The End of Convenience:

A Hip Hopera and Exegesis

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Doctor of Philosophy

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ABSTRACT

This practice-led PhD consists of a feature film screenplay titled ‘THE END OF CONVENIENCE’ and an exegesis that critically reflects on the process of creating the work and its related themes. The artefact explores the life and relationship challenges encountered by three unmarried young couples who are forced by finances and circumstance to co-habit in share accommodation. It also investigates some of the difficulties of youth cohabitation, such as economic and social marginalisation. The dialogue is constructed in rap.

The screenplay interrogates the notion that sharehousing is both an individual and societal economic relationship of benefit, explores whether the relationships within sharehouses are constructed around convenience, and asks what happens to the lives of young people when they enter sharehouse arrangements.

The exegesis analyses, critiques, and reflects upon the writerly choices made during the creation of the screenplay. It integrates discussion about these choices with questions around whether the musical genre of Hip Hop can be used to tell a story about urban marginalisation in an Australian domestic environment. It evaluates whether Hip Hop is an effective tool for social commentary when the subject of its storytelling is not the industries of the street or race related issues. It also uses the frame of Feminist Standpoint Theory as its central theoretical approach and applies it to questions and assumption around the role of gender, performance, and lived experience in Hip Hop, narratives of cohabitation, and to the debates around appropriation of cultural and musical forms.

The exegesis also discusses use and evolution of poetic form, lyrical style and content throughout the artefact through an evaluation of the ideas of Edwards (2009), Bradley (2009), Khabir (2011), Stavrias (2005), and Salaam (2005). Finally, it interrogates the nature, form, and dilemmas of multiprotagonist storytelling in the screenplay.
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Throughout this project I have been indebted to the love and support of my family and friends and I hope to make you all proud with my accomplishments.
DECLARATION

I certify that the thesis entitled ‘The End of Convenience: A Hip Hopera and Exegesis’ submitted for the degree of PhD contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma; to the best of my knowledge contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text; and is not based on joint research or publications.

Document formatting and copyediting was conducted by Dr Rachel Le Rossignol in accordance with the Australian Standards for Editing Practice (ASEP) for research students’ theses and dissertations.

Full name: Christina Hogarth

Signed:..................................................

Date: 18/07/2017..................................................
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THE END OF CONVENIENCE

A Hip Hop Opera

Address
Phone Number 0435 266 857
FADE IN:

INT. SHAREHOUSE - DAY

LOUNGEROOM

A comfortable, lived in space. FURNITURE is mismatched but funky.

TELEVISION

LOTTERY BALLS spin and tumble.

LOTTO ANNOUNCER
(Spoken)
Today's jackpot is 3 million dollars but you've got to be in it to win it. Best of luck.

One by one the numbers fall.

LOTTO ANNOUNCER (CONT’D)
(Spoken)
And the first lucky number tonight is number 8. Next, number 13...unlucky for some...but lucky for someone....

A symphony of SOUNDS echoes in the distance.

KITCHEN

A steady DRIP falls from the tap, a kettle WHISTLES, a pot BUBBLES on the stove, a mobile phone VIBRATES, a coffee machine HISSES and GURGLES.

HALLWAY

A bedroom door plastered with POLITICAL MESSAGES swings open.

ZADI, an aggressive, militant activist, emerges with a MEGAPHONE to her mouth.

(all dialogue in bold is rapped)

ZADI
(through megaphone)
Listen up this is the voice of your conscience, I'm conscious of
your negative responses,
environmental awareness,
it isn't nonsense
so obey my instructions
or I'll knock you unconscious.

She ditches the megaphone and marches down the hallway.

KITCHEN CONT.

Zadi turns off TAPS and APPLIANCES and switches off LIGHTS.

ZADI
Turn off the lights
and change the bulbs,
recycling, rubbish,
I’m liking you divide them both,
you got compost
be competent,
light a candle, save power,
cause we all pay rent.
Know what goes
in the environment,
every dollar spent
takes a toll on this planet.

LAUNDRY CONT.

Zadi removes an armful of generic brand DETERGENTS from the cupboard and carries them through the house.

ZADI (CONT’D)
Throw out
those suds and soaps,
that float down the drain
putting fish into a comatose.
It's just habits,
houseys act like rabbits
say they've had it
with all these practices.
Always complaining
their words are irritating
and grating,
am I the only one saving
this earth we're inhabit-ting?

KITCHEN CONT.

Zadi splits the detergents and bottles between the ‘RUBBISH’ and ‘RECYCLING’ bins.
ZADI (CONT’D)
So zip your lip
and do your bit
I’m the earth mother, nature lover,
runnin’ a tight ship.
I'm like a pastor on a pulpit
preparing to preach,
if you follow my instructions
you’ll be earning your peace.

She SHRIEKS as she discovers a BANANA PEEL in the Recycling.

EXT. SHAREHOUSE CONT.
The back door bursts open.

Zadi bolts outside holding the offensive item at arm's length.

GRACE, your typical girl next door who oozes respectable even in a TRACKSUIT, breezes along on a TREADMILL.

Zadi grinds to a halt in front of her with the peel held at attention.

Grace sees Zadi’s lips move but her voice is drowned by HIP HOP beats in her HEADPHONES.

Zadi dumps the banana peel on the treadmill.

Grace hits the STOP button, retrieves the banana peel, and heads toward the house.

GRACE
I want to be a mother,
I want to be a wife,
I'm dreaming of a baby
and a family life.
My clock inside is ticking.
I want to feel it kicking.

KITCHEN CONT.

Zadi watches with approval as Grace places the peel in the rubbish.

GRACE (CONT’D)
He’s the one I want
to be the father of my child,
we’ll raise our kids together
he’s the one I’ll kiss goodnight.
We’ll grow old together.
Have bond no one could sever.

GRACE AND BYRON’S ROOM CONT.

An immaculately kept bedroom.

Grace slides a CUSHION underneath her top and examines her side profile in the MIRROR. She strokes her pseudo-pregnant belly with an expression of longing.

GRACE (CONT’D)
Everyone will know us as that perfect couple, the one they all admire and aspire to live up to. Our children will be doctors and lawyers, we’ll have grandkids in our 40s.

A lifeless ANTIQUE CLOCK catches her attention.

Grace climbs onto the bed and induces a regular tick to the pendulum with the prod of her finger.

GRACE (CONT’D)
I know, we’re made for each other, he’s my life, there’ll never be another. I know he feels the same way too, can’t be separated cause we’ll always be two

Grace removes the belly bump, places it on the bed, and smooths the wrinkled quilt with the precision of a cake decorator.

SHARE HOUSE STUDY CONT.

A sterile, super tidy study.

A manual entitled ‘SUCCESSFUL BLOGGING’ sits beside a LAPTOP.

Grace dives forward and kisses the neck of BYRON, a caffeine addicted hipster writer who bounces on a SWISS BALL at his desk. He squirms away from her affection.

Disappointed, Grace turns to leave but trips on a lead. A CLOCK crashes to the floor.

Annoyed, Byron scoops it up and places it back on the desk.

Grace exits, embarrassed.
Byron removes his EAR PLUGS and turns around. He's wired.

    BYRON
    Blogging erotica
    it's so exotica,
    inside world of fantasy
    it’s more fun than romance to me
    This is my reality,
    my speciality,
    fulfils me intellectually,
    without dramas of infidelity.

KITCHEN CONT.

Byron makes himself a coffee from the COFFEE MACHINE.

    BYRON
    I’m freed by technicality,
    immersed in sensuality
    it sure beats hospitality
    better suits my personality
    The trick’s originality,
    I might have loosened my morality,
    but I’m strict about tonality,
    nothing too weird in my depravity.

He empties three SUGAR SACHETS into his GLASS with trembling hands.

    BYRON
    I’ll make a name and gain recognition,
    homegrown genius an envious position,
    a million followers as I blog myself to fame
    twice the kudos of 50 Shades of Gray.
    But there’s the problem of productivity
    when disturbed in my locality,
    I’m still bound to work consistently
    to post work in its finality
    I need to be solitary,
    disturbance causes irritability,
    and I need some peace and quiet
    to work to the best of my ability

He cleans the bench.

LOUNGE CONT.

Byron takes a seat in the lounge and sips from his coffee.

JEAN, a lazy, smooth talking tourist dressed in saggy jeans, runners and back the front cap, lays sprawled out on the couch amid a sea of CRUMBS. He taps a rhythm on his chest.
JEAN
I've been around the world seen all kinds of girls keen to make me their boyfriend their men treat me like poison.

BYRON
Yeah.

JEAN
Then I met this one girl and she was a keeper took me home for the weekend, even kissed her best friend.

BYRON
Nah!

JEAN (CONT’D)
Cause she's a free spirit and I'm on a good wicket, I like to get wicked, and now that I live here.

Jean scrolls through Pay videos on the TV.

JEAN
I'm a free loading lover paying love for my rent, I don't pay a cent,

BRYON
Uh uh.

JEAN
my housemates resent me cause I want residency She's polyamorous, her folks aren't impressed but I don't protest, Just couldn't care less. I want PR status, we'll have a fake marriage, I'll pose as partner, cause her family control her Got honey for my honey swapping honey like money, she's my sweet honey bunny, honey sweet sugar mommy.

Jean selects a video.

Byron jumps to his feet and wrestles Jean for the REMOTE.
JEAN (CONT’D)

But if the good times stop coming
I'm out the door and running,
breaking hearts and leaving tarts
with buns in the oven.

Channels change in the scuffle and the TV blares WHITE NOISE.

Jean cranks up the volume.

The front door flings open.

RORI, tattooed, pierced, and highly stylised, charges through the lounge with the intensity of a whirlwind.

She sweeps Byron out of the way and dumps her SHOPPING BAGS on top of Jean.

Rori pries the remote from Jean’s hand and switches the TV off.

Jean grabs her. She SLAPS him.

RORI
Don't touch what you can't afford
I'm gonna be rich,
And never be ignored

Jean rummages through her purchases.

RORI (CONT’D)

I want another one of those
and another one of those,
and another one of those,
And another one of those.

JEAN

Hey!

Jean finds some LINGERIE, Rori grabs the bags back.

RORI
Lotto tickets, credit cards,
sugar daddies, lucky charms.
Big musicians, top actors
cause I'm looking for status,
wanna better myself,
I'm all 'bout the wealth. Well,

RORI AND TOM’S ROOM CONT.

A hoarder's room.
BOXES, CLUTTER, and PHOTOS cram the space.

Rori dumps her HANDBAG on the bed and tries to store her shopping in the cramped wardrobe.

RORI

Wanna get myself out of this hell hole,
I'm too good for this place,
I'm just saving face.
I'm raising my standards,
so I'm changing my fate,
my itchy palm says I'm lucky
But I'll just have to wait.

Rori scratches her palm.

TOM, a jock with a gentle demeanour in a CRISP SHIRT and SLACKS, sits against the bed listening to music on his HEADPHONES.

The SLAM of the door breaks his concentration. He removes the headphones.

TOM

The girl I met when I was at the mall,
she gave me her number,
I gave her a call.
We did take away for dinner,
sat by the river one night,
I walked her home,
than gave her a kiss goodnight.
We moved in three months later
now all we do is fight,
It's over money mainly,
I'm saving, but it's getting tight
Cause she likes to spend
but doesn't know where to end.
New clothes, new gadgets,
to impress pretentious friends.
But she's a beautiful girl
with gorgeous eyes
and I'd be lying if I said I don't get jealous
cause I'm afraid to lose her to another guy.

He opens a BOX that contains an ENGAGEMENT RING.

TOM (CONT'D)

But now I've saved enough
To afford the ring,
I want to propose,
This is not a fling.
But I'm afraid she'll say no,
cause she wants finer things,
I'm just a simple man
Who's scared she's out of my league.
I'll give it a go
because she's all I need
Now I need the right moment
To get down on one knee.

Tom hides the ring inside a PLUSH TOY on the shelf.

A phone rings.

Tom digs inside Rori's bag and answers it. It's from a PRIVATE NUMBER.

MALE VOICE
(Spoken)
Hello?...hello?

Tom hangs up. Shaken. He makes a few unsuccessful attempts to unlock the phone.

KITCHEN CONT.

Rori checks the lotto numbers in the NEWSPAPER against her LOTTO TICKET. She looks up to see Tom standing over her. He hands her the phone.

TOM
It was ringing,
I answered but they wouldn't speak

RORI
Huh?

TOM
It said private number,
I find that creepy,
who would it be?

Rori looks at her phone and shrugs. She throws the lotto ticket in the bin. Tom picks it up and puts it in his wallet.

INT. BATHROOM - EVENING

Grace BLOW DRIES her hair in the mirror. Panic sets in as she discovers a Pimple.

MAKE UP and BEAUTY PRODUCTS fly everywhere as she digs through drawers. She applies a liberal amount of CONCEALER to hide the blemish.
INT. STUDY - EVENING

Grace sneaks up on Byron and massages his shoulders.

GRACE
Let me rub your back,
I’ll massage you while you write,

BYRON
Alright.

GRACE
Combine your work with pleasure,
these shoulders feel too tight.

Byron leans back and starts to relax.
Grace makes an awkward attempt to remove his shirt.
He squirms away and resumes typing.

BYRON
I’m in the zone don’t disrupt my
flow, please go.
Come see me after hours
if you want to say hello.

Grace leaves, rejected.

HALLWAY CONT.

Rori is on the phone. She collides head on into Grace. She hangs ups and drags Grace into her room.

RORI AND TOM’S ROOM CONT.

Tom is in the corner boxing and labelling sentimental items.

GRACE
Ever since he started writing porn,
he’s become a different person,
any desire for me has gone

RORI
Tell him what you want,
make him jumps some hoops,
put him on the spot,
initiate the moves,

GRACE (CONT’D)
I did.
RORI
If he backs down,

it’s time that you expand,

find some new romance,

And be the one that’s in demand.

RORI
This room needs an enema,
The hoarding’s getting way bizarre,
throw out some stuff,
you’ve made your mark,
Just choose, choose, choose,
and then discard.

TOM
Or maybe
we just need a bigger place.
I prefer to preserve memories,
you're too keen to erase.

RORI
I live in the now.
Cause it's now I have
It's now I control
I can't buy yesterday
with the today I've sold.

Grace sneaks out of the room.

TOM
Then why'd they keep the Mona Lisa
If history is so trivial?

Rori grabs a school photo of Tom from the box of hoarded goods.

RORI
Mona Lisa? Mona Lisa?
The likeness is unequivocal.

A smoke alarm SCREECHES.

INT. KITCHEN - EVENING

A plume of SMOKE rises from the TOASTER.

Rori and Grace watch in horror as Zadi stifles the flames with a tea towel.

Jean’s head pops around the corner to watch the drama unfold.

All eyes on Tom who appears just as two charcoal pieces of TOAST pop up.
He gulps. Guilty. Zadi’s eyes could burn a hole in his head.

INT. GRACE AND BYRON’S ROOM - EVENING

Grace and Byron lay at opposite sides of the bed. Grace is sound asleep. Byron stares at the ceiling.

INT. BATHROOM - EVENING

Byron looks in the mirror. He’s pale, wired, and wide awake.

He opens the bathroom cabinet filled with medication and takes out some SLEEPING PILLS. He washes them back with a handful of water from the tap.

INT. GRACE AND BYRON’S ROOM - MORNING

A piercing ALARM.

Byron hits SNOOZE and buries himself under the covers.

The ALARM sounds again. He barely has the energy to switch it off.

Byron rolls out of bed in the DUVET and hits the floor with a THUD.

INT. BATHROOM - MORNING

Byron turns on the faucets and presses the start button on the SHOWER TIMER. It plummets from cubicle wall and SMASHES on the shower floor.

He pieces it back together and sticks it to the screen.

He presses START. Nothing.

Byron soaps up and takes a long, relaxing shower.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Byron looks like death warmed up. He fumbles around for a MUG and makes himself a coffee.

He takes a sip and pauses in ecstasy like a junkie who's just taken a hit.

Suddenly everything is clearer. The kitchen sink is ugly. DIRTY DISHES and LEFT OVER FOOD make him physically recoil. The offensive image propels him out of the room.
OUTSIDE SHAREHOUSE - MORNING

Grace finishes her run on the treadmill. HIP HOP BEATS blare from her headphones.

She lifts her T-shirt and pinches the fat on her stomach.

Jean munches on a SNACK BAR. He watches her, intrigued.

Grace realises she's being observed. She hurries inside, embarrassed.

Jean hides his snack bar.

KITCHEN CONT.

Grace refills her WATER BOTTLE and grabs a RICE CAKE from the cupboard.

Rori spoons double cream onto a WAFFLE STACK.

   RORI
   I made waffles
   I’ll scoff em,
   poached pears and cream,
   yummy, yummy, yummy,
   calories extreme

Rori rubs her tummy and MOANS, exaggerating the deliciousness of her dish. She devours a mouth watering waffle and holds out the PLATE to Grace.

The sight and smell is the ultimate torture to Grace. She composes herself and declines.

   GRACE
   Ha, Ha, Ha,
   that’s not even funny
   if I’m gonna have a bulge it won’t
   be that in my tummy

She gives Rori a playful but hard slap with her TOWEL.

INT. LOUNGEROOM - DAY

Jean is relaxed on the couch among a sea of DIRTY DISHES.

He surfs the net using the TV.

Zadi walks through the lounge with another man. She kisses him goodbye on the mouth as he leaves.
Zadi grabs the remote and turns the TV off.

ZADI
Go get changed
something clean and neat,
lunch with your fake future in laws,
Remember, think before you speak.

JEAN
You told them about the wedding?

ZADI
Not yet.

JEAN
Not yet?
I'll get kicked out of the country
I've only got one month left.

ZADI
Then go take a holiday,
You don't pay here anyway,
It'll buy you an extension
not to mention we need some space.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Wired out of his brain, Byron makes a coffee and empties four sugar sachets with his shaky hands.

He takes a sip and sighs in relief.

Tom enters, flustered. He places his CAR KEYS on the window sill and skols a glass of water.

ZADI
(o/s)
Who broke the shower timer?
If it’s you don’t be a liar.
Own up and face the music
and I won’t make you a eunuch!

Byron’s face illuminates with guilt and fear.

Jean sprints through the kitchen in search of refuge with Zadi hot on his heels.

JEAN
It wasn’t me babe,
I’m for real this time,
(MORE)
JEAN (CONT’D)

I never touched the timer,
Didn’t cause the crime

Zadi’s lunges at him as he cowers behind Byron.

BYRON

I smashed it to smithereens
when I started it in the shower,
and stuck it back to the surface,
So you couldn’t tell it had been shattered.

Zadi is taken aback by Byron’s fearlessness. She comes to her senses and slams the shower timer down on the bench.

ZADI

You’ve deceived the house
and shunned responsibility,
replace this
And make this up to us
to the best of your ability.

Byron stares Zadi down as Jean watches in awe.

Tom darts around the kitchen, looking for his keys. Byron hands him his keys.

INT. LOUNGE - EVENING

Byron and Grace sit at opposite ends of the couch. Grace slides in closer.

Tom and Rori sit on a BEAN BAG. Tom’s arms firmly fixed around Rori’s waist as if she will escape any minute. She tries to edge away but he pulls her closer.

Jean slouches in a chair. He TAPS out a rhythm on his chest. The sound annoys Zadi. She leans over and slaps him.

ZADI

(Spoken)
SHHHHH!

TELEVISION

A celebrity and interviewer sit opposite each other.

CELEBRITY

(Spoken)
My defining moment was being given an ultimatum. I chose to break up.
INTERVIEWER
(Spoken)
Was it a long time coming?

CELEBRITY
(Spoken)
Yeah. Sometimes it’s easier to keep a relationship going than to end it. That’s why I named the album ‘The End of Convenience.’

INTERVIEWER
(Spoken)
Was it a relationship of convenience?

CELEBRITY
(Spoken)
Yeah, yeah, it was.

INTERVIEWER
(Spoken)
Wow. I mean, someone like you with all that money...no kids

CELEBRITY
(Spoken)
It was a habit, a routine, something that felt comfortable for both of us. I mean everyone expected us to stay together. So we did what was expected.

The housemates are visibly uncomfortable with what they hear.

ZADI
Jean, switch to ABC.
I wanna see the docco on anarchy.
Quality TV, expand your mind exponentially.

Zadi takes the remote and sifts through the channels. One by one, the housemates depart the lounge. Zadi’s lonely figure is illuminated by the TV FLICKER.

INT. BYRON AND GRACE’S ROOM – NIGHT

Byron is wired. He tidies, cleans and rearranges everything in sight. He stops and studies his shaky hands.

BYRON
No more caffeine
I need sleep
one more cup
and I’ll be up all week.

Grace climbs into bed and beckons him over. He joins her and turns out the light.

Grace cuddles up to Byron and slides her hand down his pyjamas. He freezes.

The awkward moment is saved by loud BANGING on the wall and a protest-like chant.

ZADI
(o/s through megaphone)
Emergency! Emergency!
Make your way to the lounge
with urgency!
Emergency! Emergency!
Make your way to the lounge
with urgency!

INT. LOUNGEROOM - NIGHT

Zadi reads from a letter. Tired and confused, the housemates gather around.

ZADI
We’re being evicted,
who’s in on the secret?
30 days to move,
but I’ve had no prior news!
Where’s the previous notices
should I’ve learned this via osmosis?

Everyone looks at each other. Tom acts sheepish and avoids eye contact.

ZADI (CONT’D)
Tom, Tom tell me..
is there something you’ve
forgotten?
Collected mail
and then misplaced it?
Forget to pass the letter on?

He stares at the floor.

TOM
Ummm...possibly, maybe,
I’ve had a lot on my mind lately
RORI
Sentimental with goldfish memory

BYRON
And now we’re homeless potentially?

Jean shrugs his shoulders

JEAN
(to Zadi)
Hey, I’ll just follow you baby.

ZADI
(to Tom)
If I’m left out in the cold
I swear that you’ll be sued

Zadi reaches out in an attempt to grab Tom but she restrains herself and pulls back.

ZADI (CONT’D)
I could ring your neck right now
You’re lucky I’m in a good mood.

BYRON
Wait. What's the reason?
It had better be good.

ZADI
The lease is expiring,
it's not getting renewed,
I could have given you more time,
but I never got the news.

Byron tries to read the letter over Zadi's shoulder. She pulls away.

INT. GRACE AND BYRON’S ROOM – EVENING

Byron paces around the room.

Grace seems unusually calm, even happy.

GRACE
What’s the big deal?
It’s time we moved out on our own,
living with two other couples
is too much inside one home.

BYRON
This place is my home
and I have an office,
so it’s dishonest

(MORE)
BYRON (CONT’D)
if they take that away,
I’m a pro not a novice.

GRACE
But you can work anywhere
anytime you want.
Wasn’t that the whole idea
of starting a blog?

Byron sulks in the corner. Grace moves in and hugs him
despite his initial rejection of affection.

BYRON
Something doesn't feel right.

GRACE
We all know Tom's absent mind.
Zadi never does email,
barely does phone.

BYRON
She keeps us off the lease,
so she can control the home.
The long arm of the matriarch
wouldn't make that mistake.

GRACE
Well, anyway,
we'll finally have our own place.

RORI AND TOM’S ROOM - EVENING

Rori prepares for a night out.

Tom acts clingy.

TOM
Babe, I can assure you
there’s no reason to be stressed,
something good will happen soon
and I swear you’ll be impressed...

Rori turns and faces Tom with an ‘OK let’s hear it’ look.

A frantic KNOCK at the door.

She holds her stance. There is a standoff between Rori and Tom.

The BANGING continues. Faster. Louder.

Tom breaks away and answers the door.
Grace stands trembling in the doorway.

GRACE
Byron can’t breathe
I think he’s had a heart attack,
Won’t let me call triple O,
I don’t know how to react.

INT. LOUNGEROOM – NIGHT

The mood is solemn.

Rori is on the PHONE. Jean, Tom, and Zadi watch her intently.

RORI
So it’s nothing serious
just a caffeine overdose
That triggered anxiety?
He’ll be there
in care
an hour at the most?

Rori hangs up. Zadi erupts into peels of LAUGHTER. No one else gets it.

ZADI
What?
You don’t think that’s karma?
That guy’s obnoxious and toxic,
he’s always causing a drama.

Silence.

INT. ZADI AND JEAN’S ROOM – NIGHT

A dingy, grotty, hippy hideout.

Zadi and Jean prepare for bed. Something bugs her.

ZADI
You agree with me
I mean seriously,
that guy’s a total Nazi,
a hygiene control freak
with a weakness
for porn and coffee.

A half hearted nod from Jean.

Zadi grabs Jean’s passport from the drawer and studies it. She tests the strength of one of the pages.
JEAN

Byron is a bully,
I can see it fully,
he needs to pull in his neck
Cause you deserve respect.
They don’t appreciate
how much you’ve done
for this place,
you changed their fate,
they’ll learn too late,
when it comes time to part ways

Satisfied with Jean’s response, Zadi puts the passport back on the table, and switches off the light.

INT. BYRON AND GRACE’S ROOM – DAY

A PRINTER spits out pages of rental properties. The sound almost brings Byron to tears. He grabs a pillow and covers his head.

Grace sits the bed. She removes the pillow and strokes his forehead. His eyes are shut tight.

GRACE

Hey mister,
there’s no reason to worry,
I’ve been looking up houses
Dad will lend us some money.

Byron grabs the pillow back and hides under it. Grace gives up.

EXT. SHAREHOUSE – DAY

Grace completes her treadmill run drenched in perspiration.

She empties a BOTTLE OF WATER over her head and leans forward to catch her breath.

RORI

All that work
to get the perfect body,
oddly you want to ruin it
by having a baby,
Why not get a moggy?

Rori lifts up Grace’s t-shirt.

RORI (CONT’D)

See! Skin and bones,
like I expected.

(MORE)
**RORI (CONT’D)**
Are you doing this for you?
or cause you don’t want to be rejected?

Grace pulls away.

**GRACE**
Leave me to my devices,
I’m having a crisis,
I want at least one baby by the time I turn 25.

**RORI**
Oh you poor old thing,
Come sit under my wing,
I’ll wingman ya if your man don’t understand ya

Grace walks away.

**RORI (CONT’D)**
Hey, hey, lady
I’m kiddin, don’t get sooky,
You’re a rookie with this stuff
But I’ll educate you well enough.

Rori lights up a cigarette.

**INT. KITCHEN - DAY.**
Grace makes herself a PROTEIN SHAKE and sits down at the table.
Rori joins her with a decadent breakfast and a newspaper. She wolfs down her food as she reads the lotto results.

Tom kisses Rori on the cheek as he leaves.

**RORI**
Oh wait!
Did you grab me a ticket for the 5 mil draw?
I've got the paper in front of me, wanna check the results.

Tom is vague.

**TOM**
I did, I did. Hang on.

He fumbles through his wallet and takes out the old ticket.
TOM (CONT’D)
Promise me if you're lucky
you'll share the gold bullion.

RORI
Mmmm hmmm.
Tom leaves them to breakfast.

GRACE
What’s the plan with you and Tom?
You guys found somewhere to rent?
There’s some places vacant
Around where I’m looking,
How much you want to spend?

RORI (CONT’D)
We’re cool. Haven’t thought
but the ball is in my court.

GRACE
How’s things between you two?
You seem a bit bored
but I can tell
he’s into you.

HISSING and GURGLING.
Byron lingers at the coffee machine. He makes himself a coffee.
Grace rises to confront him. He’s lethargic and sleepy.

GRACE (CONT’D)
The doctor said
to cut the caffeine...

BYRON
Relax.
I’m a grown man
who appreciates his coffee.

Byron throws back a couple of PANADOL with his Coffee.

BYRON (CONT’D)
I don’t drink, smoke, gamble,
this is my only vice,
When I need a kick in the pants,
a good expresso will suffice.
INT. RORI AND TOM’S ROOM - DAY

Rori slumps down on the bed and opens a LETTER addressed her. It’s a FINAL REMINDER for an outstanding credit card debt.

She screws up the letter and bins it.

SHAREHOUSE STUDY - LATE AFTERNOON

Byron drifts off to sleep while sitting at his desk and almost tumbles off the swiss ball.

The SQUEAK of the door jolts him awake. He straightens his posture and returns to typing.

GRACE

Babe, I was wondering
did you look at those places?
When you’re ready we can sit down
and begin applications

Grace places some RENTAL APPLICATIONS in front of Byron. He ignores her and continues working.

Grace attempts to close the laptop with one finger. It slides along the desk toward Byron.

Byron removes his earplugs.

BYRON

Today I’m struggling,
but you’re bugging,
and I’m suffering
withdrawal.
Can’t do discussion
where there’s disruption
So let’s postpone plans
and see what unfolds.

He stares her down until she leaves.

INT. KITCHEN - EVENING

Rori, Grace, Jean, and Byron dine in silence at the table.

Tom cooks on the stove.

Zadi walks in, sniffs the air.

ZADI

Who’s cooking meat?
I could tell from the street,

(MORE)
ZADI (CONT’D)
eating animals
but they’re not for feeding

She opens all the doors and windows.

ZADI (CONT’D)
Just because we’re all leaving
doesn’t mean we’re not Vegan!

Tom serves up his steak and sneaks to the table like a guilty schoolboy.

ZADI (CONT’D)
You, critter killer,
I didn’t give you permission!

BYRON
What are you gonna do?
Incense him into submission?

Everyone laughs, except Zadi.

INT. BYRON AND GRACE’S ROOM - NIGHT
Byron is passed out in bed.
Grace climbs in beside him. She looks through house listings.

BYRON
Hit the light,
it’s too bright,
night is made for darkness,
The rest of his words are a jumble.
He covers his head with the pillow.
Grace puts her papers aside and switches off the light.

INT. RORI AND TOM’S ROOM - NIGHT
Rori prepares to go out.
Tom sits on the bed, watching her.

TOM
Tell about this friend
You’re going out to see,
who is she?
I’m your man,
I don’t understand
why you don’t take me.
She picks up her bag and heads for the door.

TOM (CONT’D)
You don’t include me in your life,
is there something to hide?
Is being seen with me some kind of
blow to your pride?

Tom falls back on the bed and sulks.

He catches sight of Rori's credit card statement in the bin. He takes it out and reads it.

INT. BYRON AND GRACE’S ROOM - NIGHT

Grace sits up in bed filling out details on a rental application form.

Byron stirs.

GRACE
Can’t sleep, I’m worried,
Want to get this sorted,
we need to work on this together
I think that’s really important

Byron rubs his eyes. He gets out of bed and puts on his slippers and gown.

BYRON
I need space Grace,
I’ll find a place at my own pace,
I’m stressed enough
then I’m hassled and hurried,
I can’t deal with your panic
It’s just makes me more worried.

He grabs a pillow and a spare blanket from the drawer.

GRACE
Where are you going now?

BYRON
Fold out bed, lounge.

Grace is defeated. She cries.

INT. LOUNGEROOM - NIGHT

Byron lays on the fold out couch.

SLOW FOOTSTEPS in the room startle him.
A SILHOUETTE moves closer.
Byron sits up. Frozen.
The figure moves closer and leans over him.
Byron takes a swing and hits the shadow.
A YELP of pain.
Byron scrambles out of bed.

TOM
(half whispered)
It’s me! It’s me!
I wanted to see if you were awake,
I’ve got the feeling
Rori’s cheating,
I need to know,
I’m going insane.

BYRON
Settle down,
go back to bed,
there’s no affair,
it’s in your head.

LIGHTS flicker through the loungeroom window.
A CAR pulls into the driveway.
Tom creeps over to the window and peers through the blinds.
A car idles in the driveway.
The car door SLAMS.
Tom trips as he backs away from the window and meets the ground with a THUD.
The sound of HIGH HEELS lead to the front door, followed by a JANGLE of keys and the CRUNCH of a key entering the lock.
Tom scurries off down the hallway.
Rori hits the LIGHT SWITCH. She’s sees Byron asleep on the fold out bed.

EXT. SHAREHOUSE - MORNING
Grace runs a furious pace on the treadmill. Beads of sweat pour down her face. Her MAKE UP has melted, her MASCARA smudged.
Her elegant demeanour has evaporated. She's an angry, slighted woman. Her rage propels her to increase the speed. She struggles to maintain pace.

A few GRUNTS followed by a loud EXCLAMATION as she pulls a muscle. She scrambles for the STOP BUTTON and collapses on the machine.

Grace drags her wounded body across the ground before coming to a stop.

She WHIMPERS.

OUTSIDE LATER:

Rori lights up a CIGARETTE and takes a few deep inhales. She sees Grace on the ground and rushes to her aid.

Grace is semi conscious. She writhes in pain, pushing Rori away as she attempts to lift her.

GRACE
You set me up
to make a fool of myself,
if he doesn’t want me
so will no one else.
You’re a player and you knew
I couldn’t take that shot,
and then I got shot down,
that’s why I’m here — on the ground.

Rori steps back.

RORI
What?!! Let’s have a pity party
play me hearts and flowers
(imitates the sound and actions of a violin)
rrr rr rrr
I could listen for hours.
I’ll come back in an hour
when you’ve entered your coma,
When it comes to blame babe,
you just won a diploma.

Rori grabs Grace under the arms and hoists her to her feet. They wobble.

Grace falls backward but Rori intercepts the fall. She holds her steady until she regains composure.

