to Ricko, they eagerly run towards him. He sees Jared. They smile at each other above the crowd of eager youngsters and gesture to each other with a 'thumbs-up' hand signal. Jared gets in the passenger seat and Ricko drives off.*

Apart from the literal 'Novocastrian' encodings in the scene above (bridge, harbour, ferry, Stockton Ferry Terminal car park) which continue to 'ground' the characters as representative of the area, the filmic representation of Ricko's 'return' also enables the personality's allure to be visually apprehended due to his hexis, particularly through his reckless driving [114]. Ricko's characterisation as an expatriate 'Black Rock' youth imbues him with a distinct set of traits for the communication of a 'very masculine experience of space' (Crang 1998, p.48). Crang argues that in literary works, often gender ideologies and personal identities may be assigned through geographical interactions, with male characters ejected 'on to the road, to 'escape' to a freedom and to prove themselves' (ibid). Clearly this is what Enright had in mind when he 'wrote' Ricko as someone the youngsters might perceive as having proven himself elsewhere. Evidence of this peer distinction can be seen in a 'bonding session' with the boys that

[113] The iconic Stockton Bridge also features predominantly in a series of later lengthy scenes following Ricko's death. Jared inherits his panel van and breaks the news to his mother that he is leaving Black Rock. The scene depicts Diane abandoned and forlorn at the base of the structure as she watched her son speed off.

[114] Later scenes depict Ricko 'car surfing' in the beach car park and encouraging Jared to do the same, surrounded by drunk and cheering younger 'Blackos'.

occurs early in the film when he honours them with stories of his surfing escapades 'up north'.

FOOTAGE: THE HEADLAND – BLACK ROCK – NIGHT

The boys are sitting around a beach bonfire, drinking alcohol and smoking bongs while Ricko tells surfing stories and uses misogynistic and derogatory sexual metaphors to describe his physical surfing prowess.

Ricko:

'One hell day, I'm just sittin' out the back, see these other dudes just paddlin' for the horizon…the fuckin' whole thing just picked up like a slut!' [the captive audience of younger guys laugh in affirmation]'No muckin' around…I just fuckin' paddled for me life…the lip starts featherin'…just about up the top…prick fuckin' just launched me down the bottom straight under…no fuckin' around, I thought I was gonna get locked in a cave, eh.'

They all laugh. Ricko has a bong and offers it to Jared.[115]

In his editor's introduction to Bourdieu's *Language and Symbolic Power,* Thompson states that:

> Slang is the product of the pursuit of distinction…it is one of the ways in which those individuals – especially men- who are poorly endowed with economic and cultural capital are able to distinguish themselves from what they regard as weak and effeminate. Their pursuit of distinction therefore goes hand-in-hand with a deep-seated conformity with regard to established hierarchies, such as the hierarchy between the sexes. (1991, p.22)

Interestingly, the scene described above incorporates improvised dialogue that was not written into the original screenplay (Enright 1997, pp.11-12). Actor Simon Lyndon's integration of surf-culture terms with chauvinistic metaphors, engages the group of

[115] Bong – 'an object used for smoking cannabis, in which the smoke goes through water to make it cool' (*Longman* n.d. online). The 'Shame-Stockton-Shame' posters referred to earlier depicted a 'grim image, portraying a bong and a bottle jutting out of the sand, on either side of a naked girl lying face down in a pool of blood' (Carrington 1998, p.37).

young males in a system of language that simultaneously, includes them in his 'circle' and sets him apart from them, in a sub-cultural style of language they're accustomed to. Furthermore, as Bourdieu would contend, Ricko's 'possession of a talent for being the 'life and soul of the party'…the ideal of the "funny guy"…crowns [him with] an approved form of sociability [that] is a very precious form of capital' (1991, p.99). This capital acquisition constitutes a distinctive kind of male power that the other Blacko boys would also like to assume, or at least be a part of and these peer desires dominate the following exchanges in the beach party scene, which have been condensed for the purposes of analytic brevity.

FOOTAGE – INT. THE MOSH PIT –THE SURF CLUB – NIGHT
Many teenagers are dancing frantically to the live band. Jared and Ricko are drinking beer from the side of the dance floor and watch one of the boys vigorously throw himself around 'crowd surfing'. Jared has his camera and takes some images of Tiffany pulling faces at the camera, and other small groups of inebriated youngsters posing for him. One group includes Tracy and her friends. Tiffany, who is drunk, staggers over to Ricko and drags Tracy and another friend over to where he and Jared are standing. She tinkles Tracy's 'bell' necklace and says to the two youths:

Tiffany:
'You know why she wears it? So when it rings, you know she's coming…'

Ricko: [He nudges Jared]
'Get in there mate, get in there – rack it up!'

