A COUNTRY PRACTICE: A STUDY OF MEDIATION IN SCRIPTWRITING PRACTICE
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Abstract

Using Pierre Bourdieu’s theory of practice as a theoretical framework, this thesis examines scriptwriting practice in regard to its interaction with the dominant production processes in Australian film. The role of the script and its relationship to film production processes is poorly addressed within Australian film studies, which approaches films as text, genre or national cinema. In the thesis, Australia cinema serves as an intrinsic case in the examination of the experience of creative practitioners in the administered culture of late capitalism, where government funding compensates for the low commercial viability of the majority of Australian films, but exposes the practitioner to a range of systematically-imposed constraints.

Considered from the perspective of the scriptwriter, the investigation is based around two case studies that explore the mediated nature of creative practice and subjectivity within the film development and production process. The first case study examines a low-budget feature film written and directed by the researcher and distributed in 2000. The second examines the development phase of an unrealised, low-budget feature that was to be written and directed by the researcher.

The thesis makes two key contributions to the knowledge and understanding of Australian filmmaking. Using an autoethnographic method, it firstly examines the experience of scriptwriting from an insider’s perspective. Secondly, it shifts the emphasis in film studies from textual analysis to the field of theories of practice. These contributions provide grounded insights into Australian filmmaking and a new approach to investigating creative practice in the field of film.
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Introduction

One of the few filmmakers of his time to theorise scripts and scriptwriting, Pier Paolo Pasolini distinguishes between the literary and filmed version of the script to highlight the essential intent of the screenplay to move towards another state. For Pasolini (2005), to understand the script involves approaching it as a written text and acknowledging the potential for its meanings to be transformed into a visual representation. This process, he suggests, occurs simultaneously, the script being predicated on the collaboration of the reader as an ‘accomplice’ to this function (p. 189). The shifting nature of the script makes its role within filmmaking difficult to define and to examine in a programmatic way. Other writers also reflect on the special qualities of scripts and scriptwriting. For Maras (2009, p. 11), a script for the screen is not an object in the straightforward way, it is a ‘practice that draws on a set of processes, techniques and devices’ that are arranged differently at different times (Ibid. p. 12). The script suggests both the complicated practice constructs and processes in scriptwriting and the relational status and transitional processes between the script and film production in time. The script, Maras argues, is transitional in being a structure that ‘wants to be another structure’; it wants to be a film (Ibid. p. 6).

This duality in the nature and role of the script in the filmmaking process informs this thesis, which draws on my professional experience as a scriptwriter since 1991. During the 1990s, I began writing a script about my time as a youth worker. Set in my hometown of Melbourne, the script was a fictional account of a period in the life of a young ward of the state. It was called Mallboy. I went on to direct the film and write its sound track. In preparing the script for filming, I encountered an industrialised mode of working that contrasted with the experience of writing the script. The process of scriptwriting, then filmmaking, raised a number of issues around individual agency and production processes in the film industry. The machinations of industry, the funding process and the prominence of the producer’s role in setting the fiscal and marketing objectives of production seemed at odds with the importance I placed on scriptwriting as a generative creative practice in the filmmaking process.

Mallboy was completed in 1999 and selected to première at Director’s Fortnight at the 2000 Festival de Cannes. This enabled the film to achieve an Australian release through the global distribution company Buena Vista International. The experience of having the film presented on the international stage and distributed by a global corporation focused my thoughts on the way Australian film was addressed in mainstream media and Australian film studies as textual
artefact and tool of national identity, masking the practices that brought it into existence. I experienced this contradiction first hand when *Mallboy* screened at Cannes. The film was no longer a small, independent production based on personal experience and made by a collective of practitioners in the northern suburbs of Melbourne. It became a representation of Australia and a representative of the Australian film industry in the international film marketplace. In press interviews at Cannes, questions consistently focused on the thematic interpretation of *Mallboy’s* content and the extent to which the film represented Australian life. This was understandable given the international film industry’s lack of familiarity with Australia and Australian films in 2000, but it was a source of frustration for me that no questions were directed to the creative choices and processes that brought the film into being, beginning with the script.

In public, post-screening question and answer sessions at the festival, I was regularly asked to address the question of the relationship and relevance of filmmaking to Australian national identity. These questions, posed by journalists for mainstream consumption, approached film as the expression of a geographically- and politically-demarcated culture. This position reflects a flawed logic within the discussion of Australian film as a national cinema. It firstly construes cinema as a struggle to be authentic to the geographic and cultural specificities of the place in which a film is made. It then ignores the practicalities of filmmaking, with the aim of constructing a cinema that is fiscally and critically viable within the local and international marketplace. In contrast to this almost romantic idea of film as Australian filmmakers’ unmediated creative response to their national context, the normative nature of production processes weighs heavily on Australian scriptwriting practice. The relational mediations between production processes and creative practice is an aspect of the filmmaking process that is largely unexamined, providing a rich source of investigation from which both film scholars and industry can learn.

Subsequent experiences in the Australian film industry provided additional motivation to examine scriptwriting practice. Since 2001, I have been involved in 10 film projects as a writer and director, working with producers in Australia and Europe. Four projects were funded by government, two were privately funded and four were freelance projects. Some of the scripts became films. Others got stuck at the script stage, a common occurrence in the Australian film industry due to the competition for scarce development funds. These experiences have afforded me privileged access to the inner operations of film projects and the working approaches of different producers and film-funding agencies, which inform this research into scriptwriting.
Use of the terms film, scriptwriting, production, practitioner and filmmaker in the thesis

In the thesis, film means any product consisting primarily of moving images and sound with the intent for it to be shown publicly on a large-scale cinema screen. The word film better reflects the types of projects funded by government funding bodies for cinema exhibition in Australia. In the thesis, the word film indicates a film project that has achieved private/public funding or attempted to secure public/private funding in its development and production. In the evolving landscape of digital media production, distribution and exhibition, the word screen denotes the multitude of screening platforms, including cinema, television, Internet broadcasting, mobile phones, streaming, online pay-per-view and podcasts available to the public (Ryan 2010, p. 85). The term screen, however, is too comprehensive for the purposes of the thesis.

This logic extends to the use of the word scriptwriting as opposed to screenwriting. Scriptwriting and screenwriting share similar characteristics and in industry parlance are often interchangeable. However, scriptwriting refers to the process of writing a script that is primarily dialogue with narrative directions. Screenwriting, on the other hand, incorporates elements of directorial craft and visualisation into the writing of a screenplay. A screenplay usually includes additional layers of information that relate to practices other than writing. These might include notes on camera angles and cut or fade instructions. The term screenwriting is too broad for the purposes of this thesis; analysis is therefore focused on the practice of scriptwriting.

The word production has two distinct meanings in the thesis, reflecting its twin use in the film industry. The first meaning is linked to the roles of the film producer and the process of financial and administrative management involved in the making of a film. The producer has control over every aspect of a film project from the selection of the script, coordinating writing, directing, editing, sound, arranging finance, and marketing and distribution processes. Producers, as independent practitioners or practitioners employed by a production company, create an environment where the practices of key members of the film project can prosper. Here, the word production is used to encompass the action of developing, making and staging the whole project from its initial idea to exhibition. The second meaning of production refers to the shooting of a film as a discrete set of actions within the broader context of the creation of the film. This is commonly referred to as the production stage of filmmaking.
The thesis uses the term practitioner to designate any person involved in a specialised creative process in the development of a film, for example, a writer, director, producer, designer, cinematographer, composer, film editor, music editor, music supervisor or sound designer. The thesis expands on the term filmmaker as set out by the Macquarie Dictionary (2005) as ‘1. a person who initiates the production of a film, especially by arranging the financial backing, and who supervises its production; producer. 2. a film director’. In a sense, every person involved in the development and making of a film can be regarded as a filmmaker. In this thesis, however, filmmaker designates the individual practitioner or the group of practitioners who take primary responsibility for steering the overall realisation of a film project.

Practice and practices

Practice in the thesis has two essential meanings. The first relates to the execution of a plan or method. The second relates to the customary way of doing something within a specific field of activity. Practice theory, on which the thesis substantially draws, recognises practice as emerging from behaviour patterns and incorporating ways of acting, cognisance and understanding that ‘give the world of humans its visible orderliness’ (Reckwitz 2002, p. 251). Research on scripts and scriptwriting in film studies tends to avoid discussion of screenwriting practice and its industry context. Only comparatively recently has there been an emerging interest in scriptwriting as a practice (Davies 2004, Maras 2009, Batty 2012).

This nascent approach to scriptwriting, as seen in the research of Davies (2004), Koivumaki (2010), MacDonald (2010), Ross (2010), David (2014) and Davis (2014), is tempered by the tendency to position the script as a literary form with a focus on the multidimensional nature of textual meaning. The difficulty with this approach derives from the script’s suspension between individual and collaborative practice, scriptwriting being situated at the intersection between the subjective experiences of action that influence practice and the objective choices made while practising to achieve a creative goal. My experience is that scriptwriting unfolds as a sequence of routine behaviours influenced by future roles for the script within the filmmaking process, which sit outside individual action and knowledge. These future roles are exemplified by interactions between individual practices, collective social and institutional practices, the activities of film production being a set of cues guiding scriptwriting.
The thesis leverages three frameworks for analysing scriptwriting, seeing scriptwriting as:

1. An institutional practice manifest in industry processes that correspond to industry standards and economic imperatives.
2. A social practice that is manifest in an affiliation to social hierarchy and power, and which is accounted for as cultural discourse.
3. An individual practice that supports the later collaborative practices of a film crew.

To investigate the transactional nature of the script, the thesis uses the concepts of ‘community of practice’ and ‘boundary object’ (Wenger 1999, Star & Griesemer 1989). A community of practice is a collection of people who do work, talk to one another about their work and obtain identity from that work. Practices within the context of a community of practice are process-driven and feature-based (Lave & Wenger 1991). Process-driven engagement in the community of practice occurs through participation. The feature-based practices of the community of practice generate agency and are intrinsic and instrumental to learning, knowledge and the exchange of expertise. Star and Griesemer developed the term boundary object to explain the role of varied intermediary entities in real world situations. They describe boundary objects as entities that transform and modify to the specific specialised requirements and restrictions of the practitioners who use them and which are ‘robust enough to maintain a common identity across sites’ (Star & Griesemer 1987, p. 393). Boundary objects are a common point of reference in a community of practice, which serve to align and coordinate action and meaning (Bowker & Star 1999).

Conceiving the script as a boundary object points to its role in mediating a diversity of practices in making a film. Filmmaking is a collective enterprise in which the scriptwriter is required to work with other practitioners. Some situations in the film industry are structured to integrate the writer into a more collaborative space, for example, the writers’ room in the television industry, where a team of writers, researchers and script runners work on multiple scripts simultaneously. In film, collaborative practice might occur in co-writing a screenplay with one or more other writers. More often, however, the writer’s position in relation to other practitioners in the film industry is removed because of the solitary nature of writing. Nonetheless, all practitioners in filmmaking share a common goal in pursuing their interest in arriving at a completed film. As a community of practice, the production team, cast and crew engage in joint activities and negotiate strategies. They share a collection of assets, experiences, narratives, and conditions of working. The strong element of shared practice reveals the complex set of social processes and relations through which filmmaking occurs.
Theoretical framework

In this thesis, practice theory provides a conceptual apparatus for the analysis of the role of the script in the collaborative process of filmmaking. Practice theory is an important thread within the broad field of cultural theory. It takes practices as the primary social unit mediating between individual agency and social structure, and the core unit of analysis in any field. In Australian film studies, a theoretical approach to film based on practices is a significant shift from the normal focus on the completed film as a cultural artefact.

Within practice theory, social practices comprise both bodily and mental activities, and are regarded as the primary locus of the social. When somebody carries out a practice, they take over the corporeal and cognitive patterns that constitute the practice, which then becomes the ‘possession’ of the individual while retaining a shared social dimension (Schatzki 1996, p. 20). Practice theory represents a movement towards a relational analysis of the status of body, mind, things, knowledge, discourse, structure and process, and the action of the individual (Reckwitz 2002, p. 244). The framing of practice within practice theory disrupts the inside-outside binary through which the mind and body are conventionally understood (Ibid. p. 248).

In taking practices as the basic component of social life, practice theory examines the links between practice and context within a given social environment. According to Reckwitz (2002, p. 249), practices are developed temporally by people engaged in that practice, affording agency to people. As a practice is initiated and spreads, institutions manifest to make the practice more extensively known by teaching it to beginners to enhance performance, while legitimating the practice and codifying its virtues (Schatzki 1996, p. 19). In the field of film, the codification and dissemination of practices happens through formal conduits like film and television schools, established production models, film-funding agencies, film festivals, practice manuals and scholarly publications, as well as through informal means including participation in the production of a film, personal conversations and social media.

This thesis draws mainly on French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu’s (1930-2002) theory of social practices. Bourdieu uses the concepts of practice, doxa, field, habitus and symbolic capital to make clear the influences on and agency of the individual in relation to society. He sees unrestrained structures linked to the mode of production within capitalist institutions as shaping culture, without completely closing off the practitioner’s ability to make changes to their practice. The ideas of agency, conformity and mediation are of central importance in the thesis.
The case studies examine the effect of normative processes on creative practice in an industrialised cultural field. Bourdieu, however, argues that individuals sidestep the conformity of practice by consciously or unconsciously producing irregularities within the rules of practice (doxa), this being the source of agency within a field of practice (Gerrans 2005, p. 64). The thesis approaches filmmaking and the place of scriptwriting within it as a set of interconnected regularised activities, examining the dynamic interplay between the subjective experience of the practitioner and the rules and expectations of the film industry. Bourdieu’s theory of practice addresses this phenomenon by taking into account the subjective nature of experience in an objective model of social structure.

**Research gap and questions**

The thesis focuses on screenwriting as an individual and collective practice that mediates and is mediated by other practices within filmmaking. It examines the relations between these levels of mediation, their cultural, economic and social underpinnings and the complex operation of power within filmmaking. It grows from the proposition that there is value in investigating practice from an insider perspective. The investigation is framed from the position of the industrial organisation and funding model in Australian film, a cultural and social context that imposes particular restrictions on filmmakers. Three research questions support the overarching research proposition:

1. What are the production processes and imperatives that impact on scriptwriting practice?
2. How do production processes and imperatives mediate scriptwriting practices?
3. How are scriptwriting practices affected by the staging of film productions?

**Research design and methods**

The study uses autoethnographic method and two qualitative case studies to examine the individual experience of scriptwriting against the wider context of the Australian film industry. The cases explore the influences that make members of a given field what and who they are, without removing the possibility for agency. They examine two film projects in which I was a writer. In the *Mallboy* case, I was the sole scriptwriter. In the *Godless* case, I was a co-writer. The cases take the reader into the everyday and conventional world of filmmaking. The description of practice considers the impact of production processes and funding models on creative processes within scriptwriting, exercising influence over film content.
The narratives in the case studies draw on data accumulated in the production process, including diary entries, emails, draft scripts, formal production documents and producer notes. The data is analysed through the theoretical precepts of Bourdieu’s practice theory to provide a nuanced examination of scriptwriting as a creative practice. The qualitative research design represents a novel approach to the analysis of scriptwriting that consciously departs from the models of critical analysis and literary discourse. The presence of my voice in the case narratives challenges the ‘accepted views about silent authorship and author evacuated texts’ in qualitative research (Sparkes 2000, p. 22).

**Structure of the thesis**

After this introduction, the study has six chapters. Chapter One, ‘A Country Practice’, offers a brief history of the development and funding systems of the Australian film industry. It then examines the literature of Australian film studies to establish its preoccupation with textual analysis and notions of national cinema. The chapter claims that the knowledge structures and classification systems in Australian film studies privilege fixed notions of place, character, genre and identity in the discussion of Australian film. Chapter One also interrogates film production studies in the international and Australian film literature, establishing the limited attention to practice analysis in the field. The chapter concludes with an investigation into the nascent research in scriptwriting to establish the originality and contribution of the thesis.

Chapter Two, ‘Scriptwriting and Practice’, focuses firstly on the script and its place in the film production process. It argues that the difficulty in approaching the script as an object of enquiry is inherent in its various functions within film development and production. The chapter then explains the theoretical approach taken to scriptwriting practice in the thesis, introducing Bourdieu’s theory of practice as the main theoretical framework for the examination of scriptwriting practice.

Chapter Three, ‘Research Design and Methods’, argues for the use of case study and autoethnography as the methods for the analysis and presentation of evidence in the thesis. The chapter explains the case study design through a focus on the contextualised exposition of the research questions and thick description as a valid and authentic research approach to provide insights into scriptwriting practice.
Chapter Four, ‘Mallboy’, provides a retrospective case study that examines the genesis, development and production of the film *Mallboy*. The chapter is presented as autoethnographic narrative that investigates the relational divergences between individual and collective practices in filmmaking. The chapter interrogates the mediated and mediating function of the script across three key practices in filmmaking: direction, editing and distribution.

Chapter Five, ‘Godless’, examines the development and pre-production process for *Godless*, a feature film that I co-wrote and for which I was proposed as director, but which failed to achieve production. The case study interrogates the role of the script as a boundary object, revealing the impact of production decisions and the casting process on scriptwriting practices.

Chapter Six, ‘Cross Analysis and Findings’, presents a comparative analysis of the two cases. The chapter contextualises the findings of the two cases to represent scriptwriting as a mediatory practice that functions across a variety of disciplines in filmmaking. The chapter contests the limiting elements of existing enquiry into filmmaking practice to present scripts as original creative expression rather than cultural or national texts. It presents the research findings as an original characterisation of scriptwriting practice in the context of Australian film studies in response to the research questions. The conclusion to the thesis summarises the current challenges in the emerging field of production studies to which the thesis contributes and proposes potential areas for further research.
Chapter One

A Country Practice

Chapter One reviews the literature of Australian film and film production studies to establish the scholarly understanding of the nature of the Australian film industry since the commencement of government support in 1969. Firstly, the chapter provides an overview of film development and funding systems in the Australian film industry in an increasingly globalised industrial context. Secondly, it discusses the position of scriptwriting in the film development process. Thirdly, the chapter reviews the academic literature that accounts for and elucidates the nature of Australian film, discussing its focus on textual analysis and the idea of national cinema. In this, the field of Australian film studies establishes knowledge structures and classification systems around Australian film, imposing fixed notions of place, character, genre and identity. Fourthly, the chapter examines emergent film production studies in the international and Australian film literatures, highlighting the limited research into filmmaking processes and practices. Finally, Chapter One discusses the literature of scriptwriting to establish its primary exegesis as a literary form and the extent of existing enquiry into scripts and scriptwriting.

Funding models in the Australian film industry after 1969

The scope to make films in Australia is distinguished by the particular way in which films are funded, constituting a specific set of mediating conditions for filmmaking. The following section provides a brief history of funding models in the Australian film industry after the commencement of federal government support for the Australian film industry in 1969. The discussion contextualises some of the factors in film production funding affecting creative practitioners and their implications for creative practice. It then examines the shifting nature of film development and production and the difficulties faced by film practitioners in a dynamic globalised marketplace.

Film is a complex combination of cultural expression and commercial and audience interests. Marshall McLuhan pinpoints the economic imperatives that drive film production when he states that ‘film not only accompanied the first great consumer age, but was also incentive, advertisement and, in itself, a major commodity’ (McLuhan 1964, p. 318). From its inception, mainstream cinema has been driven strongly by spectacle and the profit motive that ‘requires
money, a lot of money’ to realise (Badiou 2013, p. 226). Feature film production in Australia was healthy in the first decades of the twentieth century. The years 1907 to 1928 saw the production of over 150 feature films (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2014). The 1920s was also a period when ‘American dominance of the Australian industry became a fact of life’ (McFarlane 1987, p. 10). The transition to sound motion picture technology, however, significantly disrupted the Australian film industry. The technical transition to sound was costly and difficult. F.W. Thring and Ken G. Hall are two names that ‘dominate the first decade of talkies’ in Australian film production (Ibid. p. 11). Their production of popular feature films such as Diggers (1931), On Our Selection (1932) and Dad and Dave Come to Town (1938) represented Australia’s closest parity with the development and production practices of the American industry. Increased international production and the dominance in the marketplace of international productions and distribution networks led to a decline in Australian film production after World War Two which saw only 42 features produced in Australia in the 1950s and 1960s.

Australian government support for Australian film began in 1969 when the John Gorton Liberal government accepted a proposal to establish a Film Committee of the Australian Council of the Arts (O’Regan 1996, p. 13). Soon after, the Australian Film Commission (AFC), established in 1975 by the Gough Whitlam Labour government to fund Australian films, had a mandate to ‘facilitate the exhibition and distribution of Australian film’ that was culturally significant and reflected a national perspective (McFarlane 1987, p. 25). State government counterparts such as the South Australian Film Corporation founded in 1972, Screen West founded as the West Australian Film Corporation in 1973, Screen NSW—formerly the New South Wales Film and Television Office—founded in 1975, and the Victorian Film Corporation—now Film Victoria—founded in 1976, were established to support this national cultural agenda by fostering film activity in the individual states. In particular, the state film bodies were set up to attract private institutions and investors to support the film industry (Ibid. p.16).

By 1981, it was recognised that collaboration between the federal and state government film-funding bodies, private investors and the international marketplace was crucial to the commercial viability of the Australian film industry. In that year, the federal government sought to encourage private investment in Australian film production through the introduction of generous tax subsidies for investors. The 10BA tax incentive provided large budgets for both film and television production (Jacka 1993, p. 188). Division 10BA (1981) of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1936 allowed investors a tax concession of 150% on the risk of their investment. This
incentive saw an explosion of investment in Australian film. During the 1980s, these concessions were whittled away as the government sought to prevent the loss of tax revenue, the government becoming concerned about ‘rorts and uncontrolled costs occurring under 10BA’ (Ibid. p. 84). The level of taxation offset for private investors was reduced to 133% in 1983, and 120% in 1985 (Ibid. p. 81).

In 1986, the AFC released a discussion paper that recommended winding back the 10BA and the establishment of a film bank. After much debate and negotiation, in 1988 the federal government established the Australian Film Finance Corporation (FFC) as the major source of financial support for filmmakers (Ibid. p. 84). The AFC, formerly the government’s main agency for funding film production, now focused its resources on development, marketing and research activities. The overarching aim of the AFC was to support Australian film production for its cultural value, with limited regard for commercial returns inside Australia and internationally (Ward 2005, p. 55). However, these changes had a noticeable effect on the types of films that were funded, as the FFC insisted that all projects have a presale of between 35% and 50% of the production budget, which tended to favour more commercial projects (Ibid. p. 191).

In contrast to the period of 10BA, in the 1990s, taxpayer-funded government support from the AFC and FFC became the dominant source of funding for Australian films. In the period 2002 to 2011, the low Australian dollar encouraged a steady rise in foreign film production in Australia, reflecting the globalisation of film industries. This shift reflected a movement away from the funding of Australian stories to a globalised perspective that gave precedence to international fiscal strategies and policies. In these times, Australia was seen by international producers as a low-cost production location, with the added benefit of highly-trained and experienced practitioners (Brillon 2006, p. 1).

Until 2008, the impetus for film funding was to support the filming of Australian stories, filmed in Australia, employing Australian cast and crews, and created by Australian directors, producers and screenwriters (Ward 2005, p. 56). However, in 2008, public financing of Australian filmmaking experienced a major overhaul to create the present conditions for the Australian film industry. Film and television production were repositioned within an expanded industry cluster including web design, games development and other forms of recreational software development. This was on the basis that film production technologies share common ground with other screen media (Screen Australia 2014). The 2008 restructure amalgamated the AFC
and FFC to create Screen Australia. Screen Australia’s head office and major operations were based in Sydney, supported by smaller state offices. The Minister for the Arts at the time, the Hon. Peter Garrett, MP, and Ruth Harley, Chief Executive of Screen Australia, promoted the restructure as marking a new era for Australian screen industries. The emphasis was on an Australian film industry that was to be commercially viable, with Garrett stating that the industry needed to ‘develop commercially focused screen businesses’ by attracting an audience to achieve a profit (Kaufman 2008, p. 17).

Figure 1 shows the number of Australian and foreign film productions between 1991 and 2014. It highlights the increase in foreign production in Australia against the number of Australian productions since 2006/2007 (Screen Australia 2014). Post-digital and visual effects (PDV) figures are included in the reckoning of Australian and Foreign Film productions in Australia between 1990 and 2014 (Screen Australia 2014).

![Figure 1 Australian and Foreign Productions in Australia (Screen Australia 2014).](image)

1. Productions under Australian creative control, including domestic productions, official co-productions and other productions involving shared creative control, i.e. with a mix of Australians in key creative positions.
2. Productions under foreign creative control with a substantial number shot in Australia.

The rise in international productions was also linked to a concerted effort by the federal film-funding body Screen Australia to court international projects through generous tax breaks and subsidies for international investment and participation in the local industry—the definition of an international film being any film that spends between 20% to 30% of its overall budget in Australia, within any phase of the film production process (Screen Australia 2015, p. 47).
As noted by Given (2003 p. 52), the trend towards international co-productions and distribution lent a new complexity to the idea of what constitutes an Australian film. Films such as *Finding Nemo* (2003), *Happy Feet* (2006), *Happy Feet 2* (2011), *The Great Gatsby* (2013) I, *Frankenstein* (2014) and *Mad Max: Fury Road* (2015) have tested these boundaries, within both content and production parameters. This shift in what constitutes Australian film is significant for practitioners negotiating ways of operating in the industry. The shift towards international co-productions makes access to limited resources for film practitioners even more competitive, as eligibility for production funding is open to an international marketplace. It also raises questions around the fundamental principles and established precedents of Australian film, with film scholars reconfiguring the significance and quality of Australian film content in seeking to account for the inherent qualities of the Australian film industry and the orientation of film content.

The shift from cultural policy to industry policy as the basis for public film funding has seen film producers take an increased role in securing funding. It has been necessary to emphasise commercial imperatives rather than the use of subsidy to enable artistically- and culturally-worthy Australian films to be made (Ryan, 2010 p. 85). This was made manifest in the Australian Screen Production Incentive (2008), which comprises three mutually-exclusive, uncapped tax offsets that are comparable to tax rebates (Screen Australia 2015, p. 47):

- The 16.5% Location Offset, which is to attract large budget offshore film and TV production to work in Australia.
- The 30% PDV Offset (Post, Digital and Visual effects production), which is to encourage production companies to work with Australia’s world-class VFX, animation and post-production sector.
- The Producer Offset (40% offset for qualifying Australian production expenditure incurred on a feature film and a 20% offset for qualifying Australian production expenditure incurred on a film that is not a feature film) for Australian projects and official co-productions.

The emphasis on international co-productions reflects changes in the film industry, which challenge assumptions about Australian film content and its relationship to national culture. The occasional box office success and mainly favourable critical reception of these films are considered positives for the Australian film industry (Screen Australia 2016).
A central implementation of the changed funding arrangements was the Producer Offset Scheme, a refundable tax concession provided to producers for the production of film and television properties made after 1 July 2007. In 2008, an Enterprise Scheme was established to provide funds for emerging filmmakers where these projects were managed in association with experienced producers. Before 2007, the AFC’s General Development Investment increased the skills of emerging producers by providing funding for small business management training. This opportunity for professional development was removed under the Enterprise Scheme, which gave established production companies a significant advantage over newer companies and emerging producers.

Screen Australia’s policy schedule for the Australian film industry has repercussions for the form and content of Australian films. Since the introduction of the Producer Offset, uncertainties have emerged between a policy mandate to foster commercial returns and the definition and boundaries of Australian creative input. Screen Australia’s 2010 Charter of Operations states that ‘maintaining a balance between cultural and industry growth’ is a policy objective (Screen Australia 2010-2011, p. 9). It contends that a project’s eligibility to receive Producer Offset funding depends on an assessment that a proposed project is ‘audience focused and culturally relevant’ (Screen Australia 2010-2011, p. 6).

Policy frameworks for Australian film production are reconfigured to reflect the differing aims of successive governments and continual budget cuts. The 2014 federal budget incorporated a major overhaul of the 2008 policy frameworks, incorporating an overall reduction in funding of $25 million dollars for Screen Australia. Figure 1 shows that after the changes, Australian film production increasingly incorporated international creative and financial input, becoming more global in its orientation and output. Arguably, where the artistic, cultural and social value of film was previously recognised in relation to Australian filmmaking, these values become secondary to a film’s capacity to generate profit.

In 2015, Screen Australia experienced a third round of budget cuts over an 18-month period. The Mid Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook (MYEFO) outlined that Screen Australia would lose a further $10.3 million over four years, which was 3% of its budget (Cooke, Maddox, & Morris 2015). According to the MYEFO statement, an unspecified amount of the cuts to major arts bodies will help fund a $47.3 million allocation over a two-year period to two major
Hollywood film productions, the next instalment of the Marvel Studios’ fantasy franchise *Thor* and the next sequel in the *Alien* franchise *Alien: Covenant* (2017). At present, Australian filmmakers are both dependent on government funding and beholden to the tough reality of market success and audience preferences. Within this framework of internationalisation and fiscal challenge, film practitioners reassess strategies to maintain meaningful employment and practice in the industry. From the position of the practitioner, these continuing changes in government financial policy for film suggest a minimal focus on individual agency and practice in the context of internationalised film production and industry.

The dependence on government funding to get films made promotes compliance with the development of commercially-viable films as linked to returns from sales, sidelining the merits of film as a cultural and social artefact. Creative practice flourishes or withers in relation to the requirement to create commercially-successful films. The value of the script and the practice it embodies is left unexamined in the face of the economic pragmatism that underpins decision-making in film development and production, problematising the notion of a national cinema. The recent changes to government policy reflect a form of ‘internal cultural colonialism’ where the articulation of the parameters of a national cinema encompasses contradictory discourses that neglect the analysis of practice, despite superficial consensus (Higson 2002, p. 63). The next section outlines how the literature of film studies and film production studies discusses Australian film. In both accounts, the default setting for interpretation is the conception and elucidation of national cinema.

**Australian film studies**

Humanities-based research and writing is the dominant mode of analysis in Australian film studies, encompassing historical studies, film criticism, cultural theory, production studies and social theory. This body of literature examines the content of Australian films and their artistic, cultural, economic and political significance through a range of critical and theoretical frameworks, although the key texts on Australian film typically take a hybrid approach to the discussion of their topic, reflecting the complex confluence of analytical approaches in film studies generally.

demonstrates a commitment to medium specificity; that film has special properties that need to be studied on their own terms, but which take film as a stand-in for society in the critical analyst’s diagnosis. Academic journals such as Continuum and Studies in Australasian Cinema favour formalism and textualism. The main trade magazines for Australian film, Metro (1968-), Film Ink (1997-), AC Magazine (1998-) Empire Australasia (2001-), IF Magazine (2011-) and Lumina (2010-) focus on the craft of filmmaking and its technical nature. Lumina, for example, specialises in practitioner reflections on technological advances in filmmaking.


A recurrent theme within this approach to Australian film is the extent to which Australian films express Australian national identity and how this is supported through textual analysis and genre characteristics (Moran & O’Regan 1985; Moran & O’Regan 1989). Such publications privilege the form and content of film, contextualised as a cultural artefact removed from the nature of its production. Australian film studies reveal a variety of positions around the disinterested nature of aesthetic judgment in search of quality. The attention given to aesthetic form and filmic content effaces the means—the practices, the production processes, funding arrangements and industrial conditions—according to which films are brought into being. These approaches omit matters of film practice and production in relation to individual practice and agency, neglecting the relational links between individual agency and the collective, multifaceted nature of filmmaking practice (Van de Vijver & Biltereyst 2013).
From this position, texts such as *Myths of Oz* (1987), *New Australian Cinema: Sources and Parallels in American and British Film* (1992), *The Australian Screen* (1989), *Australian Cinema after Mabo* (Collins & Davis 2004) and *Diasporas of Australian Cinema* (Simpson, Murawska & Lambert 2009) seek to draw out sub-textual meanings within the content of Australian films in respect of cultural, political and social meanings and expectations. Analysis in Australian film studies is in the process of constant, critical re-imagining of new meanings and paradigms based on the film as text, seeking to promote films that produce ‘something significant about the culture which produces or consumes it’ (Bordwell 1985, p. 73). Sometimes, critical discussion of Australian cinema reveals a disappointment with the nature of Australian films. McFarlane (1987), for example, laments that Australian films are made with affection and craftsmanship that have commanded wide respect, [but] are […] in other ways too respectful: too unwilling to take major artistic risks; too tastefully anti-‘ocker’; too ready to use the past (historical and literary) as an occasion for triumphs of *mise-en-scene* rather than a means of exploring the indocile present (*Ibid*. p. 222).

**Australian film production studies**

Film researchers in the field of production studies expand horizons of enquiry by exploring the social, cultural and economic influences on film development and production. In this, the film is conceived as something other than the material consequence of original creative expression and practice. Historically, academic studies in Australian film production have discussed who does the producing rather than what they actually did. This approach broadens the discussion of film production studies somewhat, but neglects the individual agency and contribution of diverse practitioners. Prioritising the finished film as the basis for the discussion of meaning overlooks the causal links between production processes and completed films. For example, Bertrand and Collins’ *Government and Film in Australia* (1981) examines Australian film from the 1920s to the 1970s by discussing links between commercial interests, government influence and audience engagement. This is characteristic of the tendency in Australian film studies to gloss over or wholly omit the nature and significance of filmmaking process and issues of film production to approach Australian film as a national cinema.

Bertrand and Collins also exemplify Australian film scholars’ broad investigation of production processes by examining the uses of film as propaganda in a nation-building exercise and in
respect of national security. The investigation neglects individual agency in favour of big picture summation. The scope of this analysis takes into account the examination of social and cultural contingencies in film production. This position reveals the conflicting expectations and influences of government, industry and community lobby groups. Bertrand and Collins’ polemic is underpinned by politicised imputations that suggest that Commonwealth governments extracted financial advantage from the industry through tariffs and taxes while harnessing the medium for propaganda purposes, particularly during wartime.

A politicised agenda also informs analysis of Australian film production in *Australian Cinema: The First 80 Years* (Shirley & Adams 1989). In this reading of early Australian cinema, Shirley and Adams examine the economic and cultural infiltration of the Australian film industry in its formative years by American and English entities, while identifying cycles of growth and collapse in the Australian film industry. The jump from analysis of production systems and processes to finished film exemplifies the trend in Australian film production studies to ignore the significance of what practitioners actually do. This approach is part of the thread of politicised analysis in Australian film production studies also evident in the influential work of Susan Dermody and Elizabeth Jacka. Their writing set the agenda for the discursive orientation of Australian film studies in establishing a model of the Australian film industry with two distinct factions. These are Industry 1, which is culturally inclined, and Industry 2, which is commercially inclined. Dermody and Jacka (1988) argue that the post-1970 Australian film industry has ‘entrapped itself in a restrictive field of aesthetic choices’ (*Ibid.* p. 233). These aesthetic choices are characterised by self-imposed censorship where audiences and the box office mediate both the governmental decision-making that gets films funded and the content of the films. This position reflects a split desire to be acceptable as official culture while appealing to the marketplace.

Dermody and Jacka’s ground-breaking work inspired later explorations into the complex relations between the Australian film industry, cultural policy and funding decisions. Their much-cited texts on the sphere of Australian film production and policy, *The Screening of Australia, Vol 1: Anatomy of a Film Industry* (1987) and *The Screening of Australia, Vol 2: Anatomy of a National Cinema* (1988) provide an extensive discussion of the development and operation of the Australian film industry following its rebirth in the late 1960s. Both volumes discuss production processes within an overarching focus on the formal and genre characteristics of Australian films. Dermody and Jacka achieve this by linking the industrial context for the
revival of Australian film in the early 1970s to a critical analysis of the film as cultural artefact. The books address the relationship between government and commercial funding as a primary factor in the revival of the Australian film and television industry.

Beginning with a detailed analysis of production parameters and funding guidelines in *Volume One* (1987), Dermody and Jacka analyse the processes of the Australian film industry in the mid-1980s to identify the main narrative and character patterns in Australian feature films. It is within a reading of the analytical contexts of production and funding investigation and textual critical analysis that Dermody and Jacka produce cultural, social and economic meaning of Australian film. In *Volume Two* (1988, p. 233), they track production funds and budgets to claim ‘culture’ and ‘industry’ as poles for the analysis of Australian film. Australian films of the late 1980s are approached as projections of Australianness, with issues of national identity, sexuality, social and cultural context and popular history being discussed in relation to the influence of government funding and film production models.

Dermody and Jacka identify what they call a ‘privileged aesthetic’ (1987, p. 93) to characterise the hierarchical and mediating link between the cultural and social objectives of government for film and the tendency for government funding bodies to fund particular types of films and filmmakers. They suggest that government policies for film were initially geared to the funding of individual films where the author or instigator is taken to be the producer, a hard-headed handler of money and ideas. The implication here is that only a producer can navigate the ‘anxious, always mysterious demographics of the box office, audience and market, which determine the requirement of a presale as early as the first moves of project development’ (Dermody & Jacka, 1988, p. 233). For Dermody and Jacka, the link between government funding and content is explained by the principle that Australian film product be both a projection of national interests and ‘like but not too much like, Hollywood’ (*Ibid.* p. 233).

In Australian film production studies, the concepts of national cinema, quality and commercial viability are intertwined. In *Australian Television and International Mediascapes*, Cunningham and Jacka (1996) argue that the development of more complex readings of the Australian film industry, production processes and international finance and distribution networks position the question of identity within the framework of the international film market. They contend that a subsidised commercial industry has resulted in the development of a body of safe, middlebrow films with the idea of an Australian national cinema being used to inflate the significance of a
body of mass-market genre films. Australian film production studies also address the effect of production processes in an increasingly globalised film industry in relation to audience reception (Rayner 2000), distribution and exhibition models (Verhoeven 2006), and industry structures and film policy (Bowles 2007). Goldsmith and O’Regan’s *The Film Studio and Cinema Cities, Media Cities* (2003) examines the funding and role of major film industry infrastructure such as film studios in Australia. Their research explores the political, economic and cultural processes that have created infrastructure to attract the international film industry to make films in Australia, revealing adverse short- and long-term effects on local film industries. These effects, which Goldsmith and O’Regan argue have remained largely unexamined in the industrial processes of filmmaking, need to be contextualised in terms of government policy and the globalisation of the media. This multi-disciplinary approach is also evident in ongoing research by Given, Curtin and McCutcheon (2013) into the structures and manifestations of the Australian media industries, including film.

Within Australian film production studies, there are texts that use qualitative interview research and case studies to investigate production processes and content creation. In *Lights, Camera, but Where’s the Action? Actor-Network Theory and the Production of Roberts Connolly’s Three Dollars*, Mould (2009) explores actor agency in the production process in Australian filmmaking. He uses the case of *Three Dollars* (2009) and a research approach that combines participant observation and Actor-Network Theory (ANT). ANT prioritises production activities and relationships within production over analysis of the structural effects of industry and institutions. Mould argues that the examination of production processes using ANT is useful in revealing production processes to be a ‘networked whole’ (*Ibid.* p.211).

Consistent in film production studies is a lack of attention to how individual practitioners operate within industry ecologies, including how film-funding policies and dominant production models influence individual practices such as scriptwriting. A reason for this is that much of the documentation related to practice in the film industry remains confidential. Competition and confidentiality clauses, which frame the financial and legal negotiations between producers and film bureaucrats, are the norm in the film industry (Caldwell 2008, pp. 60-61). The scarcity of actual film production notes, deal memos, transcripts and legal documents for scholars to examine is a pivotal reason for the lack of attention to practices in film. This thesis addresses this gap by analysing information rarely available for scholarly investigation.
Australian film in Australian production studies is understood as a consequence of the changing circumstances of film production rather than the mediating effects of production models on practice. The position reflects the importance placed on the explanation and, to a degree, the justification of government policy decisions. In this, Australian film production studies directs enquiry into Australian film by privileging the textual analysis of a national cinema to the neglect of the practitioner’s perspective. It then defines Australian film in the light of the influence of international financing structures without exploring relations to individual agency within creative production.

**Australian film as national cinema**

The concept of national cinema is integral to Australian film studies and film production studies and extends the examination of the position of the practitioner as a counterpart to the focus on textual analysis in Australian film studies. In *Framing National Cinemas* (2000a), Hayward argues that what is ‘instructive’ in framing a national cinema ‘are the discourses mobilised to do so’ (*Ibid.* p. 91). These frames can be cultural or political, but both assume a relationship between nationhood and films as cultural artefacts. According to Hayward, at the centre of this set of frames is a standpoint that comprehends film as a form of cultural reproduction and a product to be sold to the masses, with ‘national’ cinemas being set against the dominance of Hollywood for the most part. This, she argues, links the idea of national cinema to a concept of value. For Hayward, national cinema is much more complex than a concept of value measured against Hollywood and the ‘other’. The idea of value is implicit in economics; in the film industry value is implicit in the production of film, the consumption of film and the consequent transfer of wealth. Hayward’s point is that the rationale of this type of discourse reduces the ‘ideology of national cinema to a set of binaries’ (*Ibid.* p. 91).

The eminent definition of a nation is Benedict Anderson’s (1983) proposal of nations as imagined communities on the basis that ‘the members of even the smallest nations will never know most of their fellow members, meet them, or even hear them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion’ (*Ibid.* p. 15). Anderson sees nationalism as a mode of political imagination not unlike religion, a social imaginary, a confabulation of history, cultural perceptions and social experience, produced through ideological discourses (*Ibid.* p. 122). Social identity refers to the processes through which individuals identify ‘others’ and how the other identifies them. These processes become the basis of self-identification. Perceptions of national
identity are habituated in that they encapsulate individual subjective experience of changing social structures.