They struggle towards the house.
INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Jean leans against the refrigerator door and stares into a sparse fridge. He opens a full carton of MILK, takes a few large gulps, and puts it back.

Jean raids cupboards and devours a half empty CHIP PACKET with Byron’s name on it.

He discards the chip packet in the rubbish and places a BOX on top to hide the evidence. He compresses the rubbish with his foot.

INT. STUDY - MORNING

Byron stirs his coffee as he waits for the laptop to fire up.

He clicks on the internet. It's really slow.

He restarts the computer and tries again. Same problem.

The phone rings. It's Grace.

BYRON
What's up? Whatdaya need?
I'm flat strap sortin' something
so speak your say quickly.

GRACE
(spoken)
Babe, can you come pick me up from the hospital?

EXT. SHAREHOUSE - DAY

A car pulls into the driveway.

Byron gets out and opens the door for Grace.

He supports her as she limps toward the front door. It's a small display of chivalry that perks up her spirits.

GRACE
I bet it was Jean.

BYRON
Who else would it be?

GRACE
He's always surfing...
BYRON
The net on my TV.

GRACE
What a sponge.

BYRON
He’s used up all the bandwidth.

GRACE
Glad we’re moving out.

BYRON
Dunno how much longer I could stand it.

INT. GRACE AND BYRON’S ROOM - LATER

Byron paces around the room. Grace relaxes on the bed with her bandaged leg.

BYRON
I need fast internet.

GRACE
Babe, we’re moving out.

BYRON
Until then we should sublet.

GRACE
Babe, we’re moving out.

BYRON
How much worse will it get!

GRACE
We’re moving out!

BYRON
Living here was my biggest regret.

GRACE
We’re moving out.
Let’s move out together.

BRYON
Ok.

GRACE
We’ll move out together into something better.
Grace pulls Byron close and kisses him.

INT. RORI AND TOM’S ROOM - DAY

A hung over Rori with raccoon eyes fumbles for a glass of water on the side table.

Tom files a box with old lottery tickets.

RORI
Oh my god, oh my god,
Are they old lotto tickets?
So convinced your collecting
is borderline sickness,
soon you’ll be twitching,
I’m pitching
personal possessions in the
incinerator,
before you start a museum
with all my stuff on display.

Tom grabs the plush toy from the shelf.

TOM
When’d you get this?

RORI
Valentines Day.

TOM
When?

RORI
When? Dunno. 09?

TOM
No, 10!

RORI
9, 10.
What’s the difference?
This is intense.

TOM
It's important

Rori
Why?

TOM (CONT’D)
Why?
Because it shows your interest.
RORI
Interest or memory?
Cause your memory’s your enemy.
You can’t even remember
to switch off the toaster
so let’s not compete about who
remembers the most.

INT. STUDY - DAY
Byron activates wifi on his mobile phone and connects to the internet using his laptop.

He stops to listen.

TOM
(o/s)
What if I was wealthy?
Would that make me good enough to marry?

RORI AND TOM’S ROOM

Rori laughs.

RORI
Tom, you don’t have two pennies to rub together

TOM
I found your letter!
Never mentioned you were in debt.
Did it slip your mind? Forget?

RORI
You went through the waste
to read my bank statement?
That’s...

TOM
We’re meant to be a team.
We can’t keep keeping secrets.

RORI
You dug my records out of the bin?
You’re crazy.
I don’t believe this.

Tom takes Rori’s credit card out of her purse and cuts it into pieces.
TOM
No man wants a women that’s too independent,
I’m doing you a favour,

RORI
What????

TOM
Surely this will help you save instead of spend,
Savour the fruits of your labor.

EXT. SHAREHOUSE - DAY
Rori storms out of the house with Tom right behind her.
She runs down the driveway and up the road.

INT. LOUNGE - DAY
Jean looks through movies for hire on the TV.
Zadi dumps a stack of protest rally posters in front of him.

ZADI
Got a job for you,
go paste some posters,
make use of the multiple minutes
wasted at your disposal.

JEAN
What about the weather?
It might rain.

ZADI
Then take an umbrella.

JEAN
But I don't know how to do it.

ZADI
Quit making excuses!

INT. KITCHEN - AFTERNOON
Byron makes himself a coffee.
Grace throws her arms around him.
GRACE
You’ll never believe this,
I emailed the real estate agent
our application,
For a three bedroom home
that just became vacant,
They're eager to lease,
I said 'yes' on the spot,
We just need
to pick up the keys!!!!

All Byron can manage is a fake embrace.

Grace limps out of the room.

Byron strikes the kitchen bench in frustration. He rummages through the cupboards in search of food.

A CRUNCH.

He looks down to find CHIP CRUMBS on the floor. Thus begins a frantic search through the cupboards.

Byron leans back against the bench defeated. He eyes off the RUBBISH BIN.

He rummages through the rubbish and discovers several PACKETS with his name on them.

JEAN
(O/S)
Hey brother Byron
need your help here buddy,
I’m like a man at wits end
when the net's not running.
So come and give me a hand,
I’m a, I’m a, big fan
of all kinds of movies,
The funny and the freaky.

LOUNGE CONT.

Jean plays with the modem.

BYRON
Someone’s eaten my chips.
You seen my chips Jean?
I’ll be up in their face
like a fist to a jaw.
It’s a chore to keep checking
if I’ve been cheated of my chow.
What’s a man gotta do
if someone’s eating their food?
Byron holds up the chip packet to Jean.

JEAN
Hey come and help me
get this box back in action.
I hit the switch, hit the stick,
but nothin' is happenin.....

BYRON
I'm a professional,
I deserve respect,

JEAN
Yeah?

BYRON
when I go to my cupboards,
there's nothing left,
I'm broke like you
but I don't stoop to theft.
I'm stressed,
Now you've used up all our net
heart beating out of my chest,
I'm gonna cause a scene
bigger than burlesque,
Listen up, I'm pumped,
I'm the Michelin man,
I'm tired of all this tiring talk
You toss in my trash like spam....

Byron scrunches up the box and aims it at Jean's feet.

INT. BYRON AND GRACE’S ROOM - EVENING

Byron drifts off to sleep.

Grace, restless and still on a high, snuggles up to Byron.

GRACE
How awesome, aren't we lucky?
So thrilled our luck has changed,
I'm glad you came around,
You won't regret
what I've arranged.

She places kisses all over Byron's face.

He lays there motionless.

She stops.
GRACE (CONT’D)
Are you happy?
Do you regret your decision?
If you do you need to tell me
I won’t go through
without permission.

BYRON
Of course.
I’m just tired.
Weening off the caffeine.
Not feeling inspired

Grace holds a finger up to his lips. She plants a deep, sensual kiss and climbs on top of him.

INT. BYRON AND GRACE’S ROOM - LATER
Bryon lies at the edge of the bed facing away from Grace. He stares into darkness.

INT. RORI AND TOM’S ROOM - REALLY LATE
HOT SHOT, a slick, touchy feely lounge lizard, is seated on the bed next to Rori.

She’s tipsy.

HOT SHOT
Lucky boyfriend,
he’s a lucky man,
hope he got the ways and means
to treat you like I can.
Not offering a room or house
but a mansion on the hill,
high quality girl like you
deserves to be fulfilled.

He opens a few buttons on his shirt.

HOT SHOT (CONT’D)
Champagne breakfast,
private jet,
exclusive parties,
string quartet.
So give me a call
if you want to feel special,
lavished with gifts,
‘cause you’ve got potential.

He touches her hand. She leaves it a second too long.
The door springs open. It’s Tom. He’s tired and OUT OF BREATH. The look on his face says everything.

Rori springs to her feet, not sure what to do.

Hot Shot doesn’t move. Tom ignores him.

**TOM**

I’ve been calling your phone non stop for an hour.
You disappeared in thin air,
I was worried about ya.
I searched every sleazy bar along the main drag,
full of bikies and bogans,
thought I was gonna get stabbed.
Worried myself sick
thinking you’d met with foul play,
now here you are on my bed with a stranger and you’re Ok.

**RORI**

You knew I’d left home, home,
I turned off my phone, phone,
you know why, don’t play games,
cut my card, control my ways.

**TOM**

I can't reach you,
a man’s in my room holding your hand,
then you make out I’m unreasonable,
try doing that to another man.
Even screaming and ranting
and swearing would be fair,
you’re always pushing boundaries with me
and thinking I’m not aware.
When I walked in just then
I could see it in your face,
that look of shock, of guilt,
you didn’t try to embrace me.
Don’t treat me like I’m stupid
while you’re with ‘hot shot’ playing games,
you didn’t introduce him,
do you even know his name?

Hot Shot rises and extends his hand to Tom. Tom declines.

**RORI**

Nothing happened,
you’re just jealous,
I asked him in,
he didn’t trespass,
being rude makes you look bad,
mouthing off when you get mad.
Maybe you’re too, too scared
to have a girl, girl friend
so go hang out with the boys
and come back when you’re a man.

Hot Shot takes Rori by the arm and escorts her from the room.

TOM
If you walk away
from us with him,
it will be the final nail
in the coffin.
My love is real,
not like this fraud,
he’ll use you up
until he get’s bored
you’re my best friend
and my lover,
he’s taken advantage
of the fact you’re drunk!
I’m trying to protect you
that’s my duty,
please return to sender,
to be with yours truly.

INT. TOM AND RORI’S ROOM - LATER

Tom calls Rori’s phone several times but it rings out.

He empties shelves. Items spray everywhere. He collects all
Rori’s belongings and heaps them into garbage bags.

EXT. FRONT LAWN - REALLY LATE

Tom propels the last of the bags out onto the grass.

He wipes his hands together. Satisfied.

INT. TOM AND RORI’S ROOM - LATER

Tom grabs a chair and pushes it up under the door handle.

He throws himself onto the bed and punches the mattress until
exhaustion.

He spoons the pillow and drifts off to sleep.
INT. GRACE AND BYRON’S ROOM - MORNING

A phone RINGS.

Byron turns over and buries himself in the doona.

The phone RINGS again.

Byron yawns and stretches.

The phone RINGS a third time.

Byron crawls to the end of the bed and reaches for Grace’s HANDBAG. He opens it up and looks inside.

A BOOK of baby names stares back at him. The phone rings out.

Shocked, Byron shrinks back on the bed.

Grace hobbles through the room. She's glowing.

She grabs her bag from the floor and takes out her phone.

GRACE

Oh, thought I heard my phone,
same ringtone as Rori,
four missed calls?!
You could have answered it for me.

She kisses Byron on top of his head and limps away.

INT. LOUNGE - MORNING

Jean lays on the couch, restless and bored.

STUDY - MORNING

Jean stops at the study entrance.

The colourful laptop screensaver entices him. He looks to see if anyone is around.

Jean seats himself at the desk on the swiss ball. He clicks on the INTERNET.

A COUGH.

Jean cranes his neck around.

Byron stands in the doorway in a towel. He rushes over and snatches the laptop from Jean.
BYRON
Get your hands
off of my property,
get out my study,
how's about an apology?
sick and tired
of you, parasite,
sucking me dry,
slimy and sly,
head back to the backpackers,
no free lunch, goodbye.

Jean has a sticky beak through Byron’s drawers.

Byron leans over and slams the drawer shut. It only just misses Jean’s fingers.

BYRON (CONT’D)
How’s about greasing my palm,
for six months accommodation?
We’ve all been patient
but our patience has been wasted,
it’s run out,
so now you’d better pay me

Jean pretends it’s no big deal. He bounces on the swiss ball.

JEAN
Hey man
you got relationship issues,
take a deep breath,
I’ll fetch you a tissue,
you can cry on my shoulder,
I’ll give you a cuddle,
tell me your troubles,
don’t go hitting the coffees.
You’re like my big brother,
at each other’s throats,
it means we’re close,
but I won't disclose.
I got your back man
you're killing it like pacman,
Or transformers,
get on this thing and cut sick,
Jean is in your corner

Jean attempts to stand but Byron forces him down.

The conflict is thwarted by Grace’s positive presence. She staggers into the room and kisses Byron goodbye.

GRACE
Bye sweetie,
I’ll call you in the arvo,
(MORE)
Jean notices Byron’s reaction.

INT. TOM AND RORI’S ROOM - MORNING

Tom wakes inside a sea of twisted bedding.

The doona and pillows are stripped bare. They are stained. Uninviting. Empty shelves radiate an off-white glow.

Reality sinks in. He jolts awake and checks his phone.

EXT. FRONT YARD - MORNING

The garbage bags are right where Tom left them. He picks them up and carts them back inside.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Byron makes a coffee.

TOM
Rori’s gone,
my brain’s in a vice,
we had a massive blow up
now I need advice.
There was a fight,
and a third party involved,
so it’s unlikely
it’s something I can solve.
She chose him over me,
she chose to walk away,
now all I have to hold on to
is the future for which I saved.

He hands it to Tom who takes a sip and puts it down.

TOM (CONT’D)
I locked her out,
threw her stuff on the lawn.
When I walked out this morning
it still wasn’t gone.
I’m overwhelmed
by all these mixed emotions
I can’t be her everything
there’s nothing left to withdraw from.

BYRON
I heard it go down,
you did the right thing
when you threw out her stuff,
now give her the flick.
You’re not her pimp,
this is not a bordello,
she brings back other fellows
damn straight ya shouldn’t be mellow.

He pats Tom on the back.

Tom’s self pity and desperation converts into an air of pride.

BYRON (CONT’D)
Lend me some cashiola,
you’ve got my word, I owe ya,
there’s a very slight chance
I might need to do a dash
promise mum’s the word
this can’t get back to her...
Grace.
She’s organised a place
but I dunno it feels too rushed...

TOM
Maybe you’re falling out of love.

BYRON
Maybe. Exactly.

TOM
Can’t you tell her.
Like, matter of factly?

BYRON
Well, problem is I’m not too financial.
I kinda said yes, need to be tactful,
and if I was honest with her,
I know the reaction..
but if I had enough for bond
and some advance rent,
at least it means that I’d...
I mean, we’d have options.

TOM
Well here’s the thing...
I just spent all I had on an
engagement ring

BYRON
Then sell it!
She’s gone. She’s out. So what?
Good riddance.
but don’t bid on that bitch,
and not lend a friend a pittance.

Tom scans the room for his coffee.

Byron hands it to him.

TOM (CONT’D)
I'm a doormat,
she doesn't respect me,
I try to stand up,
but my emotions affect me,
I rehearse my speech
but when it's time to speak,
I just nod and smile
and act all weak.
I'm tough inside,
I just wish she saw it,
cause when I let myself down,
I really hate myself for it

BYRON
It’s OK man.
we’ve all made mistakes
for a woman.
See, I understand chick psychology
don't go chasing
She'll con you into an apology,
Quit the idolatry
before it’s involuntary
Ok, here’s what we can do.
Play the game so that the girls
will come chasing you...

TOM
I wish

BYRON
(o/s)
Be aloof,
act out of character,
mix it up a little
be unavailable,
Girls love unpredictably,
act like the prize,
raise your value,
double your size,
scale back
on all the sensitivity,
cause when they've figured you out,
From there it’s all
vulnerability....
A steady BANG and CLANG from outside the room.

Byron crosses off another day on the calendar. He struggles to stay awake as he reads through WEEK TWELVE of the SUCCESSFUL BLOGGING manual.

Byron gulps his coffee. He pushes himself to continue.

The BANGING increases in volume. Byron breaks into a sweat. He opens the drawer and discovers he's all out of earplugs.

He searches the drawers for some aspirin and washes them down with coffee.

Zadi clears out the cupboards. She stacks cans and food containers inside a box. Byron enters. Every CLASH and BANG causes him to twitch.

BYRON
Do you mind?...
the noise.
I'm working...

ZADI
Actually, I do.
Things need to be done,
the world can't revolve around you

Byron is too sick to argue.

BYRON
Knew you'd carry on like a pork chop.

ZADI
What? What?!

Tom opens a sealed box with a STANLEY KNIFE. He takes out a stack of holiday souvenirs and reminisces while obsessively checking his phone.
INT. GRACE AND BYRON’S ROOM – EVENING

Grace and Byron are sound asleep in a spoon position.

A TAP at the door.

Byron stirs and gets up to answer it.

TOM
I don’t think it’s working
she hasn’t been in contact...

BYRON
Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa...

TOM
Twenty hours and
thirteen minutes exact.

BYRON
That’s. Extreme.

TOM
I know!

BYRON
No, you’re extreme.
Get your mind on other things mate.
You’ll forget her by the morning.

He goes to close the door on Tom, then reopens it.

BYRON (CONT’D)
And no calling!

Tom salutes to Byron.

Byron climbs back into bed. Grace stirs, half asleep.

GRACE
Everything ok sweetie?

BYRON
Yeah, go back to sleep...
Unless you’ve got a secret
that you want to tell me.

She turns over.

GRACE
Like what?
BYRON
I dunno. You know.
Something you’d like to say
you’re scared might scare me away.

She kisses her finger and touches his lip.

GRACE
I love you.

She waits for a response.

GRACE (CONT’D)
I love You too?

BYRON
You three.

GRACE
You four.

BYRON
Lost score.

Grace grabs a pillow and initiates a pillow fight.

INT. BATHROOM - EVENING

Zadi takes a shower.

She looks down at her feet. The drain is blocked and water rises around her ankles.

She turns off the taps and gets out.

INT. ZADI AND JEAN’S ROOM - EVENING

Zadi stands dripping in a towel as she looks through drawers.

JEAN
Looking hotter than ever
my cute lady.
Sweet Zadi.

ZADI
David's coming over
so you'll have to go out.

JEAN
It's cool babe...
ZADI
He's getting weirded out,
doesn't like it
that you're always around

JEAN
How rude!

Zadi won't strip off in front of him.

ZADI
Can I get changed in private?

JEAN
Oh, suddenly you're a prude?

He moves in on her, she backs away.

JEAN (CONT’D)
Are you serious?
Babe, you got me delirious.
So much for your theories
I thought you were polly
but you see this guy
more than once a week
it looks like
you're seeking monogamy.

ZADI
We have an arrangement,
so don't get jealous,
I've help you out with housing
And you're a front for my parents

Jean moves in for the kiss.

JEAN
And marriage for a Visa
so I can stay in the country,
you promised me that
You can't take that from me

Zadi puts her hand on his chest and gently pushes him out of
the room.

ZADI
If you made yourself useful,
I might consider,
But you're a beast of burden
a loser
not a winner.

She closes the door on him.
INT. LOUNGE - NIGHT

Tom lays on the couch listening to headphones with his eyes closed.

A NEWSFLASH on the TV in the background reads ‘UNCLAIMED 1.1 MILLION DOLLAR LOTTO DRAW’.

A series of shots on the TV: winning numbers, interviews with people on the street, lotto shop owner.

INT. GRACE AND BYRON’S ROOM - MORNING

Grace is on the phone.

GRACE
Come visit us
On the 16th.
Bring yourself,
Nibbles and drinks.
It’s our housewarming,
Williams Street,
number 5,
3 bedroom brick.
White picket fence,
my car in the driveway,
a little party,
two weeks from friday.

She ends the call.

Byron lies in bed as Grace gets ready for work.

BYRON
Did you say 3 bedroom?
That’ll cost us a mint!

GRACE
Cost me a mint,
I’m the breadwinner.
An extra room’s good.
Never know,
We might need it.

She kisses Byron on the cheek, grabs her handbag and leaves.

Byron peeks out the window to check Grace has left. He snoops through drawers, the wardrobe, and her bags. He finds a packet of unopened BABY BOOTIES in the drawer.

The door opens.
Byron is startled. He shuts the drawer.

It’s Tom.

BYRON

What?!

TOM

She called. Rori.

BYRON

And?

TOM

Rori. She called me.

Tom puts his hand up to high five Byron.

BYRON

I hope you told her where to go. No?

TOM

I let the call go through to voicemail. She didn’t leave a message, Should I call her back? Or let her stew and make her beg?

BYRON

Whoa! You’re not thinking of taking her back? She cheated on you And without any tact!

TOM

I still love her.

BYRON

Man, that’s not love. That’s obsession, it will happen again if you don’t learn your lesson.

TOM

But I love unconditionally...

BYRON

Unconditional love? You can’t be serious. Don’t invest, it’s unhealthy, you’ll just end up depleted.
INT. STUDY - DAY

Byron stares at the laptop screen.

Grace enters.

BYRON
Why you home so early?

GRACE
It’s Thursday.
I finish at 2:30.

BYRON
Yeah but you usually stay back for drinks with your colleagues.

GRACE
I know but they were all sitting around talking politics. I knew you weren’t feeling the best so I wanted to know how you are, take the afternoon off, Go see something at the cinema.

BYRON
I’d love to but I can’t.
You know, busy, busy.
Love to stop and talk but I’m in prep for the launch. Excusie.

Byron resumes typing.

Grace acts clingy.

GRACE
I’ve organised a home, removals, bond and rent covered, I’m not asking for favours, just spend some time with me, your girl, your lover.

INT. KITCHEN - LATE AFTERNOON

Byron watches Grace through the window as she takes slow steps on the treadmill. He’s sour, resentful.

TOM
How was the movie date?
BYRON
Washing my hair would have been more ecstatic

TOM
That good huh?
Real romantic.

It’s too much pain. She gives up.

BYRON
Don’t worry about that money.

TOM
I get paid tomorrow.

BYRON
It won’t cut it.
I won’t bother to borrow.

TOM
Wasn’t the plan to get financial, so you could leave your lady.

BYRON
Forget it. Ok.
She’s having a baby.

Tom is shocked.

Grace makes a bee line for the fridge. She grabs a can of soft drink, cracks it open, and gulps a few decent mouthfuls.

INT. STUDY - LATE AFTERNOON

Byron looks like death warmed up.

He stares at the clock, then back at his SUCCESSFUL BLOGGING manual.

He fidgets. He’s frustrated and angry.

INT. KITCHEN - EVENING

Zadi returns home and dumps her BAGS on the kitchen bench.
She takes in the horror that befalls her.

Rubbish overflows from the bins. Lights are on. Switches are on. A half eaten STEAK sits on the sink, FLIES buzz around it. The image repulses her.
INT. LOUNGE - EVENING

Jean lays on the couch in front of the TV.

Zadi enters with the megaphone.

ZADI
(megaphone)
Attention! Attention!
Time for an intervention.
Housemates gather round for this
evening’s meeting.
Let’s see some responsibility -
please!
These patterns keep repeating.
Get your acts into alignment,
your assignment is to....

Byron appears out of nowhere. Zadi is intimidated by his presence.

BYRON
I’m a comedown personified.
You know what that means?
Sick and tired.
Head throbbing
like a door knocking.
Soon I’ll come unhinged,
go on a binge and take a swing,
how shocking.
Little Jean’s got his head caved in,
face engraved into the pavement.
Nothing can save him.
Not even his beloved Zadi.
Here’s some free advice,
think twice
before you aggravate a sick mind,
I’ll blow you up
like a stick of dynamite,
put you into flight,
you’ll go screaming
straight to the ceiling.
And when they come
to clean your remains,
it will be a shame
when they discover you’ve got no brains.

Byron struts off.

Zadi pulls herself together.

ZADI
(megaphone)
Get down off your pulpit,
he’s not the only culprit, 
last I heard the word nerd 
was a threat to all concerned, 
staring at your laptop 
from dusk till dawn the backdrop 
was a lamp that burns all day 
and a laptop as your backstop...

Byron stops in his tracks. He turns around and makes a run for Zadi.

He pries the megaphone from her hands and flees down the hallway.

INT. BATHROOM - EVENING

Byron FLUSHES the toilet until the water runs out.

He sets the TIMER for 20 minutes and turns the shower on. It runs in the background as he brushes his teeth.

He slumps to the bottom of the shower as the water rains over him. STEAM rises to the ceiling and swirls around the room.

The water level rises in the blocked shower.

There’s a POUND at the door.

Byron reaches outside the shower and grabs the megaphone.

    BYRON  
    (through the megaphone)  
    Knock knock.  
    No.  
    Ring the bell.  
    Ding dong.  
    Is that Zadi?  
    Go to hell!

A violent SHAKE and RATTLE of the door knob. Someone tries to BREAK THE DOOR DOWN.

Byron exits the shower and wraps himself in a towel. He clutches the megaphone and creeps toward the door.

The door assault stops.

Byron gets down on all fours and peers under the door.
INT. LOUNGE - EVENING

Jean hunches over the coffee table as he keys his name into the surface.

Zadi startles him. She’s livid. Jean cringes back into the couch.

ZADI
You stand and watch me
be humiliated
by that oxygen thief
that demands my hatred,
now he thinks he’s won
his ego’s inflated,
my poor megaphone’s
probably been impregnated.
It’s not about validation
but you shun me
when a situation was created.
You cowered like a coward
like an animation.
I’m frustrated
your lack of strength is illustrated.

Jean summons all the cheek he can muster.

JEAN
If I’ve been a bad boy babe
I need a good spank,
go get out the whip
and give it a crack.
Think you need a little more
time with your fella,
AC to DC
converting that anger.
Let in the love
I’ll let you get rough,
let’s see your mean streak,
I know you’re a freak.

Zadi leaves, irritated.

JEAN (CONT’D)
I like em nasty
I like em with fire,
if you need a loose cannon.
I’m your gun for hire.

The WHINE of an electric pump.
INT. STUDY - NIGHT

The study has been converted into a makeshift bedroom.

Byron inflates a mattress with an ELECTRIC PUMP.

He throws back a couple of panadol, jumps into bed, and makes himself comfortable.

Grace enters, surprised to see Byron on the floor.

    GRACE
What are you doing here?

    BYRON
Massive migraine.

    GRACE
I’ll get you pills for the pain.

    BYRON
Sorted. Taken.

    GRACE
Then what do you require?

    BYRON
To be left in peace.

    GRACE
Why are you being defensive?

    BYRON
Because you’re being annoying.

    GRACE
Just come back to bed..

    BRYON
No.

    GRACE
But I want to cuddle.

    BYRON
Go.

    GRACE
Don’t make a habit of hiding

    BYRON
Please. just. leave. me. alone.

Grace walks away, hurt.
Byron gets up and locks the door.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

A SIGN on the study door reads ‘I’m already disturbed, don’t make it worse’.

Zadi pounds her fist against the door.

There is no response.

She tries the door handle. It’s locked.

GRACE AND BYRON'S ROOM CONT.

Zadi knocks on the door to Grace and Byron’s room. No answer.

She turns the handle. It opens.

She walks in.

Grace is lying in bed alone, her face illuminated by the light of the laptop. Her headphones are on, her eyes shut.

The sheet rises and falls as she masturbates.

Zadi flinches. She pulls the door closed, cautious not to create a disturbance.

Zadi pauses in the hallway. Shell shocked. A loud giggle escapes her mouth and cascades into uncontrollable LAUGHTER.

INT. STUDY - MIDDLE OF NIGHT

Byron fights his way out of a deflated mattress.

He moves his bedding to the floor and tries to sleep.

INT. BATHROOM - MIDDLE OF NIGHT

Byron empties one last sleeping pill into his hand and gulps it down with water.

He looks at his tired reflection in the mirror.

SUSPICIOUS NOISES come from another room. Byron goes to investigate.
INT. LOUNGE - MIDDLE OF NIGHT

The front door BANGS in the wind. Byron closes it.

He turns on the light.

The room is overturned. The TV, surround sound, and modem are gone.

He's gobsmacked.

INT. BYRON AND GRACE’S ROOM - MIDDLE OF NIGHT

Byron wakes up Grace.

BYRON
Grace! Grace!
I think we've been robbed!
Come check it out
before I call the cops!
Stuff's missing, it's gone

GRACE
What?!

BYRON
TV, speakers, the lot,
the lounge's upside down,
The door was left unlocked.

Grace jumps out of bed.

INT. LOUNGE - MIDDLE OF NIGHT

GRACE
Oh my god, we've been robbed?!
Wake the others! Call the cops!

GRACE (CONT’D)
The TVs missing.

BYRON
And the modem.

GRACE
When did this happen?

BYRON
(yells out)
IS ANYONE HOME?!
INT. GRACE AND BYRON’S ROOM - LATER

Byron paces around the room.

BYRON
I know it was Zadi.

GRACE
Babe, we’re moving out.

BYRON
Get some cameras installed.

GRACE
Babe, we’re moving out.

BYRON
I’ll punch holes in the walls!

GRACE
We’re moving out!

BYRON
Instigate a brawl.

GRACE
We’re moving out.
We're moving out together.

BRYON
I can't. I just can't babe.

GRACE
What do you mean?
I just paid a deposit
and signed a lease.
Please, please,
don't do this to me!

BYRON
How do you think I feel?

GRACE
How you feel?
It wasn't even your treasures,
stop the uppers and downers,
You're turning manic depressive.

Byron throws a mini tantrum.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING.

Byron is a wreck. He makes a coffee.
Grace limps around in her tracksuit.

GRACE
Looking raggedy this morning deary, 
don’t seem too cheery. 
Weary from all the writing? 
Certainly smelling uninviting.

Zadi grabs a drink from the fridge. She looks at Byron, amused.

ZADI
Pity, pity bout the idiot box, 
what a loss, 
cross that off 
your list of things to pack, 
It’ll save on some costs.

BYRON
Oh I know who did it.

ZADI
Yeah? Who? 
You think I did it to get you back? 
Well I love to think 
you thought that. 
But it doesn’t take rocket science 
to work it out 
the door was left unlocked 
so blame whoever forgot.

BYRON
Screw the two of you 
man haters, uncourageous 
and unsupportive, 
talk is cheap.
Like you. 
So time to stop speaking 
I’ll have a ball 
when you’re through.

GRACE
What’s a man who’s caught in denial? 
What’s a man who acts like a child? 
What’s a man who has no control 
and can’t achieve goals? 
What’s a man who lives off his lady? 
What’s a man who won’t have a baby? 
I’d say this man is really a boy, 
too weak to break up 
too old to be a toy boy.

Grace rearranges the magnetic letters on the fridge that spell 'Byron' and 'Grace' to read 'BYGONE'.
She blows as kiss as she leaves the room.

Zadi is smug.

INT. LOUNGE - DAY

The room is still a disaster zone.

Tom lays on the couch listening to music.

He takes out his headphones as Byron approaches.

Byron takes a seat in the lounge, puts down his laptop, and laces on his boots.

**TOM**
So what did the cops say?

**BRYON**
No forced entry.  
Someone left the door unlocked wasn't worth calling the cops.  
I already know who's guilty.

**TOM**
Really? Who? Someone you know?

**BRYON**
I let you take one guess,  
someone we both know,  
the female Eco warrior,  
mouths off on a megaphone.

**TOM**
What are you implying?  
Are you making an accusation minus information?

An awkward silence. Tom puts his headphones back in.

Byron slaps him.

**BRYON**
What about you Mr. Masochist?  
Officially kicked your woman out  
Or you still being the passivist?

**TOM**
Haven't heard a word  
but she'll soon surface,  
her, hotshot, and me...  
man, what a three ring circus
Byron grabs his laptop and heads for the door.

BYRON
Good luck pal.

TOM
Where you going?

BYRON
Internet cafe, Phone wifi runs too slowly.

INT. LOUNGE - DAY

Jean lays on the couch. Bored amongst the chaos of the over turned room.

Zadi removes Jean's legs from the couch and sits down beside him.

ZADI
We gotta talk
I'll get straight to the point
you've been around a while now
houseys are getting annoyed
if you wanna stay
a little while longer
you need to pull your weight,
I'm gonna need something from ya.

Jean grabs Zadi's hand and pulls her closer.

JEAN
Relax babe,
we've got a new life starting,
A future so good
It pulls at my heart strings.
Why we gotta be all serious?
It's tedious.
I just wanna have fun,
but you seem so highly strung.

ZADI
Don't do distraction,
don't do defiance, don't do
discussion, deviate, dismiss, deny,
debating is draining show me that
you're disciplined,
and I'll do my best
to defend the right
that you deserve to be visiting.
INT. ZADI AND JEAN’S ROOM - DAY

Zadi moves a large protest sign and discovers the stack of protest rally posters still sitting in the corner.

She lets out a GRUNT of frustration.

INT. STUDY - DAY

Byron stares at the computer screen, deep in thought.

GRACE

I know you’re not one to discuss problems and differences
and since things have gone south
we been maintaining distances.
I know you’re not ready for kids,
so I’m hitting the skids,
I want to end it officially,
it’s been too draining emotionally,
so this is it, let’s part ways
if you disagree, now’s time to say.

Grace waits for a response but Byron doesn’t even turn around.

She pauses in the doorway.

GRACE (CONT’D)

Wish I could say I was disappointed
but I expected as much,
I always feel unimportant.

She closes the door behind her. Byron hangs his head.

INT. ZADI AND JEAN’S ROOM - EVENING

Jean waits up in bed.

JEAN

Stuck in the middle
of a six way domestic,
like a real life version
of the Young and the Restless,
but I don’t get the love scenes
don’t get the affair,
someone axe this show
and rip this thing off the air.
The actors are fake
the scenes are lack lustre,
I get a line here and there
but its B-grade soap opera,
kill my character or make me a hero,
or let me direct
and be a lead in my own show,
low budget action
with convincing acting,
I’ll flip the script, find the plot
and rewrite the ending.

Note: scene below is reenacted to match the lyrics. Zadi and her other man mouth the their words and Jean raps them like the narrative method used in R. Kelly's *Trapped in the Closet*.