This dialogue indicates that Ricko's habitus is especially attuned to Tiffany's sexual innuendo. He considers the girls' lewd behaviour as 'an opportunity to be seized' and therefore goes about '*prompting*' Jared to 'bring about the forth-coming state of the game that is visible' [original emphasis] (Bourdieu 2000, p.211).

The montage of party scenes continues with Tracy having a turn at 'crowd-surfing'. Lots of males handle her small body, her skirt and top ride up to reveal her underwear…

Tracy's youthful abandon, her *'sense of placement'* [original emphasis] (Bourdieu 2000, p.184) within the party context, enables her to respond to the conditions 'of the moment' (Schirato & Webb 2003, p.540) and to 'participate actively in a collective pastime, capable of giving the participants a feeling of freedom…and of producing an atmosphere of social euphoria…[that] the consumption of alcohol can only enhance' (Bourdieu 1991, p.99). This 'realistic' performance, together with the 'faded look of the film and the swinging camera-work make this an edgy experience' (Lowing 1997b, p.22).

Jared weaves his way through the dancing and bodily mayhem and takes a photo. She pulls a wild face at him. This scene is exceptionally loud and chaotic.

Actress Linda Cropper who plays Diane in the film described the 'edgy' atmosphere these sequences convey as a 'very uncontained *rawness* that is *real*…it's "in your face" and it's raw, and it's loud, and it's a bit ugly at times, but it's very *sexual* and *very animal*…energy that could so easily topple into something that is dangerous' (Cropper 2003 DVD Interview) [author's emphasis]. These libidinous concerns and the particular cinematic framing of them, were also considered by Holland and O'Sullivan when they argued that:

> …all the colour and movement, situated within an uninterrupted and fast-paced narrative structure, achieve a level of realism that encourages the viewer to enter into the youth culture portrayed, and to recognize as quite ordinary the behaviour patterns and social relationships. (1999, p.80)

In an interview with *Sydney Morning Herald* journalist Ruth Hessey, Laurence Breuls who plays the role of Jared said of 'inside research' for this particular scene, 'We were all in Newcastle for two weeks, partying non-stop…you just had to listen to the stories people brought to the set' (cited in Hessey 1997, p.4). Actress Rebecca Smart who plays

the role of Cherie said that the shoot was 'really physically demanding…Moshing for 12 hours in *Blackrock* really took it out of me!' (Harris 1997, p.2). An unidentified online reviewer claimed that 'the party scenes in particular were spot-on. The director conveyed the frenzy of teenage parties so accurately I found myself comparing them to some of the own I've been to. And the locations were decent too, and convinced me' (*IMDB* online). Additionally, *Sydney Morning Herald* film reviewer Robert Drewe proclaimed that in *Blackrock* the teenagers 'are not Hollywood's generically cool adolescents but genuine Australian kids, instantly recognisable' (1997, p.16).

Jared begins to dance with Tracy and Toby Ackland becomes aggressive.

Toby:

'You're supposed to be with my sister man!'

The boys push and shove each other and Ricko cuts in to defend Jared. Toby grabs Tracy by the hand –

Toby:

'Tracy came with me!'

Jared:

'She came with Cherie and them – don't call me a hoon you fuckin' townie wanker!'

Violence erupts as Ricko head butts Toby and beats him to the ground, viciously kicking him.

Jared:

'That's enough!'

He grabs Ricko by the shirt –

Jared:

'Ricko!!!'

Ricko shoves Jared back. Jared then storms out of the party and off towards the beach in the darkness…

Bourdieu argues that the 'idea of masculinity is one of the last refuges of the identity of the dominated classes…[and] it is characteristic of people who have little to fall back on except their labour-power and sometimes their fighting strength' (cited in Fowler 2003, p.469). The alcohol and testosterone fuelled conditions of the Black Rock beach party scenario are representative of Bourdieu's particular claims.

Ricko also heads outside where lots of teenage girls are staggering around drunk. Rachel arrives looking for Jared.

Tiffany:

'Here's the rich bitch!'

A silhouetted Jared discards his clothes and goes for a night swim alone…Rachel continues to 'walk through' the party and encounters lots of 'couplings' in her search for Jared. Outside the Surf Club Ricko stands by a wall drinking from a beer bottle and 'eyeballs' Rachel while a young woman appears to be performing oral sex on him. The sexual activity is in full view of any bystanders. Inside the Surf Club stairwell is packed with youngsters, one of the boys cups his hand to another's ear and urgently whispers something…

……

Jared sits above the beach on a cliff top smoking a cigarette. An intoxicated Toby and Tracy stagger along the sand where he draws her to the ground, embracing her clumsily. He undoes his trousers and rolls on top of her. Jared appears amused, they're not aware of him watching from above…

Three other boys sneak up on the couple.

Scottie:

'Hello Baby!'

Toby:

'Fuck off Scotty!'

Still watching from above, Jared cups his hand over his mouth and, looking extremely concerned, begins to stand. The three boys push Toby aside and drag Tracy across the sand –

Tracy:

'Stop it -you're hurting me!'