In examining Australian film-funding policy, Dermody and Jacka (1987), discuss how in the late 1960s, the idea of a cinema of culture and quality was linked to the political task of nation building. They describe the ‘tasteful’ period films of the 1970s and 1980s as a product of the motives driving government film funding. They observe that Australian film offered a repetition of motifs and genres that reinforced an ideological construct of Australian values. This ideological position is manifest in content that is ‘inflected by a white, male, Anglo-Celtic, “common man” point of view, larrikin and spirited at its most endearing moments, but populist and conservative at its heart’ (1987 p. 35). A central point here is the role of film in representing Australia’s understanding of itself. No country can claim to have invented film language, but there is an argument that the application of film content and language by filmmakers in a particular country at times achieves an identifiable resonance through a range of aspects, including the language spoken, the stories told, their settings and the meanings created through composition, lighting, colour and diegetic and non-diegetic sound.

Alternatively, film scholars have presented different ways of contextualising national cinema. Hyort and MacKenzie (2000) argue that as a way of categorising films, the concept of national cinema grew out of the need to formulate and structure curriculum for university film studies courses. Crofts (2002 pp. 27-38) is more systematic, identifying seven categories of national cinema:

1. European Model or Art Cinema, which is different from Hollywood in that it targets a distinct and specialised market, but is perceived as not directly competing with Hollywood product in market share.
2. Third World cinema, which includes films from outside Hollywood that directly reference and critique Hollywood in their differences. These films are perceived as not competing directly with the Hollywood product for market share.
3. European and Third World Commercial Cinema, which is perceived as focused on entertainment. These films are conceived as commercial films and struggle against Hollywood with limited success.
4. Cinema that ignores Hollywood. Such films are achieved in nation states that have a large domestic market and effective trade barriers.
5. English-speaking Cinema, which tries to compete with Hollywood by imitation.
6. Totalitarian Cinema, which works within a wholly state-controlled and often state-subsidised industry.

7. Regional/Ethnic Cinema, which includes cinemas whose culture and/or language take their differences from the nation states that enclose them.

The contextualisation of a national cinema is problematic, raising questions around its function. Higson, in *The Concept of National Cinema* (2002), and Crofts, in *Reconceptualising National Cinema/s* (2002), question the use of national cinema as a historiographic model for understanding film, recommending instead industrial and reception approaches to the discussion of films. Here, Higson argues whether national cinema is manifest in:

- Everything filmic produced within a national context.
- A collection of films that engage with the construction and projection of nationhood at a textual level.
- The films that a national audience is watching, which in Australia is dominated by film and television developed overseas.
- A selection of films that academics and film-funding bodies identify as artistically worthy and representative of a nation's culture (2002 pp. 63-65).

According to Higson, the typical approach to defining national cinema is inward looking and explores the specifics of a national cinema in correlation to the socio-economic and cultural context of a nation. Higson describes the idea of national cinema as a mostly prescriptive concept that neglects the actual body of film produced and consumed in a nation. Such a use of national cinema depends on the construction of nation through the selective appropriation of history and tradition sustained by specific networks of political, social and cultural power.

Higson’s definitions of national cinema recognise the ambiguities and complexity of such definitions and suggest the limited nature of a nationalistic approach. His discussion of the status and function of a national cinema includes the alliance of cultural, political and market forces that converge with government subsidies for film production. Higson suggests that ‘cinema never simply reflects or expresses an already fully formed and homogeneous national culture and identity, as if it were the undeniable property of all national subjects’ (Higson 2002, p. 63). At the same time, he argues that the national film debate tends to reflect on the specifics of cultural and social heritage to perceive, if not outright construct, ‘common identity and continuity’ within film (*Ibid.* p. 67). For Higson, the idea of national cinema subscribes to an ideal rather than an
actuality, the national cinema construct largely projecting the sense of what a national cinema ought to be.

Since the 1980s, scholarly discussion of Australian film as a national cinema has centred on the identification of, and commentary on, sets of films considered to incorporate elements that provide an Australian audience with a sense of Australianness. The theoretical consideration of Australian film studies is driven by a perceived need to categorise what Australian film is, identifying what is specific about its form and content. The work of Bertrand and Collins (1981), Dermody and Jacka (1987; 1988a), Murray (1980; 1988; 1994) and Murray, Caputo and Tanskaya (1995) combines analysis of the film industry and film production with textual analysis of the completed films to describe the national character of Australian film. In this, Australianness remains largely elusive, being linked in the main to a distinctive atmosphere.

O’Regan’s *Australian National Cinema* (1996) offers a substantial discussion of Australian film as a definable artistic and production movement. O’Regan examines the limitations of the national cinema approach. He does this by reframing the notion of Australian national cinema in terms of a common civic and political culture. For O’Regan, the concept of national cinema includes citizenship and equality before the law, eschewing the more common idea of film reflecting the cultural core of customs, memories, myths, solidarities, symbols, significant landscapes and values (O’Regan 1996, p. 67). The concept of national cinema as fluid and relational builds on the perception that film has a civic, social and cultural role. Hayward (2000, p. 92) argues that within a nation there is a set of relations between ‘national film texts, national and international film industries and the films’ and industries’ socio-political and cultural contexts’.

To account for the complexity of this approach, O’Regan (1996) provides a tripartite framework for the definition of a national cinema, spanning film, nation and production. He emphasises the relational aspect between national film as text, national film as an industry, and the cultural, political and social contexts for a national film industry. For O’Regan, an Australian national cinema comprises a continuum of the form, content and context of Australian film as both an ‘object of knowledge’ and as a ‘problem of knowledge’ (*Ibid*. p. 27).

Within this configuration of national cinema, meaning consists of characteristic attributes that pertain first to the critical analytical frame that relates to the film in itself. Second, meaning is further complicated through questions of exclusion that relate to the notion of nationhood. Finally, O’Regan proposes that
meaning is created through the inclusion and the effects of policy as it relates to production (*Ibid.* pp. 261-362). This recalls Bertrand and Collins’ (1981) triangular model of Australian cinema during the 1920s as consisting of government, the film industry and community lobby groups. Both perspectives attribute the nature of Australian film to an effect of conflicting cultural and social demands on film. As such, O’Regan’s discussion of Australian film as a national cinema reflects the inherent contradictions and failings of the notion of national cinema in arguing that ‘problematisations of nation do not structure all the other social problematisations. They are simply another problematisation to be coordinated, ranked and associated with other such problematisations in the film milieu’ (1996 p. 332).

The difficulties inherent in the study of national cinema are linked to the scope of its multidisciplinary meaning across diverse fields. In this, the account of national cinema takes on multiple points of view in respect of film’s critical, cultural, industrial, social and political meaning. For O’Regan, film scholars conceive of a national cinema that is local and international in incorporating synergies between society, cultures and people (*Ibid.* pp. 1-2). Yet the scale of enquiry required in the study of national cinema suggests that it is ‘amenable only to observations and not systematic knowledge’ or alternatively only achievable through ‘hybrid analytical strategies’ (*Ibid.* p. 3).

O’Regan accounts for this tension by employing two conceptual approaches to the consideration of national cinema: the relational and the interdisciplinary (*Ibid.* p. 232). The relational approach holds that national cinema uses different sets of knowledge, including production, marketing and audience reception to answer theoretical questions around the nature of Australian film. This approach acknowledges the mediation that occurs across different components of filmmaking, including economic, political, historical and cultural discourses around film and film production. The interdisciplinary approach holds that national cinema has a capability to include various discipline approaches to create new meaning. An interdisciplinary approach links the characteristics of Australian film to the defining representations of the Australian nation and opposes the criticism from writers including Morris (1988; 1993), Gellner (1996), Rayner (2000) and White (2004) that Australian cinema is neither distinctive nor original.

For O’Regan, the focus on national cinema in Australian film studies arises through two distinct threads of analysis: an explicatory critical approach and a symptomatic critical approach. An explicatory critical approach ‘assumes the semiotic richness and density of the work’ (*Ibid.* p. 334). A symptomatic critical approach gives ‘full weight to that which is suppressed, repressed,
elided and excluded’ in a film, revealing the flaws of the film through an ‘often unsympathetic’ approach (Ibid. p. 334). O’Regan argues that film scholars typically merge the two approaches in discussing Australian film with the overarching analysis and interpretation of Australian film taking over from the discussion of individual films. As a result, the national cinema debate marginalises or eclipses discussion of the creative and industrial practice of filmmaking.

Understanding Australian cinema in relation to the mainstream industrial cinema of the United States—the commercially and culturally dominant other to Australian cinema—is another main theme in Australian film studies. The notion of ‘other’ plays an important role in discussing cultural nationalism, whether the concept of nation is conceived by the individual as an instrument of contractual will or of hierarchical domination. The attachment to nation is experienced as a learned and habituated space that is open to modification and reconstruction through reflexive agency and educational practices. Film is seen as a site that habituates an Australian identity. In The Limiting Imagination of National Cinema (2000, p. 67), Higson argues that an imaginary coherence compares two national cinemas to establish the measure of otherness between them. He provides the example of Western Europe, where the main strategy in seeking to maintain national cultural specificity in filmmaking is through the production of a nationally-based art cinema, a cinema of quality, subsidised by the state (Ibid. p. 59).

Moran (1991), for example, examines Australian documentary film production within the Commonwealth government film unit including subjects such as ‘men, women and children and their relationships; the family; work; leisure; geography; history; health; democracy; Aborigines; farming, and so on’ to show its social and cultural significance as points of difference to other cinemas (Ibid. p. 134). Tulloch’s Legends on the Screen (1981) and Australian Cinema: Industry, Narrative and Meaning (1982) discuss the silent era and the arrival of sound in Australian film from the perspective of the unequal cultural exchange and distribution negotiations between the Australian and Hollywood film industries.

Given (2003) merges analysis of the industrialised nature of film production in a globalised marketplace with research into media policy, film production funding and the impact of trade agreements between nations. The framing of Australian film as a national cinema via its relationship to Euro-American cinema unfolds according to a centre-periphery model that assumes a world system for film production and distribution (Shils 1961). The centre-periphery model proposes that social movements are best seen as efforts by people in a peripheral position
to the interventions from the centre position (Shils 1975). The centre-periphery model applied to understanding Australian film production uncovers differences and tensions prevalent in the perception of Australian film within Australia and overseas.

Hollywood cinema, by contrast, rebuffs any attempts to frame its output within a national context (Lacey 2005, p. 273), seeing itself primarily as entertainment and adhering to the commercial imperatives of box office, profit and the limited life of films as commodities. An exception to this is the discussion of US independent cinema, but even here the discussion implies that this body of film is of international quality. By contrast, discussion of an Australian film often emphasises the importance of the locality and the fact that it is an Australian production rather than its inherent quality as a film.

In this way, Australian film studies locates the Australian film industry within and tangential to the international film industry. O’Regan (1996) notes that national cinemas,

> involve relations between, on the one hand, the national film texts and the national and international film industries and, on the other hand, their various social, political and cultural contexts. These supply a means of differentiating cinema product in domestic and international circulation (Ibid. p. 1).

Critical approaches such as genre function as an additional tool that Australian scholars use to corroborate the status of a national cinema. For some scholars, genre is used as a categorical index against which to fix nationalist meaning to film. Hall (1985) links the concept of a national cinema to the analysis of film content and the ascription of aesthetic quality. She argues that Australian films reflect a range of specific characteristic cinematic tropes linked to Australianness: the outback adventure, the themes of masculinity and mateship, the suburban surreal, period drama and broad comedy. Hall uses the national cinema paradigm as a basis for textual analysis of Australian films, approaching Australian film as a genre in its own right. The inclination of scholars such as Hall to merge genre and national culture reduces Australian film to a fixed set of categories. Morris (1988; 1993) by contrast, argues that national culture comprises diverse cultural, historical and linguistic patterns that are masked by the application of fixed genre classifications. Select and noteworthy films are used to identify major cinematic tropes and genres that distinguish Australian national cinema. Rayner (2000) and Moran and Vieth (2006) discuss the presence of a stable range of tropes as markers of Australian national
cinema, discussing Australian film as a historicised genre study with a set of sub-genres that transcend the narrative, stylistic and thematic diversity of Australian feature films. These tropes include the larrikin, the endearing criminal, urban and suburban realism, gothic horror, urban crime, outback drama and broad ‘ocker’ comedies.

The defining characteristics of Australian film tropes are inadequate for some researchers and are included in negative assessments of Australian cinema. Rayner (2000), for example, argues that Australian film can be ‘perceived as part of the response to Australia’s supposed “cultural cringe”, the admission of cultural immaturity in comparison with the settlers’ mother countries’ (Ibid. p. 177). Rosenbaum (2002 p. 220) argues that the range of tropes in Australian film studies are ‘shopworn and inadequate’. For Collins and Davis (2004), approaching Australian film as a genre links its nature to a limited range of conventions of character, setting, narrative pattern and stylistic treatment.

In the light of the above discussion, the concept of national cinema is problematic in shifting from textual analysis to evaluations of production and film policy. In introducing her anthology *Twin Peeks: Australian and New Zealand Feature Films*, Verhoeven (1999) broadly addresses notions of national cinema through a different set of themes and national cinematic tropes to those usually favoured in Australian film studies. The essays contest the focus on authenticity and worthiness in discussing Australian cinema, throwing wide open the issue of what and what not to discuss within the context of national cinema. For Verhoeven, critical attempts ‘to explain our industry in purely national terms do our films and ourselves an indignity’ (1999 p. 12). She argues that the responsibility of Australian film studies is to ‘develop research questions and methods that will improve our understanding of the broad and variegated nature of the Australian market’ (Verhoeven 2006, p. 257). Verhoeven contends that most of the commentary on Australian cinema, like that about most trade agreements, rests on the primacy of discourses of production rather than consumption. She argues that a ‘concerted theory of consumption (in terms of assimilation, blending, synthesis, invisibility, expenditure, anti-production and so on)’ exposes the ‘ontological arguments at the heart of the national cinema as premised on the coincidence of production and consumption’ (Ibid. p. 286).

Consideration of consumption would mean a discernible shift of focus in Australian film studies, raising difficult questions about the effectiveness and transparency of film funding, development and production. Bowles (2007), in a report of cinema-going in a small rural town in New South
Wales (NSW), provides an audience-centred approach to the question of national cinema to ask whether government film-funding policies accommodate the interests and diversity of Australian audiences, rather than the more common question of how well the films that are supported by Australian film funding represent Australia. Bowles’s work reflects Higson’s suggestion that the consumption habits and experience of local audiences are a key point of reference to frame the idea of national cinema as the product of an uneasy alignment between ‘home’ and ‘away’ (Higson 2002, p. 67).

The national cinema debate continues to generate discussion, often around the state of the Australian film industry (e.g. Case 2009). White contends that ‘it is time to accept the real limitations inherent in the term “national cinema”, [to] come to grips with what this term can describe and illuminate, and then use the term more clearly’ (White 2004, p. 228). According to Gellner (1998), the propagation and proliferation of national ideals and cinema and the nationalistic message are linked to the way mainstream media frames analysis and discourse around film (Ibid. p. 127). For Gellner, the collective consumption of mediated communication from the media creates a sense of national community, although national identity is more likely to be a mix of cultures brought together in a specific geographical place.

The focus on ‘the national agenda’ leads to neglect of the practitioner’s perspective and discussion of the conditions, processes and practices that bring Australian films into being (Rayner 2000, p. 7). This thesis begins to address this significant knowledge gap in analysing filmmaking practice in relation to production processes manifest in industrial ways of working in the Australian film sector. Key questions include:

- How do these ways of working impact on scriptwriting practice?
- To what level do these ways of working mediate scriptwriting practices?
- How do these ways of working influence film content?

**Media production studies**

The analysis of practice is, however, a feature of media production studies, media production being closely associated with technologies such as the Internet and web-based content delivery, making it less encumbered by traditional academic approaches to the analysis of culture. Production studies in the area of new media seek to show how ‘specific production site[s], actors, or activities’ provide a bigger picture of employees, their practices, and the function of
their labour in relation to politics, economics and culture (Mayer, Banks & Caldwell 2009, p. 15). Early production studies in the field of film, such as those by Rosten (1941) and Powdermaker (1950), built on first-hand access to production personnel and processes. Today, production studies are rich sites of observation and meaning, but often lack direct access to practitioner experience and knowledge. The works of Blair, Grey and Randall (1999) and Blair and Rainnie (2000) examine the impact of changes in conditions in creative workplaces and industries on practitioners, often examining creative industries undergoing technological and infrastructure changes. Studies are typically based on extensive qualitative interview research with workers in media production, for example, studies by Ross (2008) and Murray and Gollmitzer (2012) that examine workers’ ability to maintain employment given the precarious and exploited nature of labour in the cultural sector.

In the field of filmmaking, Caldwell’s study (2008) on film production practice in Los Angeles offers insight into the industrial workings of the American film industry by combining analysis of extensive interviews across a number of filmmaking disciplines with ethnographic field observations, textual analysis of artefacts and economic analysis. Caldwell’s premise is that to understand the ways in which knowledge can affect practice, one must understand the context within which practice takes place. His study extends understandings of film practice as both a means of production and as an upshot of cultural, political and social meaning, suggesting the paradigmatic relationship between practices and production. Caldwell’s study shows the attitudes and habitual actions of Los Angeles-based film and video production workers to be embedded in daily practice and the media they create. These production processes are critical to the film industry, but they are also the very mechanisms through which the film and video production workers interviewed reveal the authorial potencies of institutionalised filmmaking.

Caldwell’s study emphasises ‘industry self-analysis and self-representation’, which were once considered ‘secondary or backstory phenomena’, but which now serve as ‘primary onscreen entertainment forms across a vast multimedia landscape’ (2008 p. 1). For Caldwell, the film industry’s habitual self-scrutiny, through interviews, additional content created for DVD’s and online ‘on-screen metacommentaries’ are rich sources of unexamined material that can produce new knowledge (Ibid. p. 1). The emphasis in Caldwell’s work is on reflexivity in the analysis of practice rather than reflexivity in practice itself. This difference is an important one. Reflexivity is mediated and constructed in the Los Angeles film industry because it is relegated to ‘corporate macrostrategies and human microstrategies’ (Ibid. p. 34). For example, a producer will give a
‘war story’ interview that explains what they did and how they did it contextualised through a lens of strategic interpretation and justification (Ibid. p. 39). This limited construct of reflexivity reflects an interpretative approach to practice that is associated with the identification of overall aims and interests and the means to achieve them by the practitioner, rather than the actual practice.

Where film studies typically attribute rich cultural and political meanings to film form and text, Caldwell links these meanings to production processes and the context of practice, but the analytical scope of this approach is limited due to the difficulty of gaining reliable, first-hand insider access. As Caldwell notes, the ‘higher one travels up the industrial food chain’, reflexive insights and disclosure become more suspect and spin-driven (2008, p. 3). For Caldwell, reflexivity around practices in the film industry become strategised and commercialised, a curated disclosure of practice serving as mechanisms of publicity and marketing. The complex social, cultural and economic rationales that are inherent in Caldwell’s research reveal the limited and limiting degrees of enquiry into film due to the difficulty in gaining objective insights from participants in the film industry. Greenhalgh (2010) argues that empirical work observing practice is too difficult to theorise, because practitioners mostly view practice from a narrow perspective, underestimating its theoretical density. The thesis takes this problematic position as a starting point.

The multidisciplinary, exploratory work being carried out in the field of new media studies best suits the considerations of this thesis in accounting for practice. In Theorizing Media and Practice (2010), Brauchler and Postill contextualise the study of media within the ‘broader sociology of action and knowledge’, which is distinct from the paradigm of literary criticism (Ibid. p. 37). In this anthology, an understanding of media as practice is critically interlinked with the work of a range of practice theorists to address the ‘epistemological implications’ of a turn to practice theory to account for media and bridge the gap between theory and practitioners’ understanding of mediated practice (2010, p. 26). Studies of production in other media fields such as that by Roig, San Cornelio, Ardevol and Sanchez-Navarro (2014) examine practice as a product rather than a process of shifting new media production development through the examination of co-creation in new games development. The difficulties of collaborative practices and ownership of rights function as a mediating factor in practices, being explored through observation and qualitative interview.
Media production studies also expand the parameters of enquiry, linking the collaborative administrative processes and generative gaming practices that are part of creative industries within the domain of creative practices and the field of management strategies. For example, the World Wide Web (WWW) is the focus of Fuchs’ (2011) exploration of production paradigms across a number of practices that are intrinsic to creativity on the Internet. Literat (2012) outlines the mediated creative processes within the utilisation and management of crowd-sourcing practices. Further studies of creative practice in new media production such as Ursell (2000), Ross (2003), McRobbie (2004), and Moisander, Konkkola and Laine (2012) highlight how changing employment and production systems have affected workers’ behaviour and practice. Ardevol, Roig, San Corneli and Alsina (2011) analyse the range of analytical approaches and methods used within practice studies and apply this to reveal new patterns of practice and content delivery in new media. Using two online film projects titled *A Swarm of Angels* and *Iron Sky* as comparative case studies, Telo (2013) investigates the connection between participatory film making and media production practices. His analysis of different emerging practices in online film production applies Schatzki’s (1996) principles of practice to identify practices as distinctive and mediated actions.

**The literature of scriptwriting**

The theme of practitioner agency is the dominant theme in the emergent literature of scriptwriting practice. Scripts and scriptwriting have a long history of enquiry and research. Nichols (1943) and Powdermaker (1950) explored the practice of writers in the industrialised Hollywood system of the 1940s and 1950s, securing unprecedented access to observe writer practices within the context of the Hollywood studio system.

Later accounts of scriptwriting, most notably that of Bordwell, Staiger and Thompson (1985), privilege analysis of the script as a literary text and the role of the scriptwriter as an individual practitioner working alone outside the collaborative environs of filmmaking. Maras (2009) observes the significance of research into the history of scriptwriting, noting that film scholars and critics have paid ‘increasing attention to the history of screenwriting’ *(Ibid. p. 17)*. Maras believes that the complexity of the script requires a ‘multi-pronged’ analysis, arguing that within different academic and industry contexts, the script has a problematic status *(Ibid. p. 185)*.

The growing interest in scriptwriting as an area of scholarly enquiry is reflected in the establishment of *The Journal of Screenwriting*, which publishes a range of approaches to its
examination. Price argues that scriptwriting studies are in the process of ‘formulating methodologies appropriate to the investigations of its materials’ (2014, p. 88). He identifies four frames that currently shape discussion of scriptwriting practice:

1. The discourse around writing for the screen.
2. The practitioner’s frame.
3. The research and scholarship of the script and scriptwriting.
4. Criticism and interpretation of scripts as text.

The discourse around writing for the screen includes enquiry on the problematic nature of the script as an object of enquiry. Maras (2009) surveys emergent discourses that frame a discussion around writing for screen rather than scriptwriting as a practice in itself. Maras presents the object status of the script as problematic and positions his investigation of the script within historical relations between the script and industry, literature and practice. Maras describes the script as a text that ‘selects some aspects of a perceived reality and makes them more salient in a communicating text’ (Ibid, p. 10). This position suggests that there is unlimited potential for new forms and functions of the script, and consequently for scholarly analysis around the validity, scope and methods of writing for the screen.

The second frame in Price’s evaluation is the practitioner’s frame. These are guides and ‘how to’ books that are goal driven and provide detailed, practical advice on how to draft a script that is ready for the marketplace. Such publications have limited scholarship, but approach scriptwriting from the perspective that the knowledge and experience of the practitioner is enlightening and valuable. Such texts perpetuate notions of industry approaches and standards, which standardise screenwriting practice.


Price’s third frame includes scholarly texts that examine what a script is and what screenwriting involves. These studies investigate the script across a range of disciplines, including psychology (Lee 2013), semiotics (Pasolini 2005) and sociology (Ross 2010). Such works acknowledge the script as a distinct and rich literary form, related but different to other types of writing. For Price, this body of writing sees the script and its meanings as closely aligned and mediated by cultural, social and political constructs such as semiotics. For example, Pasolini (2005) emphasises a semiotic reading of the script that acknowledges its intricate and dynamic structures that are particular to the cinema. For Pasolini, the significance and meaning of film are created through the relational links between the script and the language system of cinema. The script has a poetry and a metaphorical power that is only realised through cinema.

Pasolini (2005, p. 195) also acknowledges the literary heritage of the script by emphasising its precedence in the structure and forms of the dramatic play. The literary precedence which underpins the conception of the script and its link to language and meaning is prescient in the approaches of other researchers. Davies (2014), for example, approaches screenwriting as a complex and layered literary form. Koivumaki (2010) aligns the role of screenplay closely to audience reception. Ross (2010) explores artistic decision-making within the contemporary Hollywood studio system, looking closely at the relationship between scriptwriting and production processes. He explores the pervasive link between industrial systems of working and commercial objectives in screenwriting from the insider perspective of a studio executive to argue that as audiences master new technologies, there will be increased pressure on film business models to revise and engage alternative creative voices. Lee (2013) examines the psychology of scriptwriting practice and the importance of considering the ‘intention of the artist’ (*Ibid.* p. 39). For Lee, scriptwriting and the scripts are only realised and meaningful when contextualised within a literary critical structure that includes philosophy, psychology, literature and film studies in relation to the actual filmed text.
For Batty (2012) Taylor (2015) and Sawtell (2016) the investigation of scriptwriting practice is positioned in the field of creative writing. Their analysis of scriptwriting practice places emphasis on the content that is written by the scriptwriter and underplays the significance of industry parameters and contexts that permit practice. Their examination of the script is situated within an academic paradigm of creativity which ‘functions as a training ground for new thought and practice’ (Batty, Lee, Sawtell, Sculley & Tayler 2015, p. 12). Within this domain of enquiry Sawtell (2016) suggests a future composition of the script that accounts for the evolving dissemination and distribution of content on the internet.

Price’s fourth frame is criticism and interpretation, including empirical research into production of scripts. Relevant here is Macdonald’s (2010) small ethnographic study based on semi-structured interviews with seven screenwriters from the Screen Idea Work group, which considers best practice in scriptwriting as being articulated through orthodoxy or doctrine via professional manuals. Macdonald’s use of theoretical terms such as habitus and disposition shift analysis of scripts away from traditional literary concerns to the social basis of practice. However, the focus of scholars in the literature of screenwriting is largely removed from the theoretical consideration of practice. Although practices are discussed and approaches to practice are taught, absent from the discussion of scriptwriting across the four frames is enquiry into the intrinsic connections between scriptwriting as a creative practice and the film production processes that underpin ways of doing.

**Research contribution and questions**

Chapter One has discussed the landscape of Australian film and film production studies. The wide-ranging and comprehensive analysis of film in film and film production studies covers varied approaches, but with an emphasis on finished films as the object of analysis. The literature of Australian film mostly subscribes to a national film discourse, while the material practices that bring films into being, including scriptwriting, are overlooked. This omission of enquiry into creative practices and their relationship to industrial processes establishes the need for multi-faceted research into the nature of practice in the Australian film industry, including from an insider perspective.

The three research questions that support the overarching research proposition that is suggested by the gap identified by my review of the literature of Australian film studies and film production studies are as follows:
1. What are the production processes and imperatives that impact on scriptwriting practice?
   This question inherently suggests a process of identification and contextualised explanation that is suggested through analysis of the case studies.

2. How do production processes and imperatives mediate scriptwriting practices?

3. How are scriptwriting practices affected by the staging of film productions?

The thesis addresses this gap by focusing on scriptwriting as one specific practice in filmmaking. The research into scriptwriting takes into account the circumstances that allow practice to occur, this including consideration of the scope for individual agency and the industrial system that allows practices to occur. In taking practices as a manifestation of industrial, cultural and social processes, the following set of enquiries are suggested:

1. The identification of practices around scriptwriting.
2. The explanation of practices that could potentially mediate scriptwriting.
3. The description of the effect of practices.

The thesis examines practice as an individual and social activity that is grounded in cultural production. This is an inverse position to the literature of film studies and film production studies, which favour a text-driven rationalisation of processes grounded in an analysis of the finished film. From this position, the thesis posits an interpretative anthropology and a form of interpretative knowledge generation concerned with the contextualisation of screenwriting practice rather than its theorisation. The thesis approaches scriptwriting practice as an ensemble of practices, themselves ensembles of interpretative schemes, industrial contexts and relationships. Approached in this way, research and analysis reveals further potentialities of enquiry and complexities that are inherent in a practice-based approach. The thesis provides an analysis of scriptwriting practice through the following principal themes:

1. Individual agency.
2. Cultural and social parameters.
3. Economic functions.
4. Industrial processes.

Chapter One has established the originality and significance of the thesis. Chapter Two sets out the theoretical frame of reference for the thesis.
Chapter Two

Scriptwriting as Practice

Chapter Two examines scriptwriting practice within the different stages of the film development and production. It establishes Pierre Bourdieu’s theory of practice and its main concepts of capital, doxa, field and habitus as the analytical lens for the examination of scriptwriting in the case studies presented in Chapters Four and Five. In this chapter, the field of filmmaking, and more specifically the development and production of a film project, is conceived and contextualised as occurring within a community of practice. A community of practice is a term developed by cognitive anthropologists Jean Lave and Etienne Wegner (1991). It describes situated learning, where a group of people who participate in a profession or practice interact and acquire knowledge through the process of sharing information and experiences.

The script is approached in the cases as a boundary object that is both a mediating and mediated entity within filmmaking processes in a community of practice. Star and Griesemers’ (1989) conceived the idea of the boundary object in examining collaboration between biologists and amateur naturalists at the Berkeley Museum of Vertebrate Zoology. The concept is a valuable way of considering the role of the script in facilitating the informational and collaborative needs of different groups in working together in being ‘plastic enough to adapt to local needs and constraints of the several parties employing them, yet robust enough to maintain a common identity across sites’ (Ibid. p. 393).

The use of the concepts of boundary object and community of practice in the thesis link the circumstances within which scriptwriting occurs to the analytical framework of the research. This advances the aim of the thesis, which is to provide a theorised, insider perspective on scriptwriting practice. Chapter Two is structured in three main parts. Firstly, I situate scriptwriting within the film development process, discussing its different functions within practice. I then further expand on the script as a boundary object within a community of practice, examining further relational conditions between the script and its position in a collaborative space. Thirdly, I move on to discuss practice theory, focusing on Bourdieu’s theory of practice and the attendant concepts of capital, doxa, field and habitus as analytical frames in relation to the case studies.
Scriptwriting and the film development process

The film development and production process has many variants, as does the role of scriptwriting within it. Some filmmakers dispense with the script in the production stage of filmmaking, but this is an exception. In most industrialised filmmaking, the script predicates the film development and production process. Australian funding bodies manage film development and production through the implementation of stringent development criteria. This is achieved through the use of a budgetary template called the A-Z budget, which regulates the movement of money in the production phase, organises the roles involved in filmmaking into a hierarchical structure and imposes a linear way of working on filmmaking, from the conception to the exhibition of a film.

Table 1 is an example of an A-Z budget summary page downloaded from the Screen Australia website. It sets out the four main sections of the A-Z budget, these being termed ‘above the line’ (key creative contributors), ‘below the line’ (direct production costs), ‘post-production’ (editing, visual effects and sound), and indirect (insurances, completion bond, legal and accounting fees). The script is an above-the-line cost. Budget constraints can come to bear on a script, with producers requesting re-writes to reduce costs. These costs are then accounted for in the below-the-line costs, affecting the work of other departments. For example, for the art department, the script is an index to the design aesthetic of the film and triggers a process of negotiation between designers, director and producers about how to achieve this within available funds.

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Table 1: Example of A-Z Budget Summary Page 2016
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<td>Construction Crew</td>
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<td>H.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>I.a</td>
<td>IMAGE CAPTURE - FILM &amp; LAB – Shooting</td>
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<tr>
<td>I.b</td>
<td>IMAGE CAPTURE - TAPE &amp; HD</td>
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<td>K.6</td>
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<td>OFFICE EXPENSES</td>
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<td>Q.1</td>
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**POST-PRODUCTION COSTS**

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<td>T</td>
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<td>U.2</td>
<td>DIGITAL VISUAL EFFECTS</td>
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<td>V</td>
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<td>W</td>
<td>MUSIC</td>
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<td>X.1</td>
<td>PUBLICITY &amp; STILLS - PRODUCTION</td>
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<td>X.2</td>
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TOTAL POST-PRODUCTION COSTS

TOTAL "BELOW THE LINE" COSTS

**INDIRECT COSTS**

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<td>- Bank Fees</td>
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<td>- Stamp Duty</td>
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<td>- Exchange Rate Fluctuation</td>
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<td>- Production Legals</td>
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Z OVERHEADS

TOTAL ALL CATEGORIES

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<td>CONTINGENCY</td>
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<td>FINANCE</td>
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<td>MARKETING</td>
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<td>GUILD LEVIES</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

TOTAL BUDGET
The examination of scriptwriting in the thesis seeks to account for the complex role of the script across the many spheres of practice and levels of interaction in the film development and production process. Through a case study exploration of what is done, how it is done and why it was done, the thesis investigates how a scriptwriter makes sense of practice in the Australian film industry. Scriptwriting can be an individual practice where the practitioner works alone for the most part, but its implementation and procedures are also intrinsically linked to specific and highly-specialised interactions between key film practitioners, particularly producers and directors. Maras (2009) observes that the difficulty in analysing scriptwriting is manifest in the inherent separation of the creative conceptualisation of a film and the practical work of its making (pp. 40-43).

To comprehend this collective, but compartmentalised process of development and production requires a shared understanding of the script and its different meanings and purposes in the film project. The script serves as the blueprint for film production. For producers, the script is a template underpinning the major fiscal decisions about a production across each stage from funding to marketing. For directors, the script is a main catalyst for conceptual, visual and audio inspiration. The script and its inherent literary qualities such as character design, narrative structure and thematic content serve to attract actors to a project. For financial backers, the script embodies the potential to attract an audience and profits on completion.

Firstly, it is important to understand the sequential mode of production in filmmaking. Filmmaking typically unfolds across five distinct stages:

1. Ideation
2. Pre-production
3. Production
4. Post-production
5. Marketing, distribution and exhibition

The ideation stage of the film production process is referred to in the terminology of media jargon as ‘development hell’. The further development of the project in the ideation stage is perceived as being in limbo because there are so many creative, logistical and contractual elements that need to come together at the right time for a proposed project to progress to the
next stage of development. Many film projects fail to get past this stage, as was the case with the film project ‘Godless’, discussed in the second case study for this thesis.

The ideation stage involves developing story ideas and a plan of action for how the film will be made between producers, writers, directors, and private and institutional financial backers. Here, the script is an adaptable entity with different meanings and uses. For writers, the script is an act of personal expression guided by individual creative urges and inclinations, while taking into account producers’ perspectives on the development of story ideas. In the ideation stage, the script is the subject of frequent revision as writers negotiate input and feedback from other practitioners. Such revisions can go against the writers’ intentions and can reflect commercial imperatives, industrial ways of working and various deadlines. Decisions made in the ideation stage of filmmaking directly affect creative processes later.

The pre-production stage takes place once funding is secured. It involves the heads of each department—as listed in the below-the-line production costs of the A-Z Budget—in the filming process, working on the logistics of preparing to make a film. This includes further research and work on the script, as well as the generation of storyboards and visualisation documents. Other activities include location scouting, hiring actors and crew, the associated legal contracting and permissions to shoot, rehearsals, the generation of shooting scripts and design documents. Each department plays a distinctive role in the pre-production stage. At this stage, the script is usually ‘locked off’ to become the index to many other creative decisions. Decisions made in the ideation stage are realised in pre-production through the input of other film practitioners.

The production stage in filmmaking refers to the actual recording of footage, with full cast and crew working within a budgeted timeframe to translate the script from the page to the screen. In the production stage, the work of filmmaking that has been delegated to various departments in the pre-production stage is put into action. This includes practices that have tangible outcomes on the screen, such as cinematography, computer-generated images, computer graphics, costume design, direction, editing, hair and make-up, lighting, music composition, production design and special effects. The production stage is the most expensive and risky stage in filmmaking, being accordingly strongly regulated by established modes of practice and legally-binding contracts that fix employment to schedules and deadlines. At this stage, the script is the foundation from which the team goes about its work, despite it still being subject to revisions and changes. The aim of the production stage is to get the project filmed through the most efficient use of labour, time and resources.
The post-production stage involves editing the footage, the addition of sound, music, visual effects, colour grading and the final mixing of all these elements to result in a completed film. The script is re-written in the editing stage. Its original elements and meanings take on new significance as editors respond to what has occurred in the production stage. The script is calibrated against both the editor’s interpretation of the script and the footage that has been provided. The interplay between revised film scripts, schedules, production budgets and production-based documents such as daily reports and continuity breakdown documents also plays a role in editing practice. The post-production stage thus combines individual and collective practices, where practitioners are motivated and influenced by the content that has been generated and by resources, including the latest editing and grading software. These can have influence on the way work is carried out in the editing suite.

The final stage is the marketing, distribution and exhibition of the film. The script is less present in this stage, although aspects of distribution and exhibition have the potential to mediate script content. This can be seen in the collaboration of writers, directors and producers with distributors and exhibitors to create a marketing and advertising plan for the project. The interplay between the film script and its marketable elements is crucial for the film to reach its target audience. Advertisers look for meanings and contexts that can be clearly delineated from the script as important factors that underpin the successful marketing of the film. There are also potential marketing advantages and economic benefits if the script is perceived as a literary product through the publication of the script in book form. In this, the script shifts from a transitory state as a text that wants to be a film to the more normative state of a text to be read.

The function of the script can be seen to vary according to its uses. Different types of scripts reflect these differences of usage. For example, a published script is a literary manuscript using scriptwriting format to present narrative and character to the reader, as opposed to a post-script, which is a literal transcription of action and dialogue of what appears on the screen in text form. A shooting script, which is usually generated in the pre-production stage of development, is a text that makes apparent to the reader directorial choices such as camera angles, moves and frame composition in relation to an interpretation of the narrative and characters. A pitch script, usually generated in the ideation stage of film development, is a narrative-based document that focusses on the saleability and marketability of the concept and project to potential investors.
Filmmaking as a community of practice and the script as boundary object

Bordwell, Staiger and Thompson (1988, p. 382) describe the script as a ‘major area of variation’ in filmmaking, because of its changing role in the production process. Price (2014, p. 88) frames scripts as ‘collaborative works for hire’, being conceived and written for industrialised organisations that are dependent on the realisation of the script into a medium (cinema) that is distinct from its original conceptual medium (text). Primarily, the script functions as a guide within the complex set of practices that make up filmmaking. The script thus occupies a unique and indispensable position in the community of filmmaking practice, being the conduit for different meanings and understandings in film development and production.

As a boundary object, the script brokers meanings and practices between different social, intellectual and cultural communities (Worrall 2010). It is a concept that fits neatly with the idea of a script as a point of reference and means of translation for the contributors to a film development and production process. Approached as a boundary object, the script facilitates and adapts to the constraints and mediations imposed on it by the different parties using it. The conceptualisation of the script as an active mediating tool in the collective filmmaking process is a key analytical thread in the case study chapters. The practices that comprise the film development and production process are collaborative in nature and overseen by a producer or a group of producers. This site of collaborative engagement is created and owned by the producer, but is based on shared common goals and objectives within the community of practice. The process between prescribed actions and their relation to industrialised ways of doing presents as standard practices. Standard practices suggest a required level of quality that is accepted as the norm and is regularly produced.

An effective community of practice overcomes potential organisational and structural barriers to the dissemination of knowledge. Wenger (1998) further defines the nature of a community of practice through three interrelated terms:

1. **Mutual Engagement.** It is through participation that practitioners establish norms and ways of doing that build collaborative relationships. These relationships are the bonds that bring the community together as a social entity.

2. **Joint Enterprise.** It is through interactions that practitioners create a shared understanding of what keeps them together. In this, the complex negotiations of member practitioners are moderated through practice to support and sustain the joint enterprise.
3. Shared Repertoire. A community of practice generates a set of communal practices that is part of a shared repertoire. These practices are resources that are used in the pursuit of the joint enterprise, and can include both literal and symbolic meanings (p. 72).

Wenger (1998) also acknowledges that peripheral participation and divergent objectives can introduce potential weaknesses to collective action. A community of practice is inherently problem-based, while drawing its members from different fields with different knowledge and understandings (Arias & Fischer 2000). Lave and Wenger (1991, p. 42) stress that communities of practice should not be comprehended as inherently positive, but rather social processes through which practices are ‘sustained and perpetuated’ (Gherardi, Nicolini & Odella 1998, p. 279). Researchers such as Watson (2002), Collins (2003), Czarniawksa (2003), Misztal (2002), Jones (2003), and Swan, Scarsborough and Robertson (2002) examine the latent struggles and difficulties inherent in a community of practice. These studies draw attention to the potential problems that occur in a group situation, highlighting how engagement in group action is manifest and congruent with how power and authority are distributed between groups. The overlap between these researchers of key ideas such as conflict, control and lack of rules (see Figure 2) suggest the shared values and mechanisms of interaction within conditions of practice in a community of practice.