Zadi walks in holding hands with a guy.

JEAN (CONT’D)
Rewrite the moment Zadi walks in
With her other man,
they were even holding hands
I said ‘No, not again’
she looks at him and rolls her eyes,
makes out I’m some desperate guy,
He says 'I'll leave you alone to sort it out'.
She says 'no need.'
'Jean, go sleep out on the couch.'
She says ‘you’re like Lindsay Lohan
always staying, never paying'
I said 'I haven’t crashed your car and
this is not a five star hotel babe'.
But I'm like 'yeah, whatever'
it's not sharing that's the issue,
but lately I don't get my share,
how fair is that?
What did I get myself into?

INT. LOUNGE - EVENING

Note: scene below is reenacted to match the lyrics. Jean mouths his words and Byron raps them like the narrative method used in R. Kelly's *Trapped in the Closet*.

Byron tosses and turns on the fold out bed. Jean climbs in beside him.

Byron jolts awake. He scrambles out.

BYRON
Here comes the kicker
The thorn in my side,
I was tossing and turning
and shuffling and churning
like a 5 year old on a water slide.
I was just about to fall asleep
then guess who comes out to annoy me?
Pulls back the covers
with no invitation,
climbs in beside me
but I scramble to safety.

Jean stretches out on the bed like a starfish.

BYRON (CONT’D)
He says something like
‘I’ve got nowhere to sleep,
c’mon be compassionate
to a brother in need’
I say ‘I don't care, this is not my issue.
Get out of my space or I'll have to hit you’
He just laughs,
fluffs the pillow
and casually turns over
and I'm just left standing
demanding he goes to his own room.

Jean drifts off to sleep.

BYRON (CONT’D)
And that was it,
sound asleep in less than two minutes,
now I hate him even more
I grab my dressing gown and slippers,
rather than fight
I just take it as a sign
I should go back to my own bed,
and expect a big warm welcome
from my girlfriend.

Byron grabs his dressing gown and slippers and storms off.

INT. BYRON AND GRACE’S ROOM – EVENING

Note: scene below is reenacted to match the lyrics. Byron mouths his words and Grace raps them like the narrative method used in R. Kelly's Trapped in the Closet.

Grace looks at HOLIDAYS on her laptop as Byron bursts through the door. She slams the laptop shut.

He kicks off his slippers and rips off his gown.

Byron pulls back the bedclothes. The laptop slides along the bed towards the edge. Grace saves it from falling.
GRACE
I was alone and surfing the web, when my nuisance burst through the door pulled back the covers on my bed. At first I felt like getting lucky, but now that I’m no longer lucky, I took the plunge to have some fun, put him on the receiving end for once.

Byron tries to push his way into the bed. Grace stops him with her foot.

GRACE (CONT’D)
He said ‘I need to sleep here I’ve got nowhere to stay, Jean has crashed my bed, it’s my room anyway,’ I said ‘that’s news to me ‘cause I’m paying for this place besides I think I’m starting to like my own space’

Byron gently pushes her leg aside and makes another attempt to get in.

Grace pushes him back with her foot. He falls back on the floor.

GRACE (CONT’D)
You’ve been gone a while and now your boyfriend will be jealous, go spend some quality time, some spooning with your precious, you’ve got so much in common I’m glad you found each other, for there’s a man friend that sticketh closer than a brother.

Byron dives onto the bed. Grace slaps his face. Her action shocks them both.

Offended, Byron gathers his slippers and gown under his arm and makes a gentle departure from the room.

INT. STUDY - NIGHT
A bedraggled Byron gulps from a GIANT COFFEE MUG.

He raps as he types:

BYRON
He goes to her for a wild night of seduction, (MORE)
BYRON (CONT'D)
His quest to conquer needs no introduction,
tucked into her bed drenched in isolation,
he reaches out to embrace,
takes a slap in the face,
no affection, rejection,
he’s a walking destruction,
And her revocation
a true revelation.

He deletes his words and starts again.

BYRON (CONT’D)
He turns to her for refuge,
a moat from the external conflict,
seeks a place from the storm,
a warm shelter beneath her wing...

He deletes his words again. He struggles to stay awake.

Byron grabs his SUCCESSFUL BLOGGING manual and knocks over the GIANT MUG. Coffee spills over his laptop, runs down the desk and onto his clothes. It burns him.

He jumps to his feet, wide awake. He grabs some towels and dabs the coffee off the desk, laptop, and his clothes.

A coffee puddle gathers on the white carpet underneath the desk. He does his best to soak it up with the towel.

INT. LOUNGE - NIGHT
Jean is in a deep sleep. Byron yanks a pillows beneath his head. Jean turns over and clutches on to it, still asleep.

Byron grabs the corner of the doona and tugs it. Jean stirs and wraps himself up in it.

Byron gives up. He pulls a BEAN BAG from the corner of the room and collapses into it. He tries to get comfortable. He lays on his back staring at the ceiling.

INT. LOUNGE - MORNING
Jean lays awake on the couch amid the destruction of the room.

Zadi and her other man enters. He's carrying the rally posters.
ZADI
You're the perfect man,
I've got a new plan,
my new number 1,
and then some,
thanks for doing the posters,
come back and have some fun...

She kisses him goodbye as he leaves.

Jean is jealous.

INT. LOUNGE - DAY

Byron wakes to the CLANG and BANG of dishes.

The lounge is tidy.

The fold out bed is back to its couch state. The doona is folded and the pillows stacked in a neat pile.

Byron reaches for the doona and wraps himself up in it. He pulls the covers over his head.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Jean is on a mission. He washes dishes and cleans benches.

JEAN
I won't be upstaged,
No more plans get rearranged,
I'm the king!
Sing my praise,
This is my castle,
I won't stay impartial,
when she won't meet my needs,
but treats the others like Picasso,
I'll just play the game,
treat her back the same,
Just because I'm playing Cupid
don't mean I'm stupid,
you can't trump the master player,
Cause I'm smooth even in neutral

FLASHBACK:
INT. LOUNGE – DAY

Note: scene below is reenacted to match the lyrics. Rori mouths her words and Tom raps them like the narrative method used in R. Kelly’s Trapped in the Closet.

The front door opens. It's Rori.

Tom is caught off guard. He rushes to her.

She pushes past him.

TOM
(v/o)
She turned up at the front door wide eyed and weeping like a widow, she grabs my arm and thrusts herself towards me, I deflect her kiss and stare out the window

Tom grabs her by the arm and tries to kiss her. She pulls away.

RORI AND TOM’S ROOM – CONT.

Rori packs clothes into a suitcase.

Tom (CONT’D)
(v/o)
I’m as tough as nails since she put me through the grinder, she begs to stay and it takes all my strength to decline her, she pleads, she pleases she knows it’s a gamble, she’s lying prostrate on the ground her hands gripped firm around my ankles.

She heads toward the door.

Tom blocks the doorway.

She stomps on his foot.

He steps back.

She flees.

He follows her through the house.

TOM
(v/o)
She doesn't want to leave, I said she's no longer welcome,
she says it was all a big mistake
and she begs for my forgiveness.

Rori doesn't want to talk, gives him the hand.

LOUNGE - CONT.

Rori opens the front door.

Tom falls to his knees beside her, he clasps her hand.

She looks down on him in pity. Their eyes meet.

Tom releases his grip.

Rori does her dash outside.

TOM
(v/o)
I feel sorry for her,
My eyes cast downward in pity,
First time
I've seen her vulnerable side,
she looks twice as pretty

Tom follows her in hot pursuit.

EXT. SHARE HOUSE CONT.

Tom chases Rori down the driveway and physically restrains her. She hits him to get away.

TOM
(v/o)
I handled it like a pro,
oozing confidence,
even surprised myself,
she clung so tight,
I needed self defence

FOOTPATH - CONT.

Rori runs off in the distance.

TOM
(Spoken)
Rori! Rori!
PRESENT:

INT. LOUNGE - DAY

It is revealed that Tom is telling this false narrative to Byron.

Tom and Byron sit opposite each other.

TOM

She says she'll be back
didn't indicate when,
I'm zen,
even when she said,
she wants to keep me in suspense.

Zadi enters. She’s had retail therapy.

A SCARF and GOLD HOOP EARRINGS give her a much needed lift.
There’s even a hint of MAKE UP.

Tom is awestruck.

Zadi shoots Byron the death stare.

KITCHEN - CONT.

Zadi stops dead in her tracks.

The kitchen sparkles. An incense stick burns on the clean
bench. Bins are emptied. Switches are off.

BATHROOM CONT.

Zadi turns on the taps. The drainage works perfectly.

She takes a shower.

INT. ZADI AND JEAN’S ROOM - EVENING

Note: scene below is reenacted to match the lyrics. Jean
mouths his words and Zadi raps them like the narrative method
used in R. Kelly's Trapped in the Closet.

Jean sprays himself with AFTER SHAVE. He's had a haircut and
is dressed to impress.

ZADI

Must be the laws of attraction
paying off I’m the receiver,
my manifestations
pouring down from the ether,
I tell him 'I’m responsible
for this dramatic change in you'
He said 'you inspire me to be a better person
now I’m as good as it gets,
you’re the best thing that’s happened
a lover I respect and protect',
he tells me I’m his wake up call,
system shock shot from a cannonball,
there’s hope this boy might be redeemed
now my affirmations have intervened.

Zadi makes a move on Jean, he declines.

ZADI (CONT’D)
He said 'sorry sweet Zadi,
but I’ve got another date,
save it for later,
Don't wait up, I'll be home late'.
Then I demanded he face me,
And reveal the name of this girl,
but he just smiled and shrugged
and said 'a gentleman never tells'

Zadi tries to make a move again but he pulls away and leaves.
She sulks.

INT. TOM AND RORI’S ROOM - DAY
Tom sits on the floor looking at the engagement ring.
The door opens. It's Rori and Hot Shot.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY
A disheveled Byron makes a coffee.
Zadi makes her presence felt in the kitchen.
She moves things aside on the bench, switches off appliances,
and tightens a dripping tap.

He eyes her like a hawk.

BYRON
We’ve been robbed
but no one’s guilty,
people acting shifty
like politicians seeking
credibility,

(MORE)
BYRON (CONT'D)
it’s written on your face,
the signs of sabotage,
disgrace, stealing
things of mine
cause you’re so inclined,
you just wait...

ZADI
Hypocrite.
Give me back my megaphone,
I don't condone that behaviour,
your wayward,
I need a voice for my rally,
I'm on the front line,
dilly dally, willie nilly,
we all think you're silly,
Your addiction makes you paranoid,
projecting your dishonesty.

A severe tension broods as they both go about their business.

INT. TOM AND RORI’S ROOM - LATER

Rori scratches her palm.

The room is only a little less cluttered without Rori's things. Hot Shot gathers the last of her belongings.

HOT SHOT
You nearly ready?
let's hit the road,
girl, why'd you date this dude?
What a skanky abode.

He turns around to leave. Tom is right behind them.

Hot Shot swaggers toward the door. He gives Tom a quick elbow to the ribs on the way out.

Furious, Tom turns around and shoves him.

They scuffle like two school boys.

Tom lifts Hot Shot up by the collar.

Hot Shot grabs Tom up by the shirt.

The pair zig zag across the room like a twister and collide with everything in their path, including Rori. She’s knocked to the floor. She rolls out of the way.
RORI

Stop, stop it right now,
I'm not into violence,
I'll walk out the door in four,
won't even call an ambulance.
You think you're slick, slick
but you're really thick, thick,
won't see me go, go
cause when I leave I'm quick quick.

Tom kicks Hot Shot in the shin. He YELPS in pain.

Hot Shot punches Tom in the stomach. He drops to his knees.

Tom punches Hot Shot in the crotch. He doubles over and falls back against the wall, HOLLERING in pain.

Tom rises to his feet and towers over Hot Shot.

He holds out his hand and helps Hot Shot to his feet.

Hot Shot thrusts himself forward and head butts Tom in the face, knocking him backwards.

Tom buries his face in his hands. He wipes his nose and mouth to inspect for blood.

Hot Shot exudes arrogance.

Tom stands stunned and shaken.

EXT. SHAREHOUSE - DAY

Grace walks slowly on the treadmill. It looks painful.

Jean collects rubbish.

JEAN

Whoa, whoa, whoa,
lady give it a rest,
let me show you some magic.
Please, take a chair.

Grace takes a seat. Jean raises her leg and holds her foot.

JEAN (CONT'D)

Push against my hand
with all your strength,
then relax for a sec,
it's good for your leg.

Grace tries a few times.
GRACE
Where'd you learn this?

JEAN
University,
I did health science,
I know a lot about the body,
this kind of thing was a
requirement.

Jean massages Grace's leg. It's slightly sensual. She's torn between enjoyment and guilt.

She sits up.

GRACE
Thanks, it feels better....

JEAN
But you're gonna go inside...
Listen, I'm available,
call on me any time

Grace limps inside. She's aware Jean's watching and enjoys the attention.

Jean opens the bin to empty the rubbish. A plush toy stares back at him. He takes it out and brushes it off.

INT. TOM AND RORI’S ROOM - LATER

Tom stares at an empty shelf where the toy once sat. The penny drops.

He panics and phones Rori.

RORI
(Spoken)
Stop calling me...

TOM
No, no wait
this is really important,
I just want that plush toy back
then I promise I won't call you.

RORI
(Spoken)
Which one? I threw them out.

Silence.
RORI (CONT’D)
(Spoken)
Check your bins.

INT. ZADI AND JEAN’S ROOM - AFTERNOON
Jean places the plush toy on the bed with a note that reads 'To Zadi, just because, you rock my world, love Jean.'

EXT. SHAREHOUSE - AFTERNOON
Tom searches through the bin in vain.

INT. LOUNGE - LATE AFTERNOON
Tom peers under chairs and searches behind furniture.
Jean enters, cheerful and radiant. He dives onto the couch.
Tom notices his new appearance.

TOM
Have you seen a plush toy
I'm looking for clues.
It's important that I find it
I trust you'd tell me
if you knew

Jean is sheepish.

JEAN
It rings a bell but I’m blank
off the top of my head,
think I saw something
Can’t remember where,
we dumped an extra load of rubbish
In the neighbour's bin,
so if you dig down deep
you might discover a win

Tom’s inquisition is disturbed by a RHYTHMIC KNOCK at the door.

He rushes to open it.

A PIZZA BOY in a MATCHING CAP and POLO SHIRT holds out a PIZZA BOX.

A PLASTIC BAG full of COKE and GARLIC BREAD hangs on his arm.

PIZZA BOY
One large Hawaiian pizza,  
Coke Zero 2 litres,  
extra pineapple extra cheese,  
1 garlic bread $21.90 please

Grace brushes Tom aside.

Tom watches her separate a 20 DOLLAR NOTE from a wad of 50s in her purse.

She pulls out another 10 DOLLAR note.

Pizza Boy hands over the goods and fumbles for coins in a BUM BAG.

Grace motions for him to keep the change.

Pizza Boy leans in through the door.

PIZZA BOY (CONT’D)

Hey thanks for the tip  
hope you’re hungry,  
I’ve got some time up my sleeve  
if ya need some company

Tom closes the door in his face.

The Pizza Boy walks away with a spring in his step.

FRONT YARD CONT.

The Pizza Boy jumps in the car. He dials a number and places his mobile on speakerphone.

PIZZA BOY

Man you wouldn’t believe  
this last delivery,  
got an $8 tip cause the chick  
was really into me

The car passes the fence line.

PIZZA BOY (CONT’D)  
(Spoken)  
No worries mate, I’ll be there in about twenty minutes.

A SCREECH of tires. The car speeds off down the road.
EXT. SHAREHOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

Tom peers over the fence and surveys the back yard. Two bins are stacked neatly against the side of the house.

EXT. NEIGHBOUR’S HOUSE CONT.

Tom hoists himself over the fence.

He treads cautiously toward the bins and takes a peek. He takes a deep breath and delves inside.

A phone RINGS. Tom's hands are dirty, he can't turn it off. He hides in a bush.

A couple with a pram and a dog walk past and see Tom. They eye him with suspicion.

As soon as they’re gone, Tom delves inside the second bin.

After a few moments of sifting around Tom catches sight of an UGLY SUBSTANCE on his arm. The smell propels him backward. He collides with the other bin.

It hits the ground with a BANG.

A latch CLICKS. Footsteps SHUFFLE across the ground.

Tom crouches behind the bins.

The SOUND of a spoon tapping a plate.

FABIAN
(Spoken)
Milly! Milly!

FABIAN, a eccentric pensioner, fills a bowl with cat food.

The couple with the pram return. Their dog wanders down the driveway toward Tom.

They WHISTLE. The dog runs back.

FABIAN (CONT’D)
(Spoken)
Milly! Puss puss!

The couple smile at Fabian.

He sets back on the eternal journey to the front door.

The front door SLAMS.
Tom races down driveway and along the

FOOTPATH CONT.

The couple with the pram turn to beckon their dog. They watch Tom tear off clothes as he races down the footpath.

FRONT LAWN SHAREHOUSE - CONT.

Note: scene below is reenacted to match the lyrics. Tom mouths his words and Rori raps them like the narrative method used in R. Kelly's Trapped in the Closet.

Tom strips down to his underwear and showers under the GARDEN HOSE.

Rori arrives in driveway, no makeup and dressed down.

RORI

The affair fell through,
I know he'll take me back?
I don't want to be alone,
I need somewhere to crash.
Singledom's the worst curse
on this planet
It's embarrassment,
There's no comparison.
I told Tom 'Hot Shot's gone
it didn't mean anything.
You and I needed a break,
our relationship was at stake.'

She walks toward Tom but he avoids her.

RORI (CONT'D)

I'm crossing my fingers,
my palm keeps itching,
He carries on about the toy
Keeps saying 'it's missing'.
I said 'Sorry I binned it',
But he doesn't believe me
I'm not shifty or pulling a swifty
I know he missed me.
What's happened
has made me certain,
it's Tom I always wanted,
I just never looked behind the curtain.

She follows him inside.
INT. KITCHEN - LATER

Rori scratches her hand.

TOM
Are you playing games with me?
Tell me the truth.

RORI
It's true. Honestly.
I threw it
in the wheely bin,
It wasn't on anything gross.
Sorry,
I was angry,
it meant a lot to you I know.

TOM
I hid a ring inside it.
I'd planned to propose.

Rori reels in shock.

RORI
To me?

TOM
Who else? Byron?
Don't stress,
the offer has expired,
just help me find it,
so I can exchange it for money,
another big blow to my pride.

Grace dumps a loaf of BREAD and jar of NUTELLA and PEANUT BUTTER on the table. She lays some slices out on the table top and applies the condiments. She starts gorging down the full slices of bread.

Rori and Tom stare. She stops chewing and gives them a ‘WHAT’ look.

INT. LAUNDRY - LATE AFTERNOON

Tom prepares to wash his clothes. He looks in the cupboards but only sees ‘earth friendly’ WASHING DETERGENT.

He looks out the window.

OUTSIDE

Jean pegs the last of his clothes on the line.
LAUNDRY CONT.

Jean enters with an empty WASHING BASKET. Tom grabs him by the shirt.

    TOM  
    First it’s other people’s food,  
    now it’s washing powder.

Tom hoists dirty, wet clothes from the washing machine into Jean’s basket.

    TOM (CONT’D)  
    So I want these cleaned,  
    then you can come clean you coward!

A confused Jean is left holding a basket of dirty laundry. He checks the pockets and removes TISSUES and a LOTTERY TICKET.

Jean checks slides the lottery ticket into his pocket. He puts the tissues back in the clothes' pockets and turns the washing machine on.

INT. LAUNDRY - LATER

Tom removes his clothes from the washing machine. They’re covered in shredded tissues. He’s fuming.

EXT. SHAREHOUSE BACKYARD - LATE AFTERNOON

Tom rips Jean’s clothes off the line and throws them over the fence.

Peels of LAUGHTER come from inside the house.

LOUNGE CONT.

A perplexed Tom watches Byron roll around the floor in hysterical LAUGHTER.

    RORI  
    Zadi’s been arrested.  
    You guessed it.

    GRACE  
    The protest rally  
    turned pear shaped.
BYRON
She’s spending the night
in the slammer.
Sleep over minus pyjamas

JEAN
(to Byron)
Fold out bed’s yours tonight, mate.

INT. TOM AND RORI’S ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON
Tom lays on his bed listening to music through headphones.
He gets up and drags out all the boxes from the cupboards.

EXT. SHAREHOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON
Tom goes to empty his boxes of sentimental items to the bin
but they're full. He dumps them next to the house.
A light breeze blows a bunch of old LOTTO TICKETS. They fly
around and stick to blades of grass.

EXT. BACKYARD - LATE AFTERNOON
Jean stares at an empty clothesline.
Only pegs remain where there where his T-shirts and underwear
were.

INT. LOUNGE - EVENING
Byron returns drunk from a night out.
Rori is passed out on the couch.

BYRON
(Verse 1)
I quit my job about a year ago,
to pursue ambitions as a writer,
and write inner most desires,
erotic writing got me inspired.
It’s hard wired
in my brain,
the pressure to create,
to be great,
to seek success,
and escape
the 9 to 5 rat race.
STUDY CONT.

Byron inspects the coffee stains on his laptop. He turns it on but it won’t load.

He plugs the laptop in and tries again.

    BYRON  
    (Verse 2)  
    Then it happened. Life.  
    My nose broken in a scuffle,  
    moved in with my girlfriend  
    so she could keep me out of trouble.  
    Lost my friends, got my car stolen  
    it wasn’t even insured,  
    I’m like a guy at a drive through  
    arriving two minutes after breakfast’s served.  
    Dammit,  
    I shouldn’t have made that confession,  
    my inner most thoughts  
    could be labelled negative obsession.

After a few unsuccessful attempts to switch on the laptop, Byron smashes it down against the desk.

    BYRON (CONT’D)  
    I’m gonna keep you all in the dark now  
    whenever I face misfortune,  
    someone’s hexing me  
    it’s affecting me  
    runaway like the headless horseman

KITCHEN CONT.

Byron makes a coffee and spills it on himself.

    BYRON  
    (Chorus)  
    Ohhh, ohhh, ohhh  
    I’m an unlucky so and so,  
    if I turned over a new leaf  
    I'd need a four leaf clover,  
    cause when you’re down on your luck  
    nobody wants to know ya

BATHROOM CONT.

Byron takes a BOTTLE of sleeping pills from the cabinet. It’s empty.

    BYRON  
    (Verse 3)
Now I’ve got the writer’s block
its like I’ve hit a plateau,
girlfriend is pregnant
but I can’t even commit to a tattoo.
I’m sleeping on a foldout couch
sometimes a bean bag,
dark thoughts dark dreams
people ganging up on me like a reject.
Wallowing in self pity,
everything’s complicated,
I’ve contemplated,
skiuing town,
Stuff’s stolen, internet’s down,
could get worse but I’ve got my doubts

(Chorus)
Ohhh, ohhh, ohhh
I’m an unlucky so and so,
if I turned over a new leaf
I’d need a four leaf clover,
cause when you’re down on your luck
nobody wants to know ya

LOUNGE CONT.

Byron crashes on the bean bag.

BYRON

(Verse 4)
Think I’m doomed to a life of failure
to live with losers,
just a bunch of beggars
who couldn’t be choosers.
Perhaps a meteor will fall from the sky
and put us all out of our misery,
I’ll drop dead on the toilet like Elvis
or make the Darwin Awards Obituaries,
I approach strangers for conversation
and they all disperse in droves,
don’t want my bad juju rubbing off on you
cause I’m an unlucky so and so.

A VACUUM CLEANER whines.

INT. LOUNGE - MORNING

Byron blinks awake. He’s laying on the floor.

Jean vacuums in EAR MUFFS.

A repeated THUD of the vacuum cleaner foot against furniture
almost brings him to tears.
He grabs a PILLOW and BLANKET off the couch.

EXT. FRONT YARD - MONRING

Byron sets up a makeshift bed on the front lawn.

BYRON
(Chorus)
Ohhh, ohhh, ohhh
I’m an unlucky so and so,
if I turned over a new leaf
I'd need be a four leaf clover,
cause when you’re down on your luck
nobody wants to know ya

He lays down to sleep.

FRONT YARD - LATER

Rori finds Byron asleep in the front yard engulfed in a sea of debris.

She pokes him with her foot. The crotchety beast awakens. He turns over and MOANS.

RORI
(Verse 1)
There’s a housey
sleeping on the nature strip, strip,
wrapped up like souvlaki
I gave him a kick, kick,
he grunts and he groans
he stirs and he moans.

RORI (CONT’D)
(Verse 2)
Staying in a house
where I'm an outsider,
grab a cider,

She picks up a lotto ticket in the grass. Then another one. Then another one.

RORI (CONT’D)
knock before entering
alarm the viper,
things going missing,
things getting stolen,
golden silence
and violence, tyrants,
social heir-achy and malarkey.
Rori digs through the rubbish. She finds Tom's boxes of sentimental items.

RORI (CONT’D)
(Chorus)
Human nature's
got a lot to answer for,
human nature's
got a lot to answer for
human nature's
got a lot to answer for
human nature's
got a lot to answer for

RORI (CONT’D)
(Verse 3)
Searching for a ring
Like Gollum in Middle Earth,
this time 'Precious' is not sentimental
It's about what it's worth.
The toys' the clue, a plush cartoon,
finally in tune
with a man who's leaving soon.

RORI (CONT’D)
(Verse 4)
Uh oh, now the plot thickens,
what would I say
If he popped the question?
I'm stressing either way,
just wish we could revert
to living together,
so no one would get hurt.

RORI AND TOM’S ROOM CONT.
The room is sterile.

RORI
(Verse 5)
Tom’s room’s deserted
like a bum’s dwelling,
he had more stuff in his possession
than Tori Spelling
but what’s this? He’s gone minimal,
a pivotal
extreme clean been happening, no.
No more sentimental bloke,
he's moved on.
given up his possessive ways
that caused waves
when he accumulated
possessions
His heavenly obsession.

EXT. SHAREHOUSE - MORNING
Jean goes to empty the vacuum cleaner but the bins are full.
Fabian shuffles past the house in Jean's clothes.
Jean runs over to confront him.

FOOTPATH CONT.

JEAN
(Spoken)
Thief!

The old man stops in his tracks.

JEAN
(Spoken)
What kind of low life steals a
guy’s clothes! Are you a snow
dropper?

FABIAN
(Spoken)
Yes?

JEAN
(Spoken)
You’d better not be wearing my underwear.

Jean tries to pull the old man’s trackpants down.
The young couple with the pram appear.
Fabian breaks free and shuffles off.

JEAN (CONT’D)
(Spoken)
At least you could have left me my
underpants!

Rori and Tom watch from the front yard. Tom is in hysterics.
RORI
(Verse 6)
Things are getting kinda weird,
things are getting kinda spooky,
makes you wanna switch off,
like a cheap adult movie.
Luck come save me,
till I find a new place to dwell,
too many couples,
too many heartaches, taken its toll
like a heartbreak hotel.

RORI (CONT'D)
(Chorus)
Human nature's
got a lot to answer for,
human nature's
got a lot to answer for
human nature's
got a lot to answer for
human nature's
got a lot to answer for

INT. KITCHEN - LATER
Jean stirs a saucepan on the stove.
Grace enters in a sexy nightie.

JEAN
Hey

GRACE
Hi

JEAN
I need your opinion,
come and have a taste,
let me know
if something's missing.

He puts a spoonful in her mouth. She closes her eyes and tastes it.

GRACE
Mmm..delicious,
what it is?

He moves in close.

JEAN
My speciality, a delicacy.
He looks up. Zadi is watching.

JEAN (CONT’D)

Hey baby.

Zadi is unimpressed and jealous, she walks away.

ZADI AND JEAN’S ROOM - CONT.

Zadi finds the plush toy and note on the bed.

She's softens.

LOUNGE CONT.

Jean approaches her, takes her hand, and gets down on one knee.

JEAN

I'm proud of you,
you're strong,
you stand up for what you believe,
you inspire me,
my feelings for you
have only increased,
so call the priest,
cause I'm serious
when I ask you now,
'want to get hitched'?

Grace looks on, disappointed. Tom is suspicious. Byron motions fingers down his throat. Rori smiles.

ZADI

I'll think about it.

They kiss passionately.

INT. ZADI AND JEAN’S ROOM - LATER

Tom opens the door just enough to peek inside. It CREAKS loudly.

He creeps slowly into the room. The PLUSH TOY sits on the bed.

TOM

(Verse 1)

I'm like Sherlock Holmes
or James Bond,
separating fact
from coincidence, 
at this very instant 
piecing together clues, 
like Napoleon preparing 
for the battle of Waterloo. 
Follow instinct, listen to intuition, 
when you catch the crook 
don’t expect an act of contrition, 
he’ll lie through his teeth 
even with evidence, 
he’ll lie through his teeth 
like an American President.

Tom unzips the toy and sticks his hand inside. There's no ring.

He turns the room upside down in a frantic search.

TOM (CONT’D)

(Verse 2)
I’m gonna bring out the big guns 
and put up a fort, 
like a war lord 
hunting a wild fox for sport, 
he’s been caught 
red handed 
stolen goods in his possession, 
I’ll show aggression, 
teach him a lesson, 
force a full confession. 
Bingo, jackpot, boyah, bonanza, 
hold me closer Tony Danzer, 
read the lyrics 
and you’ll find the stanza, 
probe the questions 
and extract the answers.

The bedroom door opens. It’s Zadi.

She points Tom to the door like an officer commanding troops.

Tom stays. He is defiant and furious.

TOM (CONT’D)

(Chorus)
I can’t wait to get my hands on you, 
hand on you, 
there’s no telling what I’ll do, 
when I get my hands on you

Zadi rushes toward him, arms flailing. Tom grabs the plush toy and holds it up in her face.
TOM (CONT’D)

Verse 3
Think your boyfriend's
been telling fibs.
Bet he didn’t bother to mention
where he got this

She stops in her tracks.

TOM (CONT’D)

No? Didn’t think so
cause it came from the bin.
It's where I was hiding
Rori's engagement ring.
I asked him before
if he knew where it was,
he played dumb
obviously to conceal his true cause.
A free present for his girlfriend
to manipulate her feelings,
what a phoney,
To keep himself in country
sealed by matrimony.

The penny drops. She’s been conned.

Tom (CONT’D)

Verse 4
Now you’ve seen it
with your very own eyes,
He can’t be trusted
with his legacy of lies.
Find him guilty,
march him down death row,
deliver the last rites
and strip him of his clothes,
one last cigarette till he’s strapped
to the electric chair,
ridding the lightning,
looking frightening
with the Don King hair.

(Break from song. Conversation style rap.)

ZADI
Run it by me again,
Why was your toy with the ring
in the bin?

TOM
Rori was moving her stuff out,
so she chucked it out,
Ring's still inside,
I've got no doubt,

(MORE)
TOM (CONT'D)
o only found this out
when I played scout.

ZADI
How do you know
Rori didn't poach it?
Have you approached her?

TOM
She wants me back
plus she was oblivious,
plus she's never lied to my face
like certain visitors.
To be sure
don't shoot your trap,
we'll set a trap
and when I've got it back
we can attack.
How's that?

ZADI
I'm not too keen
on sleeping with the enemy,
this is really your problem,
too much wasted energy.
I can kick him out any second,
I'm not too keen
to stick around for seconds.

TOM
Just so you understand,
that ring's worth ten grand.
If I get it back,
your half is five,
let's shake hands,
promise I'll divide.

ZADI
Money means nothing to me.

TOM
Think about
what you could do for charity.

Zadi thinks for a brief moment then shakes hands.

INT. KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

A large knife slices a TOMATO. It’s slow. Rhythmic. RED JUICE
oozes onto a WHITE CHOPPING BOARD like BLOOD.

TOM
(Chorus)
I can’t wait to get my hands on you,
I can’t wait to get my hands on you,
there’s no telling what I’ll do,
when I get my hands on you

Zadi sneaks up on Tom. She puts her hand on his back and leans her head on his shoulder.

EXT. SHAREHOUSE - AFTERNOON

Jean picks up rubbish papers blowing around the yard.

One of them catches his eye. It is a letter from the real estate agent that reads: 'Notice of eviction for unpaid rent'.

INT. ZADI AND JEAN’S ROOM - EVENING

Jean jumps on the bed with a bottle of MOËT. He pours Zadi a glass but she declines. He drinks his glass, then hers.

ZADI
(Verse 1)
He wants to celebrate,
I claim I've got a headache,
but say 'babe just go for it
cause I'm right there in spirit'

Jean gets touchy feely and tries to kiss Zadi but she holds him off.

ZADI (CONT’D)
Then he starts to get all frisky,
busts some moves,
but I'm just simply,
not interested,
he creeps me,
plays nice
but he's wolfishly,
touchy, touchy, feely,
pREFERRED when he zoned out
to the TV,
believe me when I say
I've dodged a bullet,
bad boy with a bad bet
but who knew it?

ZADI (CONT’D)
(Chorus)
Boyfriend to go.
I got a boyfriend to go.

(MORE)
ZADI (CONT'D)

Boyfriend to go.
I got a boyfriend to go.

Zadi pours another drink for him.

ZADI (CONT'D)
(Verse 2)
I pour another round
to shake things up,
see what he'll confess
when he gets drunk,
I'd rather bump him off
stick him in a trunk,
or grow a veggie patch,
on where his body's dumped, oh!