One of them straddles her. She slaps him across the face and he brutally hits her back…
[Edit: cut]

Back at the Surf Club, the party's winding down and Rachel wanders aimlessly looking for Jared…
[Edit: cut]

*Three youths forcibly restrain Tracy and muffle her screams with their hands. They appear to take turns raping her from behind…[*party sounds and a live band can be heard in close proximity]*…she groans weakly and is bleeding from the mouth…*

Jared watches in horror from the cliff top and appears imobilized….

As O'Connor's view of the representative potential of close-ups suggests, Jared's habitus 'exposes' the uncompromising situation he becomes a part of and 'discloses (local) states, even inward ones – as the qualities of expression can indicate a disposition, temper, or mood' (2002, p.153). [116]

[116] As the film progresses, there are many scenes where Jared's face is featured as a representation of his inner turmoil and feelings of guilt. McFarlane was critical of what he perceived as the overuse of these cinematic techniques arguing that, 'too often the camera dwells soulfully and unrewardingly on his conventional good looks. There's not enough sense of activity behind the eyes to make one feel that this character can work as this film's pivot' (1997.p.45). Rooney offered a contrasting view by suggesting that Breuls '[kept] his intensity to just the right level, making it easy to empathize with the character' (1998 online).

Tracy stretches her hand out towards him in a gesture of desperation. The rapists are totally oblivious to his presence above them…[at this point the footage is in slow motion and the audio is distorted]*…when they've 'finished' they drop her to the sand where she lays violated on her stomach…*

Jared appears shocked and afraid and scampers away along the cliff edge. The boys back off in the direction they came from…

Tracy struggles to her knees, crawls along the sand and adjusts her skirt.

Unwin claims that 'with the mediating accoutrements of our daily lives stripped away, on the beach we engage more directly with the primal conditions of being' (2003, p.78). Within the broader context of the *Blackrock* surfing scenes and their capacity to function as both physically fun and psychologically soothing events, his phenomenological ideas are sound. Jared's desire to 'cleanse' himself of his 'contained' aggression seems natural under the confrontational circumstances and in direct relationship with the coastal landscape. Similarly, the hormonally-rampant-sexually-promiscuous activities that occur across the party-scape and spill onto the sandhills seem equally naturalized. These pre-cursors to Tracy's assault provide vivid visual contrasts with the brutality of her horrific ordeal at the hands of several testosterone-filled-alcohol-fuelled youths, who savagely debase her person. 'We had so many discussions as to how to shoot the scene for an underage audience…there could be no nudity because we had to avoid any hint of titillating the audience…yet it had to be believable that she'd been pack-raped' (Vidler cited in Hessey 1997, p.86). When *Blackrock* screened at the Sundance Film Festival it 'immediately scored an R rating' back in Australia, the original rape scenes were 'deemed too harrowing and confronting for an MA rating…so Vidler had to cut 10 minutes from the film' (Hessey, 1997, p.4). Producer David Elfick explained that an MA censorship classification was imperative

'because 15 to 18 is what the movie's really about' and argued that 'it's absolutely essential that 15-year-old cinemagoers can see this movie' (cited in Rose 1997, p.13). Consequently, because the filmmaking 'subjects' were 'shaped, constrained and disposed towards thoughts and actions through their immersion in, and their incorporation of, the…rules, procedures, rituals, mechanisms, capital and values of the field' (Schirato & Webb 2003, p.545) the initial rape scene was re-edited. At the time of the film's release Elfick proclaimed that 'in trimming back the rape…we all felt that the shorter rape actually had more emotional effect on the audience' (cited in Rose 1997, p.13). [117]

In his critique of *Blackrock* film reviewer Colin Rose proposed that:

> Even if it is possible to leave aside the circumstances of [Leigh] Leigh's murder…*Blackrock* will still disturb. The drinking, drug-taking and (consensual) sex shown in the film are, let's be honest, the experience of many Australian teenagers. But the biggest difference between play and film is, crucially, that in the film the audience, too, witnesses the rape. (1997, p.13)

As the preceding discussion indicates, the viewing audience does not only 'witness' Tracy's rape, but, it may be argued, that because of the cinematic montage strategies used, becomes privy to the intense atmosphere of the conditions leading up to it and the devastating effects after it. The author attests that the stylistic devices employed throughout the party *and* rape scenes by Vidler, Cinematographer Martin McGrath, and Editor Franz Vandenburg [118] constitute what O'Connor refers to as the 'faciality concept':

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[117] In an interview published in the *Daily Telegraph* several days before *Blackrock's* Australian premiere Vidler told journalist Vicky Roach 'I did regret that the rape scene, which is the kind of pivotal event of the film, having had to be reduced…People who saw the longer version at Sundance agree that while generally the film is better shorter, the rape did have more impact before. But the people who didn't see that version still think it's pretty harrowing' (cited in Roach 1997b, p.34). Despite the positive 'spin' David Elfick put on the censorship limitations at the time of the film's release, he later spoke negatively about these constraints in terms of industry praxis and presented a paper to this effect at the December 1997 *Violence, Crime and the Entertainment Media Conference*, Australian Institute of Criminology and the Office of Film and Literature Classification, Sydney. In his paper Elfick argued that the un-edited rape scenes were more powerful and stated that what Vidler was trying to do was 'not show graphic violence but try to make the emotional content of the scene disturbing. He avoided nudity, but he wanted to show the emotional content of the act of rape and how it affected those involved' (Elfick 1997, p.3).