![Figure 2 Power Structures in a Community of Practice](image)

**Practice theory**

Building on the ideas of community of practice and boundary object, practice theory provides an overarching framework for examining scriptwriting as a set of learned skills, techniques and dispositions that arise in the structured system of relationships, interactions and transactions that is filmmaking. Practice in the singular can be understood as describing the whole of human action in contrast to thought. The defining characteristics of practice in this sense include conventions, customs, habits, policies, procedures, traditions, routines, rules and systems. As such, practices structure activities across diverse social circumstances. Practice in the sense of practice theory is something else. Practice theory is an umbrella term for a range of analytical
approaches within social theory that seek to explain how people make and transform their world. Practice theorists set forth different definitions of practice and its functions. Practice in this sense is used to examine human activity in varied fields, from management (Kemmis 2005) and neuroscience (Lizardo 2009) to online film production (Telo 2013).

Practice theory examines the link between practices and the formative effects of the social contexts in which they arise, while accepting the scope for individual agency. The work of a varied line of philosophers and sociologists has contributed to the development of practice theory, including David Emile Durkheim (1915), Ludwig Wittgenstein (1953), Martin Heidegger (1962), Harold Garfinkel (1967), Pierre Bourdieu (1972), Michel Foucault (1979), Anthony Giddens (1979), Sherry Ortner (1984), Michel De Certeau (1984), Ian Taylor (1985), Judith Butler (1990), Bruno Latour (1991) and Bryan Turner (1995). Each writer examines aspects of culture and society through the lens of practices. Rather than representing a cohesive, single practice theory, Brauchler and Postill (2010, p. 6) describe the work of these writers as a ‘practice approach’. Reckwitz (2002) describes practice theory as a specific branch of cultural theory that seeks to understand the cognitive and epistemological basis of practices and their role in the reproduction of the social order. Its defining feature is that it situates the social in localised actions, attributing a measure of agency to the individual.

Brauchler and Postill (2010) identify two main streams within the theoretical analysis of practices. The first approach is the more focused analysis of what practitioners do from the perspective of practitioners’ knowledge and perspectives. Here, the analysis of practices surveys both the practical activity and its representations as significant cultural, social and economic phenomena. To account for the representation of practice, the historical and cultural particularity of practices is seen to be context-dependent, while taking into account the different ways in which individual performances of practice occur. This practitioner-based and context-dependant approach to practice reflects the aim of the thesis, which examines the specific patterns of performance linked to the practice of scriptwriting within the wider practice of filmmaking.

The second approach is philosophical, with the examination of practices being seen as fundamental to understanding the social. The social philosopher Theodore Schatzki (1996), a main member of the second wave of practice theorists, positions the analysis of practice as an examination of the attributes of knowledge and reality (Brauchler & Postill 2010, p. 10). Schatzki conceives of practices as coordinated behaviours comprised of forms of bodily and
mental activity, things and their use, these being reinforced through their performance across time and space. Schatzki argues that the performance of practices also includes knowledge in the form of understandings, expertness, emotional states and comprehension. To account for such an expansive philosophical position, Schatzki (1996, pp. 91-98) distinguishes between ‘dispersed practices’, which are basic and oriented towards social understanding, and ‘integrative practices’, which are complex and constitutive of particular domains or fields.

According to Rouse (1996), practice has a crucial implicit aspect in a level of competence and performance that is inaccessible to verbal articulation. He emphasises the dynamic nature of social structures and their sway over individual action, identifying five main concepts inherent to practice theory:

2. Social Structures or Culture and Individual Agency. The analysis of practices stresses the dynamic nature of social structures, and reconciles their governance of and constraints on individual actions.
3. Bodily Skills and Disciplines. Human agency and social interaction are understood as bodily performance at variance with intellectual conceptions of culture and social life.
4. Language and Tacit Knowledge. The significance of bodily skills in practice theory is at odds with the sense that language is integral to social life. Practices have an implicit aspect, a level of capability or performance prior to verbal articulation, and perhaps beyond the reach of language.

Within these parameters, practices involve intention and meaning, synthesising different kinds of knowledge spanning the technical, craft, theoretical and personal on the part of both practitioners, and all those who interact with a practice. The nature and interaction of the diverse practices that allow film development and production to occur represent a challenge to interpretation and knowledge, and practice theory offers a well-developed framework for understanding the systematic operation and maintenance of practices in social settings. Practices
in this sense codify what a practitioner does, codes that practice theorists argue are representative of a nexus of knowledge and power. This affords practice a relational position within any given field and identifies the role of practices in the dynamics of social cohesion (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, p. 101).

In a study of professional practice drawn mainly from the field of education, Kemmis (2005) describes practices as a set of learned dispositions, embodied, developed and maintained through the presence of the practitioner in a professional context, while nonetheless embodying scope for individual agency. Drawing on the work of Bourdieu, Foucault and Habermas, Kemmis proposes seven characteristics of professional management practices:

1. Meaning and Purpose: Practice is not just an activity, because it incorporates meaning and intention.

2. Structure: The structure of practice is realised through the subjective point of view of the practitioner, and is formed and structured through experience.

3. Situation: Practice embodies communicative action that addresses understanding, agreement and consensus between practitioners. Practice is established in agreements that form the basis of communities of practice.

4. Temporal location: Practice is historically formed, structured and reproduced. Practice takes place in human and social action against the background of individual narratives.

5. Systemic: Practice is conserved, maintained and regulated by institutions and the work of individuals in a cooperative way.

6. Reflexivity and transformation: Practice is materially and strategically reflexive, in that its transformations can be reproduced through language and culture.

7. Practical reasoning: Practice involves practical reasoning, utilising knowledge in the face of uncertainty. (Ibid. p. 6).

The characteristics articulated by Kemmis underscore the relevance and usefulness of concepts from practice theory. As a theoretical framework for the investigation of scriptwriting practice, practice theory accounts for the enabling and constraining effects of the Australian film industry, its production processes and funding models.
**Bourdieu and practice**

Central to the examination of scriptwriting practice in this thesis is the contextualisation of scriptwriting from an insider perspective within the industrial and funding structures of the Australian film industry. Scriptwriting practice is not only an individual creative activity, but a collaborative practice that accounts for the industrial, cultural and social processes that generate them. Pierre Bourdieu’s theoretical work on practice accounts for practices within a complex and relational matrix of social and cultural meaning. Bourdieu (1930-2002) was a French theorist whose work in anthropology, philosophy and sociology focused on how the social order and power are expressed within cultural fields. His interests ranged across art, education, literature, social justice and policy, taste and television, each being linked by his concern for the relationship between practices and social structures, reflexivity and symbolic domination.

Bourdieu’s interest in practice grew from early fieldwork between 1955 and 1960. He observed the impact of the changing social and cultural conditions on individuals in Kabylia, Algeria. These observations, published in Bourdieu’s first major theoretical work, *An Outline of a Theory of Practice* (1977), considered real-life customs and practices such as gift exchange and marriage. Bourdieu investigated the preservation and regulation of these practices through institutions, law, organisations, policy and professional task-sharing. This relational positioning of practice is particularly pertinent to the contextualisation of scriptwriting practice within industrialised processes of filmmaking presented in this thesis. Here, externally-imposed standards and modes of cultural production and individual creative practice co-exist, these being historically formed and organised at the local and international levels.

Bourdieu’s first interest was the ‘empirical investigation of the phenomenology of affective life’ (Robbins 2007, p. 87). He adopted a position between philosophy and sociology in seeking to explain the world by exposing its inherent, self-sustaining, strategic practices (Callewaert 2006, p. 84). Bourdieu’s writings focus on the mediating and mediated effect of practices within the institutions in which they occur to raise important questions about the maintenance of the status quo (Jenkins 1992). Table 2 sets out the key theoretical concepts in Bourdieu’s work. A consistent observation of Bourdieu’s theoretical conception of practice is the focus on the mediated effect of practices within institutions. This raises questions around the self-sustaining nature of practices that maintain status quo. Bourdieu’s position is not an explication of the world, but rather an exposition of its inherent self-sustaining and strategic practices. Jenkins, a prominent biographer of Bourdieu, states that it is this position of exposition that makes
Bourdieu ‘good to think with’ (Jenkins 1992, p. 115). In the thesis, the key concepts of habitus, capital, doxa, field and reflexivity become the basis for the analysis of the practice of script-writing and its nature and purpose within the industrialised field of filmmaking.

Table 2: Key Theoretical Concepts from Bourdieu Used in the Thesis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BOOK</th>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>KEY CONCEPTS USED IN THE THESIS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>An Outline of a Theory of Practice</td>
<td>1977</td>
<td>Practice, habitus, field, capital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Logic of Practice</td>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Practice, habitus, capital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste</td>
<td>1984</td>
<td>Habitus, field, embodied social structures</td>
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<tr>
<td>Homo Academicus</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Reflexive sociology, academic practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Field of Cultural Production</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Cultural production, field, habitus,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Cultural capital, the authority of language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photography: A Middle-brow Art</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Practice, hierarchy of legitimacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language and Symbolic Power</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>The authority of language, power, symbolic capital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Practice, reflexivity, field, capital, language, cultural production</td>
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<td>The Rules of Art</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Field, cultural production, reflexivity, habitus, dispositions</td>
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<td>Pascalian Meditations</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Bodily knowledge, habitus, practical sense</td>
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<td>Masculine Domination</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Symbolic action</td>
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<tr>
<td>Practical Reason</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Capital, field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On Television</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Cultural production, field, habitus</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Weight of the World: Social Suffering in Contemporary Society</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Capital, hierarchy</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Austin (2016, p. 1) notes that Bourdieu wrote little about screen production other than his short text On Television (1998), but his insights in practice and cultural production offer a way of interrogating film practice as a manifestation of social structures and culture. Two features characterise the applicability of Bourdieu’s insights into practice and cultural production to this thesis. Firstly, his understanding of the ‘link between theory and practice’ (Grenfell 2008, p. 2). Secondly, Bourdieu’s work presents as a unique set of conceptual terms that are employed in the thesis in the course of analysis and the discussion of findings.

For Bourdieu, understanding cultural production is relational and needs to be contextualised within broader historical, social and cultural conditions. To Bourdieu, globalisation effects in the modern world have collapsed the differences between the cultural and economic fields. This is manifest in the submission of culture to market pressures and hence a loss of cultural and artistic autonomy (Austin 2016, p. 9).
Researchers have used Bourdieu’s work to account for a diversity of cultural practices as set out in Table 3. His theory of practice and associated concepts of capital, cultural production, doxa, field, habitus and reflexive analysis has had a pivotal effect on the discussion and understanding of cultural production, and forms a valuable framework for the analysis of filmmaking in linking practices to questions of social, cultural and economic significance.

<table>
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<td>2003</td>
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<td>Dillon</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Religion and cultural production</td>
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<td>Doane</td>
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<td>Grenfeld and Hardy</td>
<td>2003</td>
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<td>Heise and Tudor</td>
<td>2007</td>
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<td>Hesmondhalgh</td>
<td>2006</td>
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<td>Prior</td>
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<td>Wright</td>
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</table>

For Bourdieu, practices bring together different complex activities into a relational symbiosis that ensures efficiency. These practices are also inherently social practices that are not completely systemic or random structured regularities. His explanation for how objective social structures model human conduct is within the standpoint that individuals have a degree of agency to act within these structures.

Bourdieu attributes three distinct qualities to practice. Firstly, practice is always located in time, which is crucial to its understanding:

[The] temporal structure [of practice] that is its rhythm, its tempo, and above all its directionality is constitutive of its meaning. As with music, any manipulation of this structure, even a simple change in tempo—either an acceleration or slowing down—subjects it to a destructuration that is irreducible to a simple change in an axis of reference (Bourdieu 1990, p. 81).
According to Bourdieu, when accounting for practice, it is important to acknowledge the state of existing within and having some relationship with time. The case studies in this thesis are cognate of time and of how practices manifest over different time periods. Secondly, Bourdieu states that although practice is not consciously organised, it is not wholly random, having 'a logic which is not that of the logician', practices being a reaction to any given situation (Ibid. p. 86). The case studies in the thesis examine the actualities of practices through an insider narrative that accounts for the differing contexts for agency and collaboration. Thirdly, Bourdieu positions practices as actions that are habitual and strategic, being oriented towards a specific goal (Ibid. pp. 15-17). The exposition of individual and collaborative practices in the case studies focuses on the goal of getting a film made and the actualities of filmmaking.

Bourdieu uses the term praxis to identify the process by which a skill or knowledge is realised through practice. He maintains that practice includes the use of skills that are learnt and methods and techniques that have evolved in structured systems of relationships over time. Practice, as such, is not self-contained within a practitioner’s action, but rather involves patterns of interaction with the social, economic, cultural and political environment within which it is actioned.

Bourdieu’s representation of practice provides a theoretical framework for comprehending how the practice of scriptwriting might exist and operate within the wider practice of filmmaking. It provides a rich set of conceptual tools for understanding how practices become collective entities based on shared comprehensions that mediate know-how and standards in turn. For Bourdieu, practice is forged around communicative action, being culturally, linguistically and socially reproduced as well as transformed over time and space. This position has value in examining how cultural and social conformity are manifest in formal institutions such as training academies and practitioner organisations, or through informal means such as mass media and personal interaction.

**Practices and cultural capital**

When Bourdieu writes about cultural production, he refers to a broad range of human activity including academic work, law, religion and various fields of art practice such as literature, music, painting and visual art. Nevertheless, his work on cultural production mostly concerns literature and visual art.
Bourdieu’s position on cultural production suggests that the elusive goal of achieving social standing drives social agents’ relations to culture. Bourdieu takes the Marxist meaning of capital beyond economics to examine material, cultural, social and symbolic forms of power. The Marxist tradition ascribes capitalism a main role in the reproduction of inequality and the maintenance of the status quo within culture. This position can drive an overly deterministic analysis that omits the possibility of human action transforming social and cultural arrangements through consequential actions that can be either intended or unintended. Bourdieu seeks to avoid the reduction of cultural interests to the effects of economic and political forces. He also breaks with a Marxist concept of capital in rejecting a ‘reduction of the concept of capital to the strictly economic’ (Costa 2006, p. 876). Drawing on Bourdieu (1996), the field of film ‘produces and imposes on the public a very particular vision’ through its modes of production, exhibition and distribution having symbolic implications across the broader fields of culture, society and politics (Ibid. p. 2).

Bourdieu links his discussion of practice to the major organising concepts of field and capital. He describes a field as a particular branch of activity or interest that embodies an ‘objectified history’ (1980, pp. 66-68). A field is a hierarchical entity that is subject to change, with dominant agents and institutions having considerable influence here. He describes capital as the resources, material or symbolic, that people accumulate by engaging in practice within a field (1993, pp. 40-41). Bourdieu identifies four main types of capital: economic, cultural, social and symbolic. Economic capital is wealth defined in monetary terms. Cultural capital involves the possession of recognised knowledge. Social capital represents the nature and extent of a person’s or institution’s social ties. Symbolic capital refers to one’s status, honour or prestige (1992, p. 114). In linking the concepts of practice and capital, Bourdieu stresses the socially-stratified nature of practices as signifiers of hierarchical class status and social circumstance.

For example, in Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste (1984), Bourdieu sets out to show how the ‘pure aesthetic gaze’ of artists and intellectuals, a ubiquitous point of view since Kant, is the position of a specific class and the product of ‘a life of ease that tends to induce an active distance from necessity’ (p. 5). He also notes that due to their privileged existence, members of the upper classes can move easily from the ‘primary stratum’ of a cultural product to the more complex ‘stratum of secondary meanings’ of forms and relationships in culture (Ibid. pp. 101-104). The concepts of privilege and hierarchical structure are germane in the film industry and in film studies. Film studies tend to privilege analysis of single films, based on the assumption that the filmmaker is sole creator of the film. This is a dynamic that can be seen as
being perpetuated by the structures and codes of conduct in the Australian film industry. Representations of film and television practitioners in mainstream media, particularly writers and directors as autonomous creators, reflect what Bourdieu calls a charismatic ideology that prevents the audience from asking who has created this ‘creator’ (1992, p. 168).

Indeed, for Bourdieu, idealist notions of artistic creativity flaw the study of the production of culture. He specifically questions the ‘charismatic conception, which by refusing to take into consideration the social considerations of production and reception, makes it fully impossible to understand cultural phenomena’ (Boschetti 2006, p. 139). Taken further into the realm of politicised economic and social enquiry, Bourdieu (1984) argues that idealist artistic endeavours are intrinsically linked to the economics of art, reflecting a work’s cachet as a social, cultural and symbolic artefact. This observation recalls Dermody and Jacka’s (1987) claim that the hierarchical and mediating links between government funding bodies and the Australian film industry privilege and fund particular types of films and filmmakers.

Bourdieu (1984) considers cultural capital as having three manifestations of status. Firstly, capital is incorporated in the general constitution of a person, or habitus, largely through primary learning in early childhood. Secondly, cultural capital is objectivised in the form of cultural artefacts and text. Thirdly, it is validated through the actions of cultural institutions and expressed in terms of awards, certificates, diplomas and examinations. Within his conception of cultural capital, Bourdieu accounts for the social values of cultural habits, dispositions and skills, positing theories of inequality within a sociology of culture and production to depict an intrinsic relationship between practice and cultural capital.

For Bourdieu, cultural practices serve as mechanisms of social distinction and competency. Both consumers and producers within a given cultural field are endowed with specific cultural involvements that are prompted by their position within a cultural field and within society. Economic, cultural and social capital define a person’s position and their options for action in any field, with human action being strategic, although mostly in a tacit rather than conscious way. According to Friedland (2009), Bourdieu sees the unequal distribution of capital as the ‘prime mover of history’ and the mediator of change within fields (2009, p. 904). From this position, Bourdieu points to the influence of economic structures over cultural life, where the mode of production of material life mediates social, political and intellectual process. Bourdieu represents cultural politics as a trans-historical space of domination, with meaning being founded on hierarchical differences between signs and the distribution of capital.
Bourdieu (1984) represents culture as capital that is institutionalised through material structures such as galleries, museums and libraries, and through events and activities such as concerts and cinema-going. For Bourdieu, culture is also an embodied capital that is manifest through the cultivated gaze, taste, poise, distinction and desire for recognition. Considering culture as capital in this way implies bridging the differences between the cultural and social and the economic and social. Bourdieu thinks that the most important cultural politics are those that shift institutional frames. For him, culture and power are ‘not simply attempts at interpreting the world, but more importantly, they are interventions aimed at changing it, by altering ways in which we perceive the social world and construct it’ (Frangie 2009, p. 222). Siisiäinen further argues that Bourdieu is especially interested in the ‘examination of social conflicts or struggles about the stakes in different fields; forms of power/violence and forms of domination and deprivation’ (Siisiäinen 2000, p. 22). These ideas of power, stakes, strategised action and conflict are particularly relevant to understanding practice in the film industry. This is because the power to represent the world is a major issue in filmmaking, being a form of cultural authority and capital that filmmakers, producers and film scholars have an interest in safeguarding and maintaining. In the film industry, the opportunity to work as a practitioner on a regular basis is an important signifier of cultural status.

A pillar of Bourdieu’s theory of practice is how social systems produce and perpetuate dominant cultural hierarchies unopposed. Bourdieu uses the analogy of the game and the skill of ‘anticipating the future of the game’ to account for the strategic action and struggles that perpetuate the status quo (Bourdieu 1998, p. 25). The guardians of the established order systemise and codify principles of production to defend them through official systems of classification and production processes. This strategic positioning is pertinent to Australian filmmaking, which is funded and thus controlled in the main by an alliance between government and corporate interests. Within the diverse arenas of social life, people are socialised to plan the most appropriate moves to accumulate status, distinction or wealth, simultaneously reproducing existing social and cultural divisions and hierarchies, and class formations. Hierarchy suggests a transferral of power and influence. Bourdieu (1990) states that the quest for power and the maximisation of one’s position in a field means that the common feature in all ‘popular arts is their subordination of artistic activity to socially regulated functions’ (Ibid. p. 8). As such, modes of practice are strategic codes used by practitioners, rather than being instinctive means of creating.
Bourdieu uses the term *doxa* to refer to the experience by which the social world appears as natural and self-evident (Bourdieu 1977, p. 164). Bourdieu’s concept of *doxa* elucidates the complexities of cultural and social institutions such as filmmaking, bringing a more nuanced understanding to the functions of such institutions. Doxa acknowledges the agency of individuals in relation to cultural practices and fields, and the scope of their creative autonomy when they do participate in an industrialised and institutionalised field of cultural production. Cultural artefacts such as film function as doxa in that their modus operandi are closely connected to the notion of ‘pre-reflexive, shared but unquestioned opinions and perceptions’ (Grenfell 2008, p. 120). This claim is particularly pertinent for production, exhibition and distribution practices in filmmaking, given that they have a historical validity that is largely unquestioned in the film industry.

Production, exhibition and distribution practices underpin ways of doing in the film industry by being structurally embedded in the legal and financial processes of film development and production. The generative action of these practices creates parameters of behaviour and action that become socially sanctioned and embedded. In this sense, doxa helps to fix social limits and one’s sense of belonging. Individuals become voluntary subjects of these incorporated mental structures that deprive them of more deliberate and informed choices (Bourdieu 1984, p. 167). Within this pattern of action and conformity, Bourdieu (1990) aligns practice to the logic of domination, but also makes an exception of cultural practice, stating that ‘in the cultural spheres of capitalist societies, practices never seem to comply with an economic logic’ (*Ibid.* p. 122).

In *Distinction*, Bourdieu details how taste serves to differentiate people and to situate them in specific social groupings, arguing that ‘taste is first and foremost the distaste of the tastes of others’ (*Ibid.* p. 223). Taste for Bourdieu is the expectation of the social meaning and value of practices, given their dispensation in social space and the knowledge people have of the correspondence between practices and social groups. It is the manifestation of the practical understandings of what is likely or unlikely to occur that have meaning for an individual occupying a given position in social space. Taste and its link to class structures and doxa underpin the analysis of filmmaking practice in the thesis. In filmmaking, taste defines the types of film that are produced and consumed. Taste marks difference through a process of distinction that informs the struggle for social position.

According to Fowler (1999, p. 3), Bourdieu’s exploration of the economic, social and cultural machinations of taste reflects a ‘deliberate disenchantment with art’, yet consistent throughout
Bourdieu’s analysis of cultural production is the link between economic, social and cultural structures, and the significance and meaning of the content created (Bourdieu 1993). The empirical work into taste choices in France supporting *Distinction* is now decades old. However, Boyne (2002) argues that the characterisations of different class systems relative to the function of cultural production remain pertinent today. They are certainly pertinent in the thesis in relation to the analysis of scriptwriting practice within the context of Australian film production. An objective of this research is to examine the effect of economic structures on creative agency, the role played by late-stage capitalism in the reproduction of inequality and the status quo that has bearing on individual agency and practices. Forty years ago, Dermody and Jacka (1987, p. 93) argued that the examination of production processes was an important filter for understanding the nature of Australian film production in an environment of changing models of government funding. This is a pertinent starting point for the research of this thesis, which considers contemporary production process as a way of understanding individual agency and practices.

**Habitus and cultural practice**

The thesis investigates the effect of social and cultural constructs on individual creative practice. Here, Bourdieu’s discussion of habitus is relevant because it orientates practices from the seemingly almost automatic and insignificant gestures or techniques of the body such as ways of eating, drinking and walking to the most fundamental principles of composition, comprehension and evaluation in the social world. Since habitus is grounded in practice, it cannot be reduced to a mere mirror of those structures; the reproduction of social structures through habitus always has a creative, emergent quality.

Bourdieu takes the idea of habitus ‘from a long line of philosophers, stretching from Aristotle to Aquinas to Husserl, to develop a dispositional theory of action’ (Wacquant 2005, pp. 81-92). The dispositions that make up habitus are a ‘tendency, propensity or inclination’ (Bourdieu 1977, p. 214). For Bourdieu, habitus consists of dispositions that mirror social divisions within the surrounding society. In this, habitus is an approximation of the relationship between social structure and individual agency to produce a habitual state of being. Habitus can then be conceived as both a structure and as structuring. According to Grenfell, habitus is ‘structured by conditions of existence and generates practices, beliefs, perceptions, feelings and so forth in accordance with its own structure’ (Grenfell 2008, p. 51). For Bourdieu (1984), the habitus of the individual is revealed through a dialectical process whereby the practitioner internalises the external world and externalises their internal world through practices. Habitus is
defined by two capacities—the ability ‘to produce classifiable practices and works’ and the scope ‘to differentiate and appreciate these practices and products’ (Bourdieu 1984, p. 170). Habitus can also be defined as internalised, embodied social structures, the repeated performance of particular repertoires forming the unconscious disposition of habitus.

Bourdieu argues that our habitus determines fundamental life chances, and is incorporated in the characteristic ways we communicate and in our preferred inclinations, tendencies and dispositions. Individuals creatively construct their habitus, reproducing, and to an extent also modifying, social structures. Habitus informs the structures of field, the field mediates between habitus and the many diverse practices and fields form the transcendent realm of the social. The ability to find the appropriate expression of one’s thought reflects the fact that utterances need to be performative in the social market. Hence, habitus ‘generates meaningful practices and meaning-giving perceptions’ (Bourdieu 1984, p. 170). Habitus thus represents a matrix that is deep-structuring and creates self-fulfilling predictions according to disparate social opportunities linked to class. Habitus is an artefact that is produced out of the social world. Bourdieu’s conception of habitus recognises that social agents are not submissive individuals pulled by external coercions, but rather skilful beings who construct and navigate social reality in an active way through their perception and action. As a consequence, habitus is interlinked with reality and theory. It is both an empirical reality and a theoretical proposition (Hilgers 2009).

People’s different life experiences mean that they bring varied ways of thinking, feeling and behaving to the activity of filmmaking. The initial social and cultural positions that lead someone to filmmaking are augmented by training, followed by induction into the market-driven world of film development and production, which in Australia is mediated by public arts funding. No one is born a filmmaker, filmmaking being a set of acquired dispositions. The socially-constituted cognitive structures that comprise a habitus are pliable, relational and can be transferred, and result from the experienced phenomena of filmmaking. The subjective structures that inform habitus underpin the presentation of the case studies in the thesis. Habitus is projected as an individual’s direct choice of alternatives equivalent to the structures that have produced the habitus. To speak of habitus is to include the practitioner as an intrinsic part of the object of knowledge, it being their contribution to the generation of knowledge that reconfigures the reality of the object of knowledge.
The case study chapters on scriptwriting practice investigate the capacity habitus has for generating representations and practices ‘within the limits imposed upon it by the objective structures that produce it’ (Costa 2006, p. 880). For Bourdieu (1984, p. 101), habitus is prior to practice and regulates it as proposed in the following formula:

\{(\text{habitus}) (\text{capital})\} + \text{field} = \text{practice}.

The formula suggests the fluid, interlinked and relational elements of practice to habitus within a field and capital. Capital here is cultural capital, which is linked to an individual’s economic resources (Ibid. p. 101). Capital generates an infinite number of behaviours like a ‘chain of displacements, transformation, mediations’ from which a limited number of principles can be gained (Potter 2000, p. 237). Capital forms a resilient generative principle that gives direction to people’s choices. The thesis uses the concept of habitus to examine the deeply ingrained social structures that influence social and cultural milieus and which act as guidelines that permit the practitioner to make adjustments, improvise and strategise to situations as they arise.

**Filmmaking in a cultural field**

The cases studies in this thesis examine the work-a-day practice of scriptwriting in the field of filmmaking from an insider perspective. For Bourdieu, practice within a cultural field is the basis for understanding the role of individual and collective agency as a mechanism of distinction and competency. A condition for the emergence of a field is that agents recognise it as such and refer to it within the parameters of its history. Bourdieu maintains that fields are specialist domains of practice with their own logics (Bourdieu 1993, p. 6). The position of the agent in the field is objectively defined by the determinations that the field imposes on both the agent and the institutions that make up the field. According to Bourdieu, the most instructive way to analyse a field is as a relatively autonomous, socially-instituted domain (Ibid. p. 6). However, the concept of field was not developed as a ‘grand theory, but as a means of translating practical problems into concrete empirical operations’ (Grenfell 2008, p. 81).

Bourdieu depicts fields as distinguished by power differences between the practitioners who make them up. The practitioners are plunged into a zero-sum game characterised by the struggle for strategic advantage between those with established power, the curators of culture, and those who seek power, the creators of culture. Bourdieu thinks that it is the outcome of struggles within a field that is worthy of attention. These struggles are ascertained by the amount of social, cultural and economic capital possessed by competing players in a given field and the rigor of a
field arise from the position-taking according to the dispositions of agents. Drawing on Bourdieu, Macdonald (2004, p. 267) suggests that the investigation of screenwriting should be accompanied by an analysis of the field as ‘a way of thinking that requires attitudes and competences … judgements and distinctions based on a covert set of social relationships’.

Far from reacting mechanically to external conditions, agents respond to the invitations and mediations of the world whose meaning they have helped produce. Fields therefore function as historically-established paths organised around struggles over the respective powers of capital, which are struggles over legitimate dominance. The social within this context is a set of interlocking and political production functions. Power operates through culture, but is not itself cultural. This dynamic is seen in the field of filmmaking, where hierarchical positions of power and influence are relational across a number of practices. In Practical Reason, Bourdieu (1998) sees vested interests and struggles to attain material and symbolic advantage as inhabiting the heart of culture. Inherent to most forms of action is capability and the drive to attain the upper hand through strategising that is on occasion deliberate, but mostly comes from habit and is unspoken. Bourdieu’s concept of practice illuminates the interrelationship between culture, power and social reproduction within a qualified paradigm of strategised activity. Discussing the field of contemporary British art, Grenfell and Hardy (2003) note the links between art practice and economic aspiration. These links exemplify Bourdieu’s notion of field positioning in which social structures are linked to cognitive structures and serve as a prop for domination, symbolic or otherwise. This is the predominant goal of strategic interaction and practice in the field (Ibid. p. 21).

The thesis investigates whether participation in the field implies a shared commitment to the principles of the activities of the field and of the field-specific capital. Filmmaking is a field within which complex frameworks of connections and position-taking occur. The constant struggle for stakes in filmmaking is manifest in the conflations of different sub-fields to support the legitimisation of filmmaking practice, which is always at stake. One way that the Australian film industry projects its cultural value and maintains the status quo is through the selective use of data on the behaviour of Australian cinema audiences to suggest evidence of a commercially-thriving industry. One or two Hollywood blockbusters counted as Australian in annual surveys of film revenue bolster the overall Australian box office figures, creating the impression that the Australian film industry is financially successful. For example, The Great Gatsby (Luhrmann, 2013), which grossed $27,300,000 at the Australian box office, bolstered the figures for local
attendance for Australian film in 2014 (Screen Australia Box Office 2016). The classification of
the film as Australian masks the fact that the production is predominately Hollywood-driven and
owned, with most of its earnings going back to the parent company Fox Studios in the USA.
This shows how power over a classificatory system and the imprecise use and misappropriation
of data reflect struggles over the meaning, significance and relevance of filmmaking as well as
further complicating the definition of what is an Australian film.

More pertinent to the research in the thesis is that the power to selectively use data as the basis
for estimating value and worth in the Australian film industry is another way status quo is
sustained and maintained. The research approach in the thesis moves away from this in
endeavouring to make sense of practices from within the field and from experiential first-person
observations from practice, rather than using data that pre-exists in the field. To do this involves
a reflexive participation in practice and analysis. A reflexive approach considers the interiority of
the individual’s habitus within the field, as well as the structures and contingencies that make up
the field. According to Jenkins (2008), reflexivity for Bourdieu pertains to two interrelated
domains: the application of scientific method in sociology and a critical discourse in philosophy
(p. 200). According to Wacquant (2001), Bourdieu’s reflexive position on the logic of practice in
cultural production suggests two possible resolutions: the logic of practice and the logic of
science (p. 184). Bourdieu identifies a gap between the logic of practice, which is embedded in
time, situated in space and not aware of itself, and the logic of academic knowledge. This
difference can be spanned by the effort of theorisation, by a reflexive analysis of the theoretical
position itself and by how it influences research as an activity that is practical.

In *Pascalian Meditations* (1977), Bourdieu identifies an unassailable gap between practical
knowledge and scientific knowledge, practice being a process that is not formed by the process
of thinking in the moment. The gap between practice and its elucidation cannot be bridged, but
that does not prevent analysis of social conditions altogether, allowing the reader to view
something ‘other than what it is for itself’ (Wacquant 2001, p. 185). For Wacquant, the
‘Bourdieu Wager’ is that even though there might be a contradiction between the logic of
practice and the logic of science, forging a science of society has more benefits than
disadvantages (*Ibid* p. 185). The unbiased objectivity of science constitutes a sharp break
between a practice participant’s comprehension of what they are doing and the explanation of it.
The potential problem is that analysis is disengaged from any interest in the practice itself. To
interpret and analyse practice from this position is an objective of the thesis. It requires a
balancing of orientations that takes into account human action as temporally, spatially and corporeally determined within the logic of practice marked by the conditions of its unfolding.

**Conclusion**

In the thesis, Bourdieu’s theorisation of practice is used to make sense of how scriptwriters experience the structural advantages or disadvantages present within the industrialised system of film production. The relationship between capital, doxa, field and habitus helps explain how culture and social constructs impact on practitioners and how they reproduce practices within their fields that are taken for granted. For Bourdieu, human action can transform social and cultural arrangements through the deliberate or unintended consequences of that action. By focusing on the aesthetic and symbolic aspects of cultural experience, there is the risk of losing sight of the material domain of economic structures and industrial processes in filmmaking practice. Bourdieu’s concepts underpin the key questions of the thesis by broadening the scope of enquiry into how and to what level industrial ways of working affect individual scriptwriting practice in Australian filmmaking.

Chapter Two has set out the theoretical framework for the thesis. It has established the script as a transitive boundary object that is developed through the collective action of a community of practice. Bourdieu’s conception of practice, habitus, field, capital and cultural production stresses the transitive nature of scriptwriting practice and its exposition through contextual reflexive analysis in the thesis. The chapter has explained the role of the script in an industry context and as an object of individual agency. Chapter Three extends the discussion of the relationship of Bourdieu’s work to the thesis. This is achieved through the presentation of the research design and methods used in the study, including the use of Bourdieu’s theory of practice and the application of reflexive analysis in the case studies.
Chapter Three

Research Design and Methods

Chapter Three sets out the qualitative, case-based research design used in the study. The chapter argues for the suitability of the methods of inquiry to the research aims and questions in order to provide an authentic insight into the nature of scriptwriting practice in the Australian film industry. Qualitative researchers are interested ‘in understanding the meaning people have constructed … how people make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world’ (Merriam 2009, p. 13). Rich with detail that provides insights into people’s experiences of the world, qualitative research seeks to describe a phenomenon fully and in a form in which researchers and readers ‘usually experience it’ (Lincoln & Guba 1985, p. 120). For Eisner (1991), the measure of a qualitative study is the usefulness of the research findings. He proposes three ways in which the findings can be of use. Firstly, qualitative research can help a reader comprehend a situation that is ambiguous or confusing. Secondly, it can help a reader anticipate future possibilities and scenarios. Thirdly, qualitative studies enable insight by describing a situation or scenario through expressive language, and through the ‘presence of voice in the text’ (1991, p. 36).

The research proceeds from a belief in the value of immersion in the research context, qualitative methods being best suited to developing an understanding of scriptwriting practice within the context of the diverse practices that comprise filmmaking. Data from observations, diary entries and production documents are combined with themes from practice theory to move from the particularity of the cases to the proposition of explanatory frameworks. Qualitative research is intrinsically exploratory and favours inductive rather than deductive reasoning (Lee 1999, p. 38). Inductive data analysis aims to derive meaning from the data and build substantive theory from practice. This way of building theory is appropriate to my research in offering practical benefits for applying practice theory to the analysis and understanding of scriptwriting practice. Findings are presented as complications, themes, deductions and postulations.

The use of the case study method in the thesis introduces a new approach to the investigation of Australian film, one that departs from the entrenched use of historical and textual analysis. The case studies seek to achieve what Bell (1987) describes as a full picture of patterns of agency and influence, while positioning the researcher as the primary instrument of data collection and
analysis. The chapter defends the use of the autoethnographic method and reflexive analysis within the cases to examine professional filmmaking from an insider perspective. This includes consideration of the issue of subjectivity in autoethnography through a discussion of Bourdieu's concept of participant objectivation. This is followed by an outline of the case study design, spanning case selection, data sources, the data analysis framework and the use of thick description in the articulation of the research findings.

Research design

The thesis aims to immerse the reader in the workaday practices of scriptwriting practice in the broader context of filmmaking. Scriptwriters generally develop their knowledge through informal communities of practice by reading each other's work in the public domain, through social networks such as writers' guilds and through occasional writer-based presentations at film and writer festivals. Aside from these scant opportunities to participate in knowledge exchange, scriptwriters work in a competitive and individualistic environment with few opportunities to interact and share knowledge. Figure 3 sets out the principal steps that underpin the research design. The first step calls attention to the key questions that underpin the case studies.

□ What are the production processes and imperatives that impact on scriptwriting practice? This question implies a process of identification and contextualised explanation that is suggested through analysis of the case studies.

□ How do these mediate scriptwriting practices?

□ How does the staging of film production in Australia affect scriptwriting practice?

Figure 3: Key Steps of the Research Design

The research questions emphasise identification, contextualisation and description through an insider perspective on scriptwriting practice. The research design takes as its starting point the rationale that links the data to the research question. This involved the selection of methods of
enquiry that suited the research aims. The research methods of interview, survey and questionnaire were rejected as being too far removed from filmmaking practice. The rationale linking data to the research question also influenced which cases were selected.

The units of analysis, which included the collection and collation of data, became the case studies. The criteria for producing the findings of each case is configured in three ways to create a distinctive narrative. First, Bourdieu’s theory of practice provided a framework for analysis and interpretation. Using this theoretical approach as a criterion for interpretation underpinned the interrogation of the practices and politics of evidence that produce data. Second, criteria for interpreting the data were designed to support an insider perspective. These were substantiated in the choice of the autoethnographic method for analysis. The potential for analysis and meaning in autoethnographic research is increased, especially where ‘the combination of data types [is] highly synergistic’ (Eisenhardt 1989, p. 538). Third, a criterion for interpretation was the choice of exposition for the research findings in order to heighten reflexive awareness around practices, leading to ‘an understanding of concrete forms of practice’ (Denzin 2013, p. 354).

**Case study research**

Case study is a recommended research approach for conducting in-depth investigation into phenomena in real-life contexts (Feargin, Orum & Sjorberg 1991). It is valued for its ability to examine complex events and situations through interpretative sense-making based on rich description. Case study is widely used in academic fields where the subject under consideration is the repeated performance of an activity that acquires and must maintain proficiency. Examples are counselling, education, management, nursing and social work. Researchers such as Crouch and Pearce (2012), Onwuegbuzie, Leech and Collins (2011), Stake (1995) and Yin (2009) see one advantage of the case study as its capacity to examine complexity within contexts that are specialised and specific. Yin (2003) recommends the case study as the method of ‘choice when the phenomenon under study is not readily distinguishable from its context’ (p. 4). According to Stake (1995), case studies have intrinsic and instrumental functions within their contextual parameters. Providing rich insight into an issue or question is of intrinsic value in building understanding, while cases can serve an instrumental role in building knowledge. For Crouch and Pearce (2012, p. 141), the focus on contextualised knowledge production in the case study method assists in building an understanding of the cultural, political and social contexts of research questions.
Merriam (2009) identifies four key types of case study:

- **Intrinsic case studies**, in which cases are selected for their inherent interest, rather than aiming to aid understanding of an abstract concept or generic phenomenon;
- **Instrumental case studies**, in which the case plays a secondary role of facilitating understanding of something else, or is used to draw a generalisation;
- **Evaluation case studies**, where the case study is used to illuminate meanings and communicate tacit knowledge; and
- **Multi-studies or multi-case study** in which cases share a common characteristic or condition.

From this perspective, case studies reflect not so much a methodological choice as ‘a choice of what is to be studied’ (Stake 2005, p. 443). The cases in this thesis are intrinsic case studies in that a particular problem of genuine interest to the researcher is examined, this problem being bound to my individual experience. They are instrumental in aiming to generalise from within the cases to provide a wider insight into the research questions as the basis for a theoretical approach to the subject (Wiebe, Durepos & Mills 2010, p. 473).

From this perspective, the case is of ‘secondary interest, it plays a supporting role, and it facilitates our understanding of something else’ (Stake 2005, p. 437). At the same time, a defining aspect of case study research is the building of theory around a bounded object, not a general topic or hypothesis (Miles, Huberman & Saldana 2014). The delineation of the case can be in terms of temporal and spatial considerations (Creswell 2003), temporal and action based considerations (Stake 1995) or meaning and circumstances (Miles & Huberman 1994). In the thesis, the cases are bound to my practice as a scriptwriter for two different films. The unit of analysis—me as a filmmaker—is not the topic of investigation, but is a defining characteristic of the case studies. The cases reflect the uniqueness of my experience and the meanings inherent in that experience, hence the use of autoethno-graphy as a primary approach in the cases.
**Theorising from case study**

Case study is seen by some as a problematic research approach, its specificity limiting its scope to provide generalisable knowledge (Flyvbjerg 2006). Advocates of case study such as Erickson (1986) reject this position, arguing that as the general resides in the particular, understanding and meanings generated from the case study method having the scope to convey knowledge from one case to another. The use of a contextualised causal explanation raises questions of interpretive reliability (Simons 1996), case study research being seen to have an implicit verification bias where data analysis serves to confirm researchers’ preconceived notions. However, Stake (1995) and Flyvbjerg (2006) argue that this can apply to any method. Denzin (2013, p. 355) notes that objectivity and associated concepts of evidence are ‘political and ethical terms’ open to contestation. Criticism regarding objectivity in the case study method stems from the dominance of positivism in academic research, which forces researchers to emphasise generalisability over contextual sensitivity (Bamberger 2008, p. 843).