Jean looks under the weather. She pours him another drink.

ZADI (CONT'D)
I said 'babe if I'm to say 'yes',
I want a big rock,
something to impress,
I asked straight out if had one
he said.....'eerrrr yes'
I said 'in that case,
let's go visit the pares,
the folks will be stoked,
the answer to their prayers,
I'm always compared
to my other siblings,
But I'll be respectable
when I wear that ring'.

ZADI (CONT'D)
(Chorus)
Boyfriend to go.
I got a Boyfriend to go.
Boyfriend to go.
I got a Boyfriend to go.

Jean passes out.

ZADI (CONT'D)
(Verse 3)
Come on Mr.,
flash those diamonds,
I'm so excited
I won't sleep tonight and
oops!
Pop goes the weasel,

Tom enters.
ZADI (CONT’D)
He passed out before I nailed the retrieval. Pure evil, tongue like a serpent, observant, this mission is urgent, the alternate, I'll work on fervently, he's locked in purgatory till I plan plan B.

ZADI (CONT’D)
(Chorus)
Boyfriend to go, I got a Boyfriend to go. Boyfriend to go. I got a Boyfriend to go.

INT. GRACE AND BYRON’S ROOM - EVENING
Rori wipes away tears. Grace trawls through male profiles on a dating site.

RORI
He forgot our anniversary after all the adversary, showin no mercy, he’s got no memory, forgotten me, An anomaly.

GRACE
You left him so what do you care? Grab your care bear cuddle it, kiss it. When you toss your toys don’t complain you miss them.

RORI
But I want him back, we had a routine, I mean, I haven't been single since I turned seventeen!

GRACE
You know what makes him tick, why not make up a gift, sift through his junk, I mean, his stuff,

(MORE)
GRACE (CONT'D)
put together some memorabilia,
before you know it
he'll be feeling ya.

RORI
Good idea.
When did you become miss
assertive....?
In that case
you can chase up my bond.
I’ve asked Zadi twice,
it's not nice she won’t respond.

GRACE
I think we should be worried, since
our names
aren't on the lease,
so legally we're at her mercy,
she can do whatever she please.

INT. TOM AND RORI’S ROOM - EVENING
Tom goes through his wardrobe and tosses out OLD CLOTHES.

A KNOCK at the door.

TOM
Yeah.

Rori lets herself in. She's carrying a big present. She hands it to Tom.

RORI
Happy Anniversary.
Did you have plans for the evening?
If not I was thinking
we could do dinner,
maybe go for a drive
make the most of the night,
and I could explain some things.

Tom unwraps the present and looks at it. It's a collage of pictures taken from the bin and put in a picture frame.

TOM
These are old.
So's the frame.

RORI
I know
but it would be a shame
to throw them out,

(MORE)
**RORI (CONT'D)**

these are my favourites,
takes me back to happy days.

Tom goes back to sorting and tossing clothes.

He tries on a jacket and checks himself out in the mirror.

**RORI (CONT'D)**

Don't ditch that blazer,
it cost me a mint,
makes you look dapper,
hot like a rapper,
ignites my instincts,
I nearly need to be tasered.

**TOM**

Can’t you give me some peace?
I hate to rain on your parade,
but high maintenance chicks
aren’t my thing these days.

**INT. GRACE AND BYRON’S ROOM - DAY**

Grace wraps some baby gifts: the book of names, booties, and a baby blanket.

Byron comes in to get some clothes.

**BRYON**

What are you doing?

**GRACE**

What's it look like?

I'm going out tonight.  
One of the girls from work  
starts maternity leave,  
so we're getting together  
and maybe having a few bevies  
after Cantonese.

**INT. LOUNGEROOM - AFTERNOON**

A contemplative Byron drinks with Rori.

**RORI**

Still haven’t figured you out.
One minute you’re up,  
next minute you’re down.  
Tom’s was obsessive,  
you’re manic depressive,

**(MORE)**
RORI (CONT'D)
Hot Shot was a scammer, an opportunist planner. Player.
At least Tom was a stayer.

BRYON
What are your plans now you've been kicked out?

RORI
The future is always a mystery equation, but later today?
Out drinking with Grace since we're both free agents.

BRYON
Drinking? Isn't that a bit reckless? I mean, what if she's pregnant?

RORI
Are you on crack? As if you two could have a baby, when was the last time your relationship was consummated? Unless your suggesting she's having an affair? Cause when it comes to reproduction, she'd have to look elsewhere.

It hits him like a brick.

BRYON
A party, huh?

RORI
Hell yeah. There'll be some hot, rich, single dudes there. How ironic, if I meet a man on June 15. Tom and my anniversary. Certainly...

BRYON
June 15? June 15. June 15!
INT. STUDY - AFTERNOON

A messy study.

Byron ruffles through papers and checks the date on his calendar.

June 15 is highlighted as the Blog Launch date.

He weeps.

INT. GRACE AND BYRON’S ROOM - AFTERNOON

Grace dresses to seduce and puts on make up.

GRACE
(Verse 1)
Figured it was time
to let down my hair,
dare to do it different
Do you care to compare?
Ditchin the vibe
of the humble housewife,
to a slick style chick
checkin out the nightlife.

GRACE (CONT’D)
(Verse 2)
I’ve been hearing
horror stories here
hanging around the house,
couples caught cuddling
keep curled up on the couch.
Not me, glamorous Grace,
giddy up pick, up the pace,
Mademoiselle on a mission
minus a man for permission.

GRACE (CONT’D)
(Chorus)
I got a new life
I'll be no man's wife
I'm independent oh
I'm getting stronger,
moving on yeah,
Here the present

GRACE (CONT’D)
(Verse 3)
I’m a wise woman
make the most of my mistakes,
youth is wasted on the young
I’ll live it up 'fore it’s too late,
from the sublime to the ridiculous
my rhymes get more articulate,
so hit repeat and play it again,
can’t catch the rhymes first time
you’ll need a thousand listens.

Byron enters. He watches her. Speechless.

GRACE (CONT’D)

(Verse 4)
Boys on my brain
and men on my mind,
my pulse gets a pumping
on a simple bow tie,
no harm in looking
no harm in trying,
no harm in sampling
before you buy it.
Been kissed on the lips
with a wand by a fairy,
voicing ferocious
vocabulary,
like a screaming banshee
feeling raunchy,
oozing sexy
and rearing for foreplay.

I got a new life,
I'll be no man's wife,
I'm independent oh,
keep getting stronger,
moving on yeah,
here in the present

Byron makes a move on Grace. She's not interested. She pushes him onto the bed.

GRACE

(Verse 5)
Got my mojo back
and I might just mingle,
got more surprises
than in a Kris Kringle,
I’m date bait, here’s an update,
don’t wait up, I’ll be home late.
I wanted kids, a house,
and a white picket fence,
that comes at a price
a lifelong expense,
I guess I’ve seen the light
and now I need some shades,
I need to live my life
before I birth a babe.

GRACE (CONT’D)
(Chorus)
I got a new life,
I'll be no man's wife,
I'm independent oh,
keep getting stronger,
moving on yeah,
here in the present

INT. ZADI AND JEAN'S ROOM - AFTERNOON

Jean wakes up hungover, confused, and tied to the bed. Tom is sitting in the corner.

TOM
Where's the ring?

JEAN
Huh?

TOM
Hand it over,
And stay away from Zadi,
and Grace and her baby.

JEAN
Is this a joke?

Tom grabs a scarf in the room and gags him.

TOM
I'm gonna let you stew
for another few minutes
When I return you better talk,
or it's gonna get sadistic.

Tom leaves.

Jean tries to figure out how to escape.

INT. TOM AND RORI’S ROOM - EVENING

Tom cleans out his wardrobe. Bags of clothing sit around the floor.

He grabs a jacket and tries it on. He feels something in his pocket. He takes out the ring.

FLASHBACK:
Tom lays on the bed listening to music on his headphones. He stares at the ring. Rori and Hot Shot enter. He shoves the ring in his pocket and gets out of the way.

PRESENT DAY:
Tom freaks out. He runs to Zadi and Jean's room.

ZADI AND JEAN'S ROOM CONT.
Tom flings the door open. Jean is tied up and gagged on the bed. Tom unties him.

TOM
Zadi's called the cops,
Dude, you'd better run.
She's accused you of abusing her,
she said you hit her
when you were drunk.

JEAN
You know I'd never do that
in a million years!

TOM
You think the cops will believe it
when she cries those fake tears?
Quick man, get out of here!

Tom leaves.
Jean gathers his belongings.

JEAN
(Verse 1)
I’m a pacifist
a passenger on this journey,
avoiding the carriage of conflict
while some get off on the stop of mercy.
Now I broadcast truth,
Cause you all deserve to know
We’ve been ripped off and played
by a lying, thieving ho.
JEAN (CONT’D)

(Verse 2)
Never questioned her moves,
trust has its disadvantages,
like the three wise men
I bear a gift that speaks all languages,
bigger than wikileaks
traitor in our own barracks,
I’m not perfect and I get outed
she gets away and stands proud and...

JEAN (CONT’D)

(Chorus)
That girl’s a liar.
That girl’s a cheat.
That girl’s a liar.
That girl’s a thief.

JEAN (CONT’D)

(Verse 3)
You all should thank me
instead of trying to fight me,
did my best to address the mess
it’s all come back to bite me.
Massive accusations,
by those who give but can’t take,
now I’m calling you on your inconsistencies
Don't dispute what I’m saying.
feigning ignorance, ignoring common sense,
Zadi’s been keeping rent,
she’s a bad tenant,
she shot herself in the foot
but I pulled the trigger,
she’s the reason we’re all leaving
The reason we’re being evicted.

JEAN (CONT’D)

(Verse 4)
I’m cheeky
and sometimes sneaky,
never in stealth mode
my sneakers are squeaky,
She sneaks around
behind my back
doing dirty deeds
I won’t come crawling back
now she wants to be a squatter,
the conflict’s getting hotter
could try to stay but why bother
we’re all just cannon fodder
JEAN (CONT’D)
(Chorus)
That girl’s a liar.
That girl’s a cheat.
That girl’s a liar.
That girl’s a thief.

INT. ZADI AND JEAN’S ROOM - LATER

Zadi walks in to find cut rope, the window open, and no sign of Jean.

EXT. KITCHEN - EVENING

Tom is pacing around the kitchen. Zadi beckons him to follow her.

INT. ZADI AND JEAN’S ROOM - CONT.

Zadi leads Tom in by the hand.

ZADI
See?

ZADI (CONT’D)
What do we do?
What if he goes to the police?

TOM
Nah, he won't
he was scared silly,
besides, he couldn't go there.
He's an illegal immigrant.

She looks around the room and in the wardrobe.

ZADI
He left most his stuff.

TOM
He left in a hurry
too much to carry,
proves he was guilty.
Just bag it up
I'll chuck the baggage.
INT. STUDY - EVENING

Byron stares at the blue screen of death on his computer. He closes it, winds up the lead and carries it to the door.

Underneath the door is an envelope addressed to Byron. He bends down to pick it up.

INT. LOUNGE - DAY

Tom and Zadi dump bags at the front door.

Byron reads a letter.

BYRON
(Through megaphone)
Notice of eviction for unpaid rent.
Repent!
For your own sake....

Zadi snatches the megaphone and the letter from Byron. She studies it.

ZADI
It's a fake!
If you believe the word of a thief
then you deserve to suffer
your self fulfilled grief.
Perceive what you will
but I deny this ill.

BYRON
Blaming others again!
Half the problems caused
are from you carting home strays

ZADI
I'm tired of you judging me and my
polyamorous ways!

BYRON
Polyamorous
is just a glamorous term for
slu......

ZADI
Ah! Ah! Ah! Ah!
Don't you say it!
Don't you say it!
At least
I'm open minded and honest.
BYRON
Pffft! For a squatter?

TOM
Squatting?

BYRON
If it's crossed your mind
to keep to our bonds,
don't even consider,

He gets in her face.

BYRON (CONT'D)
I'll burn this house
down to the ground,
with you in it.

INT. LOUNGE - LATER
A knock at the door. Tom answers.
It's Fabian.

FABIAN
Hello, Hello,
I'm your next door neighbor,

TOM
Hi.

FABIAN
We've never officially met,
but you can call me Fabian.
I was confronted out the front
by an angry young man,
Who then disappeared
like Catch Me If You Can
and in the interest
of good neighbourly relations,
I wanted to come have a chat,
I'd appreciate your patience.

TOM
Ok.

FABIAN
I tried to explain
but never got the chance,
I got yelled at, screamed at,
he said I stole his underpants,
but truth is

(MORE)
FABIAN (CONT’D)
I found those clothes
in my backyard,
so I put them through a cycle
with some dynamo and sard
and wallah!
Practically a new wardrobe,
some fashionable attire,
especially
the Spider-Man boxer shorts.
I didn't mean to cause offence,
it's just the previous housemates
or tenants,
threw things over the fence,
as a means of dispense,
so like hard rubbish,
I sifted through
to sort the wheat from the chaff,
then kept it and wore it
but I'd be glad to hand it back.

Fabian starts to remove clothing.

TOM
No, no, no, no need, in fact

Tom grabs a bag of clothes and hands it to Fabian.

TOM (CONT’D)
He just moved out and
left a pile of clothes behind,
They were bound for the Salvos,
Take them but
they'll need a good wash and iron

FABIAN
Oh you're too kind.

TOM
Don't mention it.

FABIAN
Life can be bit stingy
for an poor old pensioner.
Well, I'd better make tracks....

TOM
Tom.

FABIAN
Ok Tom. Right.
Cheerio.
You'll have to pop in
Sometime for a cuppa
and an iced Vovo.
INT. GRACE AND BYRON’S ROOM - NIGHT

Grace is passed out on her doona, fully clothed.

Byron removes her shoes and covers her with a blanket.

BYRON
(Verse 1)
Like a tiger burning brightly
in the middle of the night,
he takes his thoughts, pen and paper
into darkness and begins to write,
engraving words deep
into the fabric of history
but now he’d rather
his past life
remain a distant mystery

He places a glass of water on the side table.

BYRON (CONT’D)
(Verse 2)
Shackled to the expectations
that he placed upon himself,
the self loathing and self pity
leaves no room for someone else.
Someone special, she’s here
and he’s left her abandoned,
please forgive my selfish ways
I’m looking out for second chances.

BATHROOM

Tom paces around like a caged animal.

TOM
(Chorus)
Don’t come around here,
don’t come around here,
teaching me the error of my ways,
I’ve lived a million lifetimes,
I don’t need a lifeline,
I’ve still got a lot I want to save.
Don’t come around here
don’t come around here
pointing out the error of my ways,
I’ve been battling with the demons,
kicking and screaming,
I’ve challenged my escapes.

He rips the mirror off the wall and SMASHES it into the basin.
TOM (CONT’D)

(Verse 3)
Found my buried treasure,
but now we can’t get back together,
not now, not ever,
thought I was clever,
now my dumb actions
will impact on me forever.
There’s a second chance
waiting outside,
eat defeat
and swallow my pride,
secrets keep me twisted inside,
bide my time, move on
and take it in my stride.

GRACE AND BYRON’S CONT.

Grace wakes up tucked in bed.

GRACE

(Verse 4)
Is he good is he bad?
Should I give him one last chance?
Didn’t say I’d take him back,
till he proves he’s worth a crack.
It’s natural I’m skeptical,
he could cause another spectacle,
but what the hell, we’re only human,
it’ll be amusing
to watch him prove himself.

BATHROOM CONT.

A KNOCK at the door. It’s Zadi.

Tom stands dripping in a towel.

ZADI

(Chorus)
Don’t come around here,
don’t come around here,
teaching me the error of my ways,
I’ve lived a million lifetimes,
I don’t need a lifeline,
I’ve still got a lot I want to save.

TOM

(Chorus cont.)
Don’t come around here
don’t come around here
pointing out the error of my ways,
TOM AND ZADI
(Chorus cont.)
I’ve been battling with the demons,
kicking and screaming,
I’ve challenged my escapes.

They kiss.

LOUNGE CONT.
Byron climbs into the fold out bed. He falls asleep as soon as his head hits the pillow. He looks at peace.
Grace wakes him. She takes him by the hand and leads him away.

GRACE AND BYRON
(Chorus)
Don’t come around here,
don’t come around here,
teaching me the error of my ways,
I’ve lived a million lifetimes,
I don’t need a lifeline,
I’ve still got a lot I want to save.
Don’t come around here
don’t come around here
pointing out the error of my ways,
I’ve been battling with the demons,
kicking and screaming,
I’ve challenged my escapes.

GRACE AND BYRON’S ROOM CONT.
Byron and Grace lay next to each other. There’s silence. Serenity.
Byron snuggles puts his arm around Grace. They kiss passionately.
The pendulum on the clock slows to a stop.

LOUNGE CONT.
Tom and Zadi sit beside each other on the couch.
Zadi’s hand reaches to touch his thigh.

ZADI
(Verse 5)
Two people
on opposite sides of the equation, fearing loss, find each other in a situation, as different as opposing forces but drawn together through external sources. Another chance for a heart connection, another chance for reinvention, another chance to start again This time with a good and honest man.

Tom stares down at the floor. His face is burdened by secrets and guilt.

EXT. ROAD - MORNING

Grace jogs along the road on her HEADPHONES. She’s exuberant, glowing.

PARK CONT.

Rori finds a bench, sits down, and waits. She sings to herself.

RORI

(Chorus)
Don’t come around here, don’t come around here, teaching me the error of my ways, I’ve lived a million lifetimes, I don’t need a lifeline, I’ve still got a lot I want to save. Don’t come around here don’t come around here pointing out the error of my ways, I’ve been battling with the demons, kicking and screaming, I’ve challenged my escapes.

Grace sits down beside her. She removes her headphones and hands over an envelope.

Rori peeks inside at the cash.

GRACE

(Spoken))
Bond AND the extra week of rent that you paid.
RORI
(Spoken)
I thought that would be like
getting blood from a stone.

GRACE
(Spoken)
Strangely, no.

RORI
(Spoken)
I thought I’d lose it all.

GRACE
(Spoken)
AND I got lucky last night.

Rori plays with the envelope.

RORI
(Spoken)
You know, my palm has been itching
a lot lately. I knew money was
coming in...

She laughs to herself, places the envelope in her pocket, and
gets up to leave.

RORI (CONT’D)
(Spoken)
See ya lady.

GRACE
(Spoken)
Yeah. See ya.

Grace is on her way. There’s a spring in her step.

In the distance, Rori jogs off.

GRACE (CONT’D)
(Chorus)
Don’t come around here,
don’t come around here,
teaching me the error of my ways,
I’ve lived a million lifetimes,
I don’t need a lifeline,
I’ve still got a lot I want to save.

EXT. BUS STOP - MORNING

Jean wakes up on a bench.
Grace jogs past in the background.

JEAN
(Chorus)
Don't come around here
don't come around here
pointing out the error of my ways,
I've been battling with the demons,
kicking and screaming,
I've challenged my escapes.

A man next to Jean reads the NEWSPAPER. There is a headline that reads 'UNCLAIMED 5 MILLION DOLLAR LOTTO DRAW'.

Jean checks his pockets. He's wearing different clothes.

He has a moment of horror.

EXT. SHAREHOUSE - DAY
A 'For Lease' sign.

Zadi and Tom walk back to the house and close the door.

NEXT DOOR CONT.
A 'For Sale' sign.
A FLASH CAR in the driveway.

The old man exits the house in Jean's hipster clothes and sun glasses.

He jumps in the car and drives off.
Exegesis
INTRODUCTION

The Project

This project consists of two complementary elements that bring scholarly insights to a creative journey. My artefact is a feature length Hip Hopera screenplay. A Hip Hopera (Hip Hop Opera) is a series of Hip Hop songs shaped into the form of an opera that communicates a story through related music featuring the same character or characters (McClary 2005). It is a relatively underutilised form that was originally popularised in video clips and later evolved to MTV-produced performances (McClary 2005). The existing films that are classified as Hip Hoperas vary in their delivery, some feature a mix of songs and dialogue and some are sung or rapped throughout, therefore confusing the definition of ‘Opera’. The same type of confusion exists with some film that are classified as Rock Operas. Hip Hoperas and Rock Operas are just two of the subgenres of the film musical. My screenplay is a Hip Hopera that utilises a combination of the characteristics of existing Hip Hoperas and also makes a new contribution to the genre via its feminist angle and delivery in a cappella. My Screenplay The End of Convenience can be classified as a Hip Hopera because the vocal delivery is in rap and the narrative is based around themes in existing Hip Hopera such as survival, status, and housing.

My exegesis explores and articulates key elements of the Hip Hopera and discusses how my artefact interacts with the genre. Insights from this journey are important not only for the development of my artefact, a screenplay entitled The End of Convenience, but also for the ongoing furthering and understanding of my creative practice through this scholarly scaffolding.
Through practice-led research (PLR) the creation of this exegesis enabled reflection on many aspects of my creative process. This included what role cohabitation and Feminist Standpoint Theory (FST) played in creating a screenplay with an even representation of genders and how Hip Hoperas, Hip Hop, the development of film musicals over the decades had an impact on my work. It also included an investigation into how to best create multi-protagonist storylines.
**PLR Methodology**

I utilise PLR as a key methodology for the creation of this exegesis and artefact. As defined by Jillian Hamilton and Luke Jaaniste (2010), such research is a methodology that enables knowledge to emerge from creative practice as the practice unfolds. Jen Webb and Donna Lee Brien (2008) identify a sequence of steps in the cycle. These are: research for practice, research into practice and research through practice.

Webb and Brien suggest the PLR stage consists of generating data that will provide knowledge for the creative project. My PLR began with research for practice, which consisted of background reading into film musicals and their subgenres over the decades that included early Hollywood musicals, rock musicals, rock operas, and the Hip Hopera. As a limited number of Hip Hoperas have made it to the screen, I cast my research wide to include the nature of Hip Hop as a culture and musical form and poetics of Rap and screenwriting. This led me to engage with the scholarly discourses of the issues that powered my screenplay such as the social and economic dilemmas for youth and the theoretical framework of Feminist Standpoint Theory (FST) as a way of working through some of the challenges of creating in the traditionally masculine and sexist music genre of Hip Hop.

Next, Webb and Brien define research into practice as the generation of knowledge about techniques, thinking and processes about how this practice will be implemented. For me, this included journaling to reflect on how data discovered in the first step might influence my creative process. Throughout the process of creating the artefact and exegesis I have kept a journal for research, ideas, and
findings directly related to my artefact. The journal recorded my creative challenges, observations and interrogations about the other cultural products that are similar to mine, my experimentation with ideas and offered the space to engage with academic readings so as to test out my thoughts on how their various techniques and processes might interact with my artefact.

The third step is what Webb and Brien describe as research through practice, a method to generate more knowledge of aspects such as social and political issues through implementing creative techniques. The concept of ‘research through practice’ is a further step in the cycle of PLR in which I tested out on the canvas of the artefact what I learned through researching for the artefact. Finally, I utilised PLR to build this scholarly exegesis to complement my artefact.

**Screenwriting a Hip Hopera**

The first step in evaluating the appropriate research for practice was to examine my motivations for writing a film musical. Two reasons came to mind: firstly, a background as a musician and songwriter and secondly that I have always had a strong interest in movies and screenwriting.

Writing a film musical was the perfect way to combine these two passions. The added benefit is that the two complement each other; I wanted to write music and have it featured in films and by creating a film musical I have the canvas of a feature film in which to feature my songs.
The lack of screenplay manuscripts available for film musicals made it challenging to choose a layout that would best suit the delivery of my screenplay. Therefore, I chose to create a hybrid based on two existing screenplays: Rent and Sweeney Todd. The dialogue (Rap) has been centred with each of the lines ending in a rhyme in order to make the rhythm and cadence visible. As the story begins with each of the characters introducing who they are and what their goal is using a monologue style, the format appears different and distinct from standard screenplays.

Part of the appeal of writing a film musical is the potential for recognition due to the limited number of films being made in this genre. Creating a film musical gives an independent filmmaker what Lisa Selin Davis (2004) emphasises as a greater chance to stand out and a better chance of winning an award in this category due to less competition. The musical is also one of the most popular film genres and a favourite among audiences and scholars (Marshall & Stillwell 2000).

There was no point modelling the screenplay on Golden Era film musicals, as their themes, values, characters and even narratives would not be suitable for harder hitting messages (Altman 1989; Feuer 1993; Steimle 2010) such as those I was considering for my screenplay. Many early film musicals feature performers ‘working within a narrative’ (Mundy 1999) and although film musicals between the 60s and 80s deviated from ‘happily ever after’ narratives (Kessler 2004) and more recent films such as Dancer in the Dark (2000), Repo! the Genetic Opera (2008), and Rent (2006) featured darker and edgier storylines, my attention was drawn to the form/genre of the Hip Hopera as it was a newer style of film musical that had potential to deal with
grittier realities while retaining a sense of the poetic. Indeed, David Parkinson (2007) noted that the film musical has the potential to be a viable art form but hasn’t had success because Hollywood hasn’t kept up with musical trends.

One of the challenges of creating a Hip Hopera was the lack of existing works and research to draw examples from. However, the benefits of writing a Hip Hopera is that I get to contribute to the genre and thus change the way women are represented within it. I created female protagonists (one of whom is polyamorous), and a third female (not as assertive) whose happiness is dependent on her male partner and who ultimately learns to find her own strength and independence. These characters challenge the masculinist status quo of the genre. Even with careful research into the Hip Hopera, the quantity of available information was too narrow to begin working on my artefact so I embarked on a more in-depth research of Hip Hop.

**Researching Hip Hop**

The exegesis evaluates the characteristics of Hip Hop as musical genre as described by Susan Hadley and George Yancy (2011), Tricia Rose (1994), Jeff Chang (2005), and Peter Shapiro (2005). It evaluates perceptions around Hip Hop as a culture and whether these are present or debated in my artefact. These include its growing global popularity as a permanent cultural space (Gest 2007) and misogyny and sexism (Dyson & Hurt 2012). Hip Hop’s representation of women
gave me grounds to develop my characters into something more original and fresh to contribute to the genre: Rappers with a feminist edge.

As a part of my research, I investigated thematic tendencies in Hip Hop and their relationship to the Hip Hopera, drawing on the work of Tony Mitchell (2003), David Gest (2007), and Loren Lomasky and Kyle Swan (2009). Questions asked by these scholars include whether it can capture intense social and political issues and moments by exploring aspects of the genre such as gang-related crime, drug use, and cyclical poverty. Further themes I discuss include whether Hip Hop should be appropriated by those outside the racial and cultural community of origin; how it reveals problems with affordable living in city environments/share housing, and in what ways it deals with a sense of oppression and its representation of gender.

No discussion of Hip Hop could be considered complete without addressing issues of authenticity and appropriation and calling on larger questions around capitalist exploitations of other cultures. Some scholars introduce claims that white opportunists have hijacked black culture for their own selfish needs (Garofalo 2002) and appropriated black culture in a way that is palatable to mainstream America (Ford 2004). Other academic debates (Thompson & Brown 2002) argue that contemporary Hip Hop closes the gap between black and white by presenting a musical form that appeals beyond racial boundaries and that addresses inequality in its many different forms. For example, Christopher Malone and George Martinez (2010) claim that Hip Hop is so popular because Rap can present commentary and narration on issues from many viewpoints. These include the white trailer park poverty of
Eminem and the Brooklyn based inner-urban struggles of the early Beastie Boys as well as the gang-related life experiences of Ice T. Similarly: the protest against homophobia by Macklemore; the descriptions of urban decay in Grandmaster Flash; and the Furious Five’s 1977 song ‘The Message’ demonstrate different elements of life experience.

This discussion engages with the idea that performances have been used to create and execute fake personas that have been used to excuse violent lyrics and to present a ‘theatrical representation of violence’ (Saddick 2003, p. 115). With this in mind, my artefact explores this idea through having many of my characters deliberately perform identities in the first half of the screenplay that are surrendered in the second half of the screenplay.

The setting, a sharehouse, is a fictionalised account of sharehouse experiences and what it was like to live with couples. The reality of share housing and the Hip Hop genre seemed to feature some strong connections. I also discuss my decision to create a non-specific geographic location and how this impacts on the choice of language used in the Rap.
Hip Hop and Housing

The exegesis investigates how the screenplay draws on Hip Hop’s fascinating socio-economic connection to housing that began in the South Bronx’s poor high-rise communities. Post-war resettlement led to an increase in shared accommodation as a result of financial institutions’ reluctance to offer loans to South Bronx areas, the luring of stable families to newly built outer suburbs, and the creation of inward looking subsidised social housing with little infrastructure in the way of services and transport (Gest 2007). Overcrowding of dwellers in housing and the resulting tensions of extended family living and fractured unstable families meant that many younger people sought their own share housing (Alexander 2012). The Hip Hop movement grew from these conditions. In my mind, this history made the Hip Hopera a natural fit for a story about the difficulties of urban living. I also discuss how Hip Hop has become a global movement (Morgan & Bennett 2011) and has become transferable to many other cultures (Hadley & Yancy 2011).

Hence, the exegesis analyses debates around urbanised living, cohabitation, the advantages and disadvantages of shared living, and youth disempowerment through economic conditions. It interrogates how each of these has interacted with decisions in my creative practice. I also discuss the impact of sociological theories that build on the themes common to Hip Hop and explain how I use in my artefact. These include Steven Bourassa, Donald Haurin, Jean Haurin and Patrick Hendershot’s (1997) findings about the common reasons for cohabitation (to escape stressful family situations, to cope with higher inner city costs of shelter), and Elijah
Anderson’s (1990) theories of youth disempowerment through economic conditions and a cycle of gaining and losing reputation (Anderson 1990; Wilson 2012).

**The Hip Hopera and Women**

*The End of Convenience* explores the life and relationship challenges encountered by three unmarried young couples that are forced by finances and circumstance to live in share accommodation. It also presents the hidden costs of youth cohabitation, such as economic and social marginalisation. The screenplay interrogates the notion that share housing is both an individual and societal economic relationship of benefit; examines whether the relationships within share houses are constructed around convenience or love; and analyses what happens to the lives of young people when their share house arrangement ends.

In this exegesis, I use FST as theorised by Dorothy Smith (2004) as a frame to shed light on the role of performance, role-play, gender, identity, and marginalisation in environments of cohabitation and how has this influenced the development of my screenplay.

Michael Dyson and Byron Hurt (2012) suggest that the representations of women in Hip Hop foster a belief that the successful male in the Hip Hop community must dominate women and that women should be viewed almost exclusively as sexual objects. This is despite the fact that women played a vital role in the evolution of Hip Hop. However, women tend to hold less visible positions of authority in the
movement (Gupta-Carlson 2010), and so the contributions that women have made to Hip Hop history have largely been hidden and overlooked. My screenplay aims to provide a space for women to be seen and heard in an assertive way in a musical style that often marginalises them as they negotiate relationships and their roles in the house.

Rap

_The End of Convenience_ is a Hip Hopera with dialogue delivered entirely in Rap and my exegesis provides insights into the process of creating the rhyme and how it has been used to convey a character arc through the use of Paul Edwards’ (2009) breakdown of the elements: flow, writing, and delivery. The exegesis also interrogates how my use of poetic form, lyrical style and content and point of view throughout the artefact has evolved and challenged, and tests how FST can be used to enrich representation of both genders in the screenplay.

I also evaluate Rap’s suitability to storytelling by drawing on the observations of theorists who describe Hip Hop as a platform for battle Rap (Edwards 2009), disssing (Bradley 2009), discussing fiction or debate (Pieterse 2010), relaying narratives (Saloy 1998), and delivering political and social messages (Kiyoshi 2009). I justify my departure from Hip Hop language stereotypes such as swearing, slang, and politics by drawing on the findings of Halifu Osumare (2009) who asserts that Rap isn’t always about political and social messages, and Mtume ya Salaam (1995) who claims that slang and dialects can make lyrics difficult to decipher. As I have not
specified a location or specific nationality in my screenplay, slang and dialects have been omitted and I discuss if this impacts on the effectiveness of the story.

As I created dialogue intended to be delivered without accompaniment (a cappella), it was important that I research and clearly articulate the distinguishing features and characteristics between Rap and poetry. I investigate these differences using evidence that the strong presence of rhyme is essential to Rap (Edwards 2009) but not in poetry (Khibir 2011).

This exegesis also investigates the findings of my analysis of other Hip Hoperas. These include: *A Day in the Life* (2009), *Caught on Tape* (2013), *Trapped in the Closet* (2005), and *Carmen: A Hip Hop Opera* (2001). I examine these through the prism of similarities and differences to my artefact and discuss what I have applied and ideas abandoned. This includes integrated reflection on how these aspects suit or do not suit my artefact.

**The Multi-Protagonist Narrative**

As noted, this exegesis discusses how I have created a screenplay that is an outcome of my exploration into how best to deal with the issues of share housing and cohabitation in a creative form. It looks at the multi-protagonist narrative as the most appropriate structure for my screenplay because it portrays the survival of the group (Aronson 2010), follows the journeys of each member of the group (Law 2006) and it is one of the most popular trends in cinema today (del Mar Azcona 2010).
Multi-protagonist story structure allows discussion of reoccurring themes in Hip Hop such as diversity in Rap (Powell 2000), authentication strategies (Hess 2012), violence (Richardson & Scott 2002), interpretation (Saddick 2003) and corporate control (Sullivan 2003). In order to test my model structure, I have broken down existing Hip Hoperas for theme, characterisation, and narrative, and drawn comparisons between them and my screenplay.