[118] Franz Vandenburg was also the editor on the *Aftershocks* film.

> Because the close-up is inserted into the flow of the scene, it forms an interval, a moment between past and future states, or between a situation and an action that may take place and possibly create a new situation. The affect is a potential mixture of bodies. It infects whatever borders it, on either side. It fills situations with sense, ambience, or anticipation, and it supplies actions with their momentum. (2002, p.90)

These ideas are applicable to the disparate array of party images, and to the sexual activities that take place on, and in proximity to, Black Rock beach. In this regard, it may be argued that the viewing habitus the filmmakers' praxis enabled, makes for an interpretive schema that is likely to accommodate visceral as well as intellectual investment in the party scenes, and highly charged emotional responses to the temporally and acoustically 'extended' rape scenes [119]. Berleant describes the kind of 'intense sensory presence, directly felt, resonant meaning, and expanded awareness' that the author argues the rape scenes feature, *and,* are likely to propagate, as a 'negative aesthetic' (2003, pp.50-51). He further expands this concept to explain how a specific place may garner specific negative identifiers due to the 'experience of the dark side of place' (ibid). The author argues that the dark, foreboding, experiential dimensions of the rape scenes in *Blackrock*, because of: their content and style; the beach site of their occurrence; and their temporal position with the narrative construction of Vidler's film, connote generative meanings applicable to the circumstances of Leigh Leigh's death, and convey negative aesthetics pertaining to Newcastle's cultural identity.

The scenes that directly follow on from the rape revolve around a number of 'discoveries': Cherie's mother shows up at the Surf Club Car Park (where Tiffany bursts forth from the rear of Ricko's panel van and drunken youths try to help another who's unconscious), and heatedly pursues her 'dishonest' daughter; scattered, drunken teenagers are attempting to locate lost friends when Rachel enters the chaos, having come across Tracy's dead body on the beach. When the pre-dawn turns to morning the local community begins to discover what took place the night before. The ordinariness

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[119] The director has integrated a number of rape scene motifs throughout the film to indicate Jared's psychological dilemma. According to Lowing the 'flashbacks to the attack itself skitter on the edge of gratuitous' yet function successfully within the context of the whole film' (1997b, p.22)).

of ‘Black Rock’s’ domestic life and suburban streets is juxtaposed with: images of police cordoning off the ‘beach’ scene with gaffer tape; forensic team members sweeping the sand with metal detectors; a crime scene photographer shooting images; and a television helicopter news crew filming the flurry of activity below. ‘As the news spreads (featuring some moving cameos of the victim's distraught parents and school friends), the national media arrive, the town is thrown into sadness, shame and confusion, and real life intrudes once more’ (Drewe 1997, p.16). In the film, the ‘reality’ of Tracy’s murder and its profound effects on the local community are exacerbated by ‘intrusive media’ who, according to Faithfull are portrayed as ‘interfering hounds who…trespass and provoke’ (2001, pp.57-58) [120]. Two pivotal scenes which function according to Faithfull’s account include: a persistent television film crew outside the Warner’s house the morning Tracy’s body is found (on whom Diane Kirby sprays water from a garden hose); and, outside the cemetery gates following Tracy’s funeral. Significantly, in both of these scenes a small girl – Tracy Warner’s *sister* appears (she is seated quietly in the Warner’s living room as Diane attempts to offer her condolences to Ken and Lesley and is protectively ‘scooped’ into the arms of her father as he is besieged at the cemetery). In the play texts of *APOTC* and *Blackrock* there is *no* mention that Tracy had any sisters, however, as has been widely publicised, Leigh Leigh did. The author contends that this subtle and unobtrusive visual depiction placed within the context of Black Rock’s provocatively charged ‘media scenes’, predisposes viewers with close knowledge of Leigh Leigh’s familial relationships to ‘read’ the *Blackrock* story as representative of the Stockton/Newcastle community.