Welch, Piekkari, Plakoyiannaki and Paavilainen-Mantymaki (2010, p. 745) identify four methods for theorising from case studies: 1) inductive theory building; 2) natural experiment; 3) interpretative sense making; and 4) contextualised explanation. In inductive theory building, theorisation develops from in-depth examination of case material (Ragin & Schneider 2011). With natural experiment, the generalisation to theory is analytical in that the causal relationships within the case are isolated from the case context. Theory is emergent, being developed through the recognition of patterns in the data in what are usually observational studies. In interpretative sense-making, description builds understanding from the particularity of the data. Stake (1995) claims that particularisation, not generalisation, is the key dimension of interpretative sense-making in case study. He differentiates between case studies that identify cause and effect relationships and those seeking to understand relational links in human action. In contextualised explanations, context is integrated with explanation and is contingent on limited generalisation.

Proponents of the case study argue that their strength is in offering a contextualised explanation that steers a line between the particular and the general, two features of research design often regarded as incompatible (Cronbach 1975; Welch, Piekkari, Plakoyiannaki & Paavilainen-Mantymaki 2010; Ragin & Schneider 2011). The potential for case study to contribute to theory hinges on two questions—whether generalisability is an essential aspect of theory and whether theory developed through case study can be generalised. Researchers such as Crouch and Pearce (2012), Eisner (1993), Erickson (1986), Flyvbjerg (2006) and Welch, Piekkari, Plakoyiannaki
and Paavilainen-Mantymaki (2010) contend that theory derived through case study can be
generalised. For other researchers, such as Friedman (2003), Cronbach (1975), Simons (1996),
Stoecker (1991) and Vogt, Gardner, Haefele and Baker (2011), generality is an important part of
theory-building in case study. These differing positions reflect theoretical positions on case
study’s potential. Researchers such as Crouch and Pearce (2012) and Welch, Piekkari,
Plakoyiannaki and Paavilainen-Mantymaki (2010) suggest theory as a set of ideas developed to
explain facts, but which does not require generalisation. The push for positivist rationales for
data analysis in case study neglects the potential for this form of research to understand human
agency beyond the realm of the observable (Welch, Piekkari, Plakoyiannaki & Paavilainen-
Mantymaki 2010).

These arguments support the choice of a case-based research design in capturing, making sense
of and drawing implications from the complex actions, perceptions and interpretations involved
in scriptwriting practice. The movement to theorisation in the thesis depends on contextualised
explanation, rather than generalisability. To establish this position in the case studies requires a
balancing of orientations that takes into account human action as temporally, spatially and
corporeally determined within the logic of practice marked by the conditions of its unfolding.
This orientation requires an autoethnographic method that focuses enquiry on a single subject
within the multitudinous contexts for scriptwriting practice in filmmaking.

**Autoethnographic method**

Autoethnography is a sub-field of ethnography. Formed from the Greek words *ethnos*, meaning
people, and *grapho*, meaning to write, ethnography is a qualitative research approach that
explores systems of knowledge, meaning and practice in a social or cultural group.
Autoethnography makes the researcher’s subjective experience a central rather than limiting
element in the research process (Uotinen 2010, p. 163). Russell (1998) describes autoethno-
graphy as a break with the positivist precepts of traditional ethnography, the reframing of
research as self-representation rupturing the distinctions between epistemic reality and textual
authority. Autoethnography is both a reflective and a problem-solving approach to research,
being a prime method for practitioners to bring their own practice into critical view.

Richardson proposes three key criteria (Figure 4) for evaluating autoethnographic research,
privileging the experience of the object/subject that is observed in a reflexive context
(Richardson 2000, p. 254). Autoethnography aims to expand the scope for understanding and
reduce the authority of any given interpretation in the method’s acknowledgement of the subject as a valid unit of analysis. In this, autoethnography draws attention to the nature of exposition and interpretations, recognising the narrator as an inscribed figure who has the agency to manipulate meaning and whose role draws attention to authority structures in society (Fischer 1986, p. 232).

Autoethnography draws attention to the fictive and linguistic nature of exposition and interpretation, with the style of reporting research findings varying from the ‘formal style of a scientific publication to literary texts’ to ‘perhaps even poetics’ (Mcilveen 2008, p. 16). According to Uotinen (2010, p. 16), exposition in autoethnographic work ‘should be personal and research-like, evocative and analytic, descriptive and theoretical at the same time’. Autoethnography requires the researcher to perform narrative analysis pertaining to the self in relation to a particular phenomenon (Mcilveen 2008). Some scholars contend that there are constraints on the act of self-consciousness in autoethnographic writing, especially regarding claims of ‘authorship, authority, truth, validity and reliability’ (Richardson 2000, p. 254). Vryan (2006) argues that the distinction between analysis and creative or evocative first-person writing styles is unwarranted and counterproductive, rejecting the idea that the project must avoid too much deep investigation into the autoethnographer’s personal experience.

In autoethnography, meaning is created by exploring the discursive possibilities of subjectivities. Like case study, autoethnography is seen as a problematic research practice in that it departs from established criteria for judging the validity of qualitative research (Holt 2003). The field itself is split into the positivist and anti-positivist camps around ‘the goal of explicit analysis’ (Vryan 2006, p. 408). Evocative autoethnography challenges the analytical and objective by presenting deeply-subjective responses as a form of situated knowledge. Its emphasis on memory and testimony challenges notions of
accuracy in traditional research. Evocative autoethnography stresses the ethnographer’s position within lived experience and reflects an anti-positivist stance (Denzin 2006; Ellis & Bochner 2006). It is commonly used in research dealing with difficult themes that affect the individual at an emotional level, including racism (Brodsky & Faryal 2006; De Andrade 2000; DeVault 1995; Guevarra 2006; Kusow 2003; Merriam et al 2001; Shahbazi 2004), violence and problematic family relations (Adams 1999; Allen 2004; Bolak 1996; Mahoney 2007; Naples 1996; Paerregaard 2002; Rashid 2007) and status (Sherif 2001). The use of narrative description to arouse an emotional response in the reader aligns evocative autoethnographic research with a critical-ideological paradigm. For Ellis and Bochner, the descriptive language and personal tone of evocative autoethnography shifts the locus of interpretation towards a subtext that reflects broader social, cultural and political implications (2006, p. 429).

Analytic autoethnography addresses the issue of the subjective by aligning itself with a post-positivist and constructivist-interpretive paradigm and objective writing and analysis to provide an individual or communal sense of the ‘real’ (Richardson 2000, p. 254). Analytical autoethnography demands criteria for the analysis of data to ensure rigour, although the divide between the researcher and the researched, research process and product is still seen as permeable (Richardson 2000). The objective and subjective paradigm of analysis oscillates between content and the response to that content, suggesting a broad receptive and interpretative perspective (See Figure 5). Even in analytic autoethnography, many have questioned issues of validation and relevance in order to frame autoethnography as the opposite of theory-driven, hypothesis-testing ethnographic research (for example Duncan 2004; Anderson 2006; Atkinson 2006; Denzin 2006; Ellis & Bochner 2006; Delamont 2007).

Within an autoethnographical context of investigation and analysis, the epistemological tenets of reliability, validity and generalisation are treated in very specific ways (Ellis & Bochner 2006). Validity in autoethnography is linked to the following questions:

- In what way was the data congregated?
- What are the moral complications?
- How is this perspective informed in the construction of the written work?
- How has the subject’s subjectivity been both an artefact and a creator of this text?
- Is there sufficient conscious self-knowledge and self-awareness for the reader to discern the perspective presented?
- In what way does the autoethnographic work personify an actual sense of reality – How does the text present as a believable description of the complex individual, cultural, and social dimensions of experience?
Participant objectivation

A key element of the autoethnographic repertoire is the reflexivity that arises from the symbiosis between researchers and the object of their interest (Atkinson 2006). For Bourdieu, the researcher’s aspiration to disinterested objectivity regarding the subject of enquiry of practice is very different to a practitioner’s understanding of what they are doing in practice. Bourdieu uses the term ‘participant objectivation’ to conceptualise reflexive analysis of practices as a double consciousness that is difficult to sustain. He describes participant objectivation as the conduct of ethnologists who immerse themselves in a foreign context to observe an activity, while simultaneously taking part in it. The term identifies the twin orientation of this thesis of seeking to simultaneously explore the experience of the knowing subject and the social conditions, effects and limits of that experience.

Participant objectivation requires sensitivity to the possible biases flowing from a researcher’s social position and intellectual orientation. Bourdieu (2003) identifies three biases in the researcher’s social position as set out in Figure 5. Firstly, there are personal biases linked to the researcher’s social class, gender and ethnicity. Secondly, biases are inherent in the researcher’s academic discipline and position. Thirdly, biases are associated with a researcher’s position in a social field. These biases point to the difficulty of mapping stages of the creative and production process as well as the importance and difficulty of sustaining a self-reflexive position in research. Habermas (1974) writes that self-reflection ‘requires a quite paradoxical achievement: one part of the self must be split off from the other part in such a manner that the subject can be in a position to render aid to itself … furthermore in the act of self-reflection the subject can deceive itself” (1974, p. 23). A reflexive approach underlines the challenges of an epistemic ontology of experience.

![Figure 5: Biases in Researcher’s Position](image-url)
The autoethnographic method is established on the ability to invite readers into the lived experience of another, the researcher, and to experience it viscerally through exposition. The proposition of investigating a research question from an insider perspective raises issues of power as well as subjectivity, especially when the subject of research is practice. The insider perspective, with its claims to privileged knowledge, suggests a relational concept between insider and outsider knowledge of practice. Yet Ergun and Erdemir (2009, p. 20) argue that ambiguity in the dual researcher role represents an ‘opportunity to see and experience the field in novel ways’. My dual insider/researcher status challenges me to negotiate identity at various levels according to the circumstances of the research process. This complication reflects Bourdieu’s delineation of field positioning as a prop for ‘social domination’, where ‘social structures and cognitive structures are recursively and structurally linked’ (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, p. 14).

A reflexive approach to the analysis of practice is not reductive, but rather takes into account the interiority of the individual’s habitus within the field as well as the structures that determine the field. Bourdieu’s (1997) position is that the reflexive approach is directed to practice and action, where:

the opacity of historical processes derives from the fact that human actions are the non-random and yet never rationally mastered product of countless self-obscure encounters between habitus marked by the history from which they arise and social universes (in particular, fields) in which they realise their potentialities, but under constraint of the structure of those universes, receiving from the dual necessity their specifically historical logic, intermediate between logical reasons of ‘truths of reason’ and the pure contingency of ‘truths of fact’, which cannot be deduced, but can be understood or even necessitated (pp. 116-117).

Reflexive practice is characterised by ‘fluidity and indeterminacy’ since it is not the product of rules internalised by practitioners, but is rather the product of less specific and definite dispositions (Jenkins 1992, p. 43).

Autoethnography is a rare research approach in Australian film studies in that it is ‘performative, pedagogical and political’ rather than critical and analytical (Denzin 2006, p 421). There are few norms against which to compare the combination of case study and autoethnography as a research approach in Australian film studies. Participant objectivation and autoethnography invoke an overlapping of history and memory that challenges the authenticity of experience as well as problematical notions of subjective
experience and analytical distance. In the case studies, I adopt an evocative autoethnographic position. In being both a subject and an object of the research, I acknowledge that I am simultaneously insider and outsider within the phenomenon I am investigating.

Research components

The collection and analysis of data for the thesis has four main components:

1. Literature Review
   The literature review has identified a limited literature on scriptwriting practice in Australian film studies and film production studies, providing no adequate analytical framework for the analysis of case data. Specifically, discussion related to scriptwriting practice rarely mentions matters of individual agency and experience. For this reason, the research is designed as a contextualised framework of enquiry that uses narrative to establish an understanding of the field of scriptwriting and identify issues in current practice.

2. Case Selection
   The cases provide privileged insight into scriptwriting practice in the context of the Australian film industry. My professional involvement in the projects has given me background information and documents, affording a unique insight into underlying intentions, requirements and outcomes of scriptwriting in an industry context. Each case presents different perspectives on the industrial and creative aims, processes and outcomes of the projects, providing an insider insight into the relational role of practice in a film industry context. The two cases were selected as genuine instances of practice in this context, showing contrasting snapshots of the scriptwriter’s experience. In both cases, the script functions as a boundary object with logical continuities across different practices and processes.

3. Research sources
   The research sources consist of official production documentation, including budgets, contracts, correspondence notes and schedules; production-based emails between key crew members; personal diary entries; and personal artefacts and recollections of the researcher, all uncommon sources of data in practice research. As the research involved human subjects, ethics clearance was sought from the Swinburne Human Research Ethics Committee. Approval was granted on 30 October 2007. Evidence of ethics approval is provided as an Appendix to the thesis.
4. Case Studies
The case component of the research integrates contexts with an investigation of practice to develop explanatory frameworks and findings. The case studies privilege depth over representativeness, and contextualise scriptwriting as an individual, institutional and social practice that involves individual and collective agency. The case studies reveal scriptwriting practices that embody functional and technical reasoning to achieve goals. They are intrinsic to ‘understand[ing] particularities’ of practices in the field of filmmaking (Wiebe, Durepos & Mills 2010, p. 498). As sole researcher, I present an insider perspective on practices, while also being reflexive. The case studies in this thesis are also instrumental in that they serve to reveal, define and examine a theoretical understanding of practices. This position shifts the focus of the research from the objectivity of an observed and measured study to a sense-making approach that presents findings that are ‘comprehensive, holistic, expansive and richly descriptive’ (Merriam 2009, p. 18).

Case design
The research design for the two cases is informed by the research aim to examine the links between the experience of scriptwriting practice and industry processes and structures.

Case selection: Mallboy and Godless
The first case is Mallboy, a feature film written and directed by the researcher. The film was developed and completed over a period of 11 years and exhibited in 2000. The role of this case in the research is to examine industry structures, processes and practices in the period before the overhaul of the Australian Film Industry in 2008. The Mallboy case establishes the case questions and propositions through a narrative account of the background of the project. The units of analysis are writing practice and the uses of the script. I focus on two moments in the production process:

1. The writing of the first page of the script;
2. The shoot on day 1, which encapsulates a typical shooting day on location, filming elements of the script out of sequential order.

I use the data from daily reports of what was shot on those days, incorporating the duration of shots, how much film was used, use of location and the actors and props involved. This was done
to investigate a goal-oriented agency that suggests scriptwriters’ practice according to a variety of incentives, but that also incorporates improvisation of new ways of doing on the job. The case employs multiple data sources, including field observation, personal diary notes and production documentation to craft a retrospective account of filmmaking practice.

The second case is *Godless*, a feature film project written and to be directed by the researcher. The project was developed over a period of three years, but did not go ahead to production. The case is used in the thesis to indicate conditions and experiences in the post-2008 period of the Australian film industry following a major restructure of government funding. The *Godless* case study combines an inductive research model with an evocative autoethnographic method, examining a chronological sequence of email correspondence interspersed with analysis. The case study documents the increased production activity in the project as it moves from the ideation stage to pre-production. The narrative of the case study is structured around the search for a cast and the read-through of the script by a group of actors. The use of actual email transcripts lays the foundation for balancing the deep embeddedness of the practitioner’s view in living the phenomenon with the necessary all-encompassing view often required to draw the theoretical insights necessary for the thesis (Gioia, Corley & Hamilton 2012).

**Data collection**

The cases use multiple qualitative data sources that can be categorised into major subjects and themes. The *Mallboy* case draws on accumulated personal files and production records that document my involvement in the film: writing, directing and composing music for this feature film. This data outlines what happened on any given day of the shoot, according to the schedule set up by the production office in collaboration with the key practitioners on the film. This data provides the raw material from which I can reconstruct the experience of film practice within the film development process.

Data in the *Godless* case derives from an 18-month period during which the script was in the ideation and development stage of production. This includes documentation of meetings and correspondence between the producers, writers and director of the project. The data is time-specific, documenting collaborative practices from scriptwriting to casting to the point at which the project stalled. Table 4 sets out patterns of similarities and differences between the two cases in terms of their roles within the research.
Table 4: Similarities and Differences Between the Cases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MALLBOY</th>
<th>GODLESS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Received government funding.</td>
<td>Received government funding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low-budget film with similar budget restraints</td>
<td>Low-budget film with similar budget restraints</td>
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<tr>
<td>and considerations.</td>
<td>and considerations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deals with marginalised and outsider social</td>
<td>Deals with marginalised and outsider social</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>groups.</td>
<td>groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project idea was generated from personal</td>
<td>Genre project that is producer-led.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>experience.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed project, which has been exhibited</td>
<td>An ongoing development that is yet to see</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and distributed.</td>
<td>production.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The researcher is the sole scriptwriter.</td>
<td>Written in collaboration with another writer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project was developed before the 2008 overhaul</td>
<td>Project was developed in the post-2008 overhaul</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of government funding for the Australian film</td>
<td>of government funding for the Australian film</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>industry.</td>
<td>industry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data is retrospective and collated to inform</td>
<td>Data was procured while the researcher was</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>an autoethnographic narrative.</td>
<td>researching the thesis. The method of data</td>
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<td></td>
<td>collection and analysis therefore includes a</td>
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<td></td>
<td>variation on the autoethnographic method,</td>
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<td></td>
<td>through the incorporation of elements of the</td>
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<td></td>
<td>action research method and participant</td>
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<td></td>
<td>observation.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Data analysis framework

The data analysis framework identifies key themes from the data. It presents themes in a sequential pattern that is both a logical and intuitive response to the connections between the data and ideas. As set out in Figure 6, the framework reflects the relational nature of practice in the film industry as a product of both individual and collective agency. The framework harnesses Bourdieu’s concepts of practice, habitus, capital, doxa, reflexivity and field as the principal theoretical contexts used to analyse of practices presented in the case studies. The framework indicates that the identification of emerging themes around the problematic object of the script can be configured as a site of meaning and significance. The framework for an analysis of scriptwriting practice is through the following principal themes:

1. Individual agency
2. Cultural and social parameters
3. Economic functions
4. Industrial processes
The articulation of findings through thick description

Thick description as an expositional and interpretive tool in the case studies presents narrative accounts of the production process in filmmaking as it unfolds. By providing a full account of events, thick description explains human action and behaviour in context to make it comprehensible and meaningful to an outsider as opposed to the reductiveness of theoretical analysis. Thick description enables a more accurate reconstruction of phenomena to show how meaning arises and changes through the different facets of film practice. The use of thick description in the case studies captures the actuality of scriptwriting and filmmaking practice, providing vignettes of the thoughts, emotions and complex social interactions of participants within the context of their situation. The description promotes a complex interpretation of social actions, leading to additional meanings in the findings for the reader.

According to Geertz, thick description is not a total description because of the emphasis on interpretation in distinguishing between behaviours that may seem similar on the surface (1973, p. 27). According to Denzin (1989), thick description creates truth-like statements that produce
for readers the sense that they have experienced, or could experience, the events being described. Building on Geertz, Ponterotto (2006) identifies five characteristics of thick description:

1. Accuracy
2. Context
3. Motivation
4. Verisimilitude
5. Interpretation

The narratives in the case studies are experience-centred narratives (Squires 2008, p.16), which embody four important characteristics:

1. The narratives are sequential and meaningful
2. The narratives are humanistic
3. The narratives reconstitute experience
4. The narratives embody transformation

In the Mallboy case, the narrative shifts between theoretical musings and analytical breakdown of production data. In the Godless case, the narrative shifts between descriptions and theoretical contextualisation of practices. It is the effect of these differing voices and positions in the narrative that adds weight and veracity to the thick description of practices. The choice of language is important in the case study narrative, as it designates the writer’s relational position in a field or social space (Bourdieu 1991, p. 66). For Bourdieu, the linguistic relation to power is both a linguistic and a social fact. The importance of language and the complexities of interpretation in communication are paramount in Bourdieu’s conception of reflexive sociology (Smith 2004, p. 107), hence the language used in the case studies is performative and instrumental.

**Limitations of the case design**

As a nascent study in the field of scriptwriting, the research seeks to establish a basis for future research in the field of scriptwriting and practices. The research in the thesis is limited to the experiences of a single practitioner in bounded cases and does not include practitioner interviews or surveys. A limitation of the case design is that the data has the potential for biased selectivity in the selection of data sources. This limitation is acknowledged and mitigated by different design strategies in the case studies. In the Mallboy case, I use different sets of data sources to create a diversity of perspectives on scriptwriting practice in the project. In the Godless case, the
limitation of data from a variety of practitioners to a specific timeframe creates an authentic insider picture of practice.

**Chapter summary**

Chapter Three has set out the research design and methods, and their basis in a qualitative and interpretative approach to theory-building. The approach to data collection and analysis used in the two case studies has been explained. It has been established that the thesis does not seek to present a generalised theory from the cases, but rather to develop an understanding of the forces, processes and complications at play as contextualised explanations within the specific examples of scriptwriting practice. As such, the case studies, through their specificities, develop a richer and deeper understanding of the relational links that exist in the development and production of film, raising issues of potential relevance to other practices in the field. Through their particular qualities, the two cases offer a foundation for further research into the role of practice theory in scriptwriting and filmmaking practices in the field of film production.
Chapter Four

Mallboy

The Mallboy case examines filmmaking as an embodied experience by combining autoethnographic narrative with theoretical reflection to identify and examine the production processes and imperatives that mediate scriptwriting practice. The case narrates different levels of mediation that occur in filmmaking within a personal, cultural, social and economic context. Through this process, the nuanced and complex operation of power in filmmaking is revealed. The narrative identifies emerging themes around the problematic object of the script, reconfiguring scriptwriting practice as a site of meaning and significance.

The narrative describes scriptwriting across four stages of the development and production of a film: the writing of the screenplay, the direction of selected scenes, the editing process and the distribution of the film. Each section of the case study frames discussion of the script as a boundary object that has different functions within the filmmaking process across different practices. The case considers emerging individual agency in filmmaking against the perspective of the industrial organisation and funding models in Australian film production. In this, the interactions between personal development and the cultural and social contexts of filmmaking can be seen to both facilitate and inhibit individual practice. Chapter Four focuses on the interaction between significant stages of development and production that are characteristic of collective and individual practices from an insider perspective.

The case illustrates how scriptwriting practice intersects with the staging of film productions. It examines the relations between these levels of mediation and their cultural, economic and social underpinnings. Through this, the complex operations of power and power exchange within filmmaking are demonstrated. The story of the writing and making of Mallboy from my perspective is followed by the analysis of my experience. I use Bourdieu’s theory of practice with its key concepts of capital, doxa, field and habitus as a lens for examination. The account of what occurred is underpinned by a theoretical analysis of individual, social and industrial conditions for scriptwriting practice. Lastly, the case illustrates how the script and the film as a form of cultural production are appropriated as national capital, dissembling the discussion of its genesis and collective modes of production.
The story of Mallboy

In my late teens, straight out of high school, I fell into youth work after volunteering at a welfare home for abandoned and abused children run by the Victorian State Government. The home was the Allambie Reception Centre in the leafy eastern suburbs of Melbourne. ‘Allambie’, as it was more familiarly known, operated between 1961 and 1990 under the administration of the Family Welfare Division of the Social Welfare Department. The facility housed up to 100 children for whom measures such as family support or foster care had failed. Allambie boasted an impressive set of buildings dotted over a large expanse of parkland that bordered a creek. Each building was architecturally distinct and had an evocative Australian botanical name. I worked in the Acacia Hall of Residence, a 1960s building that housed babies and toddlers. Acacia was close to the creek and surrounded by a wire mesh fence. Sometimes, I would take the children down to the creek and watch a family of foxes make their way across the parkland, the vixen protective of her kits as they straggled behind.

I had been working at Allambie for around 18 months when the decision was made to close the facility as part of the deinstitutionalisation of the Victorian welfare system that took place in the late 1980s and early 1990s. A nearby private school acquired the extensive parcel of land for extra classrooms and a conference centre. The transition from a large, central institution to smaller housing units scattered across Melbourne took over two years, with Allambie closing for good in 1990. I moved on to a small unit in northwest Melbourne to care for older children, mainly teenage boys and girls.

Under the direction of officials from Community Services Victoria, the house was set up for an influx of troubled teens. Reinforced locks and high fences were discretely added to the fit-out, transforming an average suburban home into a mini juvenile justice facility. The decentralisation of the welfare system meant a change in work practices. There was a shift to modulate behaviours and forestall problematic situations rather than to offer a secure safety net for underprivileged children traumatised by family dysfunction. New, systematic approaches were put in place to manage the welfare of the teenagers. Subtle changes of language re-codified roles and relationships in the department. The teenagers became ‘clients’, the youth workers ‘staff’. Most of my time was now spent in the office, capturing and collating data, instead of in meaningful contact with the young people in my charge.
The new tasks functioned as a form of surveillance, with staff required to note our clients’ daily activity—the number of hours they spent at school, in contact visits with their parents, on extracurricular activities or with law enforcement officers—in addition to gathering reports from specialist teachers and principals. The data was used to establish patterns of client behaviour and measure staff performance against the facility’s budget. The information was presented at departmental meetings, but the focus on data gathering and analysis was inconsequential in the face of the chaos and messiness of adolescent lives. In the confines of the small house, teen emotions were amplified. The teenagers were uncontrollable. They roamed the streets in small packs wearing oversized hoodies and armed with big bottles of Coke. They terrorised old people and broke into local churches to steal small change from the collection boxes and swig soured sacramental wine for the hell of it. They hung out at the local shopping mall stealing deodorant and picking the pockets of stressed housewives.

I worked in these trenches seven days on, seven days off. I burnt out quickly. Yet moments of respite and profound beauty were to be found in this battlefield if one looked beyond the trenches, away from the hollow futility of administrative tasks. When there was time, I would hang out in the backyard with these boisterous young people, singing and laughing under a passionfruit vine that threatened to collapse after a large downpour of rain. Around 1990, I started to record my experiences as a youth worker, the accounts of my charges becoming the basis for the characters and story of the feature film Mallboy.

The genesis of the Mallboy script

I wanted to write a story focused on my personal experiences of the welfare system and social work. I imagined a narrative that would capture the hypocrisy and inadequacies of a rigid and politicised state welfare apparatus intruding into fragile family structures. For me, this was a contemporary reality seldom explored in Australian culture. Once I left youth work in my early twenties, I had time to write. Between 1990 and 1992, I began adapting the fragments of prose I had written into a screenplay. The writing process was broken up by work and bringing up my own family. When the opportunity arose, I would sit at the kitchen table and write as much as I could, review and then start writing again in an intuitive response to the task at hand.

By 1992, I had researched script format guidelines and written a first draft of the screenplay. I began contacting local film producers for advice and guidance. In 1994, I sent a few scenes to the Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC) for consideration for a proposed series of short
films. The script was rejected, but received encouraging feedback from the producers who worked there. They suggested I get an independent producer attached to the project to help develop the script into a longer, feature-length screenplay.

I discussed the script with friends, family members and anyone else who was willing to listen. A friend suggested that an early career producer with a few short film and television credits might be interested in the project. I arranged a meeting and we spoke briefly about the project over a coffee. The producer was busy with another project that had just been financed for production by the ABC, but she expressed a genuine interest in the story and the characters, asking to be kept in the loop regarding any further developments with the project.

In 1996, I applied to the AFC for scriptwriting funding as part of a New Writers scheme. The application included the latest draft of the script, a synopsis and a one-page précis, outlining the changes intended for the next draft. A year after the submission of the application, I received a phone call asking me to come to Sydney. After a three-hour interview, during which I was questioned about the origins of the narrative and how further drafts of the screenplay could be developed, my application was accepted, seeing me received funds to craft the short script into an industry-standard, feature-length script. This was the point that the script became a viable film project. The producer offered an option for the script, giving them rights over the script for a limited period with the objective of developing it into a film. I accepted and we began working together on the script while the producer explored sources for funds to make the film. After six years of work crafting my script, I found myself working in the Australian film industry.

To this point, writing the script was mostly an individual activity, but part of the New Writers funding to develop the project to the next stage included the money to hire an experienced script editor to oversee subsequent drafts. The script editor was a mentor for me and an arbiter for the project, identifying areas of weakness in the script and options for resolving them. Each session with the script editor elevated the narrative, making the characters more graspable and adding layers of meaning to the text. The shared search for clarity developed trust between me and the editor, building my confidence in the writing process. It also introduced me to the professional practice of scriptwriting as an industry process.

My intuitive approach to writing was to commence the script from the beginning, looking for flow and rhythm in the writing through character and building the narrative to an end result. The
script editor’s approach reflected established industry practice and involved breaking the script down to its key structural components; attention focused on individual sections of the script that were brought together at the end of the process. The nuances of rhythm and feel for the whole were secondary to ensuring the information on the page was clear and instructive to the other film practitioners who would be collectively working with the script. This was a systematic way of working that ensured that the text was able to support the pragmatic decision-making inherent in filmmaking. The process engaged both a reflexive engagement with the narrative and collective decision-making and knowledge exchange between me and the script editor.

I delivered revised drafts of the script to the script editor and the producer every few months. On one level, it was exhilarating work in that the exchange of knowledge between me and the editor was reciprocal. I learnt about the industry and industry processes while the editor learnt about the milieu I was trying to represent in text. There was a sense of purpose to the process through the joint focus on a result—the aim to achieve a finished script. It was also a frustrating process because the script as a text was being constantly reviewed and changed. I had the sense that the script would never really be finished, that it was a fluid object in a perpetual state of transition (Maras 2009, p. 6).

The producer also sought advice from more experienced filmmakers working at the AFC regarding the potential for the project to receive further development and production funds. Other filmmakers were recruited to read the latest draft of the script, offering advice on the world and characters it presented. They had little or no experience or understanding of the milieu it represented, but understood the terms of a script as the basis for a viable production, especially in terms of what was marketable at that point in time.

By late 1997, the Mallboy script was in the late stages of drafting. It was open to different perspectives and purposes. I had come to see that the script was simultaneously a strategic tool in the search for development funds and a narrative template for production and casting decisions. These new roles significantly changed my position in relation to the script and scriptwriting. I now had to discern and master codes and requirements intrinsically linked to the collective practice of filmmaking, while being unsure of the intentions behind the advice I was being offered regarding the script. I had to judge whether notes and comments reflected a genuine interest in the project or something else. My approach to the feedback was to consider what was at stake for the person giving it and what was at stake for the project if I acted on the advice,
always thinking about what would be best for the constructive development of the script at this stage. Did the advice reflect an understanding of what I was trying to do or did it represent an adherence to the conventions of storytelling that were assumed within the field? I was protective of the script, continually returning to its early versions to preserve my initial inspiration and sensibility.

Grappling with this environment of position-taking, expert coaching and institutional gatekeeping, by 1998 I had completed a final draft of the feature-length script to the satisfaction of a range of industry players. By this time, the producer had also secured some general production funds, enabling the Mallboy project to move towards the pre-production phase, which launched the script into an increasingly collective process. The producer was given a strong indication from within the AFC that the script was a contender for funding as a low-budget property, seeing the producer begin to assemble a crew for the project. Based on my first-hand understanding of the milieu and after consultation with the AFC, the producer decided that I should direct the film. This choice was brave and made securing further finance for the film more difficult, the track record of the director being a key consideration for funding productions.

In the funding application to the AFC and SBS Independent, the producer presented a case that my work as director would be carefully managed. I was duly put through a ‘mini’ film school program, which included short courses on filmmaking at institutions such as the University of Melbourne and the Australian Film, Television and Radio School (AFTRS). The short course at the University of Melbourne included a two-day intensive directing masterclass with Nadia Tass, an experienced film director. The material broadly covered directorial craft topics such as working with actors, rehearsals and how to use lighting, camera position and composition to structure shots and tell a story. The five-day short course at AFTRS included intensive, practice-based exercises interspersed with screenings of clips from well-known Australian films. These films reinforced the aesthetic qualities and specific cinematic tropes characteristically linked to Australianness: the outback adventure, the themes of masculinity and mateship, the suburban surreal, period drama and broad comedy which were box office hits in their day.

The content of the course shifted from directorial content to more general film production elements. It included topics such as how to break down a script for shooting, rehearsal techniques, the use of cinematic tools such as composition and framing for scene impact, how to find pace and rhythm in actor performances and how to work creatively with a cast and crew.
The producer organised for me to spend time on active film and television sets as a director’s attachment, giving me unique insight into the directorial role and industry practices on set in real time. These insights were part of an informal process of induction to the social and personal exchanges that were the norm in film practice on an Australian film set. Inherent in the embedded exchange and interactions that occurred on set was the notion that knowledge of what happened on the set is taken for granted. These interactions, which were hierarchical in structure, helped shape personal and professional knowledge in relation to writing and directing practices. This process, in turn, suggesting respective advantages and disadvantages tied to specific ways of working in the field. The hierarchies that were manifest on the set were a way of internalising the structural advantages or disadvantages within an industrialised film production system. This suggested a particular and homogenised way of working.

The producer also organised for me to have regular contact with experienced film directors with a mix of local and international screen credits to their name. They offered advice on how to film the *Mallboy* script based on their interpretation of it. Their director’s point of view was two-fold. Firstly, the directors gave practical advice on the interpretation of the script through direction. They suggested ways of breaking down the script using visual tools such as mood boards, colour charts and shot lists. Secondly, they advised me to be cautious of the realities of industrial film production processes. Issues such as the hierarchy of roles on a film set were important to acknowledge and adhere to in ensuring a productive shoot. At the same time, they criticised how standard production schedules and protocols controlled filmmaking, depicting them as at odds with creative freedom and decision-making. Through this, I acquired a perspective on the directorial habitus, seeing it both as a continuation of the work I had done as writer and as an augmentation of that work that accounted for both the collective practices of filmmaking and the industrial ways of working in the field.

My novice directorial status aside, my experience with the development process of *Mallboy* made the role of producers as the key initiators and controllers in the film production process obvious, highlighting their position of presiding over the involvement of others in establishing a model for producing and managing the process. Over an 18-month period between late 1998 and 1999, the producer attended several meetings with staff from the AFC, SBS Independent and Showtime to discuss the script as a contender for full production funding. I was not privy to these meetings, the producer only informing me of their general direction. The timing of
applications for production funding was crucial, being based around the logistics of production, including the suitability of the crew being assembled, the suitability and commercial viability of the cast, the risks involved in using an unknown writer and director, and scrutiny of the full budget for the film using the A-Z budget template as stipulated by the AFC. The movement to production was not only prefaced on the pragmatic realities of production based on budget outcomes and the careful scheduling of events, but was also justified by the progression of personal development for the key creative people involved in *Mallboy*.

Once production funds were granted, the project moved into proper pre-production. Contracts were signed, then over an eight-week period the heads of different departments—accountants, camera, editing, lighting, location, make-up, production managers, props and wardrobe—were hired. On 17 May 1999, everyone came together to draft a plan for filming the script. The first assistant director took this proposal to draft a schedule for the shoot. On 1 July 1999, the AFC announced *Mallboy* as the fourth film to be made under the Million Dollar Movies initiative, a partnership between the AFC, SBS Independent, The Premium Movie partnership and Beyond Films to fund production of five low-budget films.

Casting also took place over a four-week period during this pre-production stage. I considered over 800 teenage actors for roles in the film, a process that included all-day actor workshops with hopefuls seeking to break into the film industry. Standard auditions with experienced actors were held for the secondary roles. Once casting was complete, a two-week rehearsal period quickly followed, during which I had the first opportunity to test my directing skills and help shape performances. The script was instrumental in this phase of development. It was the template against which interpretive decision-making was made. The producer hired an experienced actor as a dramaturge to assist in script-related duties in the rehearsal space. It was an exhilarating time with no time in the schedule for reflection.

Around the rehearsal sessions, I had short meetings with key crew members who had been hired by the producer. The crew was a mixture of experienced and inexperienced filmmakers, put together to facilitate the exchange of skills and know-how. The distribution of experience on the set was uneven and expertise exchange was an important part of the reasoning behind the composition of the crew. Reflecting the times, the crew of the *Mallboy* was predominantly male, being made up of 18 men and five women. Gendered roles influenced the type of work done by crew members. Men were responsible for more assertive or physically-demanding tasks such as
camera, lighting, rigging, sound acquisition, on-set production tasks such as first and second assistant directors and special effects. Women oversaw wardrobe, make-up and production management based in the production office.

This intense period of activity was followed by a five-week shoot. The experience of making the film was exhilarating. It was the culmination of many years of solitary creative practice that was finally achievable through collective engagement with other practitioners. The atmosphere on set was addictive. It was a collegial environment with a shared responsibility within the community of practice to see the script produced to a film. The community of practice around the project provided an example of learning and information exchange situated in the context of problem-solving. The process of acquiring the habitus of director in relation to the collective practices of production meant engagement. This was through legitimised peripheral participation by other film practitioners as I gradually took up the practices and ways of doing what was necessary in a successful community of practice. The script was the template for this process and decision-making. The intensive work carried out in pre-production meant that production—the actual shooting of the script—went relatively smoothly in an environment that was almost circus-like in its familial warmth.

During this stage of production, the producer worked mostly behind the scenes, being kept informed of events on the set and on location through daily reports provided by the first assistant director and the continuity person. The editor also received reports and daily rushes of the film that had been shot. The producer made a few appearances on set throughout the five-week shoot, usually around lunchtime, escorting executives from AFC who were interested to see a live film set. In the last week of shooting, I noticed a marked shift in the behaviour of the crew members. Most of the crew were glued to their mobile phones taking calls in between camera set-ups and location shifts. I later realised this was fervent discussion with their agents or producers to set up their next job. Things were different for me. I stayed with the project, which moved on to post-production and the relative calmness of an edit suite in Port Melbourne.

An experienced editor with television and documentary credits had been hired in the late ideation phase and attended all pre-production meetings. As production began, the editor got to work making a rough assembly of shots to the pattern of production to support discussion of adjustments and additions to the shooting schedule. Each day in post-production, I worked closely with the editor and sound designer crafting the film from the filmed and recorded
material. The editor worked to find a rhythm to the film, using the script as a point of reference. The nuances of interpretation and meaning generated by the production stage are tempered by the script. After the boisterousness of location shooting, the editing suite, redolent with the smell of ammonium thiosulfate and dust, was a place of contemplation, not unlike the writing desk.

There were two review screenings held for the funding bodies to assess the work that had been completed. The first was in late November 1999. It was an assembly-cut screening where the producer, editor and myself received notes from high-ranking film executives about what were considered potential problems in the current edit. The assembly cut was a means for the creative team to deliver to the viewer an approximation of what to expect as the film is edited towards its final version. A later screening of a fine-cut of the film was held early in January 2000. This was for executives from the AFC, SBS Independent, The Premium Movie partnership and Beyond Films. It was the last opportunity for industry feedback before the film was locked off and completed ready for distribution. Scant notes were taken as the film satisfied all present.

During this time, there had been updates in the form of short media releases from the AFC on the production status of Mallboy, which were directed at industry magazines such as IF magazine. The updates to mainstream media were organised to elicit exhibition interest in the film. The producer was not able to secure a commercial distributor by the time Mallboy was complete, although this was common for a low-budget, independently-produced Australian film. To help Australian-funded films achieve local and international distribution and be selected for international film festivals, film-funding bodies organise regular screenings for visiting international festival agents. In late January 2000, Mallboy was part of a group of films screened to a contingent of agents for the Cannes film festival. This included films with higher budgets and higher-profile lead actors and those considered more commercially viable. We were a long shot. We were surprised and overjoyed when Mallboy was shortlisted for inclusion in the Cannes International Film Festival 2000. A few months later in May 2000, the film was announced as an official selection for Cannes 2000 Les Quinzaine des Réalisateurs (Directors Fortnight), becoming the only Australian feature film selected to screen at Cannes that year. After this, interest in Mallboy changed dramatically. The producer was immediately flooded with requests from distributors and a screening was hastily organised. Within days, the producer had signed a distribution deal with an international distribution company, with selection for Cannes forming the basis of the marketing campaign for the film.
The selection of *Mallboy* for Cannes was an opportunity to showcase the Australian film industry. The film premiered at Cannes with a large contingent of senior staff from the AFC present. Producers, film-funding executives and high-ranking bureaucrats networked, made connections and pitched projects at special functions held on a rooftop terrace. This space is hired out each year for the Australian film industry contingent, whose members travel between film festivals trying to secure deals and sales for local content. It overlooked the *Promenade de la Croisette*, the main avenue of Cannes, and a grand panorama of verdant hills and luxury yachts bobbing in the deep blue Mediterranean Sea could be seen in the distance. The gap between where the script began and where it ended was incomprehensible. I was a long way from home and the inspiration and controlling idea of the film.