The multi-protagonist structure suits the theoretical framework of FST, which asserts ‘the only way of knowing a socially constructed world is knowing it from within’ (Smith 2004, p. 28). According to this theory: ‘marginalized groups have less interest preserving the status quo’ (Lenz 2004, p. 98). My artefact explores this concept through featuring female characters that strive for change both inside and outside of the boundaries of house and home.

Through the prism of PLR, my exegesis analyses, critiques, and reflects upon the creative choices made during the creation of the screenplay. It integrates discussion about these choices with questions around whether the Hip Hopeara is an appropriate vehicle to tell a story about urban marginalisation. It evaluates whether Hip Hop is an effective tool for social commentary when the subject of its storytelling is not the industries of the street or race-related issues. The frame of FST is used to consider the role of performance, role-play, gender, and identity in cohabitation and examines the relationship between share housing and marginalisation.
SECTION ONE
WHY HIP HOPERA?

The Musical

Having decided that I wanted to write a film musical of some type, my next question became ‘what type of musical?’. Barry Keith Grant (2012) says that a musical is a film genre that involves song and/or dance performed by the main characters and that these song and/or dance numbers make up an important part of the film. Thomas Hischak (2004) claims that songs are the heart of a musical both on stage and on screen.

Although I see the film musical as an avenue to combine both of my artistic passions, there has been much discussion in the literature about the health of this genre with scholarly debate over whether or not it has seen its day. Given that I wanted to create a film musical, I evaluated critical discourse around it. For example, Susan Hayward (2006) says the film musical has been on the decline since the 1980s while Peter Fraser (1987) believes that the film musical has as many possibilities now as it did in its Golden Age, but states that the generic tradition may not be recoverable. So too, Richard Barrios (1995) claims that the film musical is an American concept that has not matured and survived and it has little to do with ongoing film trends.
There is evidence to suggest the traditional concept of the film musical has indeed declined, but one could argue that the modern day musical is stronger than ever and has simply taken a new form. The music video could be considered the new Hollywood musical (Mundy 1999) and the introduction of reality TV programs such as *American Idol* could be considered a type of back stage musical (Garcia 2014). Television shows such as *Glee, Empire, Garfunkel and Oates* and *Flight of the Conchords* all feature musical numbers and have run for multiple seasons on both free to air and cable stations. Though the film musical may have declined, as some of the above evidence suggests, it is certainly not dead and I believe that the number of film musicals being produced should not deter creating in this genre; in fact, producing film musicals may provide more of an opportunity to stand out.

Parkinson (2007) asserts the decline of the film musical has paralleled a renewed interest in Broadway musicals. Diana Sanders (2006) not only argues that the film musical is far from disappearing, but says that during the years 1983-2000 the genre evolved through blending high concept film making and music video into a new hybrid that includes, but is not limited to, the Disney musical, the teen musical, and the music video. Kelly Kay Kessler (2004) states that although the film musical has experienced ups and downs throughout its history, the film musical maintained a constant presence in the 80s and films like *Chicago* (2003) prove that it remains a resilient and significant genre well into the current times.
In contrast, Martina Elicker (2002) argues that the rock opera hasn’t taken off due to the repetitive nature of rock music. Elicker describes the musical as the modern day equivalent of opera and claims that the rock/pop musical has often been used to reflect the current political, cultural and social climates. This characteristic doesn’t lend itself to continuity between numbers, the timbres of rock instruments are limited in terms of dramatic and aesthetic expression, and the melding of high art and pop art has been scorned by both purists and populists alike (Elicker 2002). This is relevant to my work because understanding what genres have been tested previously in pop culture gave me an insight into what musical successes to repeat or what issues to avoid. Though there are still few Rock Musicals made, many tend to become cult films. Examples of this are *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* (2001), *Rock of Ages* (2012), and *Repo! the Genetic Opera* (2008).

My story’s representation of the challenges of youth share housing meant that ideally it needed a form of delivery that could quickly capture and project the key elements of share housing that I wanted to communicate. These included aspiration, retreat into escapism, interpersonal conflict, and struggle, as well as sociological findings related to young adult cohabitation. I also needed a form that could function as, and carry, social commentary. I felt the traditional film musical would not achieve this because their narratives are universally regarded as escapist (Babington & Evans 1985), innocent (Barrios 1995), and light hearted and superficial (Steimle 2010). Hence, while some scholars argue that these styles do have their own internal devices for challenging the status quo (Altman 1989; Feuer 1993), their particular
conventions did not seem to suit my exploration and delivery of harder-hitting messages (Fraser 1987; Steimle 2010).

**The Form**

The form, I decided, would need to be in sympathy with the message as much as possible. With this in mind, I examined a range of contemporary film musicals that had the potential to offer social comment in order to evaluate whether their form, structures, and delivery could work for my intended content and themes.

I began my investigation with two film musicals, *Rent* (Columbus 2005) and *Dancer in The Dark* (von Trier 2000). Based on the stage play of the same name, *Rent* (2005) is the story of a group of share house tenants who learn they are unexpectedly required to pay rent or face eviction. The story is loosely based on Puccini’s *La Bohème*, but updated to include a sadism and masochism (S&M) dancer, a transvestite and a performance artist. It is set in New York in the late 1980s under the shadow of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) and portrays a bohemian lifestyle that the characters come to question. As a stage and film musical, it has more traumatic content than I intended for my own screenplay: heroin addiction, prostitution, everyday street violence, and AIDS mortality. The characters live for the present as a way of coping with an inhospitable and economically rationalist society that had marginalised and excluded them and it is this shortsightedness of both society and the landlord that is theirundoing.
Similarly, *Dancer in The Dark* (2000) is a bleak narrative about immigrant marginalisation and lack of opportunity in America in the 1960s. Its ending resides well outside the traditional resolution of the film musical and it comes to harsh conclusions about the role of law, authority and worker’s rights. The content of both these films assured me that the modern film musical could carry social critique and, as Kessler (2004) suggests, has indeed evolved to deal with harder-edged issues such as death, disease, victimisation, and, through works such as *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* (2001), political and legal questions around transsexuality. This is evident in *Hedwig* when Luther, an American soldier, explains to his partner Hansel that the government will be conducting a physical exam, therefore Hansel will need to undergo sex change surgery in order for them to get married.

**The Delivery**

Satisfied with the modern film musical’s ability to deal with confronting content, I considered delivery. *Rent’s* musical delivery is grounded in rock music, but has deliveries blended with other genres such as pop, gospel and tango (Titrington 2007). The result is a range of musical performances that apparently intend to match mood and character. Many critics, however, did not feel this was achieved successfully. Roger Ebert (2006) for example suggests that there is a disharmony between the words and the music: ‘the music serves the choreography, the words serve the story, but they don't serve one another’ (p. 576). I had already written and staged a rock musical in the past and so felt the need to explore new creative ground and technique within the generic form of the musical. I also wanted to expand my writing from stage to screen.
Dancer in the Dark (2000) had some innovative approaches to resolving the tension between lyrics and music. It deliberately matched the environmental sounds of the setting to the lyrics and often used them as accompaniment, drawing the diegetic into the musical compositions in a natural manner. Most interestingly for me, it also resolves any potential disconnect in many scenes by delivering the vocal performance without music, that is, a cappella. With this in mind, I turned to other cultural artefacts that use rhythms and rhyme to deliver dialogue and narration. Shakespeare’s plays: A Midsummer Night’s Dream (c: 1605), Hamlet (c: 1603), and Romeo and Juliet (c: 1595) immediately came to mind.

Given that my artefact is a screenplay, I examined Baz Luhrmann’s Romeo and Juliet. Poetry and rhyme are used throughout the dialogue and are the central modes of communication for the narrative. This method of delivery offered a number of exciting and distinct creative advantages, particularly as a way to make a stronger representation of character through the linkage of diction and performance. It also allowed a more dramatic articulation of each of the characters’ arcs of development from the opening scene to the last moments of the screenplay. What was most immediately notable about use of rhyming verse in Romeo and Juliet was the use of rhyme to deliver background and scene information in a modern setting. Luhrmann’s Romeo and Juliet may speak in the rhythms and language of the 1600s, but the world in which the story takes place is as ordinary as any we move through today.
As I watched the film open with a television anchor-woman reciting the prologue as a news flash on the ill fate of Romeo and Juliet, so too opened a new range of possibilities about what rhyme could comment upon. If a 300-year-old story delivered in the original rhythmic poetic forms and language of its era could be used to tell a story relevant to today’s audience and to the world we live in, then imagine what could be done with a story that played with modern street forms of poetic language and the subculture attached to that.

If a Shakespearean Chorus can be transformed into a popular media journalist, and the dignified families of Verona can be re-storied into crime families, then why not use every day cultural institutions such as game show hosts, pizza delivery boys, and a share house? And why not update the poetic form from Shakespearean verse to Rap? This became, for me, an opportunity to contribute something unique and new to the film musical. With this in mind I began to research if this had been done before and discovered that my idea aligned closely with the musical form of a ‘Hip Hop Opera’ or ‘Hip Hopera’.

**Hip Hopera: Form and Delivery**

A narrative is a story that has a beginning, middle and end (Alexander 2012) that can be used to explain and interpret experiences. Hip Hop shares common narratives and cultural frames and Rap has been used as a device to tell cultural narratives and describe how different groups respond to social disadvantages such as poverty
Rap often tell stories of black men who have confronted adversaries and adversities and won (Saloy 1998). Rap lyrics can make a particular point (Gupta-Carlson 2010), can be used to reverse sexual disempowerment for women (Lopez 2014) and can deliver first person narratives used to illustrate inequalities and inner city struggle (Maher 2005). With this in mind, I began working on my artefact with the understanding that Rap is a powerful tool for narrative and self-expression.

A Hip Hopera consists of a series of Hip Hop songs that tell a story (McClary 2005). One of the few examples is an interpretation of Carmen (2001) featuring popular music icon Beyonce Knowles. Additionally, A Day in the Life (2009), Caught on Tape (2013), and Trapped in the Closet (2005) have all been labelled as Hip Hoperas.


There were other cultural items that moved towards the form of Hip Hopera. In the early 2000s a series of movies were released that featured Hip Hop music and
culture as a part of the story. Eminem’s *8 Mile* (2002) and 50 Cent’s *Get Rich or Die Trying* (2005) proved popular and as Parkinson (2007) observed, the Hip Hop movie had the potential to be the next big thing even in mainstream cinema. Yet it did not achieve this level of success.

The failure of the Hip Hop film to take off could be attributed to the fickle nature of musical tastes and Hollywood’s failure to keep up with current trends (McClary 2005). As a result, there have been relatively few Hip Hoperas. As much as this underproduction of works provides a challenge, I also see it as an opportunity to fill a gap for both the creative production and scholarship in the medium.

One of the challenges I faced during my initial stages of research on Hip Hopera was the lack of works created in this genre. In an effort to overcome this I have broadened my discussion to include Hip Hop as a musical genre so as to better understand its benefits and limitations in order to contribute to the field. One of the key points of this investigation is whether the Hip Hop movement works for or against the aims of my artefact.

In order to explore this, I needed to define the differences between Rap and Hip Hop. Although the terms are often used interchangeably, Susan Hadley and George Yancy (2011) claim that Hip Hop is the cultural arts movement and Rap is the music produced by the movement. Tricia Rose (1994) says that Hip Hop is made up of four key artistic elements. These are music, visual art, fashion and dance. Afrika Bambata
describes a fifth element of Hip Hop, ‘knowledge of self’, that refers to a conscious commentary of black history including racial exclusion and oppression (Chang 2005; Shapiro 2005). My artefact does not directly address this fifth element as it does not enter into themes of racial exclusion and oppression. However, there is an element of ‘knowledge of self’ in the sense that the characters vocalise their journey, struggles and marginalisation due to share housing and cohabitation.

An Effective Genre

Some scholars believe that Hip Hop is too diverse to be defined by any one particular label. Catherine Tabb Powell (1991) acknowledges this diversity by saying that there are many categories of Hip Hop. Others believe that Hip Hop can be categorised through the nature of performance. The two kinds of Rappers that Geoffrey Baker (2011) presents are Preachers and Gangstas. Gangstas are characterised by their blunt reportage and preachers by authoritative exhortations. Generally, people have more positive associations with political/preacher Rap than they do with gangsta Rap (Caldwell 2008). Perhaps this is because political Rap is associated with social commentary and positive change while Gangsta Rap can be viewed as a negative stereotype about black urban living. *The End of Convenience* doesn’t strictly adhere to either of these styles but does contain elements of both. Each character comments on their surroundings and participates in battle raps and unflattering commentary but as their arc develops they rap about what they have discovered and how it has affected them, passing on the knowledge and wisdom of their experiences to the audience.
One of the main reasons I have chosen to write a Hip Hopera is the growing global popularity of Hip Hop as a musical genre and as a culture. It is a global movement (Morgan & Bennett 2011) and its growing popularity has resulted in the form occupying ‘a permanent cultural space in both music and capitalist culture’ (Gest 2007, p. 71). Rap is a ‘rhetoric that reinforces strength, self-esteem and coolness’ (Calwell 2008, p. 24). It is easy to see how these characteristics would be appealing to youth, particularly to those from impoverished backgrounds. This was a definite consideration when choosing rap as the dialogue I created was intended to show the characters fighting against their life circumstances rather than becoming victims of it.

There are several advantages of working within the Hip Hop genre. The form is often considered to have originated with and been driven by urban Afro-American youth (Kiyoshi 2009) and the reality is that its appeal spreads beyond America into the wider world of youth, thus marking it as one of the most ‘dynamic arts and culture movements in recent history’ (Morgan & Bennett 2011, p. 16). It has even been called a type of ‘universal language’, as its form is able to sit within both Western and non-Western cultures and local languages (Hadley & Yancy 2011).

Aside from this universal appeal, Hip-Hop has also entered the realm of the educational and academic. ‘In response to low literacy levels in the United States, Hip Hop literacy seeks to engage socially marginalized students in language studies through the analysis and construction of Rap lyrics’ (Caldwell 2012, p. 1). Such
existing research has made it possible for me to find accurate historical information about the music and the movement that has had an influence on creative decisions and helped me navigate through ethical challenges of appropriation that I will discuss in the next chapter. By creating an artefact that is a Hip Hopera, I am contributing to academic discussions on the genre and I hope that this project will generate scholarly commentary.

Despite its early beginnings generating from the American ghettos, Hip Hop is highly adaptable to location. The global appeal of Hip Hop transcends cultural and geographical boundaries, yet it offers an organic quality to address local political and social issues. As Hip-Hop’s cultural beliefs became more widely understood ‘global hip-hop began to take on a character of its own, reflecting the culture, creativity, and local styles of the youth who embraced and produced it’ (Morgan & Bennett 2011, p. 5). The adaptability of Hip Hop meant that it grew quickly and has been imitated and revised by young people all around the globe (Kiyoshi 2009). This adaptability to location was exactly what I needed for a screenplay that could be set outside the United States.

Hip-Hop has been described as ‘one of the most effective means to communicate with young people’ (Dunbar-Hall & Gibson 2004, p. 123). It is powerful and has multiple uses such as cultural expression, social justice, and an avenue for political activism and participation through the ‘shared experience of marginalization, poverty, and hardships’ (Malone & Martinez 2010, p. 542). It has the potential to give people a voice and share personal stories that become narratives and this can be
channelled into activism. It can also be used to ‘practice political resistance’ (Gupta-Carlson 2010, p. 520-521). I felt that this made it a perfect choice for a screenplay that focuses on youth share housing because the disadvantage that occurs with share housing needs a political resistance.

Hip Hop, then, has the potential to be a powerful vehicle for social commentary. Issues such as cultural awareness, social and economic justice, and political activism have been dealt with through Hip Hop (Malone & Martinez 2010). While political works in the genre still exist today in music such as Michael Frante, Aesop Rock, M.I.A. and Kendrick Lamar, the late 1980s and early 1990s is sometimes referred to as the golden era of Rap (Powell 2000). Hip Hop’s ability to hold social commentary makes it a suitable medium for dealing with the conflicts and themes of poverty and dysfunctional relationships in my screenplay. Although my screenplay does not openly discuss political issues, it still demonstrates and is based on social and political inequalities. I appreciate, just as Bakari Kitwana (Baker 2011) does, that all culture is political.
SECTION TWO
APPROPRIATION

This section interrogates the key issues associated with the appropriation of black culture both in general and specific to Hip Hop and explores how I have negotiated these concerns while writing my screenplay. Central to these issues is the anxiety that unique cultural forms of expression are used, replicated, or borrowed by more dominant cultures for financial and other gain. Scholarly and popular discourses around this debate tend to focus on what Carsten Schinko (2012) describes as white America’s theft of black creativity. The effect of this discussion ranges beyond the boundaries of nation states, with challenges to cultural appropriation now becoming the focus of much domestic and international law and policy (Colman, Coombe & MacArailt 2009).

Cultural Appropriation

The word ‘appropriation’ is derived from the Latin word ‘appropriare,’ which means ‘to make one’s own’ (Rogers 2006). James O. Young (2009) defines artistic appropriation as ‘producing works with stylistic elements in common with works of another culture’ (p. 302). Richard Rogers (2006) states ‘cultural appropriation is defined broadly as the use of a culture’s symbols, artefacts, genres, rituals, or technologies by members of another culture’ (p. 475). Rogers defines four types of appropriation: exchange, dominance, exploitation, and transculturation. Exchange is the giving and receiving of cultural materials from within different socio-cultural
formations (Miller & Stam 2003) with symmetrical power (Rogers 2006, p. 5). Film production, circulation and uptake is a form of cultural exchange (Miller & Stam 2003). The interchange and mutual influence of many American comics and modern Japanese Manga is an example of cultural exchange. Cultural dominance is the imposition of values by a powerful group or group within a society onto another (Campbell 2001). An example of cultural domination is the colonisation of African countries where indigenous populations have other languages or spiritual beliefs enforced on them (Portilla 2016). Cultural exploitation is the use of another’s symbolic and material resources without ‘reciprocity, permission and/or compensation’ (Rogers 2006, p. 477); this includes using indigenous art in museums and exhibitions without approval or consent of the owners (Weaver 2010). They may have to record and transmit their cultural stories in English or the language of the coloniser and without remuneration (Rogers 2006, p. 13). Transculturation is a mutual agreement of exchange of ways between two cultures resulting in a new cultural identity (Ortiz 1970). An example of this is the use and localisation of urban African American styles of Hip Hop by Indigenous youth living in isolated areas or settlement spaces (Rogers 2006, p. 18).

Many scholars view cultural appropriation as a negative practice. It is seen to perpetuate unequal power dynamics (Golden 2014) and often involves the adoption of marginalised or historically oppressed minorities’ cultures (Cocuy 2014). This critique has specific applications to my own work in relation to my use of the form of Hip Hop to explore the challenges of urban living, as there is much debate about appropriateness of white musicians profiting from what are often regarded as ‘black’
genres (McWhorter 2014). Utilising the form of Hip Hop may be seen to be further manipulation by white society (Piehl 2015). Nicole Cocuy (2014) reinforces this by labelling such appropriation as harmful and racist and claims that it perpetuates stereotypes and hides prejudice by proclaiming love for the culture. Reebee Garofalo (2002) coined the term ‘black roots, white fruits’ to describe black innovation and white popularisation of music.

The issue of appropriation is not just about the performers but also about who controls the art form. Harry Allen (2003) says the movie 8 Mile is a race film not a class film as promoted because the lead character and people involved in the film were predominantly white. Allen (2003) does not see the fusion of black and white culture as a step forward but asserts that blacks have been bullied into seeing a white Rapper dominating their culture as a positive step towards blacks and whites getting along. David Suisman (1997) states that musicians are always more ignorant of racial and cultural borders than audiences or the general public. Likewise, Perry Hall (1997) says that removing an art form from its originators leads to exploitation and nullifies cultural significance.

However, there are dissenting voices within fields of scholarship who hold an alternative stance on cultural appropriation. Some scholars see it as a natural part of the evolution of art and could be seen as positioning the act of appropriation as a transcultural act. Elizabeth Byers Colman, Rosemary J. Coombe and Fiona MacArailt (2009), for instance, say that western artists have a long running tradition of mimicry, parody, and quotation and that borrowing from other musicians can be
traced back to classical music in which Bach and Handel borrowed from other composers and genres such as folk music. Similarly, Robert Walser (1992) asserts that Heavy Metal music appropriates classical virtuosity. Steven Feld (1996) claims that appropriation by technical means, such as sampling, may be intending to pay artistic homage and build cultural respect and John Tomlinson (2008), debates the notion of ‘authentic’ culture and believes cultural appropriation is complex as it involves a flowing back and forth of influence over time. John McWhorter (2014) questions what it means to ‘steal’ someone’s culture when there’s no immediate financial gain involved. While some saw the early days of rock and roll as a capitalisation of black music, Hector Quirko (2013) says rock and roll is not solely from African American roots but is a derivative of African, American, and European musicality. These arguments all align with the concept of transculturation in that it is difficult to identify a single originating culture for the art form (Rogers 2006, p. 401). This suggests that these appropriations are benign forms that push culture forward rather than undermine a specific cultural practice.

In contemplating this problem, I sought to further enter into the scholarly discussion to seek some justification for choosing to write a Hip Hopera. Cultural appropriation occurs in all forms of art. James O. Young (2008) claims that artists from various cultures consistently participate in cultural appropriation and some appropriations result in works of great aesthetic value. So too Frantz Fanon (1952) says that cultural traditions are not static but are both influenced by and influence traditions in their environment that are also subject to change. O. Young (2008) states that art isn’t the only thing that can be appropriated as appropriation extends to religion, land,
archaeological findings, scientific knowledge and human remains. Moreover, O. Young (2008) argues that not all appropriation is cultural: much of it is a creative and artistic choice as almost all artists engage in some form of cultural appropriation such as borrowing ideas, plots, technical devices and motifs from other artists. Because the art world is internationally active, O. Young (2008) states ‘The debate around cultural appropriation has been conducted almost entirely by artists, art critics, and advocates of minority rights groups’ (p.301).

Whilst O. Young’s ideas resonate for me, I recognise that these ideas are problematic. Although O. Young (2009) asserts that ‘no one thinks poorly of jazz musicians or the culture that produced the style when they witness a white man play it’ (p. 309), this was not true at the time of its appropriation in America in the 1920s and 1930s. Roberta Rubenstein (1998) states that jazz was broadly appropriated by whites and this resulted in ‘cultural mourning’, a term used to describe the loss of cultural productions following appropriation by whites if we position with mourning within the alignment of transcultural.

O. Young (2009) argues that ‘appropriation legitimizes the culture a style originates from but artists should always acknowledge the source they are borrowing from’ (p. 311) and this accords with my own use of this form. In taking influences from Black American street talk through the culture industry to my own work and own domestic spaces, I am utilising the natural evolutionary process of art forms themselves (Coleman, Coombe & MacAralt 2009). Doing so may be read as a form of homage and cultural respect rather than theft (Tomlinson 2008). It is what Rogers (2006)
terms the ‘indigenization’ of cultural forms in which imported styles are applied to new environments and localised.

These debates inevitably raise the question of how far is too far when it comes to trying to avoid provocative appropriations. If artists have been borrowing from each other’s cultures for centuries, then should we now refrain from borrowing or paying homage to elements of the cultures we admire? Should all jazz, blues and rock and roll artists ‘give back’ their works? And is appropriation only unacceptable when there is financial gain involved? This draws us away from transculturation and back to the concept of cultural exchange. The difference, says Elaine Golden (2014), between cultural appropriation and cultural exchange is an understanding and respect for the culture that is not your own. Joanne Stato (1991) says that giving proper credit to a culture when performing their music, asking permission to use a song, educating others on the issues of that culture, fundraising, and in some cases refraining from using an instrument is integral when considering whether or not to appropriate.

Artists themselves have contributed much to the debate and understanding of how the process of appropriation works. Eminem’s involvement in Hip Hop has been compared to Elvis’ hijacking of a black art form. He addresses these observations in the song, ‘Without Me’: “I am the worst thing since Elvis Presley/To do Black music so selfishly/ And use it to get myself wealthy...” (Allan 2003). Similarly, white Hip Hop artist, Iggy Azalea, came under fire from Rapper Azalea Banks for her success in the Hip Hop genre. Banks famously tweeted that Azalea has appropriated and
Some white Rappers have been accepted into Hip Hop on certain conditions. These include acceptance by collaboration, or ‘entrance passes’ that consist of performing with, being produced by, or supported by a black artist (Boyd 2001) and negotiation of their positions within Hip Hop by using authenticating strategies such as cultural immersion, imitation, and struggle (Hess 2005). Todd Boyd (2001) says that street credibility is the most essential ingredient for Hip Hop acceptance and claims Eminem’s immersion in black culture and the fact that he has never denied his debt to it has led to his effortless entry into Hip Hop. Mickey Hess (2005) discusses Eminem as an example of an artist who has used his class struggle to frame himself as an underdog in response to accusations of white privilege.

Popular Rappers themselves have led the debate about the role and presence of white artists in Hip Hop. For Rapper 50 Cent ownership and origins of the form is clear, but that should not preclude the opening of the form to new artists: ‘Hip Hop is Black music, without question, and, unfortunately for some people, it’s tough to accept that you have a White artist that does it better than Black artists’ (Music Choice 2014).

Some Hip Hop artists have seen this broadening and opening of the form to new creators as a productive tool for cultural cohesion. Jay Z, for example, believes that Hip Hop has brought about positive social change. He remarks that:
Hip Hop has done more for radical relations than cultural icons save Martin Luther King, because his dream speech we realized when President Obama got elected. Before, people partied in separate clubs. There were Hip Hop clubs and there were techno clubs. Now people party together and once you have people partying, dancing, and singing along to the same music, then conversations naturally happen after that (Oprah Winfrey Network 2015).

Kim Trent (2015) disagrees with the ideas posited by Jay Z and argues that Hip Hop is not the first black cultural movement that has been followed, enjoyed, and appropriated by white people. Trent believes that if a connection to a genre of music could create meaningful progress, there wouldn’t have been racially motivated killings in the Jazz Age or Motown era. This debate poses an opportunity for my screenplay to enter this conversation by providing a universal story of love, struggle, and friendships that is experienced by a group facing the marginalised environment of a share house, a metaphor for the ghetto.

The Widespread Effect of Appropriation

Scholarly discussion extends beyond the question of whether white people can perform black music and questions if listening to black music has an unexpected, possibly negative, effect on white audiences’ perceptions of black culture. Bill Yousman (2003) believes that white consumption of black popular culture results in fear of African Americans and therefore Blackophilia becomes Blackophobia. This could be seen as an example of essentialising culture by promoting the idea that there is something inherently fearful or particular to black culture, such as misogyny
or gang culture. However, Mischa Thompson and R. Khari Brown (2002) claim that media now view Rap as the solution to racial issues in the USA and that whites that listen to Rap music are less racist (Newsweek 2000; Nightline 2000). Perhaps, of course, this brings us back to the problem of Hip Hop being seen to promote negative stereotypes and Tomas, Day and Ward (2008), for instance, suggest that video clips featuring black artists tend to be more focused on sexuality and toughness than other music videos. Wright (2004) alleges positive Hip Hop is not profitable and that degrading life, others and themselves has become the industry-based formula for commercial success.

Research in sociolinguistics and cultural studies suggests white male youth’s fascination is with black culture because blackness is privileged over whiteness and coolness could be ideologically associated with masculinity (Lopez 2014). Although this perspective might seem like the perfect outcome for an oppressed group, academic discussions claim that this is far from fact. Wright (2004) believes that black rage has now become entertainment appropriated and controlled by the very power structure that produced it and blames the oppressive corporate control of Hip Hop for producing black stereotypes, making money off black culture, villainising the black man and prostituting the black woman. Jason Rodriguez (2006) asserts that predominantly white audiences are not politically astute but present a problem for black creativity.

Hip Hop may also promote negative stereotypes through its portrayal of the black man as associated with promiscuity, crime, and superficial desires. Homi Bhabha
(1994) defines a stereotype as ‘a form of knowledge and identification that vacillates
between what is already “in place”, already known, and something that must be
anxiously repeated’ (p. 94). Bhabha states that although stereotypes are fixed and
present a skewed version of reality, they are not as powerful or as fixed as they seem
because they must be repeated in order to be current. By creating a Hip Hopera
without conforming to some of the stereotypes of the genre, I am helping to break
some of those negative stereotypes.

Marginalisation

Hip Hop epitomises a search for personal, political, and cultural power for Black
Americans, particularly males. Appropriation of this art form may indicate a respect
for Hip Hop or another example of white dominance. Rodriguez (2006) discusses
how white youth appropriate Hip Hop through ‘color blind ideology’ as a means to
enable whites to appropriate Hip Hop for their own purposes. Two strategies have
been used to justify the participation of whites in Hip Hop: that more white MCs
makes Hip Hop easier for white audiences to relate to and that Hip Hop offers a way
to vicariously experience and connect with black culture (Rodriguez 2006). Georgina
Born and David Hesmondhalgh (2000) assert that the controversy over the
appropriation of black music stems from the fact that black music has become
globally significant and popular.

There remains a white supremacy within Eurowestern cultures that draws on abstract
liberal notions of equality (equal opportunity for all) to disconnect race from the
power relations in which equality and racial discourses are embedded. In doing so, it fails to recognise the powerful domination of white over the cultural other. Rodriguez (2006) states that by saying skills matter, not race, whites justify their participation in Hip Hop. ‘Whites appropriating Hip Hop suggest they want characteristics of blackness rather than a black identity’ (Perry 2001, p.109): that is, they see the creative possibilities of it rather than its desire to act against dominant cultural forces. It is similar to the situation of jazz music. These arguments could actually be seen to reinforce the transcultural nature of Hip Hop as they position the form as a globalised style that is powered by capitalism and the desire to use the form for specific indigenous experience. The elements of globalisation and neocolonialisation relating to specific experiences and being harnessed by transnational capitalism are argued to be conditions of the transcultural (Rogers 2006, p.491).

The manner in which many Hip Hop artists treat other marginalised groups strengthens the argument about my right to write and produce in this genre. Hip Hop has a lot to improve upon in terms of equality towards women and the gay community, as is evident in many Hip Hop lyrics and images that degrade both gays and women. It is noted that Hip Hop can be very sexist and homophobic and therefore set some negative stereotypes about these groups. Michael Eric Dyson and Byron Hurt (2012) say Hip Hop is teaching many young men and women to believe that the only way to be an authentic man is to dominate a woman and view her as exclusively sexual. Whilst this type of blanket statement will not apply to some examples in the genre, there is clearly the perception that these types of meanings are prevalent. I see the opportunity for my work to help mediate these concerns through
my own, hopefully more nuanced, representations. I will now discuss issues of sexism, homophobia, masculinity, oppression and authenticity and their relationship to Hip Hop and the Hip Hopera in order to demonstrate my motivations for appropriating this genre.

Sexism

Hip Hop has been accused of promoting sexism and misogyny. Mark Anthony Neal (2012) states that ‘Hip Hop allows for an uncritical circulation of sexist and misogynistic narratives’ (p. 345) and the depiction of a male/female relationship for a Rapper who has reached the pinnacle of success is highly sexualised women at ‘the beck and call of the Emcee’ (Pieterse 2010, p. 439). Stuart Hall (1993) claims that black men in popular culture act out certain behaviors that are oppressive to women but some scholars - such as Annette Saddick (2003) - argue that misogyny and violence are not unique to Hip Hop but ‘deeply embedded in many parts of American culture’ (p. 123). It can also be argued that this appears in other cultures as well. One of my key motivating factors to write a Hip Hopera was to provide a more balanced representation of female characters in this genre. *The End of Convenience* was created as a means to resist the sexist narratives prevalent in Hip Hop and the Hip Hopera. My appropriation of Hip Hop in *The End of Convenience* means that I can contribute to the genre in a positive way by resisting some of the negative stereotypes.
The marginalisation of women in Hip Hop is partly due to the patriarchal privilege that some male Hip Hop artists exercise, particularly when women do not conform to the roles that they are assigned (Neal 2012). Sexism and exclusion extends to the early history of women in Hip Hop. The contributions that women have made to Hip Hop history have largely been hidden and overlooked and much of Hip Hop culture, despite being used to fight injustices, excludes women who tend to hold less visible positions of authority (Gupta-Carlson 2010). Making my own contributions to the genre offers me the chance to address this in a positive and proactive way. It was with this intention that I created female characters who challenge the status quo and who drive the narrative by their wants and needs.