The final scene for analysis also enables those with an ‘ensemble’ of similarly ‘cultivated dispositions that constitute such schemes of appreciation and understanding’ (Brubaker 2004, p.41) to consider *Blackrock* as a Newcastle story. Yet, it may also be argued that because of the particular ‘place-world’ (Casey 2001.p.412) the actual film footage shows and the scene’s characterisations depict, again, more generalized viewers may engage a *‘matrix of perceptions, appreciations and actions’* [original emphasis]

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[120] Clearly the visual medium of film has enabled Vidler to employ a number of ‘media’ performances that are not so literally ‘observable’ within the constraints of a theatre performance. For example, later in *Blackrock* the Warners discover that Jared attended Ricko’s ‘surfie’ funeral because they saw footage of it on a television in the hospital waiting room.

(Brubaker 2004, p.45) relative to perceptions of Newcastle's identity.

FOOTAGE: THE TOWN FERRY WHARF

A television film crew awaits the ferry's arrival. The Black Rock teenagers alight and Jason is accosted by an overstyled female interviewer who thrusts a microphone in his face.

Reporter:

'Excuse me – were you at the party?'

Jason:

'Yeah – I was at the party' [his tone is defensive]

Reporter:

'Did you see anything?'

Jason:

'I didn't see a thing.' [shakes his head]

Reporter:

'Well how do you feel about all this attention you've been getting?'

Jason:

'Well how do you think I'm gonna feel? We've got a bunch of freaks like you lookin' at us! Just because we were there doesn't mean we did anything alright!'

During this hurried exchange Jason tries to physically distance himself from the reporter and the film crew but he's been 'cornered' spatially and verbally.

As the analysis in this chapter has revealed the 'real materials' of Newcastle's Ferry transport system feature prominently throughout *Blackrock (*and *APOTC)* in pivotal scenes representing the demarcation and isolation of the Black Rock residents from the

rest of the 'fictionalized' region [121]. The correlations between the textual encoding above and the ideological segregation of Stockton's community throughout (and after) the criminal investigations into Leigh Leigh's death, is something the author argues the filmmakers chose to repetitively articulate visually, and in so doing, continue to perpetuate recognizable links between the fictional world of the text and the cultural identity of the city.

This chapter began with the acknowledgement that Enright's and Vidler's texts have the capacity to convey universal themes related to social relationships. It then progressed to explain that when these generalized interactions are textually 'situated' according to specific terminologies that incorporate cultural geographies, their meanings become particularized. Using excerpts from the texts that incorporate gender distinctions, demographic contrasts, and power relationships, the author was able to demonstrate the communicative 'viability' of Enright's constructs, by applying Bourdieu's ideas about symbolic language and male domination and familial dispositions. Several narrative vectors and stylistic motifs were identified that provided direct links between information applicable to Leigh Leigh's murder investigation, and to the fictional story-worlds of *APOTC* and *Blackrock*. These encodings emphasized in dramatic form how a community may be traumatized and a 'place' may be stigmatized through representations based on 'true crime'. Bourdieu's concepts dealing with social exclusion and socio-psychological divisions aided this part of the discussion. Further analysis offered accounts for how and why the texts may be perceived as 'Newcastle' stories, and drew on extra phenomenological, physical, and material criteria, underpinned by Bourdieu's theory of hexis, to do so. Importantly, the role that cinematic rhythms and structures played in facilitating these understandings was also included. Finally, with a focus on the Newcastle filming locations, the discussion revealed how the irrefutable connection between the working-class 'fiction' of *Blackrock* and the natural and built environments of the actual city were sustained, continuing speculations that *Blackrock* (and by association *APOTC*) constitutes a definitive *Newcastle* story.

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[121] The ferry also features in a later scene where the lone figure of Diane waits at dawn at 'Black Rock' terminal to cross to the city for her hospital treatment.

5.0 Conclusion

The discussion and analysis that illuminates the constitution of the 'place' at the centre of this research, Newcastle NSW, Australia, reveals the co-construction of this city's socio-cultural identity through textual production processes. The research presented here examines perception formation through the mediated lens of representations of the city. The exploration of the ways 'place' meanings have been attributed to this particular location throughout textual development and appropriation revealed not only place specific meanings but, in doing so, also allowed the implementation of particular communicative and sociological approaches to this research.

In the late 1980s eminent cultural studies theorist Stuart Hall proclaimed that the field of communication research was 'stubbornly sociologically innocent' (1989, p.44). He argued that many investigations into media production and meaning-construction either overlooked the impacts that ideological practices and power relationships had on these knowledge-building, text-producing and interpretive processing systems, or paid little attention to them. Almost, twenty years later, other researchers have argued along similar lines calling for an 'integrated approach' to communication studies that incorporates textual representations, 'the contexts and mediums within which they are circulated' *and* 'act[s] of social connection' (Yell 2005, p.10) that enable sense-making to take place. The work contained in this thesis substantially meets this threefold criterion and in so doing advances knowledge in the domain of communication inquiry.