The disparities between the individual agency of creative practice within the parameters of collective industry protocols that I had experienced, combined with the added expectations of a film marketplace that was mainly economically driven, made it difficult to gauge the worthiness of the film and its relevance to an audience. The Cannes film festival was primarily a marketplace with a festival attached, representing two different domains of exchange. In the main festival, officially-selected films were screened for film critics and cognoscenti. The marketplace considered films from around the world to be bought and sold. *Mallboy* participated in both domains. I had to remind myself that the film was a commodity that needed to generate profits through sales. Three types of Australian films screened at the marketplace in 2000: mainstream populist cinema, prestige cinema—the 'art' films officially selected for festivals and to cater to an arthouse market—and Other cinema that caters to avant-garde, alternative interests. *Mallboy* did not easily fit into any category. Despite selection for Cannes, the film was difficult to market and sell. It sold to a small number of countries including Iceland, Israel and the United Kingdom, being picked up for other film festivals including the Hamburg International Film Festival and the London International Film Festival. The Melbourne International Film Festival (MIFF) also selected *Mallboy* for screening in 2000 after its appearance at Cannes. It was the closing night film. The distribution plan was to leverage the publicity from Cannes and MIFF and release the film to cinemas soon after.

The primary function of the marketing and advertising of the film is to get ‘bums on seats’. This reduces the significance of the film’s initial conception as a story—born from individual experience and the sum of practices from a diverse range of practitioners—to pecuniary enervation. The distribution company marketed the film as a family-style comedy, looking to
successful films such *The Castle* (1997) in the hope of emulating that success. In this, the exhibition and marketing of the film frames the experience of the film for filmgoers by privileging economic imperatives such as box office and budget over the actuality of the film and its conception and production. Due to complications with exhibitors and shifts in the release patterns for product from Hollywood studios, the local distribution of *Mallboy* to cinemas only happened six months later in February 2001. The film played for five weeks in local cinemas around Australia and received positive press and critical reviews.

The narrative of the *Mallboy* case from a small idea written in the north-western suburbs of Melbourne to a film produced and exhibited on the international stage frames the particularities of individual agency and personal expression against the perspective of an industrial organisation of labour that underpins funding models in the Australian film industry. Film production processes, with their relational nature, economic, social and cultural underpinnings, reveal a complex operation of reflexive engagement, collective and strategic decision-making and power exchange among practitioners.

**Case analysis**

The following analysis of my autoethnographic account of *Mallboy* leverages individual, social and industrial frameworks for the analysis of scriptwriting practices and the script. The analysis addresses the script as a boundary object that served as a mediating and mediated form across the industrial development and production process. This frame supports the objectives of the research question to provide the reader with an original insider perspective on scriptwriting practice grounded in a theoretical approach. The analysis focuses on the first four scenes of the script, including both the shooting script and the script schedule, highlighting shifts in agency and the mediation of meanings in the transition from text to filmed content. The chapter then investigates the first day of shooting and the transformative nature of the script in a professional, filmmaking process. The analysis then harnesses Bourdieu’s concepts of habitus, capital, doxa and field to account for scriptwriting practice within the matrix of collective and strategic decision-making in filmmaking in the *Mallboy* case.

**The industry standard script**

The *Mallboy* case shows scriptwriting to be mainly an individual practice that supports the collective practices of a film crew, but it also reveals how scriptwriting practice is framed by the
institutional practices manifest in industry processes and standards, and commercial imperatives. Institutional structures and practices were instrumental to scriptwriting practice in the *Mallboy* case. This was apparent in the formative origins of the project, where the influence of institutional practices was the trigger for change that resulted in the script being conceived. The impetus for writing the script was the new ways of working within the institution of social welfare in the early 1990s. These were disruptive within the workplace and manifested the machinations of a bureaucratic welfare system that needed to generate practices to justify its own existence (Bourdieu 1993, p. 205).

Once the Australian film industry accepted the *Mallboy* script, different institutional processes came into play on my scriptwriting practice. I was conscious of subtle mediations on the script's development through interactions with industry practitioners. There was a movement towards a more polished and professional ‘privileged aesthetic’ (Dermody & Jacka 1987, p. 93). The cognitive structures that industry practitioners, film-funding executives and producers implement through their practical knowledge of scripts can be seen as a manifestation of internalised social and cultural structures. This was a positive outcome for the project, guaranteeing the script received attention, development and production funding, and became a film.

To speak of the general constitution of the film industry is to include the knowledge that the producers and film-funding executives have of the industry and the contribution this knowledge makes to the reality of the industry. The success of the *Mallboy* project hinged on the script’s ability to serve as an industry standard artefact and on its capacity to support standard representations and practices inherent to the production practices that underpin the field of filmmaking. A cultural field only exists insofar as the dispositions of the agents that constitute the field imbue these with social meaning. The *Mallboy* script, a story about the disenfranchised and alienated lower socio-economic class, had to find a place within the social and cultural parameters set by the agents in the field. The script did this through an act of modification, a complex and longitudinal process of adhering and adapting the initial creative impulse of the script to the industrial norms and standards of scriptwriting practice.

In the production of *Mallboy*, the pressures of a market-driven industry on individual practices were managed by the producer, who oversaw the main logistical meetings with the funding bodies. Networking and the negotiation table constituted a significant part of doing business and seeing a project to fruition in the film industry. I was insulated from the back-room negotiations that took place to secure the funding for the *Mallboy* project to achieve production. I cannot be
certain, but my understanding is that these were for the most part successive rounds of strategic game-playing and positioning, in which projects fell in and out of favour based on the skill of the producer to state a case and justify the project’s existence. The producer’s role was characterised by taking risks in the hope of receiving industry endorsement and production funds. This included strategising that was sometimes deliberate, but more often habitual or tacit. Institutional strategising sees vested interests struggle to attain material and symbolic advantage. Here, the function of the institution was not as a structure of authority ‘whose purposes are analytically external to their constitution’, but rather the function of the institution was inherently self-serving (Friedland 2009, p. 908).

To successfully position the Mallboy project in this process, the producer needed to pitch the project as attractive to stakeholders and financial backers in the marketplace. This was done in three different, but interrelated contexts. Firstly, the script was presented as a viable and important story that needed to be told. The script was developed to industry standard through numerous drafts, which were funded and overseen by an experienced script editor. Secondly, confidence in the project was instilled in stakeholders and financial backers through the careful indoctrination of the writer to industry development processes. This was achieved through interaction with experienced mentors. Finally, the project was pitched as the careful bringing together of experienced practitioners with novices to create the team whose endorsement of the script added cachet to the project.

The normative, standardising practices of filmmaking within the Australian film industry, as seen in the Mallboy case through the use of templates, budgets, schedules and contracting, suggest the embedded and repetitive characteristics of institutionalised practice. These features, according to Bourdieu, are a common feature in the funding of arts as the maximisation of one’s position in a field is also a ‘subordination of artistic activity to socially regulated functions’ (Bourdieu 1990, p. 8).

**Script as boundary object: Scenes I to IV:**

An analysis of differences between the shooting script and script schedule sheds light on how the process of positioning the script to a homogenised mode of production occurred. The shooting script was developed from the final draft script, with directorial comments being added on how shots would be directed. The script schedule broke down these shots and directorial comments to a time-based schedule that accounted for the logistical strategy for creating the shots against the
budget constraints of the project. The script in this case brokers meaning across directorial decisions and logistical considerations. It was both a point of reference and a mechanism of intersection coordinating the different practices that are engaged in the development and production of the film. The script as a boundary object enhanced the capacity of its initial conception to function within spaces that are culturally demarcated such as communities of practice. The script accounted for the different dispositions within the community of practice by functioning as an active mediating tool that served the common goals of the group. Even though the script was interpreted differently by various practitioners there was enough immutable content in the script to maintain integrity.

In making Mallboy, the shooting script and the script schedule were interdependent, but the script schedule ultimately determined what made it to the edit suite and into the final film. The final draft of the script had 152 scenes. To create the shooting script, the first assistant director merged scenes from the final draft where a continuity of action occurred. The number of scenes in the shooting script was 132. This was achieved through negotiations between the producer, first assistant director and me around what was important in the script from the point of view of meaning and relevance and what was achievable from a logistical and fiscal perspective. For instance, some of the night scenes were changed to day scenes, which was seen by the others to have little effect on narrative intent, but avoided overtime rates for night shoots and the hire of expensive lighting equipment.

The differences between the shooting script and the script schedule reveal the role of the script in satisfying different requirements in the production process. Generally, the more informational requirements the script satisfied, the more successfully it fulfilled its role as a boundary object across the different practices in the process of making Mallboy. However, the differences between the shooting script and script schedule also demonstrate the mediatory effect of production processes on script content and meaning. Figure 7 shows how the first four scenes of the shooting script established character, location and tone through a focus on the main protagonist and his relationship with his mother and the physical spaces he inhabits: the urbanised natural surroundings of the creek and the shopping mall. The creek is the only space where the main character is active. In the other locations, such as Pam’s house and the mall games area, he is observant and passive.
1. EXT CLOSE-UP

A close-up of SHAUN's face. He is smiling as his mother, JENNY, whispers something into his ear. She moves away, and SHAUN laughs. The light behind their heads is blinding. The action is silent.

2. EXT MERRIE CREEK DAWN

It is an early winter's morning. SHAUN is running along a concrete path. SHAUN is a smallish boy of 15 years. There is fog rising from the creek. The water in the creek is rushing quickly. His figure is dwarfed by the beauty of the trees and the power lines.

2A. EXT MERRIE CREEK DAWN

SHAUN is visibly upset and exhausted. He is running along the path by the creek. He seems pre-occupied and determined to get somewhere.

3. EXT PAM’S HOUSE EARLY MORNING

SHAUN stands at the corner of the street, staring intently at a particular house. He has just finished running. He is very hot.

3A. EXT PAM’S HOUSE EARLY MORNING

SHAUN watches a man unloading boxes from his car, an older style FALCON GT HO. The man is SHAUN'S father, SAM. SAM carries the boxes into the house.

4. INT MALL GAMES AREA DAY

SHAUN is in the mall games area. He is relaxed playing at a video game (Formula ONE). He walks away from the game with a big smile on his face. He glides down an escalator. Above him, the MALL atrium looms. He hears his name "SHAUNIE" in the space of the mall.

Figure 7: First Four Scenes of Mallboy Shooting Script
The set-up of the first four scenes in the script introduces location and space as a means of inferring character traits and motivations. Figure 8 is the scheduling of the shoot days for the first four scenes by the first assistant director. The figure includes the number of takes and take duration as noted by the continuity person and the location of the first four scenes in the final film edit. As is standard, the scenes were shot out of sequence for fiscal and logistical reasons. The allocation of time in the production stage was limited; scenes from the script were grouped on different days according to common locations and actor availabilities to make the most of the opportunities available. In this case, the industrial production processes facilitated productivity and speed on the set, mediating the original meaning of the scenes. Figure 8 shows the original opening as scripted. This changed significantly, with only one small part out of all four scenes being used in the opening of the film.

Figure 8: Shoot Day, Take, Duration and Use of First Four Scenes of the Script

Scene 1, written as a prelude to the main action, was shot in a studio late in the third week of the schedule. It was omitted from the film during the editing process. The action in Scenes 2 and 2A was filmed on the first day. The scenes did not become part of the opening sequence of the film.
and were edited as establishing shots for different parts of the narrative. These scenes were adapted to fit the rhythm and pace of the film created in the editing suite. The action in Scenes 3 and 3A was shot at the start of the third week of shooting. This footage was also placed later in the film than initially intended.

The first part of Scene 4 was filmed at a games parlour and became an establishing shot of the mall for a later sequence later in the film. This decision was made after a review of the footage in the editing suite. The second part of Scene 4 became the opening shot of the film, replacing what was originally written as the opening scene of the film. The decision to do this was made partly on location recognising in that moment the enigmatic quality of the shot which set an atmosphere and tone for the film as well as being suggestive of the milieu of script. This decision making reflects the circumstances of professional interactions around the script between practitioners at the point of practice. These circumstances account for the ability to recognise and interpret an action or event, that enhances the script and builds additional meaning to the script. The decision was further vindicated in the edit suite after a review of both the Scene 4 footage and the footage shot for the original opening as written in the script.

The shoot for Mallboy was characterised by the need for efficiency and speed. This had a tangible effect on how the script was interpreted and filmed on set. In this production processes, such as schedules, can be seen to impact on the script in a direct way. The shooting schedule is logistically and fiscally determined. Its logistical concerns on any given day included the need to fulfil the time requirements of the schedule, the difficulty of movement between different location points within the public spaces and the limited access to certain locations.

Production processes can also impact on the script in an indirect way through an interpretative and collaborative response to the actualities of filming. For example, the background action in Scene 4, none of which was scripted, was directed by the first assistant director who had to give discrete instructions to the extras employed to be shoppers in the background of the scene. This strategy cut time and added to the action of the shot, being grounded in practices that privilege production processes on the set, as opposed to being consistent with the script. I was also aware that if I, as the director of the film, had given instruction to an extra, their role and status would have changed from extra to actor being eligible to receive increased pay and benefits. This directorial practice on the set is closely linked to financial practices, which promote and sustain a status quo. In this instance, the script is incidental in its usefulness to production processes.
**Day One shooting and efficacies on a film set**

The script is an intrinsic medium that underpins and guides filmmaking practice, but it is also a fluid entity that assumes meaning through interpretation into an image- and sound-based artefact. These two disparate, but related functions of the script can be exemplified by examining the first day of shooting. The section details the ranked and ordered interactions that take place on a film set. It suggests how actions are not only structured to achieve a result, but also to ensure, through ways of working and doing, a successful pattern of work practices for each day. The complexity of interaction between different disciplines and crafts in filmmaking in relation to the production processes on the *Mallboy* project predetermined the result by consistent and repetitive ways of doing. This was prevalent in the way shots were set up and in the number of shots required for each scene.

Figure 9 is a facsimile copy of the production schedule sheet for Day One, which was altered on the day to include additional scenes. There were four scenes scheduled to be filmed on Day One. The numbers on the left-hand side under the scene number are timings for the script and a fraction value of a script page. The scenes scheduled to be shot on Day One reflect an average day’s shooting. The schedule ensured that the goal each day was to work methodically through the scenes and get the scheduled work completed by the end of the day. The systematic use of budgets, accounting practices, schedules and legal contracting in the development and production in *Mallboy* suggests the privileging of reflection and decision-making *prior* to practice rather than at the point of practice itself. The schedule, as a functional rationalisation of applied practicalities, served to ‘clarify the ends to be achieved and the possible means to achieve them’ (Schön 1983, p. 41). This temporal point of difference is an important one, as it frames filmmaking as a pattern of doing that predicates an outcome potentially different from what is proposed in the script. This is understandable given the expense and risks involved in filmmaking, but undermines the possibilities to enhance the script through the diverse practices of filmmaking used to interpret the script and bring it to the screen.
The scenes scheduled for Day One added up to two minutes and 30 seconds of screen time. The scheduling of shots for filming, as per industry standard, did not take continuity of location and action from the script into account (Figure 8), rather, it reflected pragmatic production decisions based on availability of location, crew and equipment. The time allocation for each scene was an
approximation based on the length of the scene, the action required to be filmed and the technical requirements for getting the shot.

The goal of a script schedule is to mitigate any problems with clear and precise procedures that can be measured and managed effectively; it acts as a normative and descriptive tool for the rest of the shoot. The structure of a shooting script can also be a strategic mechanism that can facilitate the shooting of additional material. On the first day, the crew shot an extra six scenes, adding an extra minute and 30 seconds of footage to the total for the day (Table 5). These additional scenes were not part of the official schedule document (Figure 9). The shooting of additional footage on the first day had the sought-after effect by building trust and confidence in the cast and crew in my abilities as a first-time director. This was part of a deliberate strategy by the producer and first assistant director to formulate a schedule that would allow the shooting of additional material.

Table 5: Day One Shoot

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTUAL SCREEN TIME</th>
<th>SCHEDULED SCRIPT TIME</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2A (actual scene number in script 3)</td>
<td>0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>105 (actual scene number in script 124)</td>
<td>0.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>116 (actual scene number in script 135)</td>
<td>0.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49 (actual scene number in script 54)</td>
<td>1.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Additional scenes filmed on day</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>98 (actual scene number in script 117)</td>
<td>0.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>99 (actual scene number in script 118)</td>
<td>0.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100 (actual scene number in script 119)</td>
<td>0.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>104 (actual scene number in script 123)</td>
<td>0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 (actual scene number in script 118)</td>
<td>0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91 (pt. 2) (actual scene number in script 100)</td>
<td>0.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The translation and negotiation process around the script and the shooting schedule on the first day of production supported a level of coherence and negotiation between practitioners in collaborative practice. This reflects the significance of concepts of control and power within the actualities of practice within the field. For Bourdieu, fields, as characterised by power differentials among the practitioners who make them up, give primacy to domination as the modality and meaning of practice within the field. On the first day of shooting, the strategic scheduling established a self-determining agency within the crew that subtly challenged the primacy of the script as an established blueprint for meaning. This struggle for strategic advantage between the collaborative practices of the crew and the object of domination—the script—ensured engaged and productive practices. In the Mallboy case, the end results were not predetermined by the complexity of collaboration between different disciplines and crafts, but rather by the indeterminate production strategies that impacted on practices.
Close analysis of the script pages for Day One shooting reveals the degree to which the script was mediated by production processes. The mediation is accounted for in the organisation and planning of the daily tasks and then in the actual practices of the day. The following are the script pages that correspond to the scenes shot on Day One (Figures 10-15). These figures show the marked-up script pages ready for shooting. The sequence of the pages shows the order in which the scenes were shot. The page numbers are not sequential, but reflect the order in which filming took place on the day. The markings on the script pages shown in Figures 10-15 demonstrate the deviations between the script and what was filmed, the notes being made by the continuity person.

The function of the script and continuity are tied to the objectives of the continuity process, but are also moderated by the practicalities of a well-run community of practice. The script at this stage of the production was secondary to what transpires on the set in the moment of the shoot. The continuity markings on the script are communicative of ways of working on the set. They reflect the complicated lines of communication and engagement that exist on and off the set in the production office and editing suite. Here, the person responsible for the practice of continuity has an interpretative function directly related to the meanings in the script and the content being created on the set. Does the footage make sense in relation to the script? Is the footage editable, believable and usable? An analysis of the script pages reveals the importance of embedded exchange between practitioners on the set based on a collective understanding of the script. This understanding not only helped to sanction and permit patterns of agency, but was also instrumental in deciding who transacted them. For instance, an experienced practitioner may offer a better way of doing something or allocate resources to the benefit of one practice over another. This behaviour occurred on the set in the interpretation of shots and the preference given to some shots over others.

This suggests that the interplay between artefacts such as film scripts, schedules, continuity notes and production budgets ensured consensus between the producers in the office and practitioners on the set. Figures 10-15 reveal how the continuity notes helped to facilitate this consensus as well as providing a guide during editing and other post-production work. In this interplay, logistical and fiscal protocols and a shared understanding and interpretation of the script between cast and crew directly affected the construct of film language as it was created. The end result—the film—hinged on what occurred in the complex interactions that underpin the shooting
process. The footage was achieved through the interaction between the script and its interpretation through collective practice. These interactions contribute new meanings to the scene. This process emerges from what is written in the script and the various perspectives of those involved in the scene, both cast and crew. The task of the director, continuity person and editor is to make sure that the scene makes sense sequentially in relation to all other scenes, but also that the scene matches the writer’s original intention. In Mallboy, the script accommodated multiple interpretations.
SHAUN

NO!

TANYA

Piss off then

SHAUN goes to grab something else.

TANYA

Just piss off Shaun. I've had enough fuckin' karate for one night.

SHAUN runs out the front door.

97. EXT MALL CAR PARK NIGHT (2)

SHAUN crosses the deserted car park under the starry sky.

98. EXT BRIDGE NIGHT (2)

SHAUN runs toward the bridge near the mall carpark. He scurries underneath the bridge and settles on a piece of cardboard. It is cold and damp.

99 INT BRIDGE NIGHT (2)

SHAUN tries to make himself comfortable. He closes his eyes and hallucinates the boxer again. The boxer figure mapped out on a big starry night sky. SHAUN opens his eyes and punches out at the night air. The mall looms in the background.

100 EXT MALL AND CAR PARK DAWN (3)

The mall and empty car park is lit up by the pre dawn sky.

Figure 10: Day One Marked Script
SHAUN keeps walking. He refuses to look at SUE who keeps up the pace beside him.

SUE
Where are ya goin?

SHAUN
Where do ya reckon?

SUE
Dunno

SHAUN stops.

SHAUN
What the fuck do you want?

SUE
Nothin... nothin from you

SHAUN
Good...

SUE
You're fucked!

SHAUN
Yeah right.

SHAUN stops at the exit doors.
He looks at SUE.
She looks at him. She is hurt and angry and started crying.
SHAUN glares at SUE.

SHAUN
Just leave me alone

He walks out of the huge exit doors, leaving SUE behind him, and into the carpark.
SHAUN runs along the path by the creek.
As he runs he deals with his demons. He cries out, half speaks words, all the while running to his fathers house.
At times he seems calm almost serene in the motion of running.
(Refer scene273) SHAUN runs

SHAUN walks up to the front door. He knocks and PAM answers the door. Her face is bruised and swollen. She is surprised to see SHAUN

PAM
Shaun! What are you doin here?

SHAUN
Is Dad here?

PAM
Na he’s out. He’ll be back later tonight.

SHAUN
Can I come in?

PAM

Sure

PAM lets SHAUN into the house. The house is a total mess. Dirty and rubbish everywhere. There are lots of boxes in the corner. Obviously a stash of stolen goods.

PAM
Do you want a drink luv?

SHAUN
Yeah.
SAM
You got that!

SHAUN gets up.
He looks at SAM who keeps eating.
SHAUN stuffs the cash in his pocket.
SHAUN starts walking away.
SAM watches him for a bit and then lights up a cigarette.

115. EXT   STREETS   DAWN (4)   115

SHAUN walks the streets on his way. The rain is gentle but steady.

116. EXT   MERRI CREEK   DAWN (4)   116

SHAUN is walking by the creek. He is dwarfed by a beautiful dawn sky and power lines.
There is mist rising from the creek.
SHAUN starts to run at a slow pace steadily building the speed till he is sprinting.

117. EXT   CARPORT   EARLY MORNING (4)   117

SHAUN stands in the carport. A steady rain falls. He is dripping wet. He looks out and sees the mall in the distance.

118. INT   JENNY'S BEDROOM   MORNING (4)   / 118

SHAUN watches his mother sleep from the door of her room. He then climbs into bed with her. JENNY wakes.

JENNY
Shaun...you scared me. Where have you been?
I've been worried ya know.

SHAUN
I went to see Dad.
Figures 10-13 are mainly scenes of the protagonist running through different locations and were collated by the first assistant director in the script schedule to be shot consecutively on the day. The figures also show markings from the continuity person. These markings illustrate pragmatic decision-making to omit specific detail from the script. The script is a literary object, a sequence of lines on the page that communicate to the reader in sequential order what is to be seen and heard. The creation of the script strived for a literary quality similar to that of the novel or short story. However, the script also served as a blueprint for collaborative creative decisions down the line, functioning as a boundary object that mediated industrialised practices that were predicated on the realisation that the script is transformed into a medium (cinema) distinct from that of its original conception (Price 2014, p. 88).

Bringing together scriptwriting and the function of the script within the field of filmmaking, Macdonald suggests that an analysis of screenwriting should be accompanied by an analysis of the field that is ‘effectively a way of thinking that requires attitudes and competences … judgements and distinctions based on a covert set of social relationships’ (Macdonald 2004, p. 267). The dynamics of interaction within the filmmaking field are the result of the dispositions and positions of film practitioners working on the project. That is to say, a project has structured positions, whose occupants typically have different dispositions and resources that not only reflect their idiosyncratic approach to practice, but are also socially and culturally determined. The script is thus the start point for an artefact—a film—that, due to these interactions, could be very different to the original intent of the script.

In Scene 99 (Figure 10), the ‘boxer figure’ mapped out on the night sky would have been a special effect that added considerable expense to the budget. The continuity markings on the script reveal a budgetary decision with implications on meanings inherent in the script. The following Figures 14-15 outline Scene 49 which was also filmed on Day One.
17 - 1.2
Carpark

SHAUN walks toward the bridge with mall in bg.
SHAUN ducks from behind a car and then walks to the edge of the
car park to a planting of bushes. He looks into the bushes.

SHAAUN

O!

LAURIE (whispers)

Yeah

14 - 2
Sue

SHAUN parts the bushes and sees LAURIE, SUE and DEAN sitting
on the ground. SUE is holding open a SUEWAY bag. She is very
angry with LAURIE who is being a total smart arse.

SUE
Where have you been?

SHAUN

Busy.

SUE
We've been waiting

SHAUN

Yeah...

LAURIE hands SHAUN a walky talky.

SHAUN

Good on ya...ya remembered!

LAURIE

Yep

SHAUN

Cool

SUE (SCREAMS)

C'mon let's go!!

LAURIE searches through a MOUTO bag.

LAURIE

I thought I got a grip.

Figure 14: Day One Marked Script
Figure 15: Day One Marked Script

13-1.2

49.CONT

14-1

15-1

49

SUE

Oh God just get on with it.

LAURIE

Yep sorted man...

DEAN

Hurry up!

LAURIE grabs the Safeway bag and then opens the tube of glue. He dumps a heap of it into the bag and then sniffs. DEAN grabs the bag from him and does the same thing. SUE grabs the bag and has a huge draw.

LAURIE smiles and reaches out at something. He watches the carpark through the cover of the bush.

SHAUN pulls his face from the Safeway bag. He looks up at the sky. He closes his eyes.

SUE rests her head on SHAUN'S shoulder. He reaches down and places his arms around her shoulder. She smiles and kisses SHAUN full on the lips.

DEAN and LAURIE look on oblivious.

50. INT

JENNY'S BEDROOM

DAY(2) / 50

JENNY in one clean sweep clears her bed. She throws a fresh sheet up in the air. She smooths the fresh sheets on the bed. The photo is back in JENNY's room taking pride of place on the bedside table. She takes a huge drag from a spliff.

51. INT

MALL

DAY (2) / 51

SHAUN is back in the mall. SUE is with him but they are both on other planets. Aimlessly they walk about. SHAUN is off his face. The mall appears to be all colour and noise. Most people seem to know him. Some wave. Others call out "Shaun" He walks to the food court. There are gangs of kids hangin out there. Some of them yell out "Mallie" and "Mallboy". SHAUN smiles in recognition. "MALL BOY" he mouths to himself.

SHAUN

Hey Dudes...
On the Mallboy set, discrete and strategic lines of communication based on a shared understanding of the script were set up for maintaining efficiencies as well as troubleshooting any potential areas of disagreement. This was done through the communicative duties that were allocated to specific roles. The continuity person communicated directly with the first assistant director and producer to ensure that the shooting process was timely, within budget, consistent based on the schedule, and of an industry standard. As seen in Figures 14 and 15 the continuity markings on the script are constantly reconciled against functional and fiscal considerations. The continuity person also had a line of communication with the editor, who was by now assembling rushes. Interpretive decisions that mediate the meaning and intent of scenes are discernible in the continuity markings. Small details are crossed out as superfluous on the marked-up script, interpreting the meanings of the action.

Communication between the continuity person and producer bypassed me as director, so I could focus on the creative elements of the shot. Through this action the script took a secondary position to the interpretative vision of the director, to what the editor needs and to the production parameters mitigated by the schedule and budget. The filming of Scene 49 demonstrates shifts in the intention and meaning of the scene through production processes. The marking of the continuity person shows that Scene 49 was the most complicated to film on the day, with six shots set up for the scene and multiple takes of varying lengths. This reflects the complexity of the scene, which had to convey the character nuances as written, as well as the action between the characters in very specific locations. Most of the scene was covered with four shots, with an additional two shots for the establishing shot at the start of the scene. The scene had transitional action that moves from gang activity—glue-sniffing—to focus on the main protagonist and his relationship with his girlfriend. The four vertical marks on the page show there were four takes of the scene. Each was a moving shot with the camera on a dolly, tracking around the characters as they sat in a secluded part of the shopping mall carpark sniffing glue. The first two takes concentrated on the lead character Shaun and his action of welcoming his friends, sniffing glue and then kissing his girlfriend. The other two takes were medium close-up shots of the other two characters reacting to this.

The mediatory effect of production resides not in what was filmed and kept, but rather in what was discarded. For example, in Scene 49, I wrote that Laurie ‘reaches out to something’. This action was scripted as a diversionary point of view from the main character. On the day, this action was not incorporated into the filming due to time constraints. I wrote that Laurie ‘watches
the car park through the cover of the bush’. This action was not recorded. The set-up for filming a shot from a different point of view was not incorporated into the schedule of the shoot. In the moment of shooting, to make shooting more efficient, the first assistant director and the continuity person deemed it unnecessary to highlight this additional action, determining that the primary focus of the filming should be on the main character. The tight scheduling and strategic ways of working on the first day of shooting reflect what happened on the 15-day shoot. This industrial way of working demonstrates that the links between the script and an institutional way of working are relational, not only to the pragmatic activities of production, but also to the meanings in the script. In filming Mallboy, the model of production created efficiencies that facilitated a linearity and logic of production practices. This way of working was underpinned by established professional knowledge that guaranteed that filming could be completed and could progress towards the next stage of production.

**Habitus: A feel for the community of practice**

The Mallboy case highlights the importance of a community of practice to work collaboratively to realise the script to the screen. It was a point of reference for interpretation and decision making. The function of the Mallboy script was to satisfy the needs of the practitioners using it, considering their different social, cultural and economic perspectives and dispositional attitudes. The script as boundary object adapted to the constraints and mediations imposed on it by the different parties using it by maintaining its inherent character and identity. As a boundary object, the script was sturdy enough to maintain this identity across different sites of use. This was seen in its transitional state from script to shooting script and then schedule and in its subtle transformation through the interactions on set between the continuity person, the director and the producer. The script as a boundary object identifies and privileges its fluid state as a temporal, political, instructive and social entity. The script was an analytic concept that inhabited several intersecting worlds to ‘satisfy the informational requirements’ of each of them (Star & Griesemer 1989, p. 393).

The community of practice on the Mallboy project functioned as a mechanism for efficiency and speed as well as knowledge and exchange of expertise. The overarching, industrial ways of doing reflected a social and cultural hierarchy that determines a place in the filmmaking field. Fields are strengthened by the similar habitus of their members, which connects them to the field and its common endeavours and goals. I complied with the established division of labour and status in the field by observing its processes. Here, doxa and the appropriation of habitus
validates structures of knowledge and experience by normalising knowledge and experience in the field. This was a way of understanding the division of labour and acknowledging its practical benefits, as well as a way to become part of it.

My experience of the acquisition of the habitus of a field of creative practice was encountering a deeply structured cultural environment that provoked self-fulfilling predictions based on the different opportunities that are presented within the field. In writing and directing Mallboy, I acquired varied dispositions, such as negotiation, co-operation, adaptability and networking, which enabled me to function within the practices and purposes of the field. This position to practice was not passive, but an actively navigated social reality at the levels of perception and action. The generative schemes of habitus apply ‘to the most varied areas of practice’ (Bourdieu 1984, p.170). This raises questions about the nature of practice in an industrialised context. Is individual practice informed and mediated by social constructs, or vice versa? Does an individual’s habitus reflect the diverse social divisions within their culture? How can a practitioner sustain independent practices within a highly-industrial economic environment? More specifically, if habitus reflects class and material differences, can cultural unconsciousness, mental habits and internalised master dispositions be mediating factors in industrialised practices?

As I worked on Mallboy I internalised what was possible to achieve in the field in reference to other positions within the field, and absorbed the standards of industry practice and incorporated this knowledge into scriptwriting practice. These standards of industry practice were facilitated by the producer. The impact of the strategically-timed, everyday functions of producing on individual practice related to the consideration and comprehension of the script. The timings and deadlines of industry processes were crucial to the script and a continuous development of the project.

On one level individual scriptwriting practice was motivated by personal dispositions. It was realised and mediated through the subjective experiences of the practitioner, and formed and structured through direct experience in the field with other practitioners. Individual practice embodied communicative action within the community of practice aimed at understanding, agreement and consensus. In this sense, the community of practice was emotive and visceral. On the Mallboy set collective practice in the community of practice was always relational, and was socially, culturally and
politically structured. Latent contentions around the interpretation of the script within the group in the community of practice, as suggested in Figures 10-15, were collective struggles to get the projects to completion.

I acquired a feel for the game through experience, education and observation, and honed a practical sense that is gained through institutional experience. This was part of the construction of an effective habitus, which is an enabling disposition. In the stages of ideation for the Mallboy project, this was manifest not only in the format of the words on the page and the changed structure of the narrative, but in the way I realised that the script was something other than just a story that I wrote. I realised that the functions of the script were far reaching and its impact was to be felt across many different practices.

Working on Mallboy, I was aware that the central cooperative task of practitioners who share the same objective is actioned towards the ‘translation’ of each other’s perspectives and dispositions (Star & Griesemer 1989, p. 412). The emphasis is on the benefits for the film crew of friendship, prior relations and information exchange, which serve as structurally-embedded exchanges. This was evident in the assembly of crew and the considered placement of experienced practitioners with novices. Embedded exchange helps to describe existing patterns of social relations and influences, and who transacts them. In repeated social exchange, an experienced practitioner may offer a better way of doing something, or allocate resources that are important post-exchange that is to the benefit of the other. This behaviour occurred on the set on Mallboy, advantaging the less-experienced practitioners in the exchange, and contributing to their success. Mismatches between overlapping meanings and representations between experienced and less-experienced practitioners became ‘problems for negotiation’, requiring careful managing of boundary objects, their meanings and representations, and the interfaces they provide (Ibid. p. 412).

For practices in filmmaking, doxa denotes the taken-for-granted, unquestioned veracity, and the domain of what may be discussed and openly contested. Doxa is positioned within the limits of what is thinkable and sayable and that which goes without saying (Bourdieu 1977, p. 167). The suppositional quality of doxa raises questions regarding the limits to the creative agency and autonomy of individuals as they participate in the industrialised environment of cultural production that is filmmaking. For Bourdieu, the end result of struggle within a field is resolved by the amount of assets and means, in the form of resources, that practitioners have within the field. The vigor of a field comes about from the point of view, dispositions and strategic
perspectives of agents. A field has positions that are structured and whose occupants in most cases have different resources and dispositions. The structuring activity of agents intervenes between conditions of existence and practice; far from reacting mechanically to external conditions, agents respond to the invitations and mediations of the world whose meaning they have helped produce.

National culture yields symbolic profits

In its conception and development, the *Mallboy* script was very specific to everyday issues that were realised through a narrative focused on localised events. For the *Mallboy* project, the procurement of a distributor changed the parameters within which the film was discussed. The film was now perceived as an example of a ‘national’ film to be exhibited to the wider world. The conventional notions of national cinema find elements unique to the national identity, which are heightened in an international context and are conflated with the commercial potential of the film; a homogeneity is formed around the surface of the film in the form of nationalism. In the assertion of national culture through the providence of the film and through the marketing of *Mallboy* as an insight into a cultural and social milieu particular to Australia, the film and its inclusion in an international context ‘yields symbolic profits’ (Rourke 2003, p. 35).

Within this context, a film festival such as Cannes operates as a field effect. The festival functions as symbolic capital and as a site of ‘cultural legalisation’ for the film industry (de Valck 2014, p. 76-77). The apprehension of *Mallboy* as the only Australian film selected for Cannes in that year was disparate to its original intentions as the script and the film to explore a specific world and social class through characters and narrative. The concept of national cinema at this point imposes homogeneity; it is homogeneity suggested by an objective, inescapable imperative directly related to the marketplace requirements of the film.

The power to represent the world is a form of cultural authority that filmmakers, producers and distributors have an interest in preserving. Power and control within filmmaking is maintained through simplified concepts of definition and value—such as national cinema, genre and box office—that are easily disseminated within and outside the field. The value of the script is secondary to these considerations. The normative idea of the nation and the cultural forms it reproduces replenish the cultural status quo within the field, according to the structurally-determined interests of their producers and consumers. The marketing of film as a national
product is at odds with what actually occurred and with the inherent complexities and difficulties of film production processes and practices.

These two paradigms suggest that there are symbolic interests and investments at stake in the realms of film and popular culture that obey an economic logic. The value systems of cultural fields arise from the interaction of practices at a symbolic level. For Bourdieu (1990), this aligns practice to the logic of domination, but makes an exception for cultural practice. He states that ‘in the cultural spheres of capitalist societies, practices never seem to comply with an economic logic’ (p. 122). In the case of filmmaking, this is perhaps overstating the point, but culture and power are ‘not simply attempts at interpreting the world but more importantly are interventions aimed at changing it, by altering ways in which we perceive the social world and construct it’ (Frangie 2009, p. 222). The guardians of the established order systemise and codify principles of production to defend them with official systems of classification and production processes. This position is pertinent in film production and development, which is mainly funded and controlled by government and corporate interests. For Bourdieu (1984), the ‘most disputed frontier … is the one that separates the field of cultural production and the field of power’ (p. 43).

The Mallboy case illustrates the dichotomies between individual agency and practice and the industrial production of film in the marketplace. These tensions played out in Mallboy to facilitate an efficient production. Without the industry support and know-how, the film would not have been produced. However, the shift in the perception of the film once it had received recognition altered the parameters of its value. The marketing and distribution of film content, and of its perceived value, privilege idealist assumptions about creative practices that distort the realities of scriptwriting and filmmaking practices.

For Bourdieu, it is difficult to distance the study of the production of culture from the idealist assumptions attached to the notions of artistic creativity. Bourdieu does not question culture, but rather the ‘charismatic conception, which by refusing to take into consideration the social considerations of production and reception, makes it fully impossible to understand cultural phenomena’ (Boschetti 2006, p. 139). This was seen in the Mallboy case, where the reception of the film ignored the narrative of development and practice, instead focusing on what film represented at face value. It is a position that distorts the truth of creative processes and practices but, more importantly, prevents discourse around practices and ways of working and—most pertinently for the audience—from asking who has created this ‘creator’ (Bourdieu 1992, p. 168).
Case summary

In presenting the *Mallboy* case, Chapter Four has examined various functions of the script in the development and production of a film project, including its role in brokering collective practices of filmmaking within a community of practice. The chapter has presented the constraints of pre-production and production processes through the analysis of practices within the community of practice, suggesting potential social, cultural and institutionalised meanings inherent in the film industry. The case has narrated engagement between practitioners in the community of practice using budgets, legal and production documents and schedules that support a hierarchical workplace. The narrative has contextualised individual and collective practices through Bourdieu’s concepts of field, habitus and capital, highlighting the relational and mediatory functions of the script in an industrial context. The chapter has detailed the relational dichotomies between creative practice and the functions of industry practice and processes on a film.

The examination of practices in the *Mallboy* case accounts for some of the industrial, cultural and social circumstances that allow practice to occur, revealing scriptwriting practice to be an ensemble of practices, interpretative schemes and relationships. In this way, the *Mallboy* case interrogates the role of individual agency and collective practice within the parameters of filmmaking. In examining industrial ways of working in the Australian film industry influence scriptwriting practice, the chapter suggests that these processes potentially influence film content through an adherence to homogenised industry practices that are structured around institutional standards and norms. This is further explored in Chapter Five, which provides a different example of the agency of the scriptwriter being affected by the institutional ways of working.
Chapter Five

Godless

Chapter Five describes the early development stage of a proposed feature film called *Godless*, examining the creative and industry environment for the practice of scriptwriting. The chapter reveals the powerful, intermediary role of the producer following the 2008 changes to Australian film-funding policy and the associated, strong mediating effects of a producer-led model of development on scriptwriting practice. The chapter begins with an autoethnographic account of how the project unfolded, spanning the project’s background and the establishment of the creative team that developed the script. The narrative describes script development and the associated practices around the project, culminating in a read-through of the script by a group of actors with a focus on my position as a freelance scriptwriter working pro bono on a film project that had received limited funding. Lending richness and veracity to the narrative are extracts from email exchanges (1 June 2009 – 15 April 2011) between the project team. These portray on collaboration between the two scriptwriters, offering insight into the practical realities of filmmaking. Table 6 sets out the code names for those involved in the project.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CODE</th>
<th>ROLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VG</td>
<td>Me, co-writer, script editor and director of <em>Godless</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PR1</td>
<td>Main producer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PR2</td>
<td>Second producer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W1</td>
<td>Co-writer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EP</td>
<td>Executive producer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CA</td>
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Following this account is an analysis of the email data, which considers the reflexive role of the researcher in relation to scriptwriting practice. The analysis of scriptwriting practices is linked to the condition of precarious freelance employment in the film industry, suggesting a disjuncture between the skills and effort needed to create a script and the financial recompense in the commercially-driven film industry. Next, a discussion of the casting process investigates how the commercial cachet of actors and the influence of casting directors mediate creative decisions around the script. Finally, the chapter examines the different functions of the Godless script in relation to the commercial values that underpin scriptwriting practice.

The story of Godless

In early 2005, PR1 and PR2, two young Australian producers, approached me to read a first-draft script titled Godless, written by W1. The script, about biker gangs in the outer suburbs of western Sydney, was raw, edgy and humorous. It focused on a power struggle in an outlaw biker gang, with a perfunctory love story thrown into the mayhem. The script was loosely based on the events leading up to a 1984 gunfight between rival biker gangs in Milperra that left seven people dead, including a 14-year-old female bystander. The producers sought a writer-director to work with W1 on further drafts and take the film to the next stage of production. At the time, I was employed as a sessional university lecturer, while developing a number of film and television projects outside my paid employment. Eventually, an agreement between the producers, me and my agent was made, with the usual fee for scriptwriting waived in lieu of full credit and payment for co-writing and directing once the film received production funding.