Some artists have chosen to reject the sexism that exists in Hip Hop and others have used it to their advantage. Talib Kweli was raised in Brooklyn by politically active parents, but instead of following in their footsteps, he decided to be a voice in the music realm, critiquing misogyny and violence (Chang 2005), while ‘the increasing number of female MCs in Australian Hip Hop, nurtured by all-women workshops run by artists such as Trey and Maya Jupiter, is having a destabilising influence on the predominant masculinity of Hip Hop culture’ (Maxwell 2003, p.33). These provide inspiration for me because, by creating the artefact The End of Convenience, I am creating a space that female actors and Rappers can enter without subjecting them to stereotypical roles. The parts that have been created for the female characters are as equally, if not more, significant to the narrative of the story.
Although women Rappers have certainly gained ground in Hip Hop, some, perhaps problematically, have succeeded by both resisting and incorporating the male gaze by positioning themselves as ‘aggressive objects of desire’ (Saddick 2003, p. 123) while other artists such as Lil’ Kim have turned the tables on violence and sexual aggression by placing the man at the centre of her pleasure, punishment, and sexual domination (Thomas 2009).

My screenplay deals with this marginalisation of women in Hip Hop and the Hip Hopera by placing each of the female characters in an equal position narratively and musically. There is also an equal representation of genders to represent the household and the musical genre that I am working in which is rare in itself. The story gives women the opportunity to be as visible as the male protagonists without having to compromise their position to become an object of the male.

**Homophobia and Masculinity**

Just as there are diverse beliefs expressed and discussed in the literature on the role of women in Hip Hop, some scholars and popular artists have differing opinions about the use of homophobic lyrics that are a typical feature of the genre. Tony Mitchell (2003) says that ‘much of the misogyny and homophobia in Hip Hop is simply attributable to the ignorance of adolescent boys that is given prominence in Rap music’ (p. 8).
In the hyper masculine world of Eminem’s music, women are invariably ‘sluts’ and ‘bitches’ and ‘hos’ and men he disapproves of are routinely derided as ‘pussies’ and ‘faggots’ (Rodman 2012). He has been labelled as an obnoxious promoter of a culture of violence that terrorises women and gays. This has positioned him as a contentious figure who garners intense criticism from both within and outside the African American community that birthed the genre (Goffman 2010, p. 10).

Some scholars acknowledge that Hip Hop has issues with homophobia and that the commercial Hip Hop market is saturated with a constant rejection of homosexuality (Jeffries 2009). However, others such as Rodman (2012) believe that Eminem and Hip Hop in general shouldn’t be used as scapegoats for mainstream culture that is already rife with misogyny and homophobia and was long before Eminem and Rap existed.

In a similar vein, Vincent Stephens (2005) claims that homophobic terms commonly used in Hip Hop are more examples of genderphobia than homophobia and believes that the Rappers use these homophobic terms to challenge masculinity not sexuality. Yasser Arafat Payne (2006) says that African American men organising meaning around their masculinity in the face of social injustice is something that academics have been exploring. In contrast, Andrea Clay (2012) downplays the significance of this issue by saying that masculinity is a performance and the context must be taken into consideration.
It seems that there has been some movement toward equality in Hip Hop with Rappers either coming out as gay or supporting gay rights. Nicki Minaj, Jay Z, Kanye West and Macklemore, who released the song ‘Same Love’, have made statements that reflect a more positive and tolerant Hip Hop culture. In an interview with CNN, Jay Z was reported as saying discrimination against gays was no different from discrimination against blacks and Macklemore and Kanye West have acknowledged that homophobia is prevalent in Hip Hop and that there needs to be a change (Global Grind, 2013). Whilst, as discussed above, there is a growing understanding of the need for a more tolerant attitude towards difference, music that represents homosexuality positively is rare in the Hip Hop genre. R. Kelly’s *Trapped in the Closet* is the first Hip Hopera that I have seen that features same sex-storylines. This aspect alone of same sex storylines makes it different from existing Hip Hoperas.

However, not all popular artists are in agreement with their stance on gay rights or artists representing these issues in Hip Hop. In an interview with Vlad TV, Brand Nubian Rapper Lord Jamar voiced his opinion about white people in Hip Hop, labelling them as ‘guests’. He openly criticised Macklemore’s Ryan Lewis for his ‘Same Love’ song because he believes white people don’t have the right to voice their opinion in a black man’s musical genre. Jamar, who is noted for using slurs such as ‘faggot’ in his music, made a separate distinction between ‘Rap’ and ‘hip hop’ with ‘hip hop’ being music for people in struggle and ‘Rap’ being for the rich and gay friendly (Todd 2013).
Rather than receiving support from gay artists in the Hip Hop genre, Macklemore has come under fire from Gay Rapper Le1f who chastised him for his song ‘Same Love’. Le1f voiced his opinion through interviews and social media that Macklemore, as a heterosexual, has capitalised from a song about a gay relationship (McKay 2013). Macklemore has also been questioned by critics for portraying homosexuality as something ‘normal and good’ while ignoring the social and historical context of the LBGT movement (Nicholas 2013). While my screenplay doesn’t include any gay or bisexual characters, it deliberately resists the glorification of the hyper masculine world commonly associated with Hip Hop and Hip Hopera.

**Hip Hop as a Voice of the Oppressed**

Hip Hop allows a class of people who would be otherwise voiceless the opportunity to share their stories and provide social commentary, this makes it a natural source of appropriation in activist or therapeutic contexts. Rap, particularly in the context of group therapy, can be used to express any form of alienation (Yalom 1980). Edgar H. Tyson (2002) cites the ‘social, cultural, and political lyrical content and underlying themes’ as useful therapeutic tools (p. 132). ‘Rap is not just relevant to music therapy because of its popularity, but also precisely because of its social power’ (Hadley & Yancy 2011, p. 41). I engage with this idea of activism/therapy in my screenplay in several ways: Zadi uses Rap as a means to promote her social activism i.e. protesting, preaching and promoting green friendly house practices; also, the characters break the fourth wall and Rap to the audience as a means to express their feelings and debrief about events that have occurred.
David Caldwell (2007) believes that there is not only an increasing interest in the lives and culture of the marginalised but that feelings of marginalisation can be shared by anyone. ‘In a world where more and more people feel dislocated and disenfranchised, the culture of people who have historically lived with the contradictions of being outsiders becomes increasingly relevant to everyone’ (Lipsitz, cited in Walser 1995, p. 210). The characters in my screenplay are marginalised by the fact that they are forced to cohabit out of financial hardship. As Judith Yates and Vivian Milligan (2007) note, declining housing affordability can contribute to social exclusion and spatial polarisation (segregation within society that may emerge from income inequality). The housemates use Rap as a way to empower themselves and deal with conflict. Because of Rap’s connection with impoverished areas, it serves as the perfect medium to address these issues. Most Hip Hop artists are self-taught or taught by peers in the hip-hop community. ‘Hip Hop has empowered young people of all socioeconomic backgrounds all over the world to become artists in their own right’ (Morgan & Bennett 2011, p. 2).

But of course Hip Hop isn’t just about marginalisation and oppression. It expresses ‘rebellion, overt sexuality, confidence, and outsiderness’ (Hadley & Yancy 2011, p. 47). The characters in my screenplay exhibit all or some of these traits. Byron, who is addicted to erotic blogging and immersing himself in this world, rebels against any type of rules or expectations being placed on him. In the face of conflict, he exhibits confidence while his constant personality clashes with the other housemates position him as an outsider inside the house. Zadi is an example of an overconfident and assertive female who is despised by most of the household for her heavy handed eco
warrior and activism roles that have a direct effect on the house. Byron and Zadi are the strongest personalities in the house and the least cooperative and their relationship as housemates drives a lot of the drama that occurs within the share house. *The End of Convenience* stays true to genre in its narrative of the characters resisting the oppression they are facing. Instead of the common ‘man against the world/system’ it has become the ‘man and woman’ navigating the system. In this sense, my appropriation of the Hip Hopera is a unique take on this common theme.

**Authenticity**

The black community itself contains discrepancies regarding who has the right to be in Hip Hop. Mickey Hess (2012) says that Hip Hop artists are hostile towards Rappers who haven’t had to struggle for their success. He believes that this is largely because of the emphasis on street smarts. Hence, one could argue that this is why there are so many rags to riches stories of many Rappers and tales of hurdles encountered on the road to fame.

On one hand, Hip Hop claims to be centered on authenticity and openly criticises those who fabricate their pasts, yet according to Saddick (2003) interpretation is one of its key elements. He believes that Rappers take on personas and fake names as a means of reinventing themselves and shedding the skin of their circumstances. In this context such behavior can symbolise reinvention and empowerment and it can also suggest that ‘authentic’ identity in Hip Hop is itself a construct that can be
contested. In contrast to this, a white Rapper who comes out as saying that race does matter would be also undermining their authenticity (Rodriguez 2006).

The question of whether appropriation is an acceptable cultural practice can also be examined through the prism of postcolonial thinking. Discussions about non-Eurowestern disempowerment in creativity as in politics have resulted in the term ‘subaltern’. Gayatri Spivak (1988) describes this term as descaling the colonised and non-European cultures across the world. Subaltern in this sense means different from and lower than the elite (Morris & Spivak 2010) or ‘subordinated social groups’ (Maclean 1996, p. 203). Spivak (1988) raises awareness of the complex relationship between post-colonial studies and oppressed voices. She explains that it is the elite who define a group as subaltern and therefore if the subaltern attempt to speak they will be bound by the language of their oppressors.

The complexities of appropriation also extend to critiquing work by post-colonial writers. Wisker (2007) states that although criticism is important to development, persons from non-marginalised backgrounds critiquing writings of the subaltern can enable silencing as those from superior positions may analyse texts via their assumptions. Wisker also claims that those who do not respond out of fear of victimising also disempower post-colonial writers because it is crucial that marginalised voices are recognised.
Rosalind Morris and Gayatri Spivak (2010) assert that the subaltern cannot speak for themselves because they are the other and not listened to by the culturally and socially dominant. Similarly, Amanda Boulter (2007) claims that ‘the writer’s voice can only be found through the voices of others’ (p. 155) while Franz Fanon (1952) states that while the black man is among his own he will have no substantial means of being heard or experienced except through minor internal conflicts. Fanon claims that ‘blackness’ is not a self-identity but a label assigned to people based on their external appearances, therefore the black man doesn’t get to create his identity but is subject to the ideas others have on him based on his own appearance, and which can be used to alienate him. This captures the conundrum I faced while writing my screenplay. To what degree am I able to engage with the form of Hip Hop in a creative and critical way and what opportunities for furthering the form are lost if I avoid creating in this genre?

Throughout the world, British, European and American colonisation is both geographic and cultural. In discussing the slave trade in America, Igbo writer Chinua Achebe (2009) asserts that the victims of this crime against humanity have been struggling for centuries as one side of the world branded them as slaves and their home country as savages and the result was that they lost their identity. Achebe enters into a discourse on the theme of oppression, claiming its victims are forever branded, their spirits and humanity crushed and as a result they will continually struggle to defeat oppression and find freedom. He states that oppression doesn’t always result in meaningful struggle and attracts everything from a mild acceptance to a violent rejection. Achebe (2009) states that the correct resistance with which
fight oppression requires two types of knowledge on behalf of the victim: self-knowledge and an awareness that the oppression exists and knowledge of who the enemy is by name because if you can’t define the exact source, you can’t resist it.

This chapter has investigated and illustrated some of the ethical dilemmas associated with cultural appropriation. My approach to cultural appropriation of the Hip Hopera was to investigate the history and culture of this form, to understand the difference between cultural appropriation and cultural appreciation and to respectfully use the genre for the betterment of society, to resist the marginalisation of women found widely in Hip Hop while staying true to the use of the genre as a means to fight oppression. I am satisfied that I have done as much as I can to ensure that my use of the Hip Hop genre is cultural appreciation rather than cultural appropriation.

The question of appropriation continues in public as well as in debate. For example, at the Brisbane Writer’s Festival in 2016, American author Lionel Shriver delivered a controversial keynote address regarding cultural appropriation in which she defended the right for authors to create characters of cultural, ethnic or sexual identities other than their own. The speech attracted mixed reactions and prompted heated debate over who has the right to speak on behalf of another, something that Shriver believes should be a free pass in fiction. This indicates the importance of my entering into and contributing to the scholarly debate about this issue.
SECTION THREE
SHARE HOUSE AS THE URBAN GHETTO

Rap and Urban Living

The story idea for *The End of Convenience* evolved from over a decade of living in share houses. During this time, I observed interactions between other housemates and couples cohabiting within a shared space. These experiences raised several fascinating questions and inspired me to capture the essence of shared accommodation and fictionalise it. This is why I have chosen share housing as opposed to other forms of accommodation as the main storyline.

As previously noted, Rap immediately lent itself as an appropriate form of delivery for the screenplay due to the style’s long preoccupation with the challenges of urban living, and, quite specifically, urban housing (Alexander 2012; Chang 2005; Kosanovich 2012). Rap, and its umbrella movement Hip Hop, began as a cultural form of reaction against the harsh realities of living in politically and structurally impoverished urban areas of New York in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s (Kiyoshi 2009).

It could be seen that I was being frivolous comparing a sharehouse to a ghetto where people have suffered for generations. I have used this metaphor because of production considerations. For example, if the story was produced in Australia the ghetto isn’t as prominent here. In this story the sharehouse represents the environment where each character battles for survival. It was not my intention to be insensitive to any persons associated with the ghetto.
Like many social, cultural and activist movements, it came about as a result of a slow build-up of political and economic dissatisfaction over many decades. It can be seen, as Kevin Kosanovich (2012) suggests, ‘as a material and cultural outcome of the angst that arises when people are deprived of the symbolic and material items of citizenship, specifically national space, services and infrastructure, and local employment’ (p. 17).

Cultural historians often generically reference the embedded cyclical poverty of these decades and this region (Diaz Gonzalez 2004; Jonnes 2002), but in order to understand the true extent of the impact of housing conditions on Hip Hop, and hence Rap’s applicability as the chosen style of delivery in my screenplay, it is necessary to take a closer look at the urban housing planning issues of the era in which Hip Hop started (Chang 2005; Kosanovich 2012).

As previously noted, Hip Hop’s origins, and its relationship to housing, began long ago in the South Bronx area of New York in the 1930s, when banks engaged in a practice known as ‘redlining’, in which they deliberately refused to provide mortgage loans to many residents in specifically nominated areas such as the South Bronx (Gest 2007). Post World War Two economic recovery and renewal schemes offered good deals for single-family homes in the newly developed suburbs and many of the traditional white South Bronx residents took the opportunity to move to these quieter areas (Lipsitz 1998) in a movement commonly referred to as ‘white flight’ (Kosanovich 2012, p. 18). This outflux led to sudden cheap opportunities for inner city housing, and thousands of African American and Puerto Ricans seized the economic advantage of moving to the low rent Bronx (Gest 2007).
These areas, however, were cleared and remodelled into Le Corbusier styled high-rise superblocks under the 1949 and 1954 federally funded Housing Acts, to make way for ‘safer’ modern housing and to resettle locals displaced by the construction of major highways and expressways through the borough (Caro 1974). The area also became something of a resettlement target for Manhattan’s lower income earners displaced during the island’s ‘slum clearances’ and relocated to the socially isolating and impersonal residential towers (Gest 2007; Kosanovich 2012).

The population in the borough rose dramatically and reported one of the highest rates of African American and Hispanic occupation in the region (Kosanovich 2012). The high density, low income area was particularly hard hit over the 50s to 70s by the loss in New York of up to 500,000 factory jobs, further population explosion as more newly unemployed moved to the area, cutbacks to basic services due to ballooning city council debt, police corruption, and disruptions to everyday life caused by increasing crime and building destruction (Gest 2007).

Conditions, notes historian Nelson George, were appalling, with a fourth of all the malnutrition diagnoses in the city and an infant mortality rate of 29 in 100 (Gest 2007). Surrounded by these conditions, by 1969 many middle income residents fled, taking their sustaining spending with them. In an effort to stem this flow of stable citizens out of the region, New York’s Mitchell-Lana public housing program built a higher quality of clustered, 35-year rent controlled, 18 story mid-rise complexes, mainly throughout the better areas of the Bronx (Alexander 2012; Gest 2007). Unfortunately, these merely added to the economic and social devastation of the
area, as white middle-income residents moved in with the intention of insulating themselves from the entrenched poverty of the surrounding suburbs, leaving poor minorities to once again take their place (Kosanovich 2012).

Given this continued battering of the region and the inevitable breakdown of already struggling family units, it is of little surprise that young adults banded together in racial, residential, or like-minded gangs for protection and filial support (Alexander 2012; Gest 2007). As the children who were born into these conditions both found their voices and felt the need to creatively articulate their experiences, a range of musical works began to appear that communicated living conditions with honesty and dismay.

Works emerging from these early days, such as Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five’s description-driven ‘The Message’ (1977), both explain and rage against the cycles of poverty present in overpopulated urban areas. ‘The Message’ gives a visual snapshot of decrepit accommodation by narrating about living amongst constantly broken glass, rats and cockroaches in his residence, bat wielding drug addicts on their way out of their buildings, and the inability to keep a job due to train breakdowns and closed stations. His anxiety about the effort that it takes to move through each day is clearly articulated through the song’s refrain of ‘It's like a jungle sometimes, it makes me wonder how I keep from going under’.

The high unemployment and the intense competition for jobs that arose in many urban areas of high residential density meant that many generations of family
members were without economic means and dependent on the limited offerings of state-funded support (Alexander 2012). This had a trickle-down effect in that families were placed under increasing pressure to survive and struggled to maintain even basic necessities for their members. Community crime rates increased, there were increased rates of family violence, and escape was difficult as there was a scarcity of affordable housing (Kosanovich 2012). In these situations, sharing accommodation becomes a way of establishing independence from families and also a way to increase one’s chances of becoming financially viable.

**Cohabitation**

The share house, then, is an appropriate vehicle for my story because places of hardship and belonging are integral to the genre. ‘Hip Hop’s codes of knowledge are strongly linked to notions of place, belonging, and the tropes of family and neighborhood’ (Mitchell 2003, p. 10) and representing where you are from is a mark of authenticity of the performer (Stavrias 2005). The share house in my screenplay is a place of struggle, both financially and emotionally. The occupants have their own language – Rap. This emphasises an ‘us and them’ mentality. It is the tenants against each other and against the world.

Representing where you’re from is not only about the city or area that you live or grew up in but the very street or house. MCs occupy and represent their projects like a badge of honour. The Marcy Houses figure prominently in Jay-Z’s rhymes and in his entire story of self-making (Zipp 2013). This rags to riches story, growing up on
the tough, mean, streets and working hard for success, earns respect in Hip Hop circles.

As mentioned in the previous section, Hip Hop is a highly adaptable form. Representing where you’re from and personal struggle can be transposed into different cultures and settings. The result is the emergence of local hip-hop “scenes,” where young people practice the elements of hip-hop and debate, represent, and critique the cultural form and their social lives (Morgan & Bennett 2011).

The Share House and Cohabitation

The share house in *The End of Convenience* is both a place of hardship and a place of belonging. It is the lynchpin that holds the occupants together. Once they are served with an eviction notice we wait to discover whether or not the relationships are strong enough to survive the breakdown of the ‘home’.

*The End of Convenience* explores the causes, costs, and benefits of youth share housing and cohabitation. The story centres on three couples cohabitating under the one roof. Once they learn they are to be evicted, the couples question whether they want to break up or cohabit at a different location. In order to write a narrative that explores these issues carefully, I have stepped out of my personal experiences to examine some of the research on cohabitation.
Cohabitation has become increasingly popular and is now often a life-cycle experience (Rindfuss & Heuvel 1990). Economic and social changes, combined with the decreasing number of marriages and the increased costs of home ownership, have resulted in more Australians turning to share housing as a living arrangement (McNamara & Cornell 2007). Due to this, young adults now spend substantial time living away from their families before marriage (Morgan 2000).

Cohabitation shares many of the qualities of marriage, such as a monogamous relationship, sharing a residence and personal resources and, in many cases, rearing a child together (Brown & Booth 1996; Bumpass, Sweet & Cherlin 1991). On the other hand, these relationships also mirror single people via economic, social and sexual behaviours (Morgan 2000).

Higher rates of cohabitation as an alternative to marriage exist among those from less religious families (Axinn & Thornton 1992), while couples in poorer financial circumstances are also less likely to marry (Morgan 2000). Cohabiters are also more likely to remain together under conditions of equality, though inequality is more disruptive when the female cohabiter earns more than her partner (Brines & Joyner 1999). My screenplay explores this complicated situation as it follows the characters’ reactions to their reversed sex roles. Byron is living off his partner Grace who is the breadwinner in the relationship. Grace wants to have a child and it is difficult for her to have her needs met when Byron is focused on his career and is staying with her as a means to support his goals.
Having researched the nature of cohabitation, I then considered some of the reasons why people cohabit and how entering a de facto relationship is negotiated. This allowed me to ensure my depictions of relationships in the share house were as accurate and realistic as possible. This is another example of how the two elements of this project speak to one another.

For many, cohabitation happens gradually and not as the result of a decision or clear communication about what the transaction means (Manning & Smock 2005); research from Australia suggests that when asked about how they started cohabiting, many individuals say ‘it just happened’ (Lindsay 2000).

Sharon Sassler (2004) claims that research proves that many couples cohabitate for financial and convenience related reasons. However, research from Larry L. Bumpass, James A. Sweet and Andrew Cherlin (1991) says only a quarter of cohabiting individuals believed sharing living expenses was an important reason to live together outside of marriage. More recent research suggests that increasing financial strain on young people has definitely led many couples to enter cohabitation (Heath & Cleaver 2003). The avoidance of marriage for economic and practical reasons is found more among those of poor educational level (Sarantakos 1984).
Relationships of Convenience

*The End of Convenience* is not just about physical conveniences but focuses on relationships of convenience. Drawing on the research of Sassler (2004) and Bumpass, Sweet and Cherlin (1991), I reflect upon how I created characters such as Byron, Rori, and Jean, who simply ‘exist’ within the relationship as a means to an end, while Grace and Tom wish to move the relationship forward into a more committed and intimate agreement. Zadi and Tom are the unlikely couple that forms as a result of circumstances but the final scenes suggest unresolved tensions and won’t serve as a good foundation for this relationship.

Current trends show that people are starting to prioritise a career over starting a family (Heath & Cleaver 2003); there is less connectivity to family (Budgeon & Roseneil 2004: Pahl 2000), with some deciding to delay marriage in pursuit of other priorities. Being single no longer has the negative social stigma that it had in past decades. Singledom is no longer viewed as something forced upon a person by adverse circumstances, but is also seen as a lifestyle of choice (Heath & Cleaver 2003).

Both sides of the equation are shown in my screenplay. Rori and Tom both end up wanting to pursue relationships. Rori’s desire to commit to Tom comes at a time when her plans to move on have fallen through and she doesn’t want to be left alone. Likewise, Zadi and Tom’s hookup at the end of the story make us question whether or not they are doing this as a rebound or out of a fear of being alone. In contrast to
this, it is Grace’s acceptance of being single and independent that draws Byron back to her.

Sophie McNamara & John Cornell (2007) state that in Western society a distinction can be made between ‘house’ and ‘home’, such that in the right conditions a house can become a home, and, conversely, a home can revert to being a house. When Zadi tries to force the other occupants of the house to live up to her eco warrior standards, others like Rori see the current living situation as temporary, a stepping-stone to a better future. So even under the temporary restrictions of a lease, some of the occupants view the place as a home and others as a house, meaning that the distinctions of ‘house’ and ‘home’ can be subjective to the occupants and to the audience.

Share housing has some valid benefits such as the pooling of costs (Kemp & Rugg 1998; Kenyon & Heath 2001). This is a transient phase for the characters to establish themselves and to save money to settle into an adult life that might include education, marriage, and/or a mortgage (Heath & Cleaver 2003). These financial hardships influenced some of the storylines. For example, Tom has saved money to buy Rori an engagement ring and he believes that if he can provide for her financially she will view him as a more suitable mate.

Company and sociability (Beck 1992; Kemp & Rugg 1998), quality and space (Heath & Cleaver 2003), and forming a support group (neo-tribalism) (Maffesoli 1996) are all part of the positive aspects of share housing. The characters in The End
of Convenience have friendships and go to each other for support with their issues; they have larger rooms and a backyard that they wouldn’t have in an apartment. Byron works from home, a distinct advantage to work and lifestyle (Heath & Cleaver 2003). Living in a share house means that young people can live free from adult scrutiny (Kenyon & Heath 2001). I have drawn on this influence by writing Zadi as a polyamorous character who lies to her family about being in a monogamous relationship. By living in a share house she is able to keep her lifestyle choices private from her family because they wouldn’t approve.

Share housing supports some of the sub-cultural activities of housemates (Heath & Cleaver 2003). Cohabitation is a means to evaluate a partner’s suitability for marriage and makes a relationship breakup less costly (Heath & Cleaver 2003). This is reflected in my screenplay by creating characters that can afford to go out, buy clothes, and have a social life due to the fact that they are share housing. If the couples separate, there will be no complicated process of dividing assets that might have happened if they were homeowners, therefore there is an easier way out of the relationship.

Share housing also comes with some issues such as high levels of tension (Heath & Cleaver 2003) and lack of connectivity (Heath & Cleaver 2003). The house can be an unpleasant place to live and the share house in my screenplay is full of conflict. The differing values within the household such as Zadi’s eco warrior approach make the audience question if the only commonality between the housemates is that they are sharing the same address. A greater potential for conflict and confusion exists in
shared accommodation as opposed to traditional houses, as there are no guiding principles (Natalier 2007). Power struggles for domination exist between Zadi and Byron. Zadi is on the lease, but Byron rebels against any authority that she tries to exert within the house.

Safety concerns accompany share housing (Heath & Cleaver 2003) such as the high flow of strangers through the house and a lack of privacy (Heath & Cleaver 2003). In my screenplay, the housemates trust each other less and less and Zadi’s ‘open door policy’ may have led to a burglary inside the house. Share housing can also have an effect on professional life (Heath & Cleaver 2003). This is reflected in the artefact by Byron being continually disrupted in his ‘working’ environment and this is a source of many conflicts.

Australian research into sharehousing identifies similar challenges. Ideas over cleanliness can be major sources of tension and fighting. Among these are unequal divisions of labour, different views of hygiene and noise, of thoughtfulness (Natalier 2007), of arguing over mess and chores (Heath & Cleaver 2003) and of poor living conditions (Heath & Cleaver 2003; Natalier 2007). In the artefact the question of ‘whose job is it?’ creates disagreements in the household. For example, Jean completes the chores as a way to please Zadi and win her back. Jean is particularly untidy in the house but he is also used as the scapegoat. The blocked bath and bad hygiene are more distressing to some characters than others.
Despite the positive financial aspects of house sharing, there are negative issues. For example, Australian researcher Kristin Natalier (2007) classifies people in shared accommodation as a marginalised group. The negative financial aspects of share housing include the pressure to help others financially and the risk of a bad credit rating (Heath & Cleaver 2003). Byron needs financial independence in order to leave Grace; he comes to Tom to ask for money so that he can free himself from the relationship. Later in the story, we also learn that Zadi has not been paying the rent but pocketing the money and the result has been an eviction order.

Cohabitation generally lasts two years before ending in marriage or dissolution (Brown & Booth 1996). The relationship tends to dissolve when one party does not agree to form a long-term union (Morgan 2000). There is also evidence that cohabitation experiences significantly increase young people’s acceptance of divorce (Axin & Thornton 1992) due to cohabitation attracting some more commitment phobic individuals (Lillard, Brien & Waite 1995). Byron doesn’t want to commit, but doesn’t want to say ‘no’ either. He wants to keep his options open. Zadi doesn’t want to commit to one person and when Jean is no longer useful, she doesn’t want him around. Rori only wants to be with Tom until she finds someone better… but that backfires.

As mentioned in previous sections, Rap is a perfect artistic form to use for writing about share housing because it is often written in communities that epitomise present-day despair (Gupta-Carlson 2010). Hip Hop has empowered young people from all socioeconomic backgrounds (Morgan & Bennett 2011) because it is music
that both the young and the amateur performer can easily approach (Kiyoshi 2009). Khabir (2011) refers to Rap as a ‘poor man’s poetry’ (p. 289) because Rappers are self-taught or learn from their peers (Morgan & Bennett 2011). It is, then, perfect for the marginalised environment of a share house in my artefact. It is what Sullivan (2003) describes as ‘a counter dominant message used as an affirmation of experience’ (p. 616).

*The End of Convenience* explores some of the issues associated with cohabitation and youth share housing. The story explores how some relationships of convenience will navigate through those relationships while facing the dissolution of the share house.

The metaphor of a share house as a private ghetto and its cohabitants as youth struggling for survival both financially and in relationships has been consciously constructed to mirror some of the hardships faced by those living in the high rise areas of the Bronx, the birth place of Hip Hop. My characters and conflicts have been modified so that the struggles are less about industries of the street and more about personal relationships and the survival of the group as a whole.
SECTION FOUR
THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE: FEMINIST STANDPOINT THEORY

The women in my screenplay are all trying to take control of their lives and move their lives forward while the men seem locked in stasis. The men in the house, however, do not see some of this ‘taking control’ as progress. Inevitably, some of this ‘progress’ will result in embedding the women further in the patriarchal inequalities of their living arrangements and place them in difficult circumstances after they are no longer living in share house arrangements. Yet the women each have unique and subjective reasons for wanting this progress, reasons that the men cannot understand.

Feminist standpoint theory (FST) offers insights into the world of this share house. Women’s subjective experiences and perspectives within the larger share house group can shed light on its embedded social and power structures. FST encourages me to examine the social conditions within the group that lead to some members being dominant and some marginalised because of their gender. Through it, I can examine the language used by the male and female characters, how they present their aspirations and where these sit in the power dynamics of both the house and the wider world, and how women breaking free of these is a challenge to the world of the male share house members. FST puts forward the notion that we’re engaging in a ‘fluid and dynamic negotiation of experience and point of view’ (Lenz 2004, p. 98)
depending on what we need to gain from the dominant culture of the group. Hence it helps me explore why characters may assume roles and stances that variously place them inside and outside the dominant (but shifting) culture of the house.

As discussed in the first chapter on Hip Hop, many examples of works in the Hip Hop genre create exclusion as much as they declaim against it. This is particularly so through its representation of and vocalisations about women. These representations, suggests Michael Eric Dyson & Byron Hurt (2012), foster a belief that the successful male in the Hip Hop community must dominate women and that women should be viewed almost exclusively as sexual objects. Despite the fact that women played a vital role in the evolution of Hip Hop, they tend to hold less visible positions of authority in the movement (Gupta-Carlson 2010). So the contributions that women have made to Hip Hop history have largely been hidden and overlooked.

FST allows me to explore how each character constructs meaning around their gender in the face of social and financial difficulties using power dynamics in the share house. Dorothy Smith (1990) says ‘the only way of knowing a socially constructed world is by knowing it from within. We can never stand outside it’ (p. 22). FST suggests that women’s subjective experiences and knowledge can shed light on the structural and social inequalities of the groups in which they participate or reside. It proposes that the gaps between individual and group knowledge are where we can learn the most about group experience. FST has analytical applications relevant to my work as it provides me with a theoretical prism that allows me to interrogate my ideas and screenplay in a number of ways. The women in my
screenplay are the characters who move events forward due to their desire to change the status quo. FST allows me to theorise their points of view, the opposition they encounter, and the problems for others that these changes create. This project addresses a gap in the literature about FST and Hip Hopera as it explores how FST is important in analysing group hierarchies in cohabitation and within arenas such as the hyper masculine world of Hip Hop.

**Theoretical Framework: Feminist Standpoint Theory (FST)**

FST examines existing power relations (Wood 2005) and operates under the belief that knowledge remains central to challenging the unequal balance of power (Collins 1997). Nancy Hartsock (2004) states that FST is: ‘an important epistemological tool for understanding and opposing all forms of domination’ (p. 35). FST explores the difference between men and women in terms of both material differences and position (McLaughlin 2003) and asserts that individual experiences and interpretations of those experiences vary among individuals within social groups (Lenz 2004). FST’s roots date back to the 70s and 80s and it was developed as a critical feminist theory to analyse the production of knowledge and the practice of power (Harding 2004). FST came about as a reaction to the belief that scientific knowledge as interpreted by the white male represents the experience of the elite and has little relevance for outside groups (Collins 2000). FST had a major contribution to feminist theory (Harding 1997) and has introduced various useful ways of analysing the production of knowledge and global political economies (Hekman 1997).
There are conflicting views on what FST is and what it can do (Harding 2004) with some feminists holding differing opinions over what constitutes gender disadvantage and how to combat it (Jagger 2004). As a result, it has been one of the most distinctive and debated contributions to feminism (Longino 1993). FST has been labelled ‘rear-guarded’, ‘bourgeois’, ‘reactionary’ and full of ‘tensions’ and ‘difficulties’ (Houle 2009). However, as I show throughout, it is a useful theoretical prism through which to discuss this project.