Hall's contribution to the field, especially in regard to his encoding-decoding reception model of communication that is outlined in the thesis section entitled *Communication, Discourse and Interpretive Dispositions,* and applied extensively throughout the analyses that occur in the latter part of the thesis, sought to address questions of 'where *people get their meanings'* [original emphasis] (Griffin 2000, p.341) and what roles mediated compositions of discursive content play in positioning them to '*re-act* more vigorously' [original emphasis] (Bratich 2008, p.38) to symbolically encoded textual representations. His work was predominantly focussed on issues related to the social construction and interpretation of 'cultural identities' and for this reason reference to it

has also been made in the section entitled *An Overview of Cultural Identity and Authenticity,* where ideas about the generative nature of socially contextualized and culturally authorized identity narratives have been explored.

Hall drew attention to some of the ways that socio-culturally-codified classifications which designate categories of persons may be *used* in media productions to 'reproduce social inequalities' (Griffin 2000, p.342). His theoretical standpoint was that through constructivist (Bhaskar 1989; Crotty 1998; McLennan 1993) strategies of communication design that incline producers to develop narratives covering 'aspect[s] of our lives and the lives of others in regard to character, motive, and action' (Griffin 2000, p.297), differential 'types' of persons may be expressed, recognized, and prevail. He subsequently proposed that 'identities are…constituted within…representation' (1996, p.4), highlighted that they are 'never fixed, or immutable' (Radithalo 2003, p.21), and stressed that the contexts in which cultural identities develop are 'subject to the continuous 'play' of history, culture and power' (Hall 1994, p.394). Importantly, while he acknowledged the dynamism involved in the mediated 'manufacture' and reception of cultural identity discourses, Hall also stipulated that re-creations of them and responses to them, are founded on sociological premises and positions that should also be noted and clarified.

With similar ideas in mind, and to avoid a purely subjectivist research motivation that was instigated through 'localized' textual experiences and has been detailed in the *Research Methodology Chapter,* the author set out to find out what some of these sociological principles might entail, and how they may apply to: the work that has gone into making certain Newcastle stories; the people involved in the making; the content and style of what they produced; potential reactions to these Newcastle narratives; and how knowledge acquired through engaging with these cultural products may contribute to the city's identity construction. For, as Schank and Abelson point out in relation to 'human memory' and social communication 'all of our knowledge is contained in stories and the mechanisms to construct them and retrieve them' (1995, p.2).

To these ends a sociological platform that underpins what may be classed as 'professional' production work and simultaneously encompasses the 'ordinariness' of everyday sense-making activities has been utilized throughout this thesis. As Brubaker

attests, 'Bourdieu appropriates an explicit program: the program for a genetic sociology of symbolic forms, the aspiration to explain the social genesis of schemes of thought, perception, appreciation and action' (2004, p.31). Pierre Bourdieu's theory of habitus, its relevance for this research project, and its attendant components of social, cultural, and symbolic capital, has been thoroughly interrogated in the section entitled *Habitus – Producing Culture Through Practice*. This section's discussion of the various capital species (Gross 2008; Wacquant 1998), together with accounts of Bourdieu's field analogy (Bourdieu 1993a; Grenfell 2004; Johnson 1993; Webb, Schirato & Danaher 2003) which explains how social agents' 'positions, dispositions and position-taking practices' (Calhoun, Gerteis, Moody, Pfaff & Virk 2002, p.260) may be contextualized, prefaces the author's analysis of the personalized and professional approaches to their work that various 'makers' of the 'Newcastle' theatrical and film texts chosen for this research have adopted and adapted. Throughout the analysis salient aspects of authoring teams', playwrights' and filmmakers' praxes (Bourdieu 1977; Bourdieu 1990a; St. Clair, Rodriguez & Nelson 2005) have been explored specifically in relation to their capital acquisitions, and their various field positions, to explain how their 'cultural trajectories' and 'feel for the game' (Webb, Schirato & Danaher 2003, p.38) have impacted on the kinds of Newcastle stories they've gone about participating in and developing. Additionally, in these analyses, what these cultural producers' 'active, inventive and creative capacities' (Bourdieu 1996, p.179) may have meant for the ways particular 'Newcastle' texts have emerged, been circulated, and responded to by industry peers, as well as everyday 'audiences', has been investigated.

Preceding these analyses and from a more generalized perspective, in order to understand also the bearing that temporal dimensions may have had on the types of textual productions that have been generated, socio-cultural issues connected to Newcastle's identifiable 'place specificity' (Lee 1997, p.135) have been introduced. In the section entitled *Newcastle: A Socio-Spatial Location for the Communication and Cultural Production of Place Perception,* socio-semiotic (Gaines 2002; Yell 2005) configurations of the city's cultural geography have been elaborated on by picking up on ideas that had already been presented in the section, *Sites for Sense-Making and Locating Meaning,* that revolved around experiential impressions and phenomenological experiences of the city's natural and mediated landscapes.