My involvement in the project was personally challenging. I was working long hours in a competitive creative industry for little financial reward, while trying to balance that work with the need to earn a living. The project offered only a slim chance that the financial arrangement between me, my agent and the producers would be beneficial to all parties. Despite the risk of never being paid, I began regular email and phone correspondence with the producers and writer to develop the next draft of the script.

My main point of contact for the project was PR1, the head producer and dominant figure in the project. PRI was an early career producer in the film industry, with screen credits that
included two producer feature credits and two low-budget pay television credits. PR1 and PR2 owned the film production company that was developing *Godless*. They had several other film and television productions in different stages of development. I was introduced via phone to W1, a disciplined and engaged practitioner who juggled scriptwriting around work in a marketing firm and completing a PhD in political science.

In 2006, the *Godless* project was selected for an AFC development initiative called IndiVision, a short-lived program to support Australian low-budget filmmaking. IndiVision sought filmmakers and projects suited to innovative production techniques and practices of the low-budget form. The program was designed to demonstrate how restricted resources could produce benefits, while aiming to result in completed films rather than scripts. The first, five-day IndiVision session was called the Lab and was held at the Sydney College of the Arts. Experienced producers and practitioners were flown in from around the world to give workshops and seminars. The Lab focussed on each project’s creative development, with an emphasis on scriptwriting and direction.

The structure of the Lab sessions dealt separately with the various filmmaking disciplines. There were scriptwriting workshops with experienced script consultants with international credits. The *Godless* script was read by a script editor from Australia and a producer from France. They provided feedback on the draft, followed by individual consultations with W1, PR1 and me. The sessions involved identifying weaknesses in the plot, including the need to make the interactions between characters clearer, especially those involving the female character. The sessions were largely informal and included a general discussion of the script as a whole. There was scant discussion or analysis of specific script details. The advice was to rewrite parts of the script that dealt with the central love interest. PR1 and PR2 agreed that W1 struggled with the more intimate elements of the narrative and female characters.

At the Lab, attending directors were given the opportunity to direct, film and edit a short scene from the script, with feedback being given. The event culminated in a screening of an Australian low-budget film, intended as inspiration for the filmmakers attending IndiVision. The screening was followed by a Q & A session with the filmmaker. W1 and I came away from the Lab invigorated and ready to launch into another draft of the script.
The second part of the initiative, the IndiVision Marketing workshop, was held at the Stamford Plaza Hotel in Melbourne later in 2007. The four-day workshop included workshops and professional briefings tailored for the producers of the selected projects in respect of marketing, exhibition and distribution strategies. The script was not referred to in this part of the program. Rather, international distributors and sales agents were present to guide and mentor project teams towards an effective distribution and exhibition plan.

An outcome of the IndiVision program was receipt of a small amount of funding for general production costs for the Godless project, which was used for leasing an office space, general office expenses and further script development. I started corresponding with W1 about the new draft. I spoke with W1 about the difficulty of writing whole drafts of the script together. We decided to complete sections of the script individually, exchange them by email and then discuss revisions by telephone. The inclusion of Godless in the IndiVision program gave the project a foothold in the marketplace, enabling the project team to start approaching actors and distributors. However, this momentum was fleeting as the producers shifted their attention to another project that had received full production funding.

The two-year period between the IndiVision program and work on the next draft of the Godless script meant that I could work on other projects. On Monday 1 June 2009, PR1 emailed PR2, W1 and me outlining a plan to get Godless into production over the next 18 months. PR1 stressed that the next development stage had to focus on the commercial viability of the project, with a view to applying for development and production funds from Screen Australia. This included a requirement to attach a lead ‘name’ actor to the project and secure a distributor for the film. P1 drafted a production document to accompany a funding application to Screen Australia. It made a strong case for the commercial viability of Godless, citing the success of films in the action-based, crime fiction genre. The case included box office figures for recent genre-based films, the potential for sponsorship and branding rights and the box office clout of the actors being considered for the film.

In this document, the production budget had grown from $1.5 million to $4.9 million as a result of the re-positioning of the project from its original conception as a low-budget feature to an action film. I found this reorientation to a highly-commercial property disconcerting. We discussed the implications of the change, with me naïvely arguing that the less money we spent on the film, the greater the likelihood of seeing a profit from the
project. The others felt that the new budget reflected an industry standard for similar genre films, the action sequences needing to be rewritten to match audience expectations. This shift in strategy reflected changes in the funding model for Australian films. The Screen Australia Charter was now emphasising audience satisfaction and commercial success.

W1 and I started work on the script according to the producers’ new brief, emailing scenes back and forth with notes, clarifications and justifications. We held conference calls to map out character arcs and journeys, and narrative details. The new draft followed the same structure as the old draft, but included additional set-piece action sequences such as car chases, explosions, violence, nudity and an abundance of weaponry. Rather than finding nuances of character and narrative from within the world we had created, we were adding highly visual moments of narrative action and new characters. This led to a disconnection between the narrative elements and character design, shifting the script’s function from an exploration of a subculture to an employment of genre-based narrative constructs.

Working over the Internet with W1 was difficult, limiting my scope to talk about my concerns about the characters and the narrative construct we were developing. The characters were written with an articulated self-consciousness as men and women who knew themselves fully. This did not imply a rational, coherent or permanent sense of identity, but rather stereotypes. I started to doubt my judgement in the process of writing. I was being overly critical about the script. We sent the new draft to the producers. It was approved and used as the blueprint for decisions to take the project to the next stage.

In early September 2009, I was introduced via email to CA to begin the process of casting Godless. The aim was to secure Australian actors with international profiles. W1 was kept in the loop about the initial casting proceedings and as the weeks went by the focus on casting saw the script take a secondary role in creative decision-making for the project. As CA and I became embroiled in the casting process, W1 dropped off the email chain.

On 16 September 2009, a new revised production document for Godless was sent to W1, CA and me. PR1 set up a conference call between me, PR2 and CA. This heralded a new phase in project, with the aim being to move from the late ideation stage to early pre-production. On 28 September 2009, CA and I decided to approach PC1 for a lead part. PC1 was a major Australian actor who had worked in Hollywood studio productions. PC1 had a
local agent in Sydney and another in Los Angeles. There was a protocol to approaching PC1. CA provided me with a list of questions that had been approved by PC1’s Australian agent. I had to answer the questions, which were then sent to the Australian agent, who would then ask PC1 to consider reading the script. However, in the desire to attach actors to the project, PC2’s agent had also been approached with an offer for the same role for PC2. The rationale was to cast the net widely, hoping to catch at least one major international actor for the lead role. We decided to push ahead with negotiations with PC1’s agent, hoping that PC2’s agent would not get back to us too quickly.

The email transcript between CA and me included instructions on how to deal with PC1’s manager. I was entrenched in the casting process, caught up in the whirlwind of negotiations and back-office politics. In an email dated Monday 28 September 2009, 11.37AM, CA wrote that PC1 did not accept ‘unsolicited scripts’ and would not read the script until I had answered all the questions in detail. I knew that the producers would be willing to change any element of the project to satisfy the wants and needs of the actor. I set about answering the questions, but was unsure how to frame the response so as not to appear cloying or desperate. I included a cover letter to PC1’s agent in Australia explaining that ours was a low-budget film, that we were looking to cast PC1 in a lead role and that we were thrilled to be given this opportunity. I was mindful of my position in the scheme of things. I was a novice writer-director with one credit to my name, writing to the agent of a powerful, internationally experienced actor with many credits. In the email dated Wednesday 7 October 2009, 9.54AM, I wrote that ‘Godless has received development and funds from the AFC (now Screen Australia) as part of the IndiVision program’, adding that the proposed budget, low by international standards, was 4.5 million dollars. I wrote that the role we were offering was ‘an iconic character cameo that embodies the emotional heart and soul of the narrative’, commenting that the film project follows ‘in the tradition of low-budget and independent genre Australian films like Mad Max, Chopper, Romper Stomper and Two Hands by combining a high-octane commercial narrative and gritty characterisation with an arthouse style and sensibility’.

In the meantime, CA had sent an email to P1, explaining the current situation and the possible conflict of interest with PC2’s agent, who was still considering our informal offer. P1 sent a strategic email to PC2’s agent, introducing the project and explaining that the strategy for casting Godless had been to approach several actors for different roles at the
same time. Meanwhile CA and I worked through a long list of Australian actors working internationally only to discover that almost all of them were already working or signed to big-budget feature films or television series.

Part of my strategy to get more work and experience as a freelance practitioner was to have regular meetings and updates with more experienced industry players. I had met EP in the post-Mallboy haze of Cannes and we had kept in contact. EP was an experienced and influential Australian producer and executive with many Australian and international films and television shows to his credit. I liked to update EP on the progress of my projects from time to time. I spoke to him about another script I was writing, which he agreed to help with. This project had been optioned by a producer in New York. EP gave me advice on how to work within the North American system. I also spoke to EP about the recent developments on the *Godless* project. I was grateful that EP took the time to listen to my ideas and projects. I was never sure what he thought of them. His wealth of experience was commensurate with my lack of experience, but we got on well and spoke over coffee about work and the current state of the industry. EP’s mentoring had a calming influence in the face of my precarious position in the industry, not knowing whether a project would come to fruition.

I thought EP would be a valuable addition to the *Godless* project. I broached the subject with PR1. PR1 agreed that it was a worthwhile idea and that he should formally approach EP. PR1 and EP met up. Soon after, EP was appointed an Executive Producer on the *Godless* project. EP brought a different energy to the development stage of the production, and offered the potential to open other revenue streams for the production. I had been keeping PR1 and EP updated on the ongoing actor negotiations for PC1. I also emailed EP to explain the difficulties we were having in getting some of the younger international actors to read the script. I also mentioned that I could take advantage of a direct link I had to PC3 through a friend. EP advised us to get the script to PC3, an older and more established actor, by any means possible. On 10 December 2009, I sent a short email to PR1 to inform him that I was still corresponding with PC1’s Australian agent, and that PC1 would not read any scripts until he had finished working on a major Hollywood production. I also wrote that PC1’s manager ‘stressed how busy PC1 was’. Four hours later, I received a response from PR1, who was in Dubai: ‘*Can we please politely thank [PC1’s manager] and go on our merry way. We are just wasting our time I think.*’
CA and I discussed the reason for PR1’s position, which we saw as a shift in the casting strategy. PR1’s position was a flexing of executive muscle that undermined the protocols and ways of working with actors and actors’ agents that CA and I had established over the previous few months. PR1’s position was pragmatic and made sense in the scheme of things. I learnt later that PC1’s agent had corresponded directly with CA soon after this email, informing her that PC1 was too busy to consider *Godless* at this stage.

I was piqued by the lack of communication between the producer, CA and me. PR1 had never mentioned that he was travelling overseas. Taking EP’s advice, I sent an email to PR1, PR2 and CA on 18 January 2010 about the possibility of contacting international actor PC3 directly through a mutual friend, rather than waiting for his agent to get back to us. Direct negotiation between writer/director and actor in the industry is not the norm, being considered to disrupt the delicate, multilateral negotiations around casting. My naivety and desire to move forward created issues around confidentiality, casting practice and ways of working, status and hierarchy. CA pointed this out to me in an email, but I pressed on with my idea to contact the actor directly. I wrote that I had contacted a friend who was a personal confidant of PC3 and that ‘She has contacted his production company and they are keen to forward the info and script directly to PC3 once they hear from him’. I mentioned that ‘If that option fails she will text him directly’. I wrote that my plan was ‘to get him to read the script and maybe meet up in Melbourne sometime’.

There was no immediate response to this email. I was on my own and acting outside the accepted casting protocols. I sent an email to PC3’s Melbourne office, but never heard back from PC3. PR1, who was copied in on all the email exchanges between CA and me, suggested that PC6 was an actor we should consider, one who might entice distributors to the project. PR1 sent an email on 19 January 2010 saying that ‘PC6 could play a variety of smaller roles & would be great if he was so inclined’. CA responded in an email dated Tuesday 19 January 2010, 10:24 AM: ‘What happens if PC6 comes back and says yes to *Snapper*? You did offer it to him first? He has a deadline of this Friday by the way (not Monday). Thanks.’

PR1 responded in an email dated Tuesday 19 January 2010, 10:33 AM, stating: ‘I’m having lunch with EP tomorrow. Will get his thoughts. Let’s not push PC6 for a decision and let the deadline pass & we will be in a better position.’ The decision to defer to EP took some
heat out of the casting process. The development process had been further complicated by confusion around the roles of PR1 and EP. PR1 liked to control of a project, being unhappy that EP was asserting some authority over the situation. For example, EP suggested that I contact PC3 directly, which PR1 thought was not part of EP’s sphere of influence. Nevertheless, after a short reprieve and an opportunity to catch our breath, we pressed on with approaching lesser-known, local actors, receiving some positive feedback on the script from these actors. I thought little about the script during this time, assuming it to be ‘a given’ for the project, the established template for production decision-making. The script functioned on several levels and served multiple purposes. I was corresponding almost daily with CA about actors, the work they were currently doing and their appropriateness for Godless. With the approval of PR1, CA and I decided to move forward with the casting process and have a read-through of the script with available actors in Sydney, not the least to bring the script back to a central position in the development process.

Organising the cast read-through of a feature-length script was a logistical challenge, which included negotiating and managing the availabilities of a dozen working actors. It was also a major milestone for the project, suggesting to industry that the script was strong enough to move towards production. I believed the read-through would breathe new life into the project and push the script to the next level of development. I had little time to relay this information to W1, having had little communication with him throughout the casting process. In the lead-up to the reading, I emailed him. We had not communicated for over six months. After a quick discussion about the script, we decided the current draft was strong enough to be used. CA and I spent the next few weeks sorting through the profiles of available actors. We whittled down the actor list to those most appropriate for each role. I spent a day in Sydney at the casting offices auditioning actors.

The day for the actor read-through of the script came quickly. CA sent me an email dated Wednesday 25 March 2010 confirming times and actors. The email outlined protocols and a schedule for the day. There would be formal introductions at the start of the event, followed by the reading and then a light lunch for the actors and the main creative team. I caught an early morning flight to Sydney for the event, making my way by bus to the suburban theatre space. I was nervous at the thought of the day ahead. I was concerned that EP and PR1 were only available for the first hour of the reading. W1 was unavailable. CA could not leave the
casting office. PR2, who oversaw the logistics for the day, was in and out of the theatre. Effectively, I was on my own.

The reading got off to an amateurish start. In the effort to save money, the producers had printed two pages of the script per one A4 sheet, making the text difficult to read. Some of the actors had not brought reading glasses. The first 20 minutes was a scramble to print out new scripts in a readable font size. I introduced the project, acknowledged and thanked the main creative team and then introduced the actors taking part in the reading. My voice was small in the large theatre space. There was a pause, then PC8’s booming baritone voice filled the room with the statement, ‘Godless... scene 1. Exterior. Mountain Highway. Afternoon. Open stretch of road. Quiet. Low rumble of engine. Rumble grows....’. The sound of the actors’ voices filled the space. The dialogue from the script came alive, accentuated in the cavernous space of the theatre. So were the silent pauses, which resonated in the space as loudly as explosive exclamations. Inflections from the actors revealed or masked interpretations that may or may not have been true to the intentions of what was written on the page. Actors fixed their own dispositions and interpretations to the dialogue through the tone and timbre of their voices.

After two hours of reading expositions, PC8’s booming voice, still mellifluous, spoke the final lines: ‘Seconds Later. Sheree rides the Triumph at speed, Tiffany Brooke in front of her with Elmo. Miles of open road ahead.’ Silence. The air was heavy with expectation. Some of the actors stood up, stretched and made for the exit door. Some hung back, looking at each other as if expecting something to happen. Others looked to the ceiling and yawned. In the parlance of the theatre, the read-through ‘tanked’. The performances were assured, professional, but there was a strong theatricality to the interpretations of some characters that conflicted with the criminal and working-class milieu of the script. This was unintentional, but compromised the credibility of the characters and the narrative.

A light lunch was provided after the reading, attended by a few of the actors who did not have to leave for other appointments. The lunch was civil, but uncomfortable. Conversation inevitably turned to the script and how it worked in the reading. The feedback on the characters and the narrative structure was mostly positive, but the believability of the main antagonist was questioned. Some of the actors described the character as one-dimensional and unconvincing as written. My position was different. I thought the reading of the
character was incorrect. The character as written was a man with basic needs and a cruel disposition. There was a Machiavellian theatricality to the performance by the actor who took his part, which was incongruous in the world of the narrative. It made the character weak and comical. My thoughts were considered inconsequential and were brushed aside.

The focus was turned squarely back to the script, which was now under intense scrutiny. Its latest draft became the embodiment of all that was wrong in the development process up to that point. The drive to secure a lead actor and a distributor for the project was relegated to a secondary concern compared with the magnitude of problems with the script that were seemingly identified in the read-through. I emailed PR1, PR2, EP and W1 on Saturday 28 March outlining my concerns and thoughts about the reading and the structure of the narrative. I also sent a positive update to CA, who responded with equally positive comments. I wrote to CA that ‘In hindsight we should have got W1 (or me) to do an abridged version [of the script] with less big print [description of character action and location]’, and that I was ‘compiling my notes for the script taking into account feedback from EP and the actors’. This email was the last correspondence I had with CA regarding Godless. It was an abrupt end to an intense working relationship. This is a common experience in filmmaking, but was still difficult to process.

The project had to overcome an overwhelming sense of failure after the read-through, compounded by its subsequent rejection by all the lead actors we had approached. Regardless, I pressed on to deliver a draft of Godless that would satisfy all invested stakeholders. I spent the next few months corresponding with W1, addressing the issues that had arisen from the reading. The more pressing issue was the sense that the producers had lost faith in the script and needed to be convinced it was viable and could be salvaged. W1 and I spent hours reading and drafting a new version of the script, scene by scene, rewriting and reconfiguring character motivations and actions to consider the producers’ misgivings and the actors’ feedback about character motivations and the narrative structure. It was daunting and thankless work.

I went back to my earlier notes for the project, seeking to rediscover my initial attraction to it. The earlier drafts of Godless had a simple narrative focussed on characters from a credible working-class milieu who became embroiled in dangerous criminal activities that escalated into violence and created dysfunction in their world. The description of action in
the initial drafts of the script captured the language, thoughts, emotions and the web of social interaction between the characters with a strong sense of verisimilitude. I wanted to recapture this by removing some of the outlandish moments of action, especially the explosions and gratuitous acts of violence. On Monday 12 April 2010, I emailed W1 my notes for the new structure. W1 wrote back, ‘Allow us to start planning next steps with as good a window as we can give ourselves’. He mentioned that he would

‘read through [the notes] over the next couple of days so I can offer (a) my thoughts on the proposed direction and (b) give an indication by COB Friday whether it’s the scale of task I can take on myself or we need to source someone good to deliver the next draft with the deadlines we’ve got’. He added, ‘I’m really hoping I can do it, and will work as hard as I can to make the time to produce a draft that would be at the high standard we need to take to Screen Australia, but if I can’t I’ll let you know quickly so EP, PR1 and PR2 can get someone briefed and working on it quickly’.

I wrote to PR1, PR2 and EP about our plan to get a new draft delivered in the next six months. The response from the producers was guarded. On Wednesday 21 April, P1 wrote:

Can I pls be totally upfront and straight with you guys. PR2, EP & I have had a few meetings & spent many, many hours discussing/arguing about GODLESS. Neither PR2 nor EP are sold on Vinnie G’s ideas. Esp. Brettie being a RAT. (I’m sitting on the fence a little on this, pending execution.) PR2, EP & I can’t really agree on anything regarding GODLESS other than we ALL think the undercover Cop angle would work. My concern (like yours) is that it was used in Stone but PR2 & EP reckon undercover cops are common place in the real world (& also films that have done well at the Box Office) and that it should not concern us.

Ominously, PR1 added, ‘To be realistic, we have had the Script knocked back from EVERY lead who has read it & have not been able to secure a Distributor. Action needs to be taken. Thoughts?’

Despite the tough assessment of the viability of the production, I pressed on with the new ideas for the script. I sent my draft notes to W1 and he started on a new draft. The first act of the script was delivered a few weeks later. On Tuesday 4 May 2010, W1 wrote to PR1
and PR2, stating:

*We’ve agreed that VG will take the lead in the re-write and I’ll do a weekly polish and edit of what he’s written. The next draft will be based on VG’s most recent set of notes. VG will be doing the hard yards and I’ll be making sure that it all works and integrates coherently. I think, given timing pressures (see below) we should also be regularly keeping you guys and EP in the loop as we go (say, when we’ve got the first act done, when we’re halfway through Act 2, and at the end of Act 2).*

W1 wrote: ‘We’d look at having the 10th draft done by Monday September 6th’, and that ‘We’d set a deadline, too, of Monday June 7th to finish Act 1’. He added that the speed at which we were writing would mean that we would know if ‘this co-writing approach is going to work effectively’.

I tentatively agreed with W1’s plan for a way forward. W1 responded in an email on Wednesday 26 May 2010:

> *All super good Vincenzo. I’ll have the whole thing to you on Fri and dated. Feel like the process is working well. And we’re in good time. Maybe we should hold off sending to PR1, PR2 and EP until we’ve got a good thirty minutes written? Just so they can get a clearer sense of where we’re going. What do you think? We could have that done in a couple of weeks.*

Two weeks later, on Thursday 10 June 2010, I emailed W1 expressing apprehension about how we were going to get the work done, considering the timeframe and the difficulty of generating fresh ideas for the script. We were struggling to find solutions to workflow and how to divide up the work. There was also the added pressure of keeping PR1, PR2 and EP interested in the project.

On Friday 11 June, W1 emailed me outlining changes to the narrative. I accepted what W1 was trying to do and we pressed on. PR1 would send reminders every so often of relevant script and story structures. These reminders and notes would quote famous Hollywood films as reference material for the content of *Godless*. These notes reflected a desire to mould the narrative as a genre piece by incorporating extended action sequences into the script. My relationship with scriptwriting practice had become hesitant. I was perplexed by the development path that *Godless* had taken. I still enjoyed the process of writing and was
inspired by the prospect of writing about an objectified world through a subjective representation, but the world we were writing about was based on limited experience, being filtered through second-hand cinematic history and the expectations inherent in genre and commercial filmmaking.

W1 wrote the first 16 pages of a new Godless script based on our discussions. This included an extended description of the rest of the structure of the narrative. I received it by email on Friday 10 September 2010. The email was also addressed to PR1, EP and PR2. There was no response from the others. I sent through some further notes and ideas on the narrative in the hope that a discussion would start between the producers and the writers. Fourteen days later, on Friday 24 September 2010, W1 expressed his frustration and disappointment as fatigue set in. He wrote:

Dudes, apologies, I haven’t been able to clear any space over the past week to move the script on and I won’t get to it next week either. But will try and devote as much spare time as possible the following week. Vinnie, got your message and will call you early next week ... Sorry again.

PR1 promptly responded with a reminder that there was still the business of filmmaking to consider and that the casting of actors was still a major priority. On Friday 24 September 24, he emailed, ‘Just FYI **** **** [an Australian actor agent based in London] is waiting on the script to get it to PC2. We have a window of opportunity that will close Tick, tick, tick.........

I rang W1 that afternoon. We spoke about the feasibility of getting a new draft of the script ready. The main issue for both of us was the lack of time and resources. We both had our regular jobs. Other creative projects had taken priority in our lives. I added that I thought it was about time we got some payment for the work we had put in so far. We decided that the best course of action was to enlist a third writer, someone who would have the time to redraft the script according to our plan and under our guidance. W1 suggested this plan in an email to me, PR1 and PR2 on Friday 24 September 2010:

We’ve got a clear direction and a clear brief so if we can get someone who’s good we can give them plenty to work with, then the three of us can edit as we go and if necessary I can re-write anything that you’re not happy with. Otherwise I’ll be
churning out chunks in fits and starts without being able to commit to the deadlines we’ll need to set if we’re seriously trying to catch PC2.

PR1 responded promptly by email the same day:

By the time a new Writers got interviewed, agreed to, briefed & started writing it would be the end of the year before we got anything. I just need us to agree to a schedule & keep to it. Otherwise I am the one who is looking like a retard when dealing with Casting Directors, Actors, Distributors etc.

The project had come to an impasse. For W1 and me, working on the Godless project had become a gruelling process of writing in instalments to a brief with little feedback or encouragement. PR1 was mindful of perceptions within the film industry, but effectively dismissed the work that we had carried out and the work required to write a new draft. Two months later, we had the first two-thirds of the new draft completed. On Friday 17 December, W1 wrote: ‘1%ers, 61 pages of new Godless, complete (as a first draft) up to the three-quarter mark of Act 2. So, fifteen minutes of second act to go, then the third act. That’s about twenty-five more minutes, give or take.’ W1 also commented on the quality of the work he had put into the draft:

Mea culpa: I’d hoped to have polished this draft a bit more before sending it, but I had to work an extra day at the day job this week and only got one writing day when I’d budgeted for two. So it’s a bit raw with typos and so on and I haven’t removed the chop up in the boatshed and maybe culled excess dialogue as I’d planned to do.

W1 wanted a constructive response to the script, instructing both producers and me to ‘Just get your red pens out. Make sure that the narrative is flowing, that it’s well paced and nothing is duplicated or doesn’t make sense’. He ended the email with, ‘Anyway, whatever, I’m tired. Go to work on it. Cheers’, before signing off as ‘Ginge’, a minor character in the script who gets killed off early in the second act.

There was no response from PR1, PR2 or EP to this email. Christmas and then New Year passed and still no response. I sent an email in late January 2011 outlining a new plan of action. On 29 March 2011, a press release circulated to media outlets in Australia. It announced that Channel 10 was commissioning a new series called Bikie Wars, based on
the Milperra Bikie Massacre, from the makers of the *Underbelly* franchise. The press release was forwarded to me by PR1, signifying the end of the *Godless* project.

**Case analysis**

The preceding narrative presents scriptwriting as a series of stop-start interactions between writers and the core development team, scriptwriting functioning simultaneously as an individual creative activity and a collective activity that services the industrial development and production processes of filmmaking. To analyse these different functions, the contents of the emails were coded to identify ‘higher conceptual levels’ of meaning (Yin 2015, p. 187). As outlined in Figure 16, Bourdieu’s theory of practice and the attendant concepts of habitus, doxa, capital and field provided conceptual structure to this analysis. First-order meaning categories identify the main practices in the data. Second-order categories reflect the generative outcomes of individual and collective practice. Scriptwriting is part of a set of interrelated practices that underpin the relational dynamics between industry processes and creative decision-making and outcomes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First-order categories</th>
<th>Second-order categories</th>
<th>Conceptual themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual Scriptwriting Practices</td>
<td>Knowledge Expertise Reflexive Engagement Strategic Decision-making Collective Decision-making</td>
<td>Bourdieu's theory of practice and the field of cultural production Habitus Doxa Capital Field</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 16: Data Analysis Process in Email Transcripts**

Scriptwriting practices are linked to the concepts of doxa, field, capital and habitus in Bourdieu’s theory of practice to frame the data analysis for the *Godless* case around four distinct exploratory themes:

1. The reflexive position of the freelance scriptwriter in the field of filmmaking.
2. The doxa that underpins and informs producer practice in the field of filmmaking in relation to the role and agency of the scriptwriter.
3. The constraining agency of casting practices on the script
4. The transformative agency of actor processes on the script.
The analysis interrogates the implications of freelance scriptwriting, examining the production processes and imperatives in relation to scriptwriting practice. It accounts for the notion of a producer doxa and its hierarchical status in the field of filmmaking, as well as its impact on scriptwriting practices in the Godless project. The analysis also examines the shifts in agency and intentions between practitioner and researcher, a transitional pull that is difficult to account for.

The Researcher’s Role

My role on the Godless project was emic in that I was a writer to the project who had been granted participation rights to develop the script to the next stage of production. I was privy to the internal production processes of the project and had privileged access to knowledge. However, my role as a researcher also represented an etic position in that I sought to take an objective perspective on the project as an outsider. As I participated in the scriptwriting, I was conscious that the objective of the research was to develop knowledge and understanding of scriptwriting practice. The emergent nature of practice obliges the filmmaker to adopt a position of constant and radical reflexivity. For example, the physicality of the actor and acting practice in the read-through was ‘of the moment’. It was connected to the meanings in the script, while also being heavily mediated by production-driven activities and expectations. Through actions on the script, the members of the production team all contributed to the generation of meaning and significance in the complexity of the moment. As a researcher, such reflexive consciousness at the point of action was difficult to sustain.

As I worked on the Godless project, I was aware of three patterns of action coming into play:

1. The formal policies and systems that underpinned practice.
2. The informal practices and symbolic actions that were incorporated into everyday filmmaking practice.
3. The beliefs, values and attitudes that were inherent in filmmaking practice.

As I got deeper into the development of the script and the related process of casting, I became engrossed in the learning opportunities, becoming more attached to the project and the ways of working that were presented to me.
Working freelance: the deferral of payment for symbolic capital

The development of *Godless* followed a traditional route, beginning with the mobilisation of resources. A producer first options the rights to a script. They hire a writer(s) and director, who enjoy a non-exclusive contract until the commencement of production. Together, the producer and director select actors to fill the various roles, often with the guidance of a casting agent. It is only once these practitioners have committed to the project, that the producer endeavours to secure funding. A production crew is then assembled and the filming commences. Producers can negotiate contracts with distributors at various points in this process. Ideally, the optimum stage for an agreement between producers and distributors occurs before the filming begins. The producer then starts pitching the project to distributors after having obtained a script, a director and an undertaking from the lead actors. The pitch involves a brief presentation of the idea—the plot in simple form, cast and crew—to the principals of the distribution company. If the presentation is successful, the distribution company could agree to partly provide finance for the development and the production of the film and to distribute it in exchange for rights of ownership of the film. This was the path envisaged for the *Godless* project, but it hinged on the scriptwriters being willing to work on the project for no money.

The prevalence of freelance employment in the Australian film industry reflects an industry that is project-based rather than company-based. In this model, the resources and workers required to produce each project are engaged only for the time they are needed on the project. The resulting short-term employment relationships mean that constant networking and the ability to pitch and sell are key attributes of the film labour market. As a freelance worker in a highly competitive industry, I also had to look for alternative streams of income that would supplement the hours I was spending working on *Godless*. I immersed myself in the scriptwriting in the hope of seeing the project advance to production. My instinct was to network and attach other players to the project, reflecting an approach to action from the position of ‘a player who is involved and caught up in the game’ (Bourdieu 1990, p.81).

The freelance conditions in which scriptwriting practice takes place call attention to the relational symbiosis between field, habitus and capital. This was reflected in the way I participated in the project. Whether I gained symbolic capital in the form of trust and encouragement for the next stage of development depended on the success of the interaction with the production team. The email excerpt in Table 7 suggests that writing practice on the *Godless* project was self-determined by the writer. Self-determination in this instance is the
result of complex interaction and determination of causal mechanisms, that come from working in an industry context, rather than their reduction. For the writers of *Godless* collective scriptwriting practice corresponded to an acceptance of the practices that were expected in the field such as generating a ‘weekly polish’ and being kept in ‘the loop’. This self-determination —despite an acknowledgement of the restrictions of industry expectations and standards— is also structured by industry expectations and timelines, highlighting the ontological correspondence between habitus and field.

The relation between habitus and field operates in two ways. On one side, it is a relation of *conditioning*: The field structures the habitus …On the other side it is a relation of knowledge or *cognitive construction* (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, p. 127).

**Table 7: Industry Expectations and Timelines in Scriptwriting Practice**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conceptual Category</th>
<th>Practice Identified</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Habitus &amp; Field</td>
<td>Scriptwriting practice</td>
<td>In an email dated Tuesday 4 May 2010, 2:43pm, W1 wrote about the collaborative writing process, mentioning that ‘We’ve agreed that VG will take the lead in the re-write and I’ll do a weekly polish and edit of what he’s written’. He suggested that ‘given timing pressures …we should also be regularly keeping you guys and EP in the loop as we go’, so that everyone on the team was reassured that ‘this co-writing approach is going to work effectively’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Collaborative practice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-sustaining practices</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-determined practices</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Collective practice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At this stage of development on the *Godless* project it was important that the project progressed with tangible outcomes for the script. These outcomes would include finding a distributor for the project, attaching A-list actors to the project and attracting production funds. The script was an object that needed to be enhanced and have value added to it in the form of symbolic capital such as recognition and legitimacy.

The producers of *Godless* endeavoured to achieve this through social interactions within the film industry. These social interactions function as strategic manoeuvres to raise awareness and interest in
the project within film-funding circles. This strategic manoeuvring as displayed in the interactions at the IndiVision conference could only function properly if practitioners within the industry perceived themselves and one another as working to a common purpose. This type of interaction constitutes a ‘political form of therapy enabling social agents to understand more fully their place in the social world’ (Grenfell 2008, p. 59). It ensured that the development of the project stayed on track. Within the different areas of cultural production that presented themselves at IndiVision, people socialised to plan the best moves to accumulate prestige, kudos or wealth, simultaneously reproducing existing social and cultural divisions and hierarchies, and class formations. ‘Getting, keeping and stripping power and legitimacy from someone else is fundamental to the entrepreneurial milieu of film-making…’ (O’Regan 1996, p. 187).

For the writers of Godless the accumulation of symbolic capital was intrinsically linked to the script rather than the industry. Embedded in the significance of the script and scriptwriting practice is acknowledgement of its diverse functions and status as an object, per se. For the creative worker, a legitimate accumulation of symbolic capital consists in

- making a name for oneself, a known, recognised name, a capital of consecration
- implying a power to consecrate objects (with a trademark or signature) or persons
- (through publication, exhibition, etc.) and therefore to give value and to appropriate the profits from this operation (Bourdieu 1993, p. 75).

Working as a freelance scriptwriter on Godless was problematic and difficult. Being attached to the project was useful for my résumé, but the fact that I was not getting paid signified the lack of value I attributed to financial matters and my lack of symbolic capital as a practitioner in the field of filmmaking. This position reflects the struggle for authority and value between producers and workers in filmmaking. My lack of symbolic capital meant that I had little bargaining power in negotiating a fee for the work I was doing. As a subordinated agent, my position in relation to symbolic capital and value, as opposed to the reality of material capital, reflected the realities of socio-cultural and economic conditions for some workers in the Australian film industry. This lack of power was highlighted by the fact that matters of payment and financing were not openly discussed on the Godless project and I did not feel able to raise them even though the film producers relied on economic figures and box office statistics to generate status and support for their endeavours to develop the project to the next stage. A seemingly unspoken etiquette kept financial details of the development and production process in film projects private, being protected by legally binding confidentiality clauses.
The identification of truthfulness and moral appropriateness as strategies for action in writing the *Godless* script was complicated, as the script was based on second-hand knowledge and research. This was made worse by the difficulty in communication via phone and email. The working environment in the *Godless* case was goal-driven, and was structured around making constructive forward progress on the project, rather than introspective reasoning about the project. In *Godless*, critical reasoning was predominantly based on the commercial considerations of the producers.

Decision-making and collective agency on *Godless* were more closely aligned to the hierarchical roles established at the onset of development. I was a freelance and unpaid writer, rather than an originator of an idea. There was a clear demarcation of roles in the project. I would have to earn the right to decision-making in the development process. Once I had gained the trust of the producers, I was given the opportunity to develop strategies and ways of doing within the boundaries they set.

The limited sharing of information between the writers and producers on the *Godless* project reflected the inherent tensions of professional dynamics in the field, suggesting that information can serve as strategic capital to be used or not used. Strategic positioning in the field was determined by the number and type of resources and capital possessed; these add to social currency and hierarchy. Practitioners such as the producers on *Godless* were endowed with diverse capital, whereas W1 and myself struggled to supplement assets and resources. Resources included material assets such as money, office space and equipment; technology such as computers, photocopiers and software, and human resources such as office staff and personal assistants, as well as non-material assets such as time and health. In the *Godless* case, this was manifest in the configuration of workplace. The producers occupied a permanent, resourced office space that reflected a collective space for working, whereas the writers occupied individual space for working and a virtual space for communication. The email in Table 8 outlines a strategic move by the writers for mutual benefit—in this instance to buy time to work on the next draft.
Table 8: Freelance Conditions in Scriptwriting Practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conceptual Category</th>
<th>Practice Identified</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Habitus &amp; Capital</td>
<td>Individual practice</td>
<td>In an email dated Wednesday 26 May 2010, 5:37 PM, W1 wrote that the collaborative practice of writing together was ‘working well’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Collaborative practice</td>
<td>Strategically he mentioned: ‘Maybe we should hold off sending to PR1, PR2 and EP until we’ve got a good thirty minutes written? Just so they can get a clearer sense of where we’re going. What do you think? We could have that done in a couple of weeks.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strategic practice</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

In the *Godless* project, the expectations of the producers for the script differed from the expectations of the scriptwriters. The producers wanted the script to function as a genre text with commercial potential to attract further investment and actors. It was partly due to the inability of the script to fulfil these different expectations that the project collapsed.

In the field of cultural production, Bourdieu (1993) argues that ‘the opposition between the “commercial” and the “non-commercial” reappears everywhere’ (p. 82) because the dichotomy between commercial and non-commercial is the generative principle against which judgements about the validity and worth of creative practice are made. He argues that the contrast between commercial and non-commercial also helps to ‘establish the frontier between what is and what is not art’ (*Ibid*), which was a notion the writers considered as they worked on the script. The email correspondence in Table 9 between the writers and the producers presents an account of the work completed. It reveals a collective approach to the script to validate and facilitate further development on it. This transition from individual practice to collective practice, instigated by the writer, is related to themes of worth, cachet and value, all symbolic forms of capital. The transition from individual practice to collective practice also suggests the importance of consensus around the project to validate work that has taken place. In the email, the habitus of the writer ‘is the universalising mediation’ that suggests a way forward in development, ‘without either explicit reason or signifying intent, to be none the less “sensible” and “reasonable”’ (Bourdieu 1977, p. 79).
### Table 9: Freelance Scriptwriting Practice and Habitus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conceptual Category</th>
<th>Practice Identified</th>
<th>Example</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Habitus &amp; Doxa</td>
<td>Scriptwriting practice</td>
<td>In an email dated Friday 17 December 2010, 2:19PM, W1 wrote that he had completed ‘61 pages of new Godless’. As part of the collaborative process that had been set up between writers and producers, he suggested: ‘Just get your red pens out. Make sure that the narrative is flowing, that it’s well paced and nothing is duplicated or doesn’t make sense.’ In justifying the work done so far, W1 mentioned that there were potential flaws in the narrative and plot details which needed to be addressed, stating that: ‘I’ll go with the consensus’ around the narrative presented.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Collective Practice</td>
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### Habitus and the doxa of casting

In the *Godless* case, the taken-for-granted ways of working—the doxa—in the casting process were present as deeply internalised societal and field-specific suppositions. Firstly, this was manifest in the different ways the value and significance of the script fluctuated through the casting process. The validity of the script was not questioned for the duration of the casting process as the script had been developed through industry funding and therefore had legitimacy. However, the rules and strategies that make up the doxa of casting overshadowed the script as it moved out of the sphere of script development and into the marketplace. On the *Godless* project, this was manifest in the lack of interaction between W1 and me during this time.

The doxa of casting is manifest in protocols of engagement between casting agents, actor agents and the production team. These protocols were outlined in the facilitation of the casting process by the producer and included the scheduling of regular casting updates and the mentoring of the director by casting agent. This ensured the validity of the engagement between practitioners in the casting process. It suggests an acceptance of the processes of casting as an established order, and ‘fulfils, if only by default, a quintessentially conservation function of ratification of the doxa’ (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, p. 246).
As Table 10 sets out the instructions from the casting agent about the correspondence with an actor’s agent is very specific. It requests answers around the funding status of the film, what the proposed budget was, if there was the expectation that money would be raised based on the participation of the actor, what the classification of the film was, what the film was about, and what type of film it was. Only after these enquiries were answered would the actor commit to reading a draft of the script. The interactions between the actors’ agents and the casting agent called into question the status of the script. It was there to be either accepted or not accepted based on the protocols of engagement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 10: The Script and its Secondary Position in Casting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conceptual Category</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doxa &amp; Capital</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The relational interaction the script, production processes and casting process for *Godless* shows how the field of casting has its own expectations and timelines, and that its constraints fluctuate in relation to how the script was perceived. In the interaction between casting agent, actor agent and the production team on *Godless* the fluidity in field dynamics highlights the ontological correspondence between habitus and field in relation to doxa. The mutual reinforcement between field and habitus between casting practices, production practices and the role of the script strengthens the power of doxa as an ‘uncontested acceptance’ (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, p. 73).

As Table 11 sets out I had to reconfigure my comprehension of the script to meet market expectations and industry standards. I had to learn to communicate my understanding of the
script as a marketable commodity to address questions around funding, budget, market, classification and genre rather than narrative and character. The language I used was in part a manifestation of the acquisition of writer habitus. I was playing the part required by the field as a strategic player of the game. I was answering in a fundamentally improvisational way, engaging with ‘the constraints, opportunities and demands of specific social fields and the dispositions of habitus’ to further development and move the project to the next level (Jenkins 1992, p. 118). This was an expectation in the field where the levels of engagement are ‘fluid and complex’ (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, p. 104). Engagement in the field was mediated by a feel for the game via the presuppositions that are contained in the doxa of the field itself. This shift in the way I communicated my understanding about the script suggested a performance that was strategic and aware of the tactical potentialities inherent in practices.