Nevertheless, it is instructive to evaluate the scholarly discussion about FST. For example, some scholars have questioned the accuracy of FST: Alison Jagger (2004) states that FST doesn’t always represent certain realities clearly and claims that ‘to be a woman does not always guarantee a clear understanding of the world as it appears from the standpoint of a woman’ (p. 61). FST has drawn criticism regarding the focus on women’s and oppressed groups’ experiences, questioning their truth, objectivity and method (Harding 2004) as the truth could be manipulated to match the agendas of the author. Furthermore, Jagger (2004) asks, if knowledge is to be useful and impartial then whose interests should it reflect and represent? Dick Pels (2004) examines the potential flaws of FST and claims that not all marginality is potentially equally progressive, giving as an example the standpoint of the Nazi’s regime. For the purposes of discussing this Hip Hopera project, FST provides a relevant and useful scholarly position. In utilising this theoretical prism in relationship to Hip Hopera itself and my project in particular, I add new and significant knowledge to the scholarly discussion about the applications of FST.
FST developed because sociological methods, concepts and theories are traditionally based on the male universe (Smith 2004) and because women have frequently been excluded from knowledge production (Olsen & Hirsch 1995). FST claims women’s lives are systematically and structurally different from those of men (Wood 2005). Therefore, a conceptual framework that placed women of diverse race, class, orientation and locale as the subjects and authors of knowledge was needed (Harding 2004). Harding states that FST came about as a means to empower gender oppressed feminine groups and to validate their experiences. ‘FST emerged from the understanding that certain social groups have epistemic privilege because of the marginalized social location they inhabit’ (Rubio 2011, p. 28). Sandra Lozano Rubio asserts that this position gives a less distorted vision on how things really function; this suggests that the patriarchal leanings of scholarship and knowledge production in the arena of culture do not provide insights into gender differences.

It may be argued that the dominance of Enlightenment views is a central element of such patriarchal epistemologies. Further to this, Mary Midgley (2004) claims that the exaggerated and distorted ideas of physical science lead to the rise of scientific ideologies such as Marxism and behaviourism. FST originates from Marxist theory and has been supported by Marxist feminists (Harding 1997; Longino 1993; Wood 2005) although Susan Hekman (1997) claims that some feminists have discredited FST’s origins in Marxist thought.
The work of Hegel was highly influential to the development of FST through his examination of the perspectives of master and slave (Snyder 1995). In examining the inequalities in this extreme power contrast, Hegel’s concepts assert that a perspective from outside a dominant group represents a clearer vision of reality (Snyder 1995). This provides a basis for feminist perspectives on the questions of gender to be seen as having a clearer view than the masculinist cultural metanarratives.

In seeing FST as anchored in the theory of the ‘outsider within’ and whether this person has a privileged standpoint, Brooke Lenz (2004) discusses how experiences vary among individuals within social groups. Lenz talks about how the ‘outsider within’ or persons belonging to a marginalised group can occupy a position from inside a dominant group yet still never be able to fully participate. FST focuses on the social location of women’s lives which may be seen as positioned as an ‘outsider within’ in the dominant Western culture.

A standpoint carries with it a perspective on society that can only be accessed by people situated outside the mainstream or dominant paradigm (Hartsock 2004). FST focuses on the claim that women occupy an inferior position in society; and it explores the difficulties and limitations that occur because of this (Rubio 2011). It provides a view that is more impartial and comprehensive than that held by dominant groups (Jagger 2004) and, as Dorothy Smith (2004) explains: ‘there are and must be different experiences of the world and different bases for those experiences’ (p. 30). Jagger (2004) describes a standpoint as: ‘a position in society from which certain features of reality come into prominence and from which others are obscured’ (p. 60)
and Alison Wylie (2003) claims that a standpoint theory is ‘an explicitly political as well as social epistemology’ (p. 26). In utilising this theoretical prism to view this project, I reflect upon how my Hip Hopera shows the position of women within the group and acts to disrupt social ‘givens’.

This is appropriate as FST was developed by social scientists working mainly in sociology and political theory (Wood 2005). Social science offers the opportunity to constitute women’s experiences from patriarchal perspectives (Olsen & Hirsch 1995). Scholars such as Smith (2004) discuss how these concerns with the way men in powerful positions had influence over the frameworks of sociology led to the development of frameworks that fit with the ways men tend to understand social life. Smith (2004) suggests that sociology has been forced to comply with the projects of dominant groups and that these projects advantage administrative rule while those who don’t comply are disadvantaged. This argument shows that patriarchal constructs in the social sciences exist and clarifies the importance of a feminist standpoint that illuminates and questions this.

FST has much to contribute in terms of philosophical, scientific and political discussions and has been described as an alternative means to traditional scientific research and a method to guide future feminist research (Harding 2004). Furthermore, Rubio (2011) claims that feminist epistemologies present a more realistic perspective of what science really is, hence their movement to bind science and the feminine experience with how knowledge is produced. Feminists assert that science has been one of the main culprits in justifying gender inequality (Rubio
2011) and claim political movement and controversy lies in the belief that politics hinder and obstruct the production of scientific knowledge (Harding 2004). FST rejects empiricism entirely based on the fact that scientific norms are an inadequate way to produce unbiased work because they didn’t detect bias in the first place (Snyder 1995).

Early feminists avoided scientific views (Rose 2004) as there was an agreement that dominant science suffered from a lack of objectivity (Olsen and Hirsch 1995) due to the fact that men, as the caretakers of scientific knowledge, have controlled the limits of meaningful interpretation of knowledge (Collins 2000). Hilary Rose (2004) challenges the enlightenment model of the natural sciences and argues that sciences and epistemologies for women have emerged from the practices of the women’s movement rather than from science labs.

The struggle for power and perspective also extends to the academic world. Uma Narayan (2004) claims that woman have often been excluded from prestigious professions and Patricia Hill Collins (2000) believes that high powered positions such as medicine, law, engineering, and sciences are strongly aligned with the patriarchy and that social theories that try to rescue hieratical structure will face resistance. Liz Stanley (2013) discusses the academic world as having official and unofficial gatekeepers and that some of these people are also gatekeepers of the actual practices. Academic feminism has sought to join these ranks and neutralise these sources of power over peers. Hartsock, Rose, Jaggar, and Smith, are just some of the feminist scholars who opened feminist research to counteract the biases within
research, medical, social and science institutions. The result has been that ‘alternative conceptions of scientific knowledge as a social achievement have emerged from recent feminist scholarship’ (Rouse 2004, p. 353)

**FST: An Important Theoretical Prism?**

In reflecting upon my artefact and entering into scholarly discussion in this exegesis, I find that in reference to culture and, in particular Hip Hopera itself, FST is a useful theoretical prism because it offers important insights into the gendered nature of Western culture (Hekman 1997). In this context I agree that women must build on women’s experiences and insights through a feminist standpoint in order to develop strategies for change (Jagger 2004). Sandra Harding (2004) claims that FST brings ‘fresh perspectives on some of the most difficult and anxiety producing dilemmas of our time’ (p. 1). Harding claims that FST is controversial because it brings a fresh focus and this makes it important to feminism. Hartsock supports this belief by stating that FST ‘embodies a distress that requires a solution’ (p. 49). Part of the reason why FST has been successful in deconstructing realities and locating discrimination is because oppressed people have become increasingly motivated to discover the reasons behind their oppression (Rubio 2011). This is particularly relevant to the question of the gendered nature of Western metanarratives.

FST offers a clearly defined position for the ‘outsider within’ to question the patriarchy. The question over what constitutes feminist social research has been much debated by scholars (Maynard 1993). Feminist research is not easy or
straightforward (Stanley 2013). An epistemology is a philosophy of what knowledge is and how it is obtained (Rubio 2011) and is the root of every social practice (Snyder 1995). According to Linda Alcoff and Elizabeth Porter (1993) the meaning of feminist epistemology is not clear although it has been used to describe women’s knowledge and experiences and it has an alliance with feminism and philosophy. Stanley (2013) claims that feminism is both an epistemology and an ontology because it is a way of being in the world. Furthermore, FST has been labelled as an epistemology and an account of the development of knowledge and strategies surrounding particular groups in specified circumstances, times and locations (Cockburn 2015). A fundamental thesis of feminist epistemologies is that ‘our location in the world as women makes it possible for us to perceive and understand different aspects of both the world and human activities in ways that challenge the male bias of existing perspectives’ (Narayan 2004, p. 213).

The influence and even the existence of the patriarchy itself is often not able to be clearly seen as it is the social ‘norm’. Smith (2004) asserts that ‘the world as it is constituted by men stands in authority over that of the women’ (p. 22) and it is this social location that Jagger (2004) believes makes women more capable of providing a clearer and more trustworthy perspective of the world. Jagger (2004) concludes that FST holds more accuracy than other feminist theories. Feminist critiques have been made on multiple levels including the philosophical, moral, and practical (Gorelink 1996). It is very important to step back and examine the theories that support our practices and I will now discuss how I have used FST throughout this exegesis in this way.
**Entering into Discourse About the Use and Importance of FST**

FST provides a way for my work to be seen in scholarship as showing the position of women in the share house power structure. It enables me to look critically at the narrative in the artefact by standing outside the cultural givens and portraying the position of the marginalised. Standpoint itself shows a position that is not fixed: it is both within and outside; it is less false and open to change (Lenz 2004). My Hip Hopera and this complementary scholarly framework illustrate this through providing narratives from the perspective of the female protagonists in the share house and giving them equal voice and screen time with males.

In utilising the prism of FST to look at the artefact production, I enter into scholarly discussion about how groups are made up of individuals and how groups are constructed through particular social conditions. I propose that to stand outside dominant cultural metanarratives provides a space for an individual to have a standpoint that differs from dominant cultural givens. I question how these lead to constructed universals that provide false claims of authenticity. In reflecting upon this theoretical position, I further propose that FST provides the individual with a space in which to assert the self as standing at the margins of a patriarchal society and hence able to critique it and identify its masculinist preoccupations.

In entering into and adding to the scholarly discourse about FST, I identify how social influences are forces that organise what we see, and being forced outside of
them through unequal gender structures means that in reflecting upon my artefact, I am able to show how cultural givens operate and can be identified and acted against. FST thus provides the creative work for my artefact with a scholarly scaffold that emphasises how women’s interactions in our culture are different from, and repressed by the patriarchy.

In considering the characters and actions in my artefact, and Rap itself, FST enables identification of social givens to be utilised in the development of characters, plotlines and the use and melodies of language. This illuminates Lenz’s (2004) point that ‘standpoint theory offers a conceptual framework focused on the deconstruction and decentralisation of dominant ideologies’ (p. 100). The struggles and weaknesses of my characters also show that no standpoint is a truth: we are all subject to ideological influences and these exist in the patriarchal elements of Hip Hop. As well, the characters - and myself as writer - exist within them paradoxically at the same time as we may see them culturally through being marginalised from and by them. As the writer, then, I can position myself as the outsider within: one who can take a different stance as being able to recognise patriarchal practices and ideologies and also able to analyse and critique them whilst recognising and relating their influence on my creative work and myself.

**FST and Post-Feminism**

To critique whether or not FST is relevant in post-feminism, it is important to understand the post-feminist movement and where it stands today. The term ‘post-
feminism’ originates from 1980s popular journalism and has been considered a liberation from what some have described as the tunnel vision of feminism as celebrating difference and liberty (Thornham 2005). Some scholars disagree on the approximate moment that it entered the academic realm: Vicki Coppock, Deena Haydon and Ingrid Richter (1995) claim that the term ‘post-feminism’ emerged in the 90s at a time when gender equality was being promoted. There is also little agreement about what post-feminism is: it has been described as a distinctive sensibility made up of interrelated themes (Gill 2007). Ann Brooks (1997) claims that post feminism is anti-feminism that intersects with post-modernism, post-colonialism and post-structuralism, while Angela McRobbie (1998) identifies post-feminism as an active process by which feminist gains of the 1970s and 80s came to be undermined. McRobbie asserts that post-feminism wears a façade as a well informed and intended response to feminism whilst claiming that feminism is aged and redundant. Imelda Whelehan (2010) states that post-feminism means to embrace the broad aspects of feminism in order to justify particular choices. Elaine Hall and Marnie Sulupo Rodriguez (2003) have illustrated post-feminist claims through analysis of popular feminist articles, stating that overall support of the women’s moment has deteriorated because some women are anti-feminist and believe the feminist movement is irrelevant.

I argue that FST is crucial to post-feminism as it provides a realistic perspective of the current conditions rather than a retrospective view of the hard work feminism has done towards the advancement of women. There are definitely people in the current era that view sexism as an injustice of the past and post-feminism would have us
believe that gender equality has been achieved, that ‘women can have it all’ and that they are equal to or even surpassing men. However, this narrative can contribute to gender-based injustice by denying that it exists (Pomerantz, Raby & Sefanik 2013).

Another reason that FST is crucial to post-feminism is because it creates knowledge about women from unprivileged backgrounds in society today and by it doing so, we know what change to strive towards. It is also argued that post-feminism equates with consumption as it implies that beauty, fashion and adornment are part of the highly prized arsenal of a successful woman (Whelehan 2010) and these values may not be compatible with those feminists from other cultures. As Jess Butler (2013) explains, post-feminism is mainly relevant to white, middle class, heterosexual women and she believes that there is much to be still achieved in terms of inclusion of other races, classes, and sexualities.

My Hip Hopera has arisen from popular culture practices. Post-feminist scholars have had much to say about the portrayal of female protagonists in popular culture. Anthea Taylor (2012) states that modern television shows like Sex and the City and Bridget Jones’ Diary portray singledom as a condition that must be overcome. Taylor states that although women are often glamorised in popular culture, their portrait is also often problematic because it promotes coupledom as a ‘choice’ while displaying the woman as unhappy or incomplete because she is single. Though there may have been a shift in the portrayal of women from objectification to subjectification, women are being increasingly pressured to self-monitor and strive
for perfection (Gill 2007). Post-feminism in popular culture often portrays women as successful in their career but lacking in their intimate relationships (Whelehan 2010).

So too, L.S. Kim (2001) claims that post-feminist pop culture portrays women as unhappy because of their independence and this is demonstrated in T.V. shows such as *Ally McBeal*. Kim asserts that such a show demonstrates that it is acceptable to be pro-woman but not pro-feminist. In this sense I interpret post-feminism as very separate from and incompatible with feminist standpoint theory because at the heart of FST is the experience of the female as ‘different from’ or ‘separate’ from the dominant paradigm. One could argue that post-feminist representation in film and television, such as those given above, are both a backwards and a forward step: forwards in that they portray women as successful and powerful beings and backwards in that the female is dependent on a relationship with a man to ‘complete her’.

It could be argued that post-feminism was the result of two decades of social policy and legal reform informed by equal opportunity initiatives which brought about social change and institutional advancement (Coppock, Haydon & Richter 1995). It posits that women have now ‘made it’ or have the chance to ‘make it’ in the world or industry of their choice (Coppock, Haydon & Richter 1995). Post-feminism suggests that the power balance between genders has shifted to favour women and if they don’t succeed, they only have themselves to blame (Coppock, Haydon & Richter 1995). Post-feminism claims many of women’s most significant difficulties have been overcome and many barriers to success and equity resolved (Brooks 1997) and
though some feminists may acknowledge the work that other feminists have contributed to female advancement, post-feminist sentiments are often considered as having been severed from their philosophical and political origins (Whelehan 2010).

Though FST may be considered by some as a quaint relic of feminism’s sophisticated past (Heckman 1997), I agree with Mary Midgley that prominent ideas cannot die until the problems that arise within them have been resolved (Midgley 2004). I believe that there is still a constant challenge to strive towards gender equality. To make progress, we still require ‘knowledge from within’ to discover what advancements need to be made and which groups are the most ‘at risk’ for disadvantage. We need to know about these groups in order to support the individuals that reside within them.

**Confronting Cultural Metanarratives Underpinning Social Assumptions**

As discussed earlier, FST has the ability to confront feminist issues from a range of perspectives due to its representation of the ‘outsider within’. It provides a satisfying substitute for universal rationality by challenging western assumptions despite having been met with suspicion within dominant knowledge circles (Wylie 2003). The male-dominated arena of Hip Hop promotes the narrative of the successful Rapper who has a harem of women. The woman is therefore forced into a narrative where she is promoted as the ‘prize’: the object that is owned by the male. This is able to be challenged by a feminist standpoint as the roots of feminist epistemology grow from a critique of tradition that included dominant narratives and questioned
what tradition is (Alcoff & Porter 1993). While women Rappers do exist in Hip Hop: they are still subject to the male authority that exists in the hierarchy occupations such as record labels, management, booking agents, etc. These are the narratives that must be resisted in order to achieve a sense of balance, as women often occupy a lower position in the hierarchy when it comes to positions of power (Stanley 2013). If these challenges are apparent in Western circles, how much stronger would opposition be in countries where women face greater disempowered? FST is a natural fit to the universal nature of Hip Hop because Rap is particularly suited to storytelling and this allows women from diverse backgrounds to express their truth.

The patriarchy neutralises male and female division by claiming both implicitly and explicitly that men are superior (Wood 2005). These narratives are a universal fallacy but one that can be resisted through FST. Midgley (2004) states

we are studying a single world – the one that we live in and our thought arises from a single source, namely, our joint attempt to live in that world. The fact that all our ways of thinking deal with that one world unifies our thought sufficiently, just as the science of medicine is sufficiently unified by the fact that all its branches deal with the human body (p. 87).

It is through this unity of thought that feminists from all over the world can draw common ground.
FST is one theory in a group of standpoint theories, some others are defined by race, class etc. (Wood 2005). Nevertheless, FST is capable of holding comment on women from culturally diverse backgrounds, as the experiences of socially oppressed groups are a valuable resource for critical insight (Harding 2004). Women are united by the feminine experience and, as Mary Gail Snyder (1995) observes, social experience is gendered, which makes its theory political. I discuss throughout this exegesis how it is essential to critique cultural metanarratives, particularly patriarchal views underpinning social assumptions, because methods based on objectivity have failed to flag ‘sexist, racist, class based, heteronormative and other cultural assumptions that frame research projects’ (Harding 2004, p. 20). Women’s subjective experiences and knowledge can discredit sociology’s claims to ‘produce objective knowledge that is independent of the sociologist’s situation’ (Harding 2004, p.17).

**FST as a Theoretical Framework for This Work**

FST is a theory that provides a natural fit for the setting of the share house. It is a theory that is capable of narrating the difficulties faced within the hierarchy of the share house which is told by an even number of genders. FST is a methodology or method of research (Harding 2004) and my research into the workings of this share house led me to create characters and situations that were based on my own experiences that occurred while share housing.

FST recognises the power realities operating with a community (Hartsock 2004) and in my screenplay the share house is its own community that shares the language of Rap as
the only means of communication. I felt compelled to tell a story that featured females that were of equal importance in the narrative as the male and the best way to do this was to provide a narrative that exposes these males and females both inside and outside of their relationships. FST exposes inequalities and proposes means to move past these relations (Hartsock 2004). The inequalities that exist in the Hip Hopera are that women are at the mercy of the writer to assign them to meaningful roles that portray them as individuals rather than the accomplices of the male. FST also provides an important critique of the discrimination that is rife towards females in Hip Hop.

I believe that FST is an appropriate theory on which to base my research as the personal interest of researchers from dominant paradigms may be seen to produce lies and distortions (Gorelink 1996). FST’s contrast to dominant thinking presents a distinct type of knowledge (Harding 2004) that has been useful for providing information to fill the knowledge gaps on these topics.

There is no one set of methods or techniques that are distinctly feminist but one could argue that women should use every means and tools available to fight gender inequality (Stanley 2013). FST influences my new and significant contribution to scholarship by providing me with a platform in which to assess the biases that exist within social groups, in this instance the world of the share house and the world of Hip Hop. Of the Hip Hoperas that have been made to date, only Carmen: A Hip Hop Opera (20010) features a woman as a central and driving character to the story. FST motivates me to explore an even-gendered house featuring females who buck the
status quo and strive to move their lives forward but are trapped both inside their relationships and the constraints of the house. ‘Feminism is the name for steady, systematic correction of an ancient and very damaging bias’ (Midgley 2004, p. 133) and it is fitting for the characters to be feminist and strive for independence from their men as Hip Hop places restrictions on women and holds them to the wants and needs of the man. As Sherry Gorelink (1996) states ‘if women make their own history, they can uncover the roots of their oppression in the patterns of their own making’ (p. 31). This project contributes to such new patternmaking.

FST’s origins in Marxist thought (Hartsock 1983) means that the theory is useful for addressing the economic inequalities around, and marginalisation of, share house residents who initially band together for financial convenience, but who inevitably further economically disempower themselves.

Multiple standpoints result in multiple realities and this can be problematic in creating change (Hekman 2000). The women in my screenplay are experiencing different realities based on the information and experience that they are exposed to but it is we, the audience, who know the complete story and are able to make a better judgment about the group dynamics of the house. The women in the house don’t have major conflict with each other; it is the men who rebel against demands of the women for change. The male-to-male conflict is over things that affect the power that they have over their women, for example, Tom needs money to buy Rori and Byron needs the internet to launch his blog and become financially independent of Grace.
**Sexism and Exclusion in Hip Hop**

Marilyn French (1990) talks about developing cultural artefacts that do not simply recreate the masculine hegemony. As I have discussed here, I have used the cultural and visual art form of Hip Hop as a site of resistance. Sexism and exclusion are still current issues within Hip Hop (Morgan & Bennett 2011). In the two Hip Hoperas that feature Rap from start to finish: *A Day in The Life* (2009) and *Caught on Tape* (2013), the men play the main protagonists. The women do not play a major part in the plot of the story and offer little, if any, significance in the film other than being the property of the man.

The shallow representation of the male in Hip Hop shows little humanity and complexity and is a by-product of sexism and misogyny (Neal 2012). However, the under-representation of women in this genre is what led me to create a screenplay featuring an even number of genders and featuring women who play a strong part in the narrative. In fact, in most stages in *The End of Convenience*, the women drive the narrative.

Rather than creating a story that perpetuates and illustrates their marginalisation, I have made the characters in my screenplay equally marginalised by the fact that they are house sharing. It is the change of circumstances (eviction) that allows us to observe how the men will act in conflict, when they are not getting what they want.
Lenz (2004) identifies the danger of focusing too much on marginalisation and categorisation and losing sight of the social condition and group perspective.

The men in this story punish a lack of loyalty. In the case of Tom and Rori, Tom throws her belongings out on the lawn, leaving her homeless. Byron supports Tom’s move and even pressures him not to go back on his decision, claiming it would make him weak and unattractive. In situations of conflict, the men side with the men and the women with the women and the only reason they cross over is because there is some kind of benefit to be gained for the man (either sexual or financial). When the men are having conflict with others in the house, they demand loyalty from their partner, though rarely offer it in return.

Reality is constructed through activities and experiences (Hartsock 1983). Experiences are powerful because they shape beliefs and realities. If women are deprived of positive activities and experiences, then it will result in a skewed view of reality. This is shown in the artefact when Byron’s addiction to erotic literature leaves little time and interest in real-world intimacy. His constant rejection of Grace leads her to believing that something is wrong with her. She takes action by trying to lose weight and dress attractively, and even gets to the point of considering surgery. Rather than take responsibility for what he is doing, Byron is happy for Grace to have this skewed world vision because it means he won’t have to confront his own issues.
The activities and experiences of the other characters also shape their realities. These day-to-day activities by the male characters indicate how they oppress the females. Zadi justifies and denies her dishonesty because the people around her are also dishonest. Tom has convinced her that Jean is stealing while Tom has secrets of his own. Byron has stolen her megaphone (her voice) and won’t own up or give it back. She is constantly frustrated that no one takes responsibility for his or her actions such as breaking the shower timer or blocking the bath. Instead, the men put broken things back and let others deal with the mess.

Whilst Susan Hekman (1997) questions how we justify as truth that women have been oppressed, FST can be used as a prism identifying and focusing on evidence. Using experiences from real life, I have created a Hip Hopera screenplay that has been reflected upon through FST and strengthened through research. The main aim of my findings is to explore how men and women behave in situations of conflict within a share house and within relationships with cohabitation.

My screenplay shows the desire of men to take control: for example, Byron can’t even get his own life together but wants to control the household. Tom can’t control Rori so he tries to control his situation by kicking her out of the house. In some ways, the women are equally as dependent on the men but mostly for social expectations. Zadi uses Jean as her fake boyfriend to appease her parents who would disapprove of her polyamorous lifestyle. Grace feels the pressure to become pregnant before she is 25. In her opening words, Grace describes the perfect life, the life that includes a man. The ending suggests that the women have the upper hand:
Grace doesn’t need Byron but chooses to be with him, Tom rejects Rori but is now indebted to Zadi.

As I wanted to create a feminist Hip Hopera to try and break some of these stereotypes, I am not satisfied that ‘society needs an unfiltered voice such as Hip Hop, no matter how misogynous, because it illustrates certain cultural norms’ (Sullivan 2003, p. 185). I explore the issues in a similar way to Trapped in the Closet (2005). That work is an interesting Hip Hopera as it breaks some of the stereotypes such as same sex affairs, normally considered taboo in Hip Hop. The story often shows the women as the character in control as opposed to other works in the genre.

The patriarchal society wants to silence and control women. Sometimes, woman’s interests for desire and knowledge can be compromised for economic or political agendas (Harding 1998). The women in my Hip Hopera are disadvantaged because they need information in order to move forward such as Byron not being clear about his intentions and avoiding giving Grace a response as to whether or not they will move in together: Grace repeatedly brings up the topic of moving house to Byron but rather than deal with it, Byron won’t talk about it and in some cases lashes out at Grace for asking. It is visible in Zadi turning from being the matriarch of the house into the character that is being played by multiple housemates. By the end of the story, Zadi has become a squatter in the house and entered a relationship with Tom who is withholding information from her. Rori separates herself from Tom early...
the story but it is her desire to get rich quick and a failed attempt at dating a ‘hot shot’ that drives her to return to the house, where she begs for Tom to take her back.

The same type of behaviour exists in real life in the Hip Hop scene: women are a minority, and ‘some female Emcees have taken it upon themselves to create the change by incorporating gender issues into their lyrics in order to influence, educate and empower younger generations’ (Morgan & Bennett 2011, p. 12). Thus, while Hip Hop often excludes women, it can also offer alternatives. My artefact explores these issues through the three female protagonists and their assertiveness to ask for what they want and their determination to make it happen. Even Grace, who is the least assertive in the household, makes her intentions clear from the very beginning of the story and throughout her journey she decides to create independence from the man (Byron) who is not fulfilling her needs. As a result of her journey, she separates herself from Byron physically and emotionally and no longer sees her role simply as the wife, mother, and provider for her boyfriend.

FST reflects the current society in which we live. It is an intellectual achievement that reflects political consciousness (Lenz 2004). The house provides a standpoint that reflects western attitudes, cultures, and male/female dynamics of the current age such as cohabitation, women acting as the provider, and living in the technological age.
The Musical and Gender Stereotypes

Although the codes and conventions of the film musical have changed throughout the decades, Susan Hayward (2006) says the film musical since the 90s has sought to challenge the pre-existing codes and conventions of the genre. Hayward states that the musical *The Sound of Music* (1965) broke the codes and conventions for how a woman would normally behave in its era.

*The Sound of Music* and *Mary Poppins* (1964) could be considered radical film musicals because the female characters do things on their own terms and have other goals besides romance. *Mary Poppins* and *The Sound of Music* could be considered as containing feminist characters because of their one-woman crusade (Marshall & Stillwell 2000). Mary Poppins fulfilled a similar function to the women in my screenplay in that she was the one to initiate change within the household.

As it elucidates the points of view of women, FST can bring awareness to issues not readily visible or discussed such as social or gender inequality (Lewis 2007). Any study of film would be incomplete without considering the gender stereotypes associated with that genre, as gender representation is strongly connected to film genre (Hayward 2006). For example, Ahava Liebtag (2002) argues that although the narrative may supposedly be about heterosexual union, the film musical starts and ends with the female body. This is also prevalent in Hip Hop videos where the woman is seen as the object of desire. I wanted to explore these claims without repeating these stereotypes so I created a narrative where the protagonist struggles
with her body image in order to please her partner and encourage him to deem her worthy to be the mother of his children.

The End of Convenience explores issues such as body image and power dynamics within the household. Rather than the story ending with heterosexual union, which is the resolution of most film musicals (Hayward 2006), the story begins with cohabitation and explores where the characters would like to end up, coupled or single. Throughout the screenplay, Grace fixates on her desire to be attractive to Byron and this takes some unhealthy and obsessive forms such as excessive exercising, dieting and even contemplating surgery. The character arc is that Grace abandons her desire to please Byron through superficial means.

The film musical has constantly challenged the hard body male stereotypes and broken conventions (Kessler 2004). Kessler gives examples: Jesus Christ Superstar (1973) and Hair (1979) showed a post-Vietnam War masculinity; The Wiz (1978) remade a previously white story; and The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas (1982) reinvented the cowboy. The Rocky Horror Picture Show (1975) and Grease (1978) both push the gender boundaries for different reasons. The Rocky Horror Picture Show (1975) does this both in theme and scenes and the fact that the main character is a transvestite, and Grease (1978) because it shows a version of American dating and romance and rebellion that was relevant to the era but had not been featured in musicals prior to this.
Jillian Sandell (2010) argues that the film *Hedwig and the Angry Inch (2001)*, a rock musical about a transsexual, is equally about transnationality as it is about transsexuality because the ambiguity of Hedwig’s body raises questions about legal, political and cultural citizenships and the film has been received internationally. Like the *Rocky Horror Picture Show*, *Hedwig* challenges gender and relationship stereotypes and both have become quite a cult phenomenon.

Although, we can learn about oppressive processes and resistance through stories of women’s experiences (McLaughlin 2003), Patricia White (1998) says that the film musical promotes male dominated romance and family as the path the happiness. Throughout my story, the women try to take control of situations and the men resist. The couples are on a journey to eventually confront and negotiate what relationship they want, if any. Marriage may not be the end goal in my screenplay but commitment is. By the end of the story, everyone must commit to a decision about how they would like to live their life after the share house.

The general goal of standpoint theories is to find patterns of behaviour within groups. Though multiple realities can be problematic there need to be multiple standpoints from which knowledge is produced (Hekman 1997). FST is suitable for multi-protagonist storytelling as it uses the experience of the arena of the house to explore how people will negotiate their experience. It is also suitable for exploring group behaviour because it places the characters in a space that is removed from stricter social etiquettes.
I have consciously avoided gender stereotypes in my screenplay. Allan J. Kimmel and Elizabeth Tissier-Desbordes (1999) list masculine traits as dominance, independence, self-confidence, assertiveness, strength, virility and ambition and feminine traits as emotional, affectionate, yielding, submissive, gentle, dependent, and gullible. The characters in my screenplay display a mixture of such masculine and feminine traits.

Any analysis of the film musical would be incomplete without considering MTV. There is evidence that MTV has had an influence on how musicals have been made (Sanders 2006). Music videos have played a huge part in the success of Rap music (Saddick 2003) by expressing elements of Hip Hop such as dance, fashion, and aesthetics that can only be expressed visually and distributing them internationally (Morgan & Bennett 2011). In my research of MTV Hip Hop video clips and Hip Hoperas, I have noticed that both art forms feature females as the fixation of male gaze. This observation of women as objects of desire is noticeable to me because I am a woman and therefore I am viewing these visuals through my feminine experience. The pressure for women to live as dual beings by producing life and contributing to society is also one that provides a privilege of knowledge (Hartsock 2004) and it is through the feminine experience that women are connected to the world around them (Harsock 2004; Smith 2004). This is what allows me greater sensitivity and awareness regarding representations of women in popular culture.

Results of an MTV study revealed that women are featured in music videos as more subservient and the subject of aggressive male sexual advances (Sommers-Flanagan
& Davis 1993). In particular, Hip Hop music videos contain visual images that stereotype women as promiscuous (Thomas, Day & Ward 2008). Even MTV commercials have been noted by scholars as being filled with stereotypical gender roles and more commonly feature women as the subject of the gaze (Signorielli, McLeod & Healy 1994). However, some theorists claim that these findings and the way that we interpret them, can be used to the betterment of women. Gary Olson and Elizabeth Hirsch (1995) say that the dominant male perspective can be turned into a positive tool for change and further insight into knowledge by analysing it from a feminist perspective. FST helps us recognise and understand the production of knowledge and practice of power (Harding 2004).

The women in my screenplay are the most sexually dominant. Zadi uses men for sex, Grace tries to seduce and entice Byron away from his work, and Rori is prepared to leave sexual monogamy to find a better suitor for her needs. In many cases, the men are forced out of their own worlds to face a different construction of reality and they resent this. I have taken the stance of the dominant, sexual man who receives sexual favours from the woman on request that is featured in Hip Hop narratives and reversed this so that the man is at the mercy of the woman’s sexual desires even if that means infidelity or break up.

FST argues that a group can be defined by the way it treats its oppressed and wisdom is gained only after its members’ lived experiences have been validated on their own terms (Collins 2000). As discussed in previous chapters, Hip Hop typically stereotypes women as objects. These negative stereotypes raise questions on the
effect on their consumers as research suggests a correlation between exposures to sexually explicit and sexually violent material and increased negative attitudes toward women (Emmers-Sommer, Pauly, Hanzel & Triplett 2006). *The End of Convenience* addresses this gender inequality and provides a platform for women to be represented equally and also as empowered beings. It was the desire to address the treatment of minorities, in this case women, that was the driving factor for me to complete this artefact and exegesis.