The work in the section *Newcastle: A Socio-Spatial Location for the Communication and Cultural Production of Place Perception* presented a condensed socio-historical background of Newcastle's cultural development to explain 'how certain objective conditions of existence led to the formation of a specific habitus type and how this habitus exercises a logic which ultimately leads to its reproduction through time' (Lee 1997, p.135). This chapter included information about how various power relationships have impacted on insider/outsider attitudes towards the city and its people; discussed the formation of its egalitarian ethos and hence, its community discourses. It went on to consider specific contemporaneous 'circumstances' that have affected both internal and external attitudes towards the place, and shaped reactions to it, in the form of media representations and specialist cultural productions. Consequently, the author argues that explaining parts of Newcastle's 'sedimented social history as it [has been] lived and embodied in social life' (Sterne 2003, p.376) has enhanced understanding of *why* the purposeful production of 'Newcastle' texts, that may be considered indicative of its habitus, has occurred.

To gain further insight as to why certain texts may be considered as 'authentic' (Bendix 1997; Craig 2007; MacNeil & Mak 2007; Makeham 1998; Peterson 1997; Trilling 1972) representations of the city and its people, apart from general newspaper and Newcastle Bicentenary productions referred to throughout the section, *Newcastle: A Socio-Spatial Location for the Communication and Cultural Production of Place Perception,* the author chose selected texts to scrutinize, which were introduced in the *Research Methodology Chapter* section and contextualized in the later analyses of the plays*, A Property of the Clan,* and *Blackrock,* as well the films *Aftershocks* and *Blackrock* . The thesis again drew on Bourdieu's theory of habitus to explain the resonant potential of 'storyworld' characters according to their socio-cultural positionings, their relationships with others and the 'physical' environments they find themselves in. Richard Jenkins describes habitus as:

> …the framework within which humans improvise their way through life, a facilitatory capacity that allows locally specific learned practices and the classificatory architecture of knowledge and cognition to adjust to the demands, possibilities and impossibilities of actual settings and contexts, in such a way that meaningful, mutually sensible responses emerge and can be acted on.
> (2005, p.353)

Using habitus as the basis for the textual analysis of the plays and films has enabled the author to explain that when 'naturalized' character attributes are exhibited in recognizable 'Newcastle' contexts that have been structured as such by cultural producers, the potential for the works to be interpreted as Novocastrian 'stories' is exceptionally strong. Importantly, through applying Bourdieu's concepts that deal specifically with hexis (physical capital) (1984, p.474), social, cultural, and symbolic capital (Bourdieu 1986a), the author has been able to demonstrate the resonant potential of these plays and films for *non-Novocastrian* theatre-audiences and film viewers, *as well as* for those with 'insider' knowledge of the location-specific codes and cues cultural producers have embedded in their stories. Significantly, this explication has remained consistent: whether the analytical focus has been on particular stylized terminology and language use; whether the textual deconstruction has referred directly to the 'literal' imaging of the city such as the archival footage used in *Aftershocks* and the location footage included in *Blackrock;* or, whether the 'visualization' of the city has been explored by considering the material features of story contexts that are more easily discerned as 'constructs', but no less considered as *'natural sites'* [original emphasis] (Bourdieu 1986b, p.148).

Consequently, although this research has predominantly concentrated on cultural production activities and textual representations pertaining to the city of Newcastle, NSW, Australia, the theoretical applications it employs, and the original illumination of communication processes it provides, would also be valuable for future research into the construction of mediated cultural identities and place perception on a broader scale than the scope of this thesis accommodates.

Finally, it can be concluded that the practices involved in producing texts and the socio-cultural contexts of their creation should be considered in representations of local cultural identity discourses. These discourses can be specifically seen in the mediated inter-texts, such as newspaper articles and reviews, theatrical plays, and mainstream films, that have resonant meaning potential and this analysis of those discourses has helped to explain why certain texts may be considered to epitomize the region and its residents and accounts for their ongoing communicative currency as performance or pedagogic resources that continue to circulate perceptions of the city.

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7.0 Appendix

Sample of Pedagogic Resources Featuring Texts

2010-2012 NSW Board of Studies Higher School Certificate Course Prescriptions for Drama 6 – Topic 8 – Verbatim Theatre: 'students consider notions of authenticity and authority derived from direct testimony and community involvement' (2008, p.13).
Aftershocks [play]
<http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/syllabus_hsc/pdf_doc/drama-st6-course-prescriptions-2010-2012.pdf>

2009 Flinders University, Adelaide, South Australia.
School of Humanities Honours Course Handbook
DRAM7516 – Contemporary Australian Drama
Module 2: Recasting gender relations (a selection from:)
Blackrock [play] (Enright 1995) / *Blackrock* [film] (Vidler, dir. 1997)
<http://ehlt.flinders.edu.au/drama/download/2009_Drama_Honours_Handbook.pdf>