According to Bourdieu, the semantic relation to power is not only a lingual reality, but also one that is embedded in society. The composition of semantic interfaces is an intrinsic part of social structure. This was particularly pertinent in the casting process at this stage. Assertions around the value of the script were signs of authority, and explanations of the script were construed as signs of acquiescence and diffidence. This suggests the judicious capacity of language, where the forms of all discourse are also aimed at gaining profits—symbolic or otherwise (Bourdieu 1991, p. 67).

The discourse about the script in the casting process was conditional on the language used in an industry setting. How people speak, their preferred tastes, proclivities and deportment are taken as markers of class and taste. Based on these characteristics of class, reactions to actions bolster preconceived perceptions of the individual’s standing in the social and cultural world. The reality of communication depends not only on the syntactical accuracy and appropriateness of what is said, but also on the understanding of the structures in force within the social conditions of the project.
Table 11: Writer Habitus and the Doxa of Marketing the Script

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conceptual Category</th>
<th>Practice Identified</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Habitus &amp; Doxa</td>
<td>Strategising Practices</td>
<td>In an email dated Wednesday 7 October 2009, 9.54AM, I answered all the questions requested by PC1’s agent. I stated that ‘Godless has received development and funds from the AFC (now Screen Australia) as part of the IndiVision program’ and ‘received favourable input from local and international film practitioners (and) have since received further development funds and there has been considerable interest from private investors for the project’. I stated that ‘having PC1 attached to the project will no doubt help us with Screen Australia as well as with potential private and international investors and finding the right distributor’. I qualified this by stating that ‘…we want the project to stay true to its independent and low budget production parameters and aesthetic’. I explained that the project was market ready as ‘a high octane commercial narrative and gritty characterization with an arthouse style and sensibility’ that ‘… delivers to audiences a compelling, vicarious, edge-of-the-seat experience of the outlaw biker world. It is an experience that is marketable everywhere in the world that biker gangs take to the road. At the same time, and adding to its local and global marketability, Godless tackles universal themes of power, violence, masculinity and sexual jealousy.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field</td>
<td>Scriptwriting practice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suppositions</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The casting agent as a conduit between the project and the actor and their agent was crucial to get the project to production. The script was less important in the casting process at this stage of development. Discussion around the actors’ capabilities was firstly preface by their reaction to the project and the script. This was then followed by a discussion of what they had done, what they were doing and what they were about to do. The actors were objectified and characterised as types, which had positive or negative connotations for them. Some actors carried more economic and cultural cachet than others. This
understanding was taken as knowledge, and was justified by box office statistics and popularity, and further defined by recognition through the awards system and a regular presence in popular magazines.

The discussion about the selection of actors were underscored by arbitrary details such as reputation, and were confirmed by hearsay. Casting practices presented a constructed vision of reality with fundamental, deep-founded and unconscious beliefs so naturalised that they took on the cachet of symbolic capital. As Table 12 set out excerpts from a sequence of emails are examples of the logistical interactions and information exchange that took place between producer, writer and casting agent within the context of casting doxa.

The email interaction reflects the taken-for-granted knowledge between writer, producer and casting agent. Inherent in the exchange is an acknowledgement of and subordination to industry expectations and positions of power. The last email in the sequence documents a rejection of these industry and casting protocols, in that I suggested contacting an actor directly bypassing the usual protocols of casting and in effect bypassing the doxa of casting. This action led to indecision and a breakdown of trust in the process of casting processes between the casting agent and the producer. This break in doxa was tolerated, as it had the potential to succeed, even though it was perceived as against the norm. Such a rupture in doxa was ultimately not condoned; when it failed, the authority of and belief in my authority and by association the script was undermined.

Regardless of its potential for success or failure, this action had no place in the fixed protocols of casting doxa. Actions that are against the norm act as instruments of rupture, and erode collective practices within the community of practice. This is because the strength of doxa overrides errant behaviours and actions. As Bourdieu posits: ‘We must also break with the instruments of rupture which negate the very experience against which they have been constructed’ (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, p. 251).
### Table 12: Logistical Interactions between Writer, Producer and Casting Agent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conceptual Category</th>
<th>Practice Identified</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Habitus &amp; Doxa</td>
<td>Strategising Practice</td>
<td>In an email dated Thursday 10 December 2009, 12:26PM, I wrote to PR1 to inform him that I was still corresponding with PC1’s agent in Australia. There had been a lack of movement on the casting front, and I mentioned that PC1’s acting agent ‘stressed how busy PC1 was’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doxa &amp; Symbolic Capital</td>
<td>Performative practice</td>
<td>In an email dated Thursday 10 December 2009, 4.38PM, PR1 responded that ‘We are just wasting our time I think’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doxa</td>
<td>Rules and norms</td>
<td>In an email dated Monday 18 January 2010, 2:47 PM, I wrote that I was taking another approach to securing an A-list actor to the project by texting the actor directly rather than working through an agent.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The casting agent was positioned at an important nexus of filmmaking practice. The different roles embodied in casting practices, such as administrative, conducting negotiations, conciliation, contractual brokering and manoeuvring, are crucial in facilitating other practices in the field. On the *Godless* project, CA and I would discuss by phone our understanding of the relevant characters and actors based on a common ground understanding of the script. I engaged in the process of casting practice by hiding the workings of writer habitus and its manifestation as information capital through strategic decision making that was instigated by the deep knowledge CA had of the actors in the industry. On the *Godless* project, CA operated as a social and creative agent by exhibiting flexibility and an understanding of the importance of temporality in the field. CA had up-to-the minute knowledge of past, present and future film productions, and knew the whereabouts of actors anywhere in the world. The role of the casting agent is sage-like in its ability to project concepts of worth and potential marketplace value.

As Table 12 sets out casting practices depend on negotiation and actions based on historical and hierarchical rules. Hence casting practices were consistent and uniform, in that there was a sequence and form in dealing with actors and actors’ agents. Legal contracting and
negotiations that occurred between the producers, casting agents, directors and actors are filtered and mediated by a powerful external party—the actors’ agents—who are capricious and meddlesome to deal with, and at times have a different agenda to that of the actor. This process is complicated by the actor’s position in the field, which is in constant flux due to the shifting fortunes of an actor’s career trajectory and opportunities in the marketplace. The meaning of individual performances of actors is inconsequential in the practice of casting, as the process considers equally past, present and—most importantly—future performances in the reckoning of whom to cast and when.

The email set out in Table 13 includes an evaluation of the effect of the read-through of the script by the actors and a summation of the scripts altered value. This email functions on three different levels. Firstly, it concedes a failure to the ruling principles of success in casting doxa. Secondly, it suggests a practical way forward that accounts for industry expectations and timelines. Thirdly, the email suggests the relational links between doxa and practice. Doxa in this sense is articulated through legitimisation and accumulation of different types of social, economic and symbolic capital. The practices that constitute casting doxa owe their ‘practical coherence’—their regularities, irregularities and even incoherencies—to the fact that they are ‘the product of practices’ and that they obey an ‘economical logic’ (Bourdieu 1977, p. 109). This economic logic is market driven and includes the cost of actor, the actor’s marketability against which the marketability of the project is fixed. The script in this instance needed to be robust enough to support the weight of these marketable elements, by appealing to genre and its potential to succeed at the box office.

The email is also a response to the reappraisal of the script after the failure of the actor read through. It presents an account for the shift in the worth of the script as capital that is a resource for securing further funding. The legitimacy of the script shifted dramatically after the actor read through. The clash of dispositional agency that manifested in the actor read-through of the Godless script reflected not only the deep and disparate habitus and life experiences of each actor in the room, but also the disparate interpretive and aesthetic judgements made of the script. The script was not robust enough to account for the aesthetic choices made by the actors in interpreting the script. Their voices were at variance with each other and with what was written on the page.

This incompatibility created an air of conflict, as it related not only to an interpretation of the script but also to the strategies of the actors aimed at gaining employment. The email set out in Table 13 accounts for the aftermath of this event. The significance of the aftermath of the event was not obvious at the time,
but there was an unspoken tension manifest in the form of polite language and positive affirmations. The casting agent agreed with every point, politeness being a regulating and controlling feature of the correspondence. ‘The concessions of politeness always contain political concessions’ (Bourdieu 1977, p. 95).

The language in the email outlines how status and regularities within the casting doxa are enacted through positive affirmations that were a matter of principle. Even though the actor read-through of the script was unsuccessful, I made the effort to be constructive, pointing out to the casting agent the positive attributes that each actor brought to the read-through. Without acknowledging the elephant in the room, the casting agent went on to new projects, and I persevered with Godless.

Table 13: Habitus and Doxa in Casting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conceptual Category</th>
<th>Practice Identified</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Doxa &amp; Habitus</td>
<td>Collective practices</td>
<td>In an email dated Saturday 28 March 2010, 9:56 AM, I wrote a pragmatic and positive update to CA after the actor read-through of the script. I wrote: ‘Friday was a terrific day and a great opportunity to look at actors and hear the script’ and that ‘I thought the reading went well. In hindsight we should have got W1(or me) to do an abridged version with less big print.’ Considering the lacklustre reading of the main character, I noted that there was ‘some serious work we need to do on that character’, and then gave a breakdown of the attributes that the actors brought to the read-through. CA responded with positive affirmations for the observations, and suggested a deadline for the next development stage of the project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reflexive Practice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Performative practices</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Language</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The ideological strength of producer doxa

The producers’ response to the read-through of the script reflected a pragmatic need to get on with the development of the project, but showed little consideration or acknowledgment of the effect that the read-through had on the writers. As set out in Figure 14 the correspondence between writer and producer implied at the time that writer agency is above all an acknowledgment of industry expectations and protocols. In the Godless case, this was a given for
the writers through clear hierarchical roles and functions. Engagement between the writers and
the producers was arbitrated by market expectations and standards. This is the result of an
‘unconscious relationship’ between habitus and field where the correspondence between habitus
and the expectations of the field result in practice (Bourdieu 1993, p. 76).

As set out in Figure 14 the producers of Godless assess and assert their position by referred discretely to
the most fundamental material realities within the social and cultural order of filmmaking: the two-
principle concepts of creative and economic, commercial and non-commercial. The power to represent
the world in this binary simplification becomes an assertion of position taking in the filmmaking world—
a form of cultural authority that producers have an interest in preserving through historical precedents.
This position denies an acknowledgment of the varied practices that make up the field and are linked to
the creative sphere of the filmmaker via specific social, cultural and economic fields.

In the late stage of script development, the producers on the Godless project derived their
strength from advocating established, professional ways of doing things. For example, in pushing
for changes to the script, PR1 listed in an email several films that have ‘done well at the box
office’ and that audiences don’t care if ‘we have a similar storyline to a film made nearly 40
years ago’.

In the Godless case, the producers posited sensible and rational decision-making from market
expectations and the financial realities of film production. This position reflects a system of ideas
that constitutes doxa for the producers. This is how—in the aftermath of the read-through and the
rejection of the script—the producers framed further development of the script. Through
identification with the stories, characters and locations that already existed on the screen as
cultural capital, this shift served to create a different sense of engagement with the project that
bypassed the script. The cultural artefacts to which the producers began to refer functioned as
doxa, in that their modus operandi was closely connected to the notion of what is good and what
is not good in the script.

Therefore, there is an element of subjugation and subordination that lies at the heart of production and the
use and acquisition of resources in the field. The struggle for stability for the producers was inherent in
adhering to the fixed ways of doing that are validated by historical origin and experiential reliability. ‘In
short, habitus, the product of history, produces individual and collective practices, and hence history, in
accordance with the schemes engendered by history’ (Bourdieu 1977, p. 82).

Doxa requires that those who are subjected to it do not question its conformity to rules and
the legitimacy of those who exert it:
The dominated classes have an interest in pushing back the limits of doxa and exposing the arbitrariness of the taken for granted; the dominant classes have an interest in defending the integrity of doxa or, short of this, of establishing in its place the necessary imperfect substitute, orthodoxy (Bourdieu 1977, p. 169).

In the email presented in Table 14, doxa is exercised as a symbolic form of power. The producer’s response to W1’s course of action was dismissive. Rather than addressing the reality of scriptwriting practice and understanding and facilitating a way forward the producers offered a simple and unspecific call to ‘action’. The response sheds light on the unquestioned authority of the producer role in relation to scriptwriting practice. A role that is validated by a strong sense of ownership and control that privileged commercial and fiscal considerations and had a direct and authoritative effect on scriptwriting practice and content.

Table 14: Scriptwriting and the Authority of the Producer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conceptual Category</th>
<th>Practice Identified</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Habitus &amp; Field</td>
<td>Writing practice</td>
<td>In an email dated Monday 12 April 2010, 10:18 AM, W1 wrote that he would ‘read through [the script] over the next couple of days so I can offer (a) my thoughts on the proposed direction and (b) give an indication by COB Friday whether it’s the scale of task I can take on myself or we need to source someone good to deliver the next draft with the deadlines we’ve got’. W1 added that the collaborative work on the script had to be ‘at the high standard we need to take to Screen Australia’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Collaborative practice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital &amp; Field</td>
<td>Collaborative Practices</td>
<td>In an email dated Wednesday 21 April 2010, 3:51 PM, P1 wrote in response to W1’s email that ‘Neither PR2 nor EP are sold on Vinnie G’s ideas’, and that ‘PR2, EP &amp; I can’t really agree on anything regarding GODLESS other than we ALL think the undercover Cop angle would work’. P1 used successful genre films as examples of the direction further development of the Godless project should take, and stressed that ‘Action needs to be taken’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In this interplay between the producers and the writers on the *Godless* project the interdependence between production practices and creative practices illustrates the ‘constant struggle’ to maintain position ‘in social hierarchy’ between groups which underpins institutionalised cultural production (Norris 2006, p. 145). The struggle ‘between dominant and dominated fractions’ is systemic in cultural production and the institutions that structure and regulate it (*Ibid*, p. 145).

In the *Godless* case practice functioned as a form of capital which is the result of the relational link between habitus and field. For example, as I became more knowledgeable and skilled as a writer/director, I had more opportunities to make decisions with the producer. This facilitated a capacity for decision-making, and had direct implications for collective agency and decision-making, in that it was status-based. As the project moved through the different production stages, decision-making and collaborative agency became more hierarchical in design and implementation. In contrast producing practices were less mutable and conditional on the establishment and acquisition of intellectual rights and closely linked to contractual processes and procedures that inherently conform to law. Producing practices as outlined in the email exchange are firstly indelibly linked to concepts of power and control. Secondly, they are institutional, in that they reflect sequential ways of doing that are ratified by an established organisation, meaning they are *repetitive* and have a *normative* and homogenising effect on other practices. Thirdly, producing practices are closely linked to resources that emerge as *capital* and constitute transactions of *authority* at different stages of development and production.

The pragmatic decision-making of producers implies that doxa grants authority as a form of symbolic capital which allows decision-making without consultation. This highlights the relational correspondence between doxa and its generation of capital. ‘Doxa, as a symbolic form of power, requires that those subjected to it do not question its legitimacy and the legitimacy of those who exert it’ (Grenfell 2008, p. 122).

In the email exchanges in Table 15, the habitus of scriptwriting is at odds with the expectations of a market-driven industry. For the producers, the push was always towards further development and production, which was at cross purposes with the push from the writers to get another draft of the script written. This accounts for the difficulty in writer habitus as it relates to the various requirements of the field. Habitus in this sense has an embodied value that is not material, and which includes ‘attitudes and dispositions’ (Grenfell 2008, p. 105). This implies that double-play occurs in
the field politics of filmmaking. In the *Godless* case, the producer wanted a result, and rather than addressing the difficulties of scriptwriting, shifted focus to material concerns such as box office figures, the actor as symbolic capital, and product placement. Hence the pressure the producer exerts on the writer is external to the script.

At this stage of development on the *Godless* project, the hiring of another writer was directly linked to the potential diminishment of cultural and symbolic capital for the project. Here habitus is manifest in both ‘accomplishment’ and ‘transposability’ of cultural and symbolic capital (Grenfell 20-08, p.114). The email correspondence between the writers and the producers accounts for the tension inherent between writer habitus, which ‘enables practices to be objectively harmonised without unintentional calculation or conscious reference to a norm’ and producer habitus which is linked to cultural capital and the marketplace (Bourdieu 1977, p. 80).
Table 15: Scriptwriting and a Market-driven Industry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conceptual Category</th>
<th>Practice Identified</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Habitus &amp; Field</td>
<td>Collaborative practice</td>
<td>In an email dated Friday 24 September 2010, 11:37 AM, W1 wrote that he was unable to complete the work on the script as outlined in previous emails, and that he ‘will try and devote as much spare time as possible the following week’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-reflexive practice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital &amp; Field</td>
<td>Performative practice</td>
<td>In an email dated Friday 24 September 2010, 11:57 AM, PR1 reminded W1 and me that time was running out for the project, and that ‘We have a window of opportunity that will close’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Habitus &amp; Field</td>
<td>Collaborative practice</td>
<td>In an email dated Friday 24 September 2010, 12:36 PM, W1 conceded that the demands of work and the pressure to produce a draft was getting to him. He mentioned the idea of getting a third writer involved: ‘Otherwise I’ll be churning out chunks in fits and starts without being able to commit to the deadlines we’ll need to set if we’re seriously trying to catch PC2.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Logistical practices</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Habitus &amp; Doxa</td>
<td>Decision-making</td>
<td>In an email dated Friday 24 September 2010, 12:48 PM, PR1 wrote that he was supportive of any further work on the project, but that it had to be structured. He stated: ‘I just need us to agree to a schedule &amp; keep to it.’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For the producers on *Godless*, the push to pragmatic industrial ways of doing and the need ‘to agree to a schedule’ implies ‘an aesthetic indifference to the sensuous tasks of survival’, which was at odds with the inclinations of the writers (Friedland 2009, p. 892). The mediation that occurs between individual agency and the practices of filmmaking is problematic, but is not up for negotiation; neither are the deeply-internalised societal or field-specific presuppositions of collective practices. Instead, the relational interaction of practices is fixed within the doxa of industry and individual agency. It is in this realm that the complex operation of agency and power takes place. The relational mediation between the producers and the scriptwriter presents as a struggle between different stakes in the field of filmmaking, and is underpinned by symbolic forms of exploitation.

**Case summary**

The *Godless* case presents the relational links between development processes and scriptwriting practices as inherent and intrinsic in the structures of the everyday functions of filmmaking. Through a thick description of events and the use of emails, the *Godless* case study examines the tension between individual and collective modes of practice that underpinned the development and production path of a project against the differential power of different practitioners in the filmmaking process as these unfolded in the post-2008 financial and structural changes to Australian film finding.

In the *Godless* case, the various stages of the development of a film production are manifest through the interaction of different authorities, agents and the well-ordered and hierarchical positions they occupy. Individual scriptwriting agency depended not only on an ensemble of different positions belonging to the scriptwriters, but also on the collective relations of collaborators, producers, casting agents, actor agents and actors: all of whom were mediators across different disciplines and fields. By aligning scriptwriting practices with production processes, rather than with the constituting values of scriptwriting, industrial ways of working and commercial objectives stamp their mark on the creative process. The case study suggests that, once production processes are entangled with the conventions of the field and the logic of the market, scriptwriting practice communicates an order, structure and practicality that is skewed towards a commercial sensibility reflective of market expectations and industry ways of working rather than the holistic development of narrative and characters to create a script.
Chapter Six

Cross-Case Analysis and Findings

Through two case studies, this research has sought to create insight into the nature of individual agency in scriptwriting practice. Drawing on insights from the cases, the literature and practice theory, Chapter Six compares the case results to provide insights into the practices that interact with scriptwriting, their capacity to directly mediate scriptwriting in the production process and the indirect effects of these processes on scriptwriting practice. The comparative analysis of the cases is presented as contextualised explanations in response to the three research questions underpinning the thesis:

1. What are the production processes and imperatives that affect scriptwriting practice?
2. How do production processes and imperatives mediate scriptwriting practices?
3. How are scriptwriting practices affected by the phases of film production?

Figure 17 represents the framework from Chapter Three for the cross-case analysis. It identifies key themes in the data, which suggest a pattern of collective and individual agency around filmmaking practices. The framework links the relational nature of practice in the film industry to its theoretical equivalence in Pierre Bourdieu’s theoretical accounts of practice and cultural production.
Figure 17: Analytical Framework for the Case Studies

Through the cross-case analysis, Chapter Six provides general contextual explanations for the mediatory effect that industrial production protocols and processes can have on scriptwriting practice. Its findings are presented as figures, which highlight the relational values established between practices in a field. The first research question seeks to identify the practices that affect scriptwriting practice, both collective and individual practices (Figure 18). As Figure 18 sets out, the main production practices identified are collective practices. These fall into three sub-groups: homogenised production practices, homogenised community of practice practices and disseminating practices. Homogenised production practices span financing and logistics, relating to the practical actions involved in getting a film made, while being linked to the legal concepts of proprietorship and intellectual rights. Sitting within the homogenised community of practice are practices linked to exchanges between filmmakers and group dynamics of the collective of practitioners making a film. Sub-practices here include decision-making and knowledge exchange, which contribute to and reflect a collective agency. Disseminating practices sit within collective practice, being the sets of language-oriented doings mediated by habitus. These practices tend to be more individual actions and positions sitting within the context of the collective development of a film and have agency as dispersing and
spreading procedures and actions. Disseminating practices are communicative and are oriented towards social understanding. They are manifest in practices such as promotion and networking and relate to the conveyance of information from within the field of filmmaking to other fields.

Figure 18 also sets out individual practices, of which there are two sub-groups learning and habit and rules and norms. Learning and habit are predicated on dispositions that are acquired over time. Rules are sets of understood regulations governing conducts and procedures, and norms are expected and typical standards or patterns. Social groups (families, corporations, film-making communities) come with rules, policies and traditions that organise individual and group behaviour. Individual practices depend on meanings that are irreducible at a social or cultural level. The historical and cultural distinctiveness of individual practices and the ways in which the meanings and outcomes of individual performances of a practice are dependent upon their context are perhaps the strongest reasons for investigation and enquiry into broader social and cultural contexts.

![Figure 18: Collective and Individual Practices](image-url)
After introducing the main practices and sub-practices identified in the case studies, Chapter Six uses Bourdieu’s theory of practice and attendant concepts of capital, doxa, field and habitus to examine causal links and interactions between individual agency and industry expectations. This theoretical reading is then linked back to the material domain of practice and its substantiation through a contextualised reflexive analysis of scriptwriting. The second section of the chapter then addresses the second and third research questions. The second research question is answered by using the cases to examine how production processes mediate scriptwriting and the role of scriptwriter. The third research question considers the different ways in which production processes support scriptwriting practice through interaction and protocols that are both mutually beneficial and adverse. Finally, having identified and analysed practices at work across the cases, the chapter considers the constitution and constituting values of scriptwriting practice.

**Cross-case Analysis**

**Research Question One: What are the production processes and imperatives that affect scriptwriting practice?**

**Collective practice**

In the *Mallboy* and *Godless* cases, collective practices were integral to the development of the creative project. These practices included collaborative interactions around creative development of the script and the film project, the logistical development of the script to enable the transition to production and collaboration around marketing and distributing the film. These collective practices were subject to conventions and standards that constitute the correct or established way of doing things. In both cases, collective practices defined normality in practice and established hierarchies of power among the group of practitioners working on the film at each stage of its development and production. Once embedded and understood, collective practices presented as homogenised practices that established a normalised way of doing things.

In both case studies, collective practices were identified according to the understandings and procedures that are obligatory to carry them out. In speaking about collective practices, it is important to note the relational and mutable aspects of practice. A homogenised practice can become part of another homogenised practice. Just as a disseminating practice can be transformed in relation to a homogenised practice. For example, a financial practice such as budgeting could also function as engagement between practitioners. Or an exchange of knowledge between two practitioners might also be a performative practice that is self-reflexive.
Homogenised production practices

The two cases demonstrate that homogenised production practices are linked to problem-solving and ensure that development and production moves forward and is completed. These collective practices can be broadly defined as financial practices or logistical practices, these being multi-level descriptors that mask the complex relational determinisms of film production. Financial and logistical practices manage work-flow and consistency in production, for example, accounting, contracting, management, scheduling and coordination of specialised practices within the development of the production. Table 16 sets out the main homogenised production practices in both Mallboy and Godless cases, identifying similarities and differences in both cases.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Production Practice</th>
<th>Mallboy</th>
<th>Godless</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Finance</td>
<td>Salary and Payroll</td>
<td>Budgeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Budgeting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Accounting</td>
<td>Legal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Taxation</td>
<td>Contracting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logistic</td>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Co-ordination</td>
<td>Co-ordination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Management</td>
<td>Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scheduling</td>
<td>Scheduling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Organisation</td>
<td>Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Administrative</td>
<td>Administrative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Supervision</td>
<td>Supervision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Negotiation</td>
<td>Negotiation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Across both cases, these homogenised production practices were preserved, developed and regulated in institutions and organisations. Both cases received endorsement from the film industry in the form of funding. Once the project was optioned by the producer, finance—underpinned by contractual and financial agreements that were legally binding—was put in place to start the development process of the script.
From this point, the distribution of funding, as managed by the producer, was linked to checks and balances on the script, which would then trigger the development round. In the *Mallboy* case each phase of development was underpinned by funding. In the *Godless* case, each phase of development occurred without budget but with the same intent. These checks and balances, which carried an aesthetic criterion implicit in terms of reference such as ‘industry standard’ and ‘to the satisfaction of’, were based on the delivery of each draft.

Table 17 is a summary outline of the practices, of which the script is one, as listed in the A-Z budget that are facilitated by financing and logistical practices in filmmaking. These practices ensure that production occurred smoothly. These practices are embedded in the application process for funding, which is the foundation for development and production in Australian filmmaking. Funding applications are validated and legitimised by the inclusion of the A-Z budget in the contractual documentation that is signed at the commencement of development. The A-Z budget functions as a regulating quotidian of practices (Table 17).

**Table 17: Summary of A-Z budget 2016**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>&quot;ABOVE THE LINE&quot; COSTS</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A.1 STORY &amp; SCRIPT</td>
<td>Fees &amp; Expenses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.2 DEVELOPMENT</td>
<td>Fees &amp; Expenses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.1 PRODUCERS</td>
<td>Fees &amp; Expenses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.2 DIRECTORS</td>
<td>Fees &amp; Expenses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E(a) CAST-PRINCIPALS</td>
<td>Fees &amp; Expenses</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>&quot;BELOW THE LINE&quot; COSTS</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PRODUCTION COSTS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C UNIT FEES &amp; SALARIES</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D FRINGES &amp; WORKERS COMP - CREW/CAST</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E(b) CAST &amp; CASTING</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F.1 COSTUMES</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F.2 MAKE-UP &amp; HAIRDRESSING</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G.1 LOCATIONS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G.2 STAGE RENTALS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H.1 SETS &amp; PROPERTIES</td>
<td>Construction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.a IMAGE CAPTURE - FILM &amp; LAB – Shooting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.b IMAGE CAPTURE - TAPE &amp; HD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J INSERTS, STOCK FOOTAGE &amp; ARCHIVAL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K.1 EQUIPMENT &amp; STORES</td>
<td>Camera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L RENTALS &amp; STORAGE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M TRAVEL &amp; TRANSPORT</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N ACCOMMODATION, LIVING &amp; CATERING</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O INSURANCES</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In both cases, homogenised production practices were linked to doxa through their function as a causal mechanism according to which a structural set of practices generates and supports ways of doing. In both cases this was maintained by the collective and cooperative work of professional practitioners. This was achieved through the use of schedules, time based interactions, meetings, and budgets. Homogenised production practices presented as a range of logistical, legal and resource-based processes that structured the development path of scriptwriting practice through time-based standardisation. The generation of resources, both material and immaterial, regulated status quo and hierarchy through the allocation of roles; this suggests a homogenised industry standard and norm in the field.

As set out in Figure 19 the causal relationship between production practices and institutional support is both intrinsic and instrumental to the creation of doxa, field and capital. This was evident in both cases as the projects moved through development paths. Institutional logics in both cases were ontological enactments that were repetitive and normalising. Once the projects were accepted and funded by the film funding bodies the institutional logics that supported the projects functioned as popular consensus through democratic engagement. In fields of filmmaking practice, institutions provide a visible face, and suggest the condition of possibility that mixes authority with financial exchange, regulation and competition. The institute is nurtured through a historical process that makes the conditions for ‘a relatively autonomous social universe which is the result of a slow process of emergence’ (Bourdieu 1992, p. 289).
Figure 19: Homogenised Production Practices and Doxa

The generative qualities inherent in production practices authorise the power relations that cause doxa to continue and be reproduced in a self-determining and unquestioned manner. These homogenised production practices were financial and impacted on the logistical progress of the projects. This was evident in both cases through the role of the producer as the main instigator of financial and logistical practices. The producer in both cases was responsible for practices such as budgeting, accounting, contracting and legal which within the context of the development of both projects were undisputed ways of working. The most significant homogenised collective production practice in both cases were financial practices instigated and carried out by the producer—the management and distribution of monetary resources in support of the enterprise of filmmaking.

These homogenised production practices encompassed the doxa through which the production moved forward. Reflecting the generative and constitutive qualities of doxa, production practices such as management and administration are based on taken-for-granted assumptions and historical precedents that mediated by the field and result in the generation of capital as a driver of practice—in particular, economic capital—as seen in the script development phase of Godless and in the distribution phase of Mallboy where the ‘logic of commercial production’ underpinned collective agency (Bourdieu 1992, p. 345). Within any given field through time, the constitutive doxa—as historically-based ways of doing—becomes unquestioned in the field (Bourdieu 2000).
As set out in Table 18 the constitutional elements that underpin financing practices in both cases were finance practices that functioned as legal, institutional and resource based procedures. The specified qualities identified as constitutive elements are

1. Legitimacy and validity.
2. Repetition and normalisation
3. Capital and authority.

The table shows that the differences between the constitutive elements of the financial practices in both cases. Finance practices had differing degrees of significance on the key practices in filmmaking. Financial practices across both cases were ‘objective structures of relations’ between practitioners with different social, economic and cultural expectations and practices. Financial practices are then ‘the legitimate forms of specific authority of which the field is a site’ (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, pp. 104-105).

Table 18: The Constitutive Elements of Finance Practices as Homogenised Production Practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Production Practice</th>
<th>Constitutive Element</th>
<th>Mallboy</th>
<th>Godless</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Legal</td>
<td>Legitimacy</td>
<td>Budget</td>
<td>Contracting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Validity</td>
<td>Contracting</td>
<td>Negotiation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>Budget</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional</td>
<td>Repetition</td>
<td>Accounting</td>
<td>Accounting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Normalisation</td>
<td>Salary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Accounting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Taxation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td>Office</td>
<td>Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Authority</td>
<td>Distribution</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Funding</td>
<td>Funding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Legitimacy and validity

In both cases, a normalising structure in the development paths was created through the administrative and accounting practices, both fiscal and developmental, that was provided by the film funding institutions. This structured way of working through the imposition of time-based schedules instigated development and production.

Primarily financial practice enacts a legal and institutional constituent to ensure that there is a transparent development path for the project. In both cases the distribution of funds is clearly associated with a legal course of proprietorship that is enacted by the producer. This indisputable line of ownership carries legitimacy, as it conforms to the law. Funding and financing practices in both cases were administered through the producer role.

In the *Mallboy* case the development of the script and project depended on a legal sense of ownership rights. The criterion for applying for government funding for film production is that the producer must have 100% control of all intellectual copyright for the project. Based on the establishment of ownership and attendant precepts of legitimacy, the project was developed to production. The distribution of funding was intrinsic to production process and ensured that it took place in a regulated way. From this perspective, financing practices represented a knowable standard against which all other practices were enacted.

This constitutes a form of legitimisation of practices in filmmaking. The practices listed in the A-Z budget are underpinned by contractual arrangements that legally bind the practitioner to completion of work for the project. The legitimacy of contractual agency relies on what is declared in the contract. The A-Z Budget is thus a structuring and regulating document that is representative of doxa. This structuring of practices occurred in the *Mallboy* project at an institutional level, where financing practice was intrinsically linked to the stages of development and production as outlined in the A-Z Budget template summary.

In the *Godless* case, the producers had secured intellectual rights over the project before the writers were hired. Despite a lack of funding, the progress of script development was based on an institutional structuring of practices. To facilitate script
development in the *Godless* case, financial practices were enacted on a symbolic level rather than a material level. For example, the producers for *Godless* used a proposed budget to call for revisions to the script. This budget, which was increased with each reiteration of the script, indicating a direction for the project in production. Thus, the producers of *Godless* facilitated script development, which was enacted on financial processes that did not exist. It was essentially a transaction that had no price, enacted within an economy of symbolic goods that rely on ‘the production of belief’ for validity and legitimacy (Bourdieu 1993, pp. 74-111).

The use of financial figures in the *Godless* pitch document used precedents such as genre and box office figures to justify the further development of the project. This subjection of the scriptwriting process to external forces reflects how the economic considerations of production encroach on a field (Bourdieu 1996, p. 57). This ‘structural, objective, anonymous and invisible effect’ had little to do with what is tangible in script development (*Ibid.* p. 53). The creation and use of a phantom budget in the *Godless* case was a mediatory force within which the film script was developed.

**Repetition and normalisation**

The repetition of financing practices as suggested by the hierarchical listing of practices in the A-Z budget has a normalising effect, driving a sequential generation of practice that is comprehensible to all practitioners working on the project. For example, in the *Mallboy* case, a time-based program of funding distribution coordinated and sequenced practices throughout all stages of the projects development. This was set up once the producer had optioned the script. In the *Godless* case, repetitive financing practices such as schedules and contracting regulated what was done and when it was done, the difference being that there was no funding distribution. The repetition of institutional financial practices as sequenced by the producers in both cases had the effect of normalising individual scriptwriting practice. In this way, financial practices function as pragmatic and recurring practices, as well as nurturing and developmental practices.

As part of collective practices, financing practices as repetitive and normalising practices ensured the forward trajectory of development towards film production. They functioned to regulate and control individual and collective agency through guidelines
linked to financial and legal policy. In both cases, I had to comprehend and account for the normalising function of financing practices as part of an institutional structuring of practice. This was in relation to individual agency, as well as the collective practices I engaged in. This normalising function occurred in two ways: firstly, through the distribution of funds, which on the Mallboy project had a reassuring and comforting effect because I was being paid and on the Godless project had a regulating effect on practice because I wasn’t being paid but I wanted a structure to practice within. Secondly, I had to comprehend and account for the normalising function of financing practices through the influence of the funding institution. The institutional in each project was the funding source that provided and established normalising precedents but the institutional also existed in ‘the form of dispositions’ that are self-generative (Bourdieu 1992, p. 289). For example, once both projects received funding, they were perceived as viable projects that were endorsed by the institution. The institutional in this sense is a combination of the material and the immaterial (Ibid, p. 289). The institutional functions as not only a regulating and normalising presence on the project but also as a repository of legitimacy and endorsement.

**Capital and authority**

In both cases, financing practices were inherently linked capital to progress the development of the project. Regardless of how resources are configured and distributed, they are used to attain strategic ground, through the conversion of one form of capital into another. For example, the allocation of office space on Mallboy and Godless signified not only the practical necessity of having a physical space but also a significance linked to ownership and status. In the Godless case the producers occupied a permanent, resourced office space, whereas the writers occupied a virtual space for collective practice. In the Mallboy case, physical resources were similarly configured, with the producer occupying a permanent space made possible by funding, while all other practitioners on the project occupied temporary, makeshift spaces.

The negotiations around collective practice, in both cases, were relational activities around available resources. In both cases the nature of collective practice meant that established practitioners and new practitioners made do with the available resources to secure or maintain a position in the field. In this sense, the field functioned as a social space that was structured with its own rules and schemes of domination within social
and economic situations. Intrinsic to the field are resources, or capital which ‘does not exist or function except in relation to a field’ (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, p. 101). These negotiations functioned between dominant beneficiaries of socio-structural forces and ‘passive recipients of socio-structural forces’ (Foster 2005, p. 105).

As set out in Figure 20 financing and logistical practices relate to the practical actions involved in getting a film made, while being linked to the legal concepts of proprietorship and intellectual rights. As seen in both cases institutional processes, such as homogenised production practices demonstrate an inclination to invariability in production processes and privilege historically-repeated protocols and processes. These practices standardise practices and structure the development path of the scriptwriting practice through institutional processes. They indicate that the relationship between scriptwriting practice and film production is one of regulation and control through guidelines that are linked to financial and legal policy. In this way the development and production pathways instigated by institutional guidelines strongly indicate who has the authority to develop and produce films. This is done by establishing a measure of feasibility through fiscally-based checks and balances, to which established producers are the administrators and practitioners adhere.

Through this process of standardisation, regulation and institutional mediation, resources emerge as capital to regulate the status quo and hierarchy. Resources such as distribution are linked to structuring concepts such as stability and standardisation. For example, in the *Mallboy* case, the objective of achieving distribution for the film framed the trajectory of the film within the field, opening nights and film festival screenings elevating it and rental and late-night movie viewing then relegating it to the bottom of the value chain. As a financial resource, distributors also manifest power over what is doable, sayable and thinkable in the field.
The second homogenised production practice identified as influencing scriptwriting practice in both cases were logistical practices. Logistical practices are a sequential outcome of financial practices and include co-ordination, administrative, organisational and management practices (Table 19). Logistical practices included the flow of information via budgets and schedules through practices such as negotiation, networking and supervision. In both cases, logistical practices privilege the importance of historical precedents and social and cultural traditions.
Logistical practices provide signs by which a group in a community of practice moves from individual practice to collective practice through the scheduling of specific practices. The link between the group and logistical practice is important, as categories, labels or descriptors are inherent in this space. For example, in the *Mallboy* case, both the producer and line producers carried out similar planning and organisational tasks structured by schedules and focused on the result. However, where the role of the producer was a defined and legitimised proprietorship, the line producer’s role was limited to the needs of the production. This contrast illustrates the relative power and its effects in collective practice and how capital is leveraged to get the job done.

Logistical practices such as scheduling had scant impact on the *Mallboy* project in the initial script development stages. The script was developed as an individual project without the influence of peripheral interest or control. However, as the project advanced towards production, and more collective practices came into play, scheduling became a way of regulating collective practices through time-based restraints. In the *Godless* case, the logistical scheduling of activities and deadlines gave an air of authenticity to the project, taking the place of the regulating functions of financial practices in the absence of actual funding for scriptwriting practice. Logistical practices in both projects were aimed at securing agreement about creative direction, though not necessarily by consensus, rather by processes the embodied differential agency and control.

As set out in Figure 21 logistical procedures and protocols are realised through a sequence of learned capacities and collective actions that culminate as internalised
field-specific presuppositions. These are generative through time and negotiated according to the specifics of the situation. These field–specific presuppositions were most evident in the collective practices on the *Mallboy* case. For example, it was on set that the script was deferentially treated through field-specific practices such as the daily shooting schedule and the practices of continuity. Continuity in this sense represents a learned capacity that on one hand controls and orders the script while engaging in a collective practice that works towards a common goal. In the *Godless* case field-specific presuppositions such as engagement and protocols between writer, director and casting agent underpinned casting practices. This was through the scheduling of conference calls and regular updates.

Across both cases, the community of practice led to the homogenisation of practices by becoming tightly aligned through collective production protocols. This occurred through engagement, knowledge exchange and collective agency. For example, *Mallboy* was realised to the screen as a result of a tight group dynamic which was managed by the producer through the careful choice of practitioners to work collectively on the project. The project benefitted and was successfully influenced by
the expertise that each practitioner bought to the project. Through collective agency in the community of practice the *Mallboy* script was enhanced and realised to the screen.

Scriptwriting practices for *Mallboy* and *Godless* were influenced by the habitus of the members within the community of practice. The movement from individual practice in scriptwriting towards collective practice, indicates an ‘ontological complicity’ between practices and the field, in that the field structures the habitus, while habitus is the basis for understanding the field (Grenfell 2008, p. 52). For example, in the *Godless* case, the appointment of an Executive Producer created problems around different expectations for the script, which the writers had to account for, reflecting hierarchical power and authoritarian status. The Executive Producer bought a wealth of knowledge that was linked to the expectations of the field rather than an in depth understanding of the development path of the project and what the writers were trying to do.

In both cases practices within the context of a community of practice were process-driven and feature-based (Lave & Wenger 1991). Process-driven engagement in the community of practice occurred because there was a continuous process of peripheral participation over a period of time in the development and production of the script. In both cases, practitioners entered the community of practice, and gradually took up the practices and processes required to see the project to fruition. In the *Mallboy* and *Godless* cases, the identification, reproduction and evolution of knowledge was central to the ongoing development of the projects, defining actions within the community of practice. The feature-based processes of the community of practice generated agency, and meant that both individual and collective agencies were intrinsic and instrumental to learning, knowledge and the exchange of expertise. In this sense, collective practice generated knowledge within the context provided by the community.

As set out in Figure 22 homogenised community of practice are practices that are linked to exchanges between filmmakers and group dynamics of the collective of practitioners making a film. The movement from process driven practices, such as production practices instigated engagement that underpins continued engagement in the project. These in turn became feature based practices that are specialised and specific to the project. In the *Mallboy* case, engagement within the community of practice was structured through the holistic, process-driven development of the script.
towards a goal. Engagement involved personal agency and collective participation, and expressed qualities such as the value of care. It was guided by concerns that were moral and ethical and virtues that were unspoken and informal. Engagement in this sense was also protective and nurturing, which was evident in the *Mallboy* development and production processes. Here, engagement was process driven in that it was integrated and structured through the expectations of the producer, who worked according to industry protocols and expectations.