2009 St Mary's College, Tasmania.
English Communications Year 11/12 Booklist
Blackrock [play]
<http://www.smc.tas.edu.au/index.php?target=428&parent=012291417>

2009 Canberra Grammar School – 'Headmaster's Noticeboard'.
'The school's upcoming performances of *Black Rock* [sic] later this week will certainly be edgy, and are suitable neither for the very young or the faint-hearted. *Black Rock* [sic], Nick Enright's play inspired by the real-life rape and murder of schoolgirl Leigh Leigh in Stockton, near Newcastle, Australia on November 3, 1989, pulls no punches and uses some extremely confronting language, but also explores some important issues facing adolescents and young adults today.'
<http://www.cgs.act.edu.au/hm_n_copy/headmasters_news/headmasters_noticeboard.html>

2009 Woodcrest College Senior School, Springfield, Queensland.
Year 11 *English*. Module – *Australian Identity and Australian Film*.
Blackrock [film]
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Newsletter, vol.3, no.1. *Preliminary English Course*
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<http://www.tss.qld.edu.au/academic/drama/files/Handbook HDF 2008.pdf>

2007 Good Shepherd Catholic College, Mt. Isa, Queensland.
'Good Shepherd's *Blackroc*k Production A Hit!' – *Our Catholic Schools*, Catholic Education Office.
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CST2/3VAC – Violence and Cinema
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Holland, F & O'Sullivan 1999 article compulsory reading.
<http://www.latrobe.edu.au/cinema/resources_ug/2007/2nd Sem, 2007/CST2-3VAC unit outline.pdf>

2007 Tasmanian Qualifications Authority.
Senior Secondary School *English Communications* – Module 5 *Crime Fiction.*
Blackrock [play & film]
<http://www.tqa.tas.gov.au/4DCGI/_WWW_doc/007551/RND01/proposedEnglishComm07changes.pdf>

2006 Publication
Kiernander, A, Bollen, J & Parr, B (eds), *What a man's gotta do? Masculinities in performance*, Centre for Australian Language, Literature, Theatre and Screen Studies, University of New England, Armidale.

2005 Croydon Secondary College, Melbourne.
Newsletter – 20 May – Theatres Studies Performance – *Blackrock*
'Theatre Studies students performed the play, *Blackrock*, by Nick Enright this week to appreciative audiences. The play deals with one of the serious issues in contemporary society, in particular the issue of violence that can occur amongst some young people. Nick Enright wrote the play after the death of a fourteen year old girl at a party at the Newcastle Life Saving Club in the 1990s.' Dr Michael McNamara - Principal
<http://www.croydonsc.vic.edu.au/news/newsletters/2005/newsletters_sem1_2005/infoweek09.200505.pdf>

2004 ACT *Behavioural Science Framework Document* [Psychology; Sociology; Community Services]
Social Processes & Social Behaviour – *Sociology Module* – 'Deviance'
Blackrock [film]
<http://www.bsss.act.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0017/30842/Behavioural_Sciencefinal04.pdf>

2002 Armstrong, D 'The transformation of *A Property of the Clan* to *Blackrock*', *A Property of the Clan* and *Blackrock*: Preliminary Advanced English Course, pp.1-42. Retrieved June 22, 2005, from <http://www.curriculumsupport.education.nsw.gov.au/secondary/english/assets/pdf/clan.pdf>

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Module - *Drama & Social Education* – 'Australian youth culture and sexuality with *Blackrock* as a pre-text' – Josephine Wise & Stephen Matthais [authors].
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'Last year in 2001 the year 11 class performed *Blackrock* by Nick Enright.'
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2000 Australian Association for the Teaching of English – NT – *Dhalwa* [journal], no.2
Included the following article:
Butterss, P 1998, 'When being a man is all you've got: masculinity in *Romper Stomper*, *Idiot Box*, *Blackrock* and *The Boys'*.
<http://www.aate.org.au/index.php?id=29>

1999 Drama Studies (Year 12) 'Assessing Outcomes in the Written Examination, Sample Student Answers' – WA *Curriculum Council Development*. Author J, Fantasia. *Blackrock* [play]
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1998 *NSW Board of Studies* Higher School Certificate Examination Report – *Drama*. *A Property of the Clan* [play]
<http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/hsc_exams/hsc2000exams/hsc00_drama/98EN_DRM.PDF<

n.d. Year 10 *NSW Education* Sample Unit - Module – *Managing Diversity*
'View Movie: *Blackrock* – Based on true story of the rape and murder of Leigh Leigh from the Central Coast.'
<http://74.125.153.132/search?q=cache:8WlbAq4u-IwJ:aispd.aisnsw.edu.au/Minisites/2_independent_a/2_ind_a_units/sample_stage_5_units/104_managing_adversity.doc+year+10+teaching+managing+diversity+blackrock&cd=2&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=au&client=firefox-a>