In the *Godless* case engagement was driven by values such as proficiency, and privileged the pragmatic elements of the production in the development stage. In *Godless*, this created tensions within the community of practice, where practitioners had to reconcile commercial drive with the agency of the creative writing team. In both cases, active engagement established the norms and ways of doing that would build collaborative relationships. These relationships were the bonds that brought the community of practice together as a joint enterprise towards a common goal. The negotiations of member practitioners were moderated through normative practices to support and sustain the community.

![Figure 22: Process-driven and Feature-based Practices in the Community of Practice](image-url)
The second homogenised practice identified in the cases within the community of practice was collective agency. The practices that constitute collective agency were realised in social interactions and relationships. These could include the interests of individuals and groups of individuals, defined according to a ‘system of objective potentialities … in relation to a forthcoming reality’, make up the collective agency of practitioners working on a film project (Bourdieu 1977, p. 76).

The predilection towards collective agency in the two projects differed. In the Mallboy case, collective agency resulted in decision-making that was dispersed between members of the community through active engagement and responsibility. Collective agency on the Godless case, on the other hand, was aligned with notions of professionalism and power, which were organised and planned around specific tasks and deadlines.

Knowledge exchange and expertise exchange constitute the third homogenised collective practice identified in the cases within the community of practice. This was highly specialised and focused in specific filmmaking practices that were intrinsically linked to the script such as casting. In the Godless case the knowledge base that underpins practices such as casting was fragmentary and opaque. In the first instance casting is directly influenced by the script. But the script becomes a secondary mediatory force in the world of actors and their indelible link to the marketplace and fiscal concerns. There were issues of confidentiality around the commercial aspects of the project and the deal-making that went on behind the scenes. In the Godless case, commercial knowledge—crucial to decision-making in casting—was based on the status of the actors being approached and the agents who represented them. In negotiations with casting agents in the Godless case, discussion and decision-making were underpinned by the understanding that the casting agent had confidential industry knowledge of actor career trajectories in relation to other projects. This could not be disclosed, but was beneficial and influential in making casting decisions for the project. In the Mallboy case, the exchange of knowledge and expertise was fluid and reciprocal, being a feature of the structure of the development and production of the film. This was a direct result of the conditions of development and production. Hence by contrast to Godless the casting process for Mallboy the script was a central mediation object.
On the *Mallboy* project I was a novice in the field, and was mentored by experienced film practitioners from different fields of filmmaking. There was an exchange of knowledge and expertise between different practices in the field, which impacted directly on the way scriptwriting practice took place. In the *Godless* case, economic constraints, issues of confidentiality and the uncertain future development of the project exacerbated the limitations of knowledge exchange. In the *Mallboy* case, knowledge and expertise exchange normalised practices through a holistic understanding of group dynamics within the community of practice. This stability was inherent in the permanency of ways of doing that are validated by historical origin and experiential reliability.

This was significant for scriptwriting practice, because the development processes of film production were predisposed towards the collective practice of filmmaking. In both cases, self-conforming and dynamic processes such as engagement, knowledge and expertise exchange influenced a collective approach to practice. In turn, general patterns of social and cultural stratification were reinforced. This reflects not only the experience of the practitioner, but also their background as indicators of class and taste which can influence scriptwriting practice. This is significant for scriptwriting practice because film funding and production are predisposed towards collective practices (Figure 23).

As set out in Figure 23 practices within the community of practice shift from being process-driven practices to feature based practices through process of engagement, decision making, knowledge and exchange. These practices are adjusted according to the contingencies of production and in turn affect scriptwriting practice by reinforcing hierarchically structured levels of information which are disseminated according to the shared interest and social collectivity in the field of filmmaking.
Disseminating practices: self-reflexive and performative

In both cases disseminating practices reflect position-taking by practitioners in a field, being closely linked to the formation of a community of practice around a film project. Disseminating practices involve the performative aspects of the individual and the team, rather than the project itself and include practices such as networking, promotion, personal and social interactions. Self-reflexive practices include analysis and critical reasoning towards concepts of comprehensibility, truth and accuracy in relation to both collective and individual practices. The two disseminating practices observed across the two case studies were self-reflexive and performative.
As set out in Figure 24 self-reflexive practices in the two case studies presented as critical self-reasoning that mediated scriptwriting practice. Self-reflexive practice may infer from professional expertise competencies that include specialist knowledge, craft abilities and characteristic aptitudes that are personal. Self-reflexive practice was integral to the development and production of both projects. It serves as a means for assessing the position of the practitioner and is instrumental in the success of the project. Self-reflexive practice is guided by its agency as a strategy of action (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, p. 129). Self-reflexivity refers to the consciousness of the ongoing circular relationship between the things you are experiencing as you experience them. Self-reflexivity is linked closely to the paradigm of cause and effect. To be self-reflexive is to be meta-critical in the moment that you experience something. Self-reflexivity can be defined as reasoning against the criteria of comprehensibility, truth and accuracy. It is directed by an unfettered inclination to point out and prevail over the unintelligible, the unreasonable and unfairness (Habermas 1974). Self-reflexive practice considers that practice is not just undertaking; it also involves significance and determination.
In both cases, self-reflexivity uncovered social and cultural meaning in practices. A self-reflexive approach to practice considers the interiority of the individual’s habitus within the field, as well as the structures and contingencies that make up the field. Wacquant (2001) argues the following about this phenomenological understanding of practice and action:

The most fundamental and distinctive competencies that we have as social beings are embodied knowledge and skills that operate underneath the level of discourse and consciousness, in an incarnate sense arising out of the mutual interpenetration of being and world, directing enquiry to active practice and participation (p. 183).

Self-reflexivity was a big part of the creative process and scriptwriting practice in Mallboy. This was largely because the conception and initial ideation stage of the script’s development was based on personal experience and real events. As a writer, I could draw on my memory of those experiences and events to evaluate truth and accuracy. On the other hand, the turn towards self-reflexivity was linked to my inexperience of film industry and scriptwriting protocols. I was self-conscious of my position, and in turn self-reflexive in the questioning of the script. This double mode of action became part of the development stage of the creative process. As the project was developed further, and more collaborative practices came into play, self-reflexive practices took the different creative perspectives of other practitioners into account. Self-reflexive practice was structured within the social, cultural and economic ways of working, which are discursive through the history and traditions of the field. As a writer, I articulated the progress of each draft reiteration and revision through a self-reflexive position that accounted for industry expectations as well as my intuitive understanding of the script based on experience and real life. This information was then disseminated to other practitioners working on the project.

Performative practices such as self-promotion, networking, publicity constituted the second disseminating practice identified as influencing scriptwriting practices in the two cases. Performative practices in both cases were self-serving, socially constructed, and closely linked to individual habitus. These practices were based on social, cultural impulses and involved strategising and positioning within the field (Figure 25). Performative practices also embodied linguistic strategies aligned to power and
strategic position-taking. Performative practice had an internal or individualistic mechanism that related to an external, collaborative and group-devised self-sustaining mechanism.

As set out in Figure 25 the sequence that performative practices follow is one of strategising and positioning within the field. Across both cases strategising was an internal mechanism related to individual agency that was shifted and adapted to collective practices.

![Figure 25: Performative Practices are Self-sustaining Strategies](image)

Performative practices are closely linked to the function of language. In both cases, language did not operate as an instrument of communication, but also as a strategic instrument linked to ideas of status and authority. In both cases language, as an inherent element of performative practices, could not be analysed or understood separate from the conditions of its production and reception that are both cultural and social. In both cases, there was a constructed logic to the language being used that depended on the grammatical correctness and appropriateness of the matter being discussed. For instance, in the casting process on *Godless* pronunciation and ways of speaking in practice were reflective of an upper middle class socio-economic environment reflecting importance of social cachet and fiscal issues. This was at odds with the
content of the script and its exploration of working class socio-economic characters. The language used on set in *Mallboy* was a robust everyday language that reflected the milieu of the narrative and characters in the script.

Performatve practice in filmmaking, through the use of language, represented the aspirational social conditions of filmmaking. For discourse to be successfully acquired, it was necessary for the speaker to anticipate the participants’ sanctions and concerns, which were representative of institutions such as film-funding bodies or the film industry and market. Working on both projects I was obliged to sanitise utterances. In the moment of action, I would ask myself questions such as: which speaking code or style do I use? What can I say? How much can I say? In other words, the conformity of utterances in the space of performatve practice relied not only on the content, but also on the form of words. The reaction to discourse, based on these signs of class, reinforced existing insights into the individual’s place in the social and cultural world.

In both projects, who was *authorised* to speak and *recognised* as such by others held sway in decision-making, highlighting the nexus between individual and institutional forces in practice. This was particularly noticeable in dealings with film-funding executives and industry professionals in *Mallboy* and in the casting process in *Godless*. In the *Godless* read-through, the subjectivity of language was emphasised in its articulation through multiple voices and habitus: the subject became the source of language. This acknowledges the multiplicity and plurality possible in knowledge and expertise exchange. This social reality was a given that either denied or instigated meaning or significance. Language makes possible the organisation and mobilisation of experience.

Bourdieu notes that ‘it is rare in everyday life for language to function as a pure instrument of communication’ (Bourdieu 1991, p. 66). The capacity to use language is the product of a social and cultural learning process. As Bourdieu argues, this is part of the rules of the game, where social, cultural or political actions are internalised. Self-reflexive and performative practices are therefore strategic and conceived for potential profit—symbolic or otherwise—and the positioning of oneself in the field. According to Bourdieu, the ‘naïve question of the power of words is logically implicated in the initial suppression of the question of the uses of language, and therefore the social conditions in which words are used’ (Bourdieu 1991, p. 107).

Self-reflexive practices and performative practices in both cases were dependent on linguistic exchange based on the socially-defined dispositions of status, class and taste. Self-reflexive practices were culturally located in established traditions of societies and groups, and are strategies that practitioners use to define and validate individual agency in a competitive and globalised industry. In the *Mallboy* case self-reflexive practices were holistic and inclined to an
ongoing appraisal of performance and practice. In the *Godless* case, they were inclined to a professional position. Performative practices are therefore linked to notions of status and hierarchical power in the film industry. The use of technology further mediates these practices. The extensive use of email, phone conferences and Internet software, such as the preference for Skype conferencing in the interactions between writers and producers on the *Godless* case, moderated and to an extent constrained both self-reflexive practice and performative practice.

As set out in Figure 26 *disseminating practices* are linked to the practical actions involved in getting a film made, while being linked to practices that are characteristic to the individual. *Disseminating practices* sit within collective practice, being the sets of language-oriented doings mediated by habitus. These practices tend to be more individual actions and positions sitting within the context of the collective development of a film and have agency as dispersing and spreading procedures and actions. Disseminating practices are communicative and are oriented towards social understanding and conveyance of information from the field of filmmaking to the outside world.

![Figure 26: Relational Cycle of Self-reflexive and Performative Practices](image-url)
Individual practice

The next section comparatively analyses individual practices in relation to the first research question. In both cases, the individual nature of scriptwriting practice contrasted with the shift to collective practice during production. As opposed to collective practices, individual practices are not consciously organised, although they have practical sense and logic. For the most part, I undertook individual scriptwriting practices without conscious deliberation, but not without purpose. Individual practices dependent on the constitution of meanings are irreducibly social, and ‘the permanent internalisation of the social order in the human body’ (Bourdieu 1977, p. 83).

Bourdieu considers individual practices such as learning and habit as fundamentally dealing with things sensibly and realistically, and practically rather than theoretically. Individual practices are related to meaning and resolve. This is because habitus orients practices from the seemingly automatic and insignificant gestures or techniques towards the most fundamental principles of construction and evaluation in the social world. This position is consistent with Bourdieu’s position on the relational fluidity of habitus, where a cause is an effect or stimulus that implies ongoing relational action. Habitus and its embodied practices are ‘implicated in social location and inequalities’; habitus is a source of ‘symbolic value or the bodily and cognitive foundations underpinning the acquisition of prestige or status’ (Edward & Imrie 2003, p. 244). Habitus recognises social structures as deeply ingrained and influenced by social and cultural milieus, while acting as a set of guidelines permitting the practitioner to adapt, improvise and strategise in response to situations as they arise. It is a durable generative principle that guides people’s choices.

Learning and practice in the cases centred on the habitus of the scriptwriter. These were the experiential dispositions that the individual brought to scriptwriting. When I first started writing Mallboy, my approach to writing was influenced by learned behaviours that helped me understand what I was doing in the context of what was required in the field. These learned behaviours and ways of working gave me the know-how to complete the job. As I progressed and learned more about writing practice from research and collaboration with other writers, my approach to practice shifted to incorporate different ideas and ways of working. Implicit in scriptwriting practices is an acknowledgement of the deeply- ingrained social structures, and that the
process of interpretation of the social world is influenced by interactions within social milieus. Patterns of behaviour and action are acquired from experience, and learning on the job may foster or hamper innovation by becoming habitual and routine.

In both cases I had to legitimise my position as writer by developing a disposition that was accepted in the field of filmmaking. A disposition is not a process or event, but rather the state, preparation, or tendency towards an action. The relevant disposition demonstrates a feel for the game, and is the result of indoctrination. It is achieved as the practice of writing according to industry standards and norms becomes second nature. This was noticeable in Mallboy and Godless. In both, the sanctioning of the script by the industry through incremental development structured according to funding rounds led to further development and production.

The second individual practices identified as influencing scriptwriting were manifest in rules and norms. This is often the result of an accustomed way of thinking that leads to a wrong analysis of the situation. Rules and norms were embodied in practices such as administration, co-ordination, management, negotiation, organisation, scheduling, and supervision and can be considered impediments instigated by social and cultural groups and institutional knowledge.

Rules and norms in production practices formed a large part of the frameworks for the Mallboy and Godless cases, where established collective practices such as financing and logistics were adopted. Rules and traditional ways of doing were incorporated into individual practice as each of the projects interacted with more advanced industry processes and industry practitioners. There was an assumption that as experienced industry practitioners working in the field, the rules and traditions of the field were inherent in practice.

Implicit in practices that involve rules and norms is an admission that the structures of the social world are deeply entrenched in us, and that the way we make sense of the social world is determined by interactions within social environments through rules and norms. There is hierarchy and systematic process in the way rules and traditional ways of doing are manifest in the processes of the film industry. These suggest an institutionalised way of working that has its own codes that reflect political, cultural and social ways of doing.

As Figure 27 sets out the generative principle that forms out of this learning engenders habit. In both cases this generative principle guided me in my choice of dispositional attitudes that
inform behaviour and taste. Learning and habit, and their legitimisation through rules and norms in the community of practice in the film industry, constitute the shared reality and meanings that practitioners construct in the collective practice of filmmaking and interaction. They have a homogenising effect on individual practices in the field through establishing ways of working that have validity, and that create meaning at a *symbolic* level through rules and norms.

Individual practice embodies behaviours, gestures and words that have multiple meanings. To understand certain practices and actions, it is important to understand what these actions mean symbolically. Individual practice also has *relational* meaning, in that it incorporates a temporal element. Individual practices change and gain further significance over time. When rules and norms change over time, meanings do too. Individual practices in this sense embody *negotiated* meaning, in that rules and norms occur when there is an active role between practitioners in negotiating important issues and objects, for example the function of script.

![Diagram showing the relationship between individual practices, meanings, and learning and habit](Fig 27: Meaning in Individual Practices)
Research Question Two: How do production processes and imperatives mediate scriptwriting practices?

In both cases, collective practices, compounded by fiscal factors, shifted decision-making from individual to collective practice with a mediating effect on the script. As the Mallboy and Godless projects moved from the ideation stage to pre-production, the effect of collective practices on scriptwriting practice suggest that the time-based sequence of collective practice has a strong mediatory effect on scriptwriting practice.

As set out in Figure 28 mediations occurred as a sequence across both cases. Decisions making led to engagement and agency. These then became fiscal considerations that were either supported by funding and budget or, as in the Godless case, done for free. In all this the sequence of events resulted in time based production practices that resulted in collective practice.

![Diagram: Collective Practices that Affect Scriptwriting](image_url)

**Figure 28: Collective Practices that Affect Scriptwriting**

In the Godless case, time-based staging of scriptwriting as it intersected with preliminary casting had a tangible effect on scriptwriting practice through the transformative and reflexive nature of practice. In the Mallboy case, the shift from individual practice to collective practices was more gradual, occurring as the project gained funding and momentum. Production practices are not only time-based, as they are structured by schedules. They also have a mediatory effect through the comprehension of time in practice.
The comprehension of time for the scriptwriter reflects two paradigms: the effect of subjective time on practice and the effect of objective time on practice. The experience of time as a cumulative and consequential phenomenon is at odds with the creative process in scriptwriting practice, where time can be inconsequential in the subjective creative moment.

Reflexive analysis that took place within the context of individual practice and agency helps to account for these two patterns of temporal comprehension. Reflexivity in this instance helps to create an understanding of the key generative structures of scriptwriting practice, and the effect of production processes. It does this by shifting the focus of enquiry to the self, suggesting a naturalistic mode of inquiry that acknowledges and reconciles objective structures, such as structured processes of filmmaking. This is done with the knowledge of the lived experience of the participant. For Bourdieu, subjective experience is always moderated by structures that already mirror the objective structures being discerned in experience.

**Research Question Three: How does the staging of film production affect scriptwriting practice?**

In both projects, production imperatives were framed as a collection of exclusive and assignable rights given to the producer for a fixed number of years. On the *Godless* project these rights include the script and the contribution of key creatives to the project including director and casting agent. On the *Mallboy* project these rights include the script, actor performances, music, direction, and the contributions of key crew, including design, wardrobe and camera.

The interaction between industry practices/ways of doing and scriptwriting practice is mostly beneficial. This interaction was typically advantageous and occurred through a series of concessions and justifications between the script and the practices that were engaged to develop the script to the screen. Crucially it was the acceptance of both projects into industry that validated the script and sanctioned scriptwriting practice. This inclusion into the industry merged creative scriptwriting practice with a national agenda for Australian film through institutional processes based on historical precedence and market expectations. This was evident in the *Godless* project with its
initial inclusion at IndiVision development conference and then in the subsequent development of the project which was deferential of the market and the importance of the box office. On the Mallboy project this became apparent once the script was picked up for development by the film funding agencies.

As set out in Figure 29 the staging of production processes affected scriptwriting practice in a similar way across both projects although there were subtle differences that were indicative of the financial status of the project and the different developmental paths that the projects took. In both cases, the validation of the script through the structuring agency of the production practices was most noticeable in the degree to which the script was revised and redrafted. In the Mallboy case the redrafting of the script based on feedback within the community of practice occurred predominantly in the pre-production phase of development. In the Godless case the redrafting of the script was limited to interactions between a smaller team. In both projects, the scriptwriters directed action towards outcomes that reflected an interest in the project coming to fruition, as well as a personal creative impulse. It was apparent to the writer that the script would have different meanings and functions to whomever was using it as a boundary object.

But to what extent did the constant reworking’s and revisions to the script alter the original impulse and meanings of the script? As a boundary object in the community of practice of a film production team, the script allowed collective action without requiring overt consensus on an outcome.

The sanctioning of the script and validation of scriptwriting practice in both cases was through links to the economic imperatives of the industry. In the Mallboy case, this was through financial backing and a regime of funding from the main funding body. This ensured that the development and production of the film was according to industry standards and ways of doing. In Godless, the further development of the script was linked to the creation of prospective budgets that mimicked industry standards and sanctioned the development of subsequent drafts.

Consequently production processes and imperatives mediate scriptwriting practice through the privileging of industry standards in production. This is manifest through the links between funding structures that are set by funding agencies, and pragmatic development and production processes managed by producers. The occurred through schedules and resources that are authorised by social and cultural structures such as institutions, the globalised marketplace and the community of practice.
Production goals and processes mediate scriptwriting practice through the conditional acquisition of copyright and its structuring agency across all practices in filmmaking. The effect of this varied across the two case studies. In *Mallboy*, the acquisition of copyright was part of the development of the project from the moment of funding by a government agency. Mediations by collaborative production practices impacted on scriptwriting practice through rules and norms that were validated by the ownership of copyright.

Production processes and imperatives mediate scriptwriting practice through the intrinsic and instrumental links between production practices that are driven by a national agenda. Production processes and mediations as sanctioned by institutional practices that bolster Australia’s film culture make it distinct from film industries and cultures of other countries. Australian film production sits alongside arts funding policy, public discourse such as reviews and articles in mainstream media, and public reception in strategic nationalistic positioning. Therefore, mediations by production processes in scriptwriting practice can be interpreted as specific to a nation, and as reflective of a national practice. It is within the context of a national practice that practitioners are organised and jostle for position. This is a general descriptive of national cinema that reiterates the malleable, unfixed nature of culture against the universality of the film language (O’Regan 1996, p. 70).

Production practices and imperatives affect scriptwriting practices, in that they are continuously intrinsic and instrumental to the field and to cultural production. In both cases, the development of the script was overseen by industrial and social parameters that gave them meaning and significance in a cultural-discursive paradigm.
The mediatory influence of production processes on scriptwriting practice is implicit in the idea that the script, in development, is unstable. It is in a state of transition from ideation to pre-production. The extent to which a script maintains its original character and identity in an industrial filmmaking process fluctuates according to the mediatory influence of production processes and imperatives. The two cases under examination illustrate that the relational connection between scriptwriting practice and industry processes is mediatory as well as symbiotic.

By limiting the enquiry to two specific cases, and using case study research and autoethnographic methods, the responses to the research questions have identified and suggested possible mediations and effects of production processes on scriptwriting practices. The cases demonstrate a small sample of the different practices engaged in each project. They also reveal common aspects such as writer agency, collective practices and individual modes of development and strategic practice. These are worthy of investigation.

Figure 29: How the Staging of Film Production Affects Scriptwriting Practice
The conflation of meaning and conventions in the findings do not do justice to the aesthetic possibilities and ideological implications of production processes. Underpinned by economic, social and political structures, these are ubiquitous in creative practices. Moving on from the research questions and the identification and analysis of production processes in filmmaking, the next section returns to the script to identify its constituting values as potential generative principles according to which scriptwriting practice can be realised.

**The constitution and constituting values of scriptwriting practice**

This section formulates scriptwriting as a set of constituting values according to which the generative principle of habitus is established. In this individual agency—usually dependent on socially-determined properties such as the community of practice, institutional structures and attributes such as financing and logistical practices—takes a primary position as a driving force in scriptwriting practice. Figure 30 suggests that scriptwriting practice, generated from habitus, and underpinned by Bourdieu’s concepts of doxa, field and capital is an outcome rather than an originary practice (Figure 30).

![Figure 30: Constitution of Individual Scriptwriting Practice](image)

In both cases doxa, field and capital were the contextual frames that accounted for both collective and individual agency. Habitus was the durable generative principle that guided scriptwriter agency. Scriptwriting agency in both cases had a primary position within the set of constituting values which permitted the practitioner to adapt, improvise and strategise in response to situations as they arose.

The subjective manifestations of habitus were revealed as dispositions in the action of practice in both case studies. Dispositions in this sense are more than qualities of the
mind and character. The dispositions that make up habitus constitute an approximation to structure. This is the result of an organising action, as well as a way of being or habitual state and inclination (Bourdieu 1977, p. 214). This is because the generative schemes of habitus can ‘produce classifiable practices’ that generate ‘meaningful practices and meaning-giving perceptions’, which in turn can be applied ‘to the most varied areas of practice’ (Bourdieu 1984, p. 170). This was seen in both cases through the application of financing and logistical practices to the development process of scriptwriting. In *Mallboy*, this was through institutionalised processes regulated through a funding schedule. In the *Godless* case, it was through a symbolic use of institutional processes such as phantom budgets and schedules.

The socially-constituted, cognitive structures that form habitus are changeable and can be passed on, because they are the result of individual experience. The socialised personal embodiment of habitus in the scriptwriting practice in both cases suggests three domains for consideration:

1. Individual
2. Institutional
3. Social

No-one is born a scriptwriter. The training of filmmakers and the immersion in the bureaucratic world of film production is individually driven, but socially constructed. In this context individuals, who bring different life experiences to writing practice, will have disparate ways of thinking, feeling and acting. In the *Mallboy* case, the script as a representation of the life experience of the writer was mediated by industry-standard protocols that ensured a development and production path to realisation. In the *Godless* case scriptwriting practice was mediated by both professional practice and industry standard protocols. In both cases writer’s habitus had to account for both individual dispositions and the doxa of the industry and ways of doing.

*Institutional habitus* in both cases accounted for formal engagement in the industry, which is structured through institutional processes that are historically validated and perpetuated. In both cases, this was manifest through development processes, though in *Godless*, the influence of the institutional was connotative rather than actual. Thirdly, *social* habitus in both projects meant that knowledge and expertise functioned as social capital which was gained, lost and exchanged within the community of practice.
Across these three paradigms of habitus, a self-reflexive approach helped the scriptwriter understand how objective social structures pattern human conduct. The complex, emergent nature of scriptwriting practice obliges the scriptwriter to adopt a position of constant and radical reflexivity. It is problematic simply to respond to the social practices of others without a mutual self-examination of scriptwriting practice that acknowledges the interests and distinctions that accompany the relational links between individual and collective agency. Such reflexive consciousness at the point of action in scriptwriting is rare in the literature of scriptwriting. This is partly because it is difficult to articulate the complex nature of individual agency in the context of the collaborative and corporate nature of filmmaking, where multiple practitioners from different disciplines and with different skill sets work towards a common goal.

Scriptwriting, contextualised as a set of constituting values, shows how habitus, as socially-composed desires, compulsions and abilities, is simultaneously cognitive, aesthetic and ethical. Scriptwriting as fashioned by the habitus and dispositions of the practitioner involved, operates concretely according to these dispositions. The strategies of habitus—the central principal of categorisation—have an impact because they function as scrutiny or conscious control at the level of the sub-conscious and language. This relational element of habitus in the constitution of scriptwriting, as a shared set of dispositions, categories and generative schemes embodied in individuals, is pertinent to scriptwriting practice. This is because it subverts the institutional and industry-led emphasis in scriptwriting practice, as seen in the case studies on corporate activity among a group of people. The conformity of the Australian film industry to the marketplace—its doxa—reflects and reinforces this position, and is consequently conservative by nature. Filmmakers who practise within the paradigms set up by filmmaking institutions and industry run the risk of attributing to themselves what the distribution confers on them.

The field as a constituting value in scriptwriting practice is equally important, because the position-taking of practitioners can only be meaningful relative to the sphere of social interactions determined by both fiscal and cultural capital (Bourdieu 1996). The structural typography of the field as expressed in terms of capital—such as economic, social capital and symbolic capital, including cultural capital—that is objectified and acquired over time brings symbolic value to scriptwriting practice. In this configuration, capital is instrumental, in that is an empowering force in scriptwriting practice that functions to acquire ‘positioning within the field’ (Grenfell 2008, p. 223).

The constitution of individual scriptwriting practice posits habitus as the primary generative constituent of scriptwriting practice. This relegates the impact of doxa, field and capital to secondary generative roles. Self-reflexive and performative practices that are part of the disposition of scriptwriting habitus generate
and inform an understanding of doxa of the field. Figure 30 represents a step away from the historically-
realised, industrialised and self-generating doxa of current scriptwriting practices. As shown in the cases,
these practices are entrenched in the collective processes that underpin institutional practices in the film
industry. This constitution suggests the generative qualities of scriptwriting practices. Here, the assumed
linear progression and boundaries between ideation, pre-production, production and post-production in
current scriptwriting practice and script development are questioned.

This position interrogates the discourse around scriptwriting that privileges the development and
analysis of the script as a literary text. To some extent, it also contains reservations around the role of
the scriptwriter as an individual practitioner working alone within the collaborative environs of
filmmaking. As seen in the cases, creative decision-making within contemporary filmmaking is
intrinsically linked to the relationship between scriptwriting, industrial systems of working, and
commercial objectives. Individual and collaborative scriptwriting practices shift and change when the
form itself is free of traditional expectations, hierarchies of literary form and function, and
industrialised ways of doing.

Chapter Six has compared the case results to identify practical, contextualises insights into
scriptwriting practice as a basis for building knowledge of the field. The identification of specific
practices was a key requirement for analysis of the case studies. In both projects, I assessed the value
of my position against established ways of doing things in the Australian film industry. The cross-
case analysis considered both objective facts and subjective experience. It is characterised by both the
context within which scriptwriting takes place, and by suggesting a truth about scriptwriting and the
act of writing. Bourdieu’s theory of practices and the attendant concepts of doxa, habitus, field and
capital draw attention to the fixed and structuring nature of production practices in cultural
production without discounting the potentialities of individual agency. The comparison of the cases
reveals a dialectical movement between the individual agency of the practitioner and structured ways
of working. This is in a field of cultural practice where commercial objectives have an increasing
influence.

Together, the cases have enabled the theorisation of the complex, relational nature of scriptwriting
practice. Findings presented as relational cycles of interaction support the contextualised
identification of practices in the field of scriptwriting. These explanations question the differentiation
between the particular or historical, and the general or theoretical effects of practices in filmmaking.
The findings contribute to a deeper and more representational understanding of the impact of industry
processes through collective practices on scriptwriting practices. The constitution of scriptwriting put forward suggests that the knowledge and experience of the practitioner is an enlightening and valuable generative force in individual scriptwriting practice. They suggest that scriptwriting practice can proliferate in its functions without reference to previous modes of development and production.
Conclusion

Within the field of Australian film studies, knowledge and theorisation of scriptwriting and scriptwriting practice is not comparable with its significant role in film production. The thesis has established that scripts and the practices they engender have an integral significance in the film production process, but that Australian film studies neglects to consider the practicalities of scriptwriting practice, where the expectations of rigour and creativity are at odds with the reliance of the film industry on government funding and perceptions of commercial viability.

The case study approach underpinning the research reported in this thesis has identified complex patterns of effect that account for the nature and purpose of scriptwriting practice. The thesis has shown that cultural, political, economic and social significations attached to industrial ways of working in the film industry are evident in the way that scripts are produced and then deployed in the filmmaking process. This has been enabled through the identification of the relational links between individual practice, collective practice and production processes. Presenting a theoretical position on scriptwriting practice within the context of competitive and strategic film production processes—where filmic conventions and production processes operate as forms of product differentiation and distinction—is a main contribution of the thesis. Typically, developing such insights has been difficult due to the personal nature of scriptwriting and the commercial and legally-binding confidentiality clauses that underpin development and production processes in the industry. To further theorise from this position is uncharted territory in Australian film studies. In sum, the thesis has examined scriptwriting as

1. An individual practice that is mediated and conforms to industry standards.
2. An individual practice with relational connections to identity.
3. A cultural practice that endorses collective practice.
4. A social practice that is embedded in notions of hierarchy and power.

Original contribution and significance

In combining case study research with autoethnographic method, the thesis has presented foundational research into the practice of scriptwriting. The findings of the
Case study research produce both unique and general understandings that support building theoretical knowledge in respect of both scriptwriting practices and filmmaking in general. The choice of theoretical stakes, the ideas, events and processes in the case studies, the approaches and methods used, and the conceptualisations of the object of study—the script—within a larger field of practices are all important considerations to appraise the object—the script—with ‘a new gaze’ (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, p. 251).

The research draws on rare sources and perspectives to contribute to the development of a practice theory-based approach to scriptwriting. The field of scriptwriting requires exemplars to build expertise and consolidate knowledge from practice. This foundational knowledge-building research is a step towards recognising the meaning that can be generated out of scriptwriting practice. For this reason, this research is relevant to practising filmmakers and their collaborators, researchers and commissioning organisations contributing to the field of film studies and practice.

**Proposed future research**

Following my own pedagogical interests and practice, I propose two areas for research to scriptwriting practice. Firstly, further research to examine the forms of scriptwriting and the script in relation to emerging technologies. The research could include enquiry and examination of alternative scriptwriting outcomes such as digital scripts, which account for the changing distribution and exhibition spaces such as the streaming on the Internet and Video on Demand (VOD) platforms. The research is prescient within the context of evolving digital representations of narrative and character. It includes interrogation into the changing distribution processes of the Australian film industry and its implications on practices, in particular scriptwriting. The script in this reiteration reflects the expectations and demands of new digital exhibition, and exhibition in relation to its status as a representation of creative vision.

The digital domain offers new approaches to scriptwriting practice as a means of expression. New forms of distribution can offer new possibilities for the consideration of the form and content of scripts. Such research would involve an interrogation of the changing distribution and exhibition processes that are presently manifesting, and their implications on practices, in particular scriptwriting, in the Australian film industry.
The potential for the form and function of the script to be developed as a digital artefact is enhanced by the ability to embed visual and audio data within the body of the digital text. This research is prescient within the context of evolving digital representations of narrative and character. The script in this instance can be further disconnected from its literary orientation as an expressive and informative art form in the digital realm. Researching creative scriptwriting practices in relation to the emerging online distribution practices from a theoretical perspective requires a fusion of existing approaches as explored in this thesis. Micro-level detail would be integrated into macro-level models and theoretical critique fused with empirical investigation. This approach would take into account that the script is always realised through another medium. The script embodies meaning beyond the creation of narrative and character. Its meanings, though closely aligned and mediated by cultural, social and political constructs that underpin scriptwriting practice, can only take shape through the medium of the moving image and sound.

The second area for further research would be the development of a guide or *vade mecum* on scriptwriting based on my ongoing research for teaching scriptwriting practice in tertiary education. In this undertaking, the constitution and constituting values of scriptwriting presented in this thesis are instrumental to structuring a pedagogical approach to practice that is generative, holistic and effective. The primary purpose of the guide would be to establish some of the precepts of practice theory as a generative apparatus to scriptwriting practices. This guide for scriptwriting practice proposes Bourdieu’s theory of practice and attendant concepts of capital, doxa, habitus, field and reflexivity as a start point for generating creative practice and process.

The guide would function as both a practitioner’s guide and examination of the functions of a script recalling two of Price’s four frames of enquiry that currently shape discussion of scriptwriting practice: the discourse around writing for the screen and the practitioner’s frame (Price 2014). The conceptual framework addresses individual agency within the larger social context of the concepts that underpin practice. Taking this approach to scriptwriting practice addresses some of the inherent difficulties around teaching scriptwriting practices, such as reconciling individual agency and impulse with the expectations of an industry. The implication is that a richer understanding of the enabling and constraining factors that scriptwriting practitioners encounter in practice can emerge.

Practice theory is an important part of the underlying processes that contextualise the empirical knowledge. This approach would extend the logic of script development and scriptwriting to a strategy of reframing scriptwriting practice as a multi-practice collaboration. The guide would be goal-driven and
provide practical advice on how to write a screenplay that accounts for cultural, social and political constructs. Bourdieu’s theory of practice and concepts of capital, doxa, field and habitus would strongly figure in the generation of ideas and the structuring of narrative and character. The guide would link the significance and meaning of the script to creative decision-making within contemporary industry practices. It would present the link between industrial systems of working and commercial objectives in screenwriting from the insider perspective to initiate and generate storytelling. Most importantly, the guide would suggest ways that scriptwriting practices and scripts can be realised and become meaningful through deeply reflexive ways of working that consider the interiority of the individual’s habitus within the field and the structures and contingencies that make up the field. The guide offers a dialectical process that internalises the external world, but also externalises the internal world.

This thesis presents practice in scriptwriting as a field of practice teeming with tacit knowledge. It has to some degree been a way of rehearsing some of central arguments and counter-arguments that justify a practice-led approach to analysis rather than the traditional commitment of film studies to the idea of medium-specificity—the notion that film is not simply another medium but has special properties that need to be studied on their own terms. All of the foregoing suggests a meaningful path for further research to inform scriptwriting practices. This could help create a value system for scripts outside the conventional parameters of content, cultural meaning and economics.

The neglect of the study of practice and the unexamined acceptance of institutional guidelines for production was the impetus for this thesis. That the disparate pressures of market demand and cultural significance are indelibly linked to a film’s development determines who has the authority to make film. This mode of development and production establishes a measure of the feasibility against which film producers can claim adherence. The thesis resists this position by showing that this development and production path is not just a logical organisation of labour production methods, but is a significant mediator on the structure of meaning that is mainly unexamined and unquestioned in Australian films, yet is implicit in the mode of a countrypractice.


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WEB LINKS

http://blogafi.org

Appendix 1 Ethical Approval

From: RES Ethics <resethics@swin.edu.au>
Subject: SUHREC Project 0708/074 Ethics Clearances and Acknowledgment of Final Report Date: 1 October 2015 at 10:25:47 am AEST
To: Vincent Giarrusso <vgiarrusso@swin.edu.au>
Cc: Carolyn Barnes <cbarnes@swin.edu.au>, RES Ethics <resethics@swin.edu.au>

To: Mr. Vincent Giarrusso, FHAD
Cc: Dr. Carolyn Barnes, FHAD

Dear Vincent

**SUHREC Project 0708/074 Production methodology and the creative process in Australian Film**

Dr. Carolyn Barnes, Design/FHAD; Mr. Vincent Giarrusso, Dr. James Verdon
Approved Duration: From 30/10/2007 to 01/06/2009.
Reactivated Project/Extended Duration: 25/06/2010 to 01/06/2014.
Project Modified June 2010.

Attached please find copies of the emails issuing ethics clearance for the above project.

I confirm receipt on 30 May 2014 of the final report on the conduct of human research activity for the project in line with ethics clearance conditions issued.

Please contact the Research Ethics Office if you have any further queries.

Best wishes for your thesis submission.

Yours sincerely

Keith

-----------------------------------------------------------------------
Keith Wilkins
Secretary, SUHREC & Research Ethics Officer
Swinburne Research (H68)
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Dear Carolyn

**SUHREC Project 0708/074 Production methodology and the creative process in Australian Film**

Dr Carolyn Barnes, Design/Mr Vincent Giarrusso
Approved Duration: From 30/10/07 to 01/06/09
[Reactivated/Extended Duration: 25/06/2010 to 01/06/14]
[Project Modified June 2010]

I refer to your progress report for the above project that was received in this office on 15 February in which you requested an extension of duration. Following a request from this office for clarification with regard to your request we received further e-mail communication on 16 April and a hardcopy of the revised and updated progress report on 7 June 2010. The request and the amendment were put to a delegate of the relevant SUHREC Subcommittee (SHESC3) for consideration.

I am pleased to advise that, as submitted to date, the reactivated, modified and extended project/protocol may continue in line with standard ethics clearance conditions previously communicated and reprinted below.

Please contact me if you have any queries about on-going ethics clearance, citing the SUHREC project number. Copies of clearance emails should be retained as part of project record-keeping.

As before, best wishes for the project.

Kaye Goldenberg

on behalf of Ann Gaeth
Secretary, SHESC3

******************************************************************************

Kaye Goldenberg

Administrative Officer (Research Ethics)
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SUHREC Project 0708/074 Production methodology and the creative process in Australian Film
Dr Carolyn Barnes Design Mr Vincent Giarrusso
Approved Duration: From 30/10/07 To 1/06/09

I am pleased to advise that the Chair of SHESC3 or delegated member has approved the revisions and clarification as emailed/submitted by you on 12 October, 2007 in response to previous communication (SHESC email 3 October, 2007). Unless otherwise notified, human research activity in the project may commence in line with standard or any special conditions for on-going ethics clearance.

The standard conditions for ethics clearance include the following:

- All human research activity undertaken under Swinburne auspices must conform to Swinburne and external regulatory standards, including the current National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans and with respect to secure data use, retention and disposal.

- The named Swinburne Chief Investigator/Supervisor remains responsible for any personnel appointed to or associated with the project being made aware of ethics clearance conditions, including research and consent procedures or instruments approved. Any change in chief investigator/supervisor requires timely notification and SUHREC endorsement.

- The above project has been approved as submitted for ethical review by or on behalf of SUHREC. Amendments to approved procedures or instruments ordinarily require prior ethical appraisal/clearance. SUHREC must be notified immediately or as soon as possible thereafter of (a) any serious or unexpected adverse effects on participants and any redress measures; (b) proposed changes in protocols; and (c) unforeseen events which might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project.

- At a minimum, an annual report on the progress of the project is required as well as at the conclusion (or abandonment) of the project.

- A duly authorised external or internal audit of the project can be undertaken at any time.

Please contact me if you have any queries or concerns about on-going ethics clearance. The SUHREC project number should be cited in communication.

Anne Cain
Acting Secretary, SHESC3

Ms Anne Cain
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From: Anne Cain <ancain@swin.edu.au>
Subject: SUHREC Project 0708/074 Ethics Clearance of Amended Project Date: 30 October 2007 at 5:45:07 pm AEDT
To: "Barnes, Carolyn" <CBarnes@groupwise.swin.edu.au> Cc: "Wilkins, Keith" <KWilkins@groupwise.swin.edu.au>

Dear Carolyn

SUHREC Project 0708/074 Production methodology and the creative process in Australian Film
Dr Carolyn Barnes Design Mr Vincent Giarrusso
Approved Duration: From 30/10/07 To 1/06/09

I am pleased to advise that the Chair of SHEC3 or delegated member has approved the revisions and clarification as emailed/submitted by you on 12 October, 2007 in response to previous communication (SHEC email 3 October, 2007). Unless otherwise notified, human research activity in the project may commence in line with standard or any special conditions for on-going ethics clearance.

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