This marginalisation within a marginalised and oppressed group allows a woman such as myself a ‘ghetto pass’ to defend women’s rights. The idea to write about three couples cohabitating, rather than one, allows me to explore how the characters will interact with their partners and the world around them. FST was an effective way to place my story within the relevant scholarly discourse. This is because it draws on my personal experiences living in all male households and households with couples; experiences I have internalised then fictionalised. It also allows me to study existing behaviours in Hip Hop and fictionalise these observations as well as develop opposite scenarios within the narratives.
My decision to create a Hip Hopera arose from my appreciation of the musical beauty of Rap’s complex rhyming. One of the advantages of using rhyme is that the repetition of similar sounds is musically pleasant to the ear (Edwards 2009). However, the deconstruction of Rap lyrics is a relatively recent study in the academic world (Alim 2003). Therefore, by writing a screenplay that is delivered entirely in Rap, I am making a significant contribution to the genre not only by my creative work but through my analysis of the construction and application of Rap lyrics. As mentioned at the start of this exegesis, I was inspired by Baz Luhrmann’s *Romeo and Juliet*, which featured the poetic language of Shakespeare. From this initial concept I researched rhyming scheme in Hip Hop through scholarly investigation into Hip Hop history and tropes and by listening to the recordings of various Hip Hop artists to identify styles specific to individual Rappers.

**Rap**

Writing the screenplay dialogue in Rap was one of the most challenging aspects of creating the artefact, as I had little experience in this genre. A central part of my research was the investigation into what makes rhymes work, how these are used in Hip Hop and then whether these could be used to capture the range of characters and dialogue functions needed to make a successful screenplay. Central to creating distinct characters was understanding how to create different rhyming schemes. My
search began with scholarly articles concerning the rhyming structures of Rap but these didn’t delve into the depth and complexity that I required to construct six distinct Rapping styles and as a result I referred to Paul Edwards’ instructional book How to Rap (2009).

Edwards (2009) breaks down Rap into three parts: content (subject matter), flow (the rhythms and rhymes you’re using), and delivery (how you’re using your voice to perform). Content is divided up into real life content, fictional content, controversial content, conscious content and club/party content. Content form can be battle/braggadocio, conceptual form (come up with a concept and write lyrics around it), story form (story telling), abstract form (not straight forward or obvious) and humorous form. Content tools are imagery (vivid language), similes (like/as), metaphors (I’m the/a), analogies (extended metaphors, sometimes whole song), slang, vocabulary, wordplay, and punch lines.

Flow can be divided up into rhyme and rhythm. Rhyme formulations can include perfect (cat/hat), assonance (vowel sound rhyme), bending words, alliteration and consonance, compound rhymes (multi-syllable rhymes), couplets, single liners, multi-liners, and whole verse. Rhythm can be fast, slow, and on or off the beat. Delivery can consist of melodic, non-melodic, syncopated, nasal, smooth, sparse and dense. Through understanding the theory of rhyming structures I was able to craft rhymes that were specific to characters and situations and create a template for a character arc (see Appendix 1).
As there are limited films made in the genre of Hip Hopera and I had limited experience in writing Rap, a vital part of my research was listening to recordings of Hip Hop artists and analysing their styles using the elements described in How to Rap. Hussein Hirjee and Daniel Brown (2009) assert that song lyrics in Rap have gained very little attention in musical analysis and that the pattern and sound of the words are usually overlooked. It is within the musicality of these lyrics that we learn about vocal delivery and a rhyme scheme that differentiates Rappers and promotes their uniqueness and superiority (Hirjee & Brown 2009). It is also worth noting that Rapping technique and lyricism developed over decades. Lyrical patterns from mid-70s to 80s Rap were generally simple and featured a single rhyme on the fourth beat of the bar whereas contemporary Rap boasts complex rhyming structures (Hirjee & Brown 2009). Due to this I focused most of my attention on Rap artists of the last decade.

Rap rhymes can be imperfect, internal, chain, bridge, and compound (Hirjee & Brown 2009). Imperfect rhyme is when syllables are similar but not identical and internal rhymes are rhymes that occur in the middle of a line (Hirjee & Brown 2009). Compound rhyme is when a pair of lines overlap within a single line, chain rhymes are consecutive words or phrases that rhyme with the previous, and bridge rhymes are those that connect words that are seemingly not able to be rhymed (Alim 2003). Alim (2003) also discusses male, female and triplet rhymes. Male rhymes have one syllable, female have two and triplet have three. These characteristics are what give today’s Raps their complexity and define them as
different from both past Rap styles and present spoken word styles. Understanding these complex rhyming schemes allowed me to analyse Rap recordings with greater accuracy and understanding and then apply them to the artefact.

Rap has the ability to employ literary techniques such as wordplay, simile, metaphor, narrative, flashback, role play, suspense, irony, and imaginary (Alim 2003). Boulter (2007) claims that distinct voices make characters memorable and this can be achieved through dialect, grammar, rhythm, sarcasm, cynicism, throw away phrases and omitted words. With this in mind, I was confident that Rap was capable of satisfying all the functions of spoken dialogue that William C. Martell (2011) lists in his book *Dialogue Secrets*. These are exposition, subtext, general energy of the character, quirks, favourite words, people skills, vocabulary, direct or indirect speech, succinct speech, echo lines, nexus words, bumper sticker lines, weird world view, symbolic dialogue, anti-dialogue, contrast between characters, contrast in location, understatement, humour, conflict in dialogue, speeches, interruptions, jargon and slang, narration, and voiceover. Through this reflection, I assessed how Rap can be utilised for characterisation in film and came to the conclusion that it is effective.

Rap is an effective method of dialogue delivery in my screenplay because it is often autobiographical and personal (Gupta-Carlson 2010); it can present fiction or debate (Pieterse 2010); it often contains narratives (Saloy 1998); and it can be used for political and social messages (Kiyoshi 2009; Morrell & Duncan Andrare 2002). Rap uses twice or more the volume of words in comparison to what is used in
popular music (Kiyoshi 2009) because Rap places emphasis on creating new and unique flows and rhythms and that those extra rhythms require word syllables (Edwards 2009). This makes Rap very appropriate for movie dialogue because I can include more information than what I could include with lyrics from other musical genres.

Rap can also demonstrate character contrast by allowing each protagonist to reveal themselves through conflict and exposition. Through Rap, a character can assert his/her status within the group, put down other members, and use their Rapping skills to outshine others in verbal showdowns. For example, battle Rap provides an exciting platform for conflict as it is an improvised Rap where the winner is the one with the cleverest lyrics (Edwards 2009). Dominello (2008) asserts that ‘Hip Hop artists use language as a tool to construct identities’ (p. 46) and so I ensured each character’s diction and word choice consistency reflected their personality. Battle Rap and braggadocio are a valuable technique in scenes of high conflict to clearly demonstrate who the dominant character was in that scene and who had ‘won’ the interaction.

Reviews of existing Hip Hoperas A Day in The Life (2009) and Caught on Tape (2013) questioned the effectiveness of Rap. The plot for A Day in The Life (2009) has been labelled ‘tired and confusing because Rap isn’t the best method of exposition’ (Foster 2009). Another review said ‘the music itself is an entertaining
triumph at times, but more often torturously awkward’ (Thurston 2014). Despite this, the overall movie has been described as ‘highly entertaining and extremely watchable’ (Foster 2009).

Sticky Fingaz’s second film, Caught On Tape (2013), has been described by Sticky as ‘not a continuation or anything like that, but it's the same concept. It's a different story, different actors’ (Paine 2009). Again, the Rap was brought into question. One review said ‘some of the rhyming is clever, and others left to be desired’ (Hoffman 2013). Other reviewers found it entertaining but lacking in depth: ‘the best part about this movie is being side-swiped by the random actors who pop up and start Rapping. The story is dull and foreseeable, but the rhymes are fun’ (Mars 2013).

In reflecting upon and analysing Rap in my screenplay and referencing such reviews, I learned that if I wanted to write a Hip Hopera, I would need to analyse existing Hip Hoperas such as A Day in the Life (2009) and Caught on Tape (2013), delivered entirely in rhyme; Trapped in the Closet (2005), sung, and Carmen: A Hip Hop Opera (2001), a combination of spoken dialogue and Rap. I evaluated these films for themes, music, and characterisation.

No analysis of Hip Hop or the Hip Hopera would be complete without acknowledging their thematic tendencies. I have noted in section one how storylines and themes in the film musical have developed considerably over the years. While Golden Era film musicals may have celebrated ‘happy ever after’, later film musicals are about unrequited love, failed business ventures, and death (Kessler 2004). Themes in Hip Hop and the Hip Hopera include: violence, guns, misogyny, money, crime, and rags to riches. I show how the desire for money and success featured in The End of Convenience is an important aspect of the Hip Hopera because it
demonstrates the characters’ desires to rise above the share house which is a metaphor for the ghetto. There are several subplots in *The End of Convenience* that are driven by the desire for money to escape share housing: Rori’s lotto ticket, Byron’s focus on creating a successful blog, and Zadi pocketing money from the housemates rather than putting it towards rent.

The shift from political messages to money and sexual exploits has been commented on in the Hip Hop community (Powell 2000). Jay-Z characterises selling drugs and other such acts as ‘real things on the road to riches and diamond rings’ (Riley 2005) while Hess (2012) believes the overt goal to make money through music is what separates Rap from other genres and the power that is acquired by financial gain is something that is celebrated as long as the artist achieves it on their own terms. Like any cultural product Rap is subject to corporate control and this focus on profitability might restrict political messages (Sullivan 2003). The agenda to make money is what underground artists believe stands in the way of making real Hip Hop music (Hess 2012). Hess states that artists who focus on politics might find themselves having to balance their content between what is marketable and the message they want to deliver in order to achieve mass appeal. This reinforced that the narrative in my screenplay doesn’t have to be focused on social or political issues since universal themes are embedded in the Hip Hop genre.

Violence, guns, and crime are notable features in the Hip Hopera. Dyson & Hurt (2012) say that Hip Hop traditionally equates masculinity with the use of a gun. Sometimes this negative attention has worked in favour of the cause it is trying to resist. For example, the status of gangsta Rap rose when it caused controversy and gained publicity as opposing family values (Sullivan 2003). Richardson and Scott
(2002) argue that the violence in Rap music is artistic and based on social injustice. Their argument continues by asserting that violence in music is not limited to Rap and that tales of murder, killing police and domestic violence can also be found in other genres. Saddick (2003) considers N.W.A’s (Nigga’s With Attitude) performances as theatrical representations of violence and believes that using art as opposed to actual violence in expressing anger towards injustice should be viewed positively. The theatrical extent of violence is debatable if you consider some of the notable deaths and shootings of Hip Hop artists: 50 Cent was a self-confessed drug dealer who was shot nine times, Tupac and Biggie Smalls were both murdered over gang rivalry, Jam Master Jay was murdered in his recording studio, and Proof from the Hip Hop group D12 was shot and killed at a club in Detroit.

Hip Hoperas such as A Day in the Life (2009), Caught on Tape (2013), Trapped in the Closet (2005) and Carmen: A Hip Hop Opera (2001) all feature themes of violence and industries of street as prevalent in Hip Hop. Whilst physical violence does undoubtedly occur in share houses, just as it does in any sector of the community and in any domestic space, I felt that there were enough relationship and self-esteem orientated issues to explore when people are forced to share space that depictions of physical violence were not necessary. The intensity and effect of relationships on individuals was often traumatic enough to qualify as psychological violence. Therefore, physical violence is not a feature in my screenplay. The conflict between the characters as a result of their goals and motivations is what provides the dramatic tension in The End of Convenience.

The themes in Carmen: A Hip Hopera (2001) are: love, betrayal, obsession, and revenge. The movie has appealed to many different groups by fusing ‘high art’ with
music of ‘ill repute’ and this updated version is more true to Bizet’s opera than other
more recognised efforts (McClary 2005). This fusion has pleased audiences through
its musical melting pot (Perriam & Davis 2005) and Smith (2003) believes that the
2001 MTV version of Carmen is true to the original through emphasis on gender and
ethnicity.

The themes are similar in A Day in The Life (2009) and Caught on Tape (2013). A
Day in the Life (2009) themes are: love, revenge, loyalty, and betrayal and Caught
on Tape (2013) themes are: loyalty, betrayal, and evidence. Themes in Trapped in
the Closet (2005) are: sex, drugs, gossip, cheating, religion, same sex affairs, and
AIDS. Chaney (2009) lists the themes of Trapped in the Closet (2005) as: marital
infidelity, the secret revealed, homosexuality and the black church, and marital
distrust. Trapped in the Closet (2005), Carmen (2001), A Day in the Life (2009), and
Caught on Tape (2013), all feature guns and gang life to varying extents. The End of
Convenience is a combination of themes from these existing Hip Hopera: escapism,
love, and relationships of convenience, cheating, betrayal, and cohabitation.

The music in Carmen: A Hip Hopera (2001), A Day in the Life (2009), Caught on
Tape (2013) and Trapped in The Closet (2005) are all different in their approaches.
Carmen (2001) features songs that are dispersed throughout the narrative and contain
verse/chorus arrangements. The songs themselves could be sold as an album or
soundtrack as they stand as musical numbers on their own. In A Day in the Life
(2009) and Caught on Tape (2013), the music has been created to carry the whole
film, more like a traditional opera than a musical. The music hasn’t been created to
stand on its own outside the story. Trapped in the Closet (2005) is unique in that the
singer is also the narrator of the story and speaks on behalf of the other characters.
The words are sung, not rapped but it is still considered a Hip Hopera. *The End of Convenience* borrows from each of these works, it begins with rap a rap monologue and branches into songs and each character taking a turn to tell the narrative. The reason that I have taken this approach is to break up the delivery of the rap so that it doesn’t become boring or repetitive. Also, I didn’t want the audience to be overwhelmed by the amount of narrative in the rap and therefore lose the thread of the story.

Elements of the characters in *A Day in the Life* (2009), *Caught on Tape* (2013), *Trapped in the Closet* (2005) and *Carmen: A Hip Hopera* (2001) have been applied to *The End of Convenience*. *A Day in the Life* (2009) and *Caught on Tape* (2013) have gangster characters and feature industries of the street. The women in both of these stories are passive and serve to please the man. In *Carmen*, everything revolves around the lead female protagonist and her wants and needs: she is an active character and drives the narrative. *Trapped in the Closet* (2005) features gay and bisexual characters and many of the characters have a comical nature to them. I have used a blend of these characters in *The End of Convenience*. I have utilised some comedic elements of *Trapped in the Closet* (2005) and although I haven’t featured gangster characters such as in *A Day in the Life* (2009) or *Caught on Tape* (2013), Byron, Jean, Zadi, Tom and Rori are either trying to get rich quick or find a fast means to a freer, more independent life. Through my analysis and use of FST, I was inspired to create a situation where, like Carmen, Zadi and Rori dominate their men and push the story forward. I have chosen to use elements of each of these characters because they drive the narrative and provide dramatic tension.
During this period of research into what works had been created in the Hip Hopera, I discovered that there was an opportunity to create something new in this genre. One of the ideas that came to mind was to create a film musical that could be performed without accompaniment. I came across *Something from Nothing: The Art of Rap* (2012) directed by Ice T. In this documentary film, there are many times where Rappers perform without accompaniment and sometimes this Rap serves as a voiceover score to images of urban landscapes. Despite witnessing these performances unaccompanied, they were still distinguishable as a Rap. This was a key development and turning point in my research where I considered writing the Rap dialogue to be performed entirely in a cappella.

There were several reasons for this. For example, when I watched *Something from Nothing: The Art of Rap* (2012) and heard Rap spoken against urban backdrops it sounded more impactful because it didn’t have the music to contend with. Around the same time, I was inspired by the latest version of *Les Misérables* (2012) that was sung live as opposed to pre-recorded miming (imdb 2012). This organic delivery may make the film appear more authentic than using recorded music. As I reflected upon the advantage of performing of the screenplay minus accompaniment, I considered that an advantage to performance of the screenplay minus accompaniment could be the authenticity of the delivery, as the musical aspect of the film will be delivered diegetically. Claudia Gorbman (1998) describes diegetic music as ‘source music…whose apparent source is the narrative world of the film’ (p. 44). An example of this is when the audience hears music and sees that this sound is coming from a radio, CD player or a band that is performing.
One of the concerns that I had about writing a screenplay to be performed a cappella is whether or not it could be discernible from poetry/spoken word. Through research, reflection, writing and rewriting, I have learned that Rap has a key distinguishing feature from poetry and spoken word: the key feature of Rap is rhyme (Edwards 2009), whereas rhyme is not compulsory in poetry (Khibir 2011). Rap does have similarities to poetry/spoken word for example but the beat to Rap is poetic metre rendered audible (Bradley 2009). Blackman (cited in Ifonge 2005) says that even when there is rhythm within the text of poetry there is no requirement to be on the beat all the time as there is in Rap.

Rapping is a word war (Keyes 1984) where one of the defining features is insult or ‘dissing’ (Cummings & Roy 2002) or promoting yourself as unique and superior (Bradley 2009), but this is rarely used in poetry (Caplan 2012). Boasting and bragging are techniques Rappers use to boost their status (Kiyoshi 2009). This makes Rap suitable for scenes of conflict and effective in introducing the characters in the opening scenes. Other stylistic features of Rap lyrics are imperfect rhymes, where syllable end sounds are similar, and internal rhyme, which occurs in the middle of lines (Mayer, Neumayer & Rauber 2008).

Many Hip Hop songs feature Rappers ‘introducing’ who they are and what they’re about, this is also prevalent in the Hip Hopera. For example, in *Caught On Tape* (2013) the maintenance man introduces himself through Rap. He describes what he
sees and tells his inner thoughts as he snoops through the house and steals things. I used this Hip Hop technique to introduce my characters in the first ten pages of the screenplay where they break the fourth wall and Rap directly to the audience about who they are and what they want. Not only was I able to introduce the characters and their goals using these monologues, I was also able to clearly define each character’s Rapping technique and this serves as a strong start to the screenplay. It works perfectly in a Rap setting but might normally be considered exposition-heavy under normal screenwriting standards.

This technique of boasting and bragging can be seen in the opening scenes of my screenplay. There are several elements in my screenplay that differ from existing screenwriting techniques and layout due to the need to accommodate the techniques of Hip Hop. Perhaps the biggest difference that will be noticeable to the reader is the screenplay layout and the exposition producing a heavy introduction of each character in the opening scenes. This was a conscious creative choice on my behalf.

One of the dangers of writing a Hip Hopera was the potential to run out of ideas on how to keep the Rap fresh and interesting. After some experimentation, I came up with an approach to construct the Rap utilising six different ‘voices’, these were: a monologue style Rap that introduces the characters, conversation style Rap, Battle Rap for scenes of high conflict, narration style Rap, songs that feature one-character Rapping the verses and singing the chorus, and a song that features each character taking turns Rapping a verse and then joining in on the chorus. Also, using the different elements that make up Rap as explained in *How to Rap* (2009)
constructed a template to create a distinct arc for each character, this makes my Hip Hopera more complex and varied than existing works. As I moved into the rewrite phase, I found myself having to delete some of the Raps because the narrative in the scene no longer matched the narrative and the dialogue and so the end result is that it deviated away from the arc template but it still served as a strong guide on how to develop each character’s Rap as the story progressed (Appendix 2).

The idea of characters narrating scenes about past events that have occurred was taken from _Trapped in the Closet_ (2005), a film that features a style of narration known as _menuer de jou_. In this style of narration, we see a figure who talks directly to us but is not a part of the story. This character connects the threads of the story by providing commentary and moralising (Porter Abbott 2002). After some experimentation and brainstorming I tried a narration style where the narrative within the Rap is the exact opposite to what is happening on screen. This tells us a lot about Tom, for example, because we learn in this scene that he is lying. Voice over narration that is the opposite of reality is a common device used in screenwriting. I found that this technique worked well in the screenplay because it provided a different and interesting method of Rap delivery while giving the audience a special insight into the character that is narrating.

Though most of the screenplay is in Rap, there are situations where characters engage in spoken dialogue. This occurs when a visitor or character in the screenplay steps outside the boundaries of the house. It is also present when the housemates are watching TV. My reason for this is to make the share house its own world as much
as possible. In the share house, Rap is the language of another world. The housemates are unaffected by what is happening on the outside.

There are some key differences in my Rap that may be noted by audiences. These include an absence of dialects and slang common to identifying where a Rapper is from (Edwards 2009) and popular catchphrases like ‘word up’ and ‘in the house’ (Mitchell 2003).

These were decisions that bore a lot of weight as Hip Hop is about defining where you’re from (Dominello 2008) and by doing this, Rappers can establish their identity (Stavrias 2005). In my artefact, the share house is the location that connects all of the characters, but their location and ethnicity has not been defined in this screenplay. This, like most decisions that were made in the creation of this screenplay, was largely influenced by production considerations. I wrote *The End of Convenience* with the intention of having it made into the film and because of this I often blurred the lines between acting as a writer and a producer. Thinking as a producer meant that I wrote the screenplay with limited locations and actors, created an a cappella screenplay that wouldn’t require expensive studio backing tracks, and based the story in a non-specific location with non-specific ethnicities so that could be produced either in Australia or overseas. I am aware that some of these creative choices might be limiting but they were the best choices that I was able to make that balanced the integrity of the story with the potential for the screenplay to be made into a film. If the screenplay was produced in a specific location, then some additions to the Rap could easily transport us to a different culture.

My screenplay also opens up the question of the key function of Rap lyrics; it
challenges the given that it should be is ‘highly provocative, informal and politically offensive’ (Hill 2009, p. 24) and shocking, aggressive, resistant, taboo, outrageous and even destructive (Caldwell 2012). In keeping with the exploration of new ways to utilise and explore Rap, swearing has been kept to a minimum in my screenplay. Halliday (1976) describes swearing as an emotive reaction to something undesirable. While swearing is prevalent in Rap music, not all Rap includes swearing (Krims 2000) and this language has been mainly associated with gangsta Rap (Caldwell 2012). One of my key reasons for limiting the amount of swearing is because I didn’t want to perpetuate some of the negative stereotypes that are associated with Hip Hop. I didn’t feel that it was essential to include frequent course language to create an authentic Hip Hopera.

In this sense, my artefact resists both the ‘preacher’ and ‘gangsta’ approach to Rapping as discussed in section one. The focus in the dialogue has been on the poetics of Rap as the story revolves around the characters’ relationships with each other rather than on them fighting the ‘system’. That said, it didn’t seem organic to create a story about a group of young couples cohabitating without having at least one character that challenged the ‘system’ and rebelled against the conditions that resulted in them cohabitating out of necessity. The character to do this the most is Zadi. Zadi challenges the system by her vegan and activist lifestyle and participating in polyamorous relationships. The share house does reflect and deal with issues of marginalisation without consciously verbalising these. The absence of political messages throughout the artefact reinforces the varying themes of Rap, including sex and partying and is not always about exploring social marginalisation or racial issues (Osumare 2009).
Layout

When it came time to write my screenplay, I found it difficult to access film musical screenplay to see how they were laid out. I questioned whether the more traditional film musicals would have a normal screenplay and the songs would be written as separate score. In considering models for my artefact, I was fortunate to come across two film musicals: *Rent* (2005) and *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street* (2007). I based the layout of my screenplay on these two examples. After reading these screenplays, I bolded the Rap in my screenplay and shortened the Rap phrases and dispersed them with action lines. The layout of the dialogue was such that each line would end with a rhyme to make it easier for the reader to process the rhyming patterns. This is useful, particularly because there is no accompanying music so the layout of the rhyme must be structured in a way to expose the musicality of the language. The combination of these Raps laid out with shorter width and longer length on the screenplay and the use of large sections of exposition in the first ten pages means that visually, the dialogue will look different to a standard screenplay and the dialogue in the earlier scenes will appear to look like ‘slabs’ of rhymes.

Structure

In choosing to tell a story, the writer must decide whose point of view the story will feature and whose voice will be heard. Amanda Boulter (2007) describes voice as
‘who speaks’ and point of view as ‘who sees’. I began to ask whether one voice could speak for all the other characters such as the narrator in *Trapped in the Closet*. In *Trapped in the Closet*, the narrator is what Schlomith Rimmon Kennan (2001) describes as a focaliser because he provides a ‘birds eye view’ rather than the perspective of a limited observer. *The End of Convenience* features six main characters joined together by the experience of a share house. I wanted both male and female voices in the screenplay to be of equal importance and therefore each character needed their own voice and point of view. This approach is what Boulter (2007) classifies as polyphonic voice as the voices and points of view happen simultaneously. There is no focaliser used in my screenplay but there are scenes where each character narrates a series of events from a limited perspective.

Before commencing the execution of my screenplay, I began analysing existing films for polyphonic voice where characters are linked to a particular location and situation and analysed what structures these stories used and how they were applied to the story. *American Beauty* (1999) was the first film that I studied because the characters are joined by family, neighbourhood, and house and feature distinct stories for each of the protagonists. *American Beauty* (1999) has been described as a multi-protagonist film where characters are trapped in a social grouping (Aronson 2010). This structure resonated with me because the story was about the dynamics and conflict that occurs within share houses.

Aronson (2010) claims that multi-protagonist stories are tied together by a ‘macro’, a chain of events that cause the story to unfold. In the case of my film, the share house
ties the characters and main plot points together. The catalyst is a notice of eviction that Zadi reads to the housemates and the reaction to that notice of eviction is what really drives the story. The housemates and couples must decide whether or not to move out together or go their separate ways. The date of the eviction provides a timeframe in order to force the characters to make a decision and then act on it.

Multi-protagonist stories look at the group mentality and group interaction. They demonstrate individuals under pressure from society (Aronson 2010). In most storylines that contain multiple characters, it is their conflict that drives the narrative (Magiliano, Taylor & Kim 2005). My screenplay studies the group mentality of the sharehouse and subsequent interactions. The protagonists are under pressure from society in that they may end up in unfortunate circumstances such as homelessness if they fail to organise an alternate type of accommodation. The conflict between the characters drives them forward in their decision with some choosing to leave while others choose to stay or get back together.

There are also multi-protagonist films where the characters are joined by theme. When the theme of the film is consistent, but the protagonists are different, it becomes easier to switch between protagonists (Kent 2014). In essence, works of this nature examine the same archetype in a variety of situations, as if the various characters are taking turns at being the protagonist (Kent 2014). This is why the multi-protagonist structure was an effective structure for my work: it allowed the exploration of themes of escapism, relationships of convenience, and cohabitation.
Multi-protagonist narratives are made up of several smaller stories that each contain a main protagonist (McKee 1997). Each character in *The End of Convenience* has their own individual narrative and character arc and it is their conflict with another character within the house that they must overcome in order to achieve their goal. The narratives of a multi-protagonist film follow the journeys of all the members of the group, whose stories alternate to complete the function of the single protagonist in a conventional three-act narrative (Law 2006). In the case of *The End of Convenience*, it is not only the sharehouse inhabitants against each other but the sharehouse inhabitants against society, notably their landlord, the rental system and society.

Multi-protagonist films can be broken up into two categories: ‘group’ and ‘mosaic’. A group features a single large group linked by a central meeting place, whereas a mosaic is a number of characters, small groups or couples whose stories become entangled, usually through coincidence (Tröhler 2000). *The End of Convenience* would be considered a ‘group’ multi-protagonist story because the characters are linked by a single place (the share house). Once I had decided that the multi-protagonist structure would best suit my story, I began to research how this could be applied to the film musicals and which, if any, film musicals had utilised the multi-protagonist structure.

There are very few film musicals that feature a multi-protagonist story structure. Two that come to mind are: *Trapped in the Closet* (2005) and *Repo! The Genetic Opera* (2008). *Repo! the Genetic Opera* (2008) based on the 2002 play, is a rock
opera/horror with a complex plot line and a multi-protagonist structure. It was an inspiration for me because it shows how a complex, multi-protagonist story can be told effectively using music and graphic novel images as exposition. It also shows how a musical can combine film genres effectively. So too, *Trapped in the Closet* (2005) deals with infidelity and homosexuality and cleverly weaves together the characters’ stories through their relationships and affairs with each other. Its chapter by chapter approach and delivery blends the genres of musical and soap opera. Both of these films acted as an inspiration for me to create a multi-protagonist Hip Hopera.

Scholarly research into screenwriting proved challenging for me because there are limited academic journals published on screenwriting. Dallas Baker (2011) states that the screenplay is deserving of scholarly attention, although screenwriting considered inside the academy is very different from the screenwriting on the outside of it. This is because screenwriting researchers focus specifically on the text, not the screenwriting process (Inglestrom 2014). It has been suggested that it was only after the *Journal of Screenwriting* was established in 2010 and the Screenwriting Research Network was formed, that screenwriting was recognised as a serious field of research (Baker, Batty & Beattie 2015). This meant that there were limited scholarly resources on screenwriting available to draw from in the creation of this artefact, but this also meant that this artefact and exegesis would be a contribution to knowledge in screenwriting, particularly in the realm of multi-protagonist storytelling and in the Hip Hopera.
The next challenge that I faced was in the execution of the multi-protagonist screenplay. As I could not find ‘how to’ books on the process of writing a multi-protagonist screenplay or narrative, I looked for existing works to analyse. The four films that I chose were: *American Beauty* (1999), *Go* (1999), *Magnolia* (1999), and *The Hangover* (2009). These films differed in genre and approach and some were more plot-driven while others were more driven by theme. There were similarities between the four films: each starts off with a mystery or telegraphing of information that will make the audience wonder how the story got to that point and each takes place in a specific location and telegraphs a specific time frame. In a multi-protagonist story, theme, location, thread, person or all of the above may connect the characters and each character’s story may or may not have a beginning middle and end. I followed this structure in *The End of Convenience* only in that the story has been told in a mostly linear fashion but it takes place within a single house and the time frame is the time between the eviction notice and the date the housemates are required to move out.

Blake Snyder (2005) claims that even in a multi-protagonist story there is usually one protagonist that is the most dominant and carries the theme of the story. In *American Beauty* Lester is the main protagonist and the other protagonists (Lester’s family) embark on journeys as a result of his bucking the status quo. The main theme that *American Beauty* explores is how difficult it is to live an authentic life. When Lester decides not to do the things that are expected of him and to do what makes him happy he is seen as causing trouble. In *The End of Convenience* Zadi functions as the main protagonist because she is the one who has been withholding the money
that caused the eviction to take place. She also creates dramas by trying to dominate
the housemates into her way of living. The protagonists in The End of Convenience
have separate arcs but share the same journey and Craig Batty (2012) claims that this
is one of the defining features of a multi-protagonist story. Batty (2012) also says
that the characters in a multi-protagonist screenplay are brought together by the same
catalytic event. In The End of Convenience, the catalytic event is the house eviction.

This chapter has engaged in the scholarly discourse around creating a screenplay
about cohabitation delivered through Rap. It analyses the rhyming structures specific
to Rap and how this knowledge was used to structure the character arcs represented
through Rap in my artefact, The End of Convenience. It engages in discussion
regarding creative decisions that were made during the creation of my artefact and
how these choices align or differ with other works in the musical genre. It discusses
the chosen layout of the screenplay and how it deviates from the traditional
screenplay and it explains the process I went about when deciding the best narrative
structure to deliver my screenplay. In conclusion, I will now discuss how the
exegesis has communicated with my artefact.
CONCLUSION

This exegesis is an exploration of the key issues and challenges that arose as I wrote the screenplay *The End of Convenience*. It has functioned as a discussion of the scholarly framework for this artefact and the two elements together provide complementary new and significant scholarship. I have focused the exegesis on key issues arising from reflection on the creative decision making process that I undertook in creating this artefact. This reflection has had many benefits that I will discuss here. McRobbie (1998) asserts that ‘creative labour has been overlooked in media and cultural studies in recent years to the point that almost everything but work has been the subject of extensive attention’ (p. 178). By writing on the creative process I am making a contribution to knowledge around creative labour and the ability of Hip Hop to function as a diverse tool of expression.

Together, the artefact and exegesis add new knowledge to the Hip Hopera. In my discussion of appropriation, for example, I enter into and contribute new knowledge to discussions of how there is some resistance to taking a black musical genre and appropriating it to non-racially specific issues. I offer a resolution to appropriation congruent with Barthes’s (1997) claim that ‘every exploration is an appropriation’ (p. 14). Furthermore, I discuss how Hip Hop is highly adaptable to location and how it serves to enhance the voice of the oppressed. I contribute knowledge through my interrogation of the way the share house occupants in my
screenplay are the oppressed group as this, combined with the roles of the women in the house, is the basis for my screenplay.

I analyse the strong argument that Hip Hop is a traditionally masculine, sexist and homophobic musical genre that marginalises the marginalised. By taking issues that are specific to Hip Hop (notably the marginalisation of women) and applying them to a screenplay that explores these notions through the same musical genre, I show how I am breaking some of the negative stereotypes: this may strengthen the case for more gender-inclusive Hip Hoperas.

I draw connections between genre and protagonist on the contention that standpoint theory is not just an explanatory theory but also a methodology (Harding 2004) as there are few examples of academic analyses of contemporary relationships portrayed cinematically. I created female protagonists who challenged the status quo of the household and the musical genre of Hip Hop. The female protagonists are key drivers in the story and there are an equal number of representation of each gender in the household. This not only offers equal representation but gives women an equal opportunity for a performance in this genre.

In this project, I draw on FST to show how the focus of women as the centre of some of the dramatic storylines will not come without opposition. As Foucault (1990) says, ‘where there is power there is resistance’ (p. 95). The women in The End of Convenience aren’t dependent on the man for survival as exhibited in other existing Hip Hoperas but as Simone de Beauvoir (1953) says ‘even the women who
emancipated herself economically from the man is still not in a moral, social or psychological situation identical to his’ (p. 723). Another issue that women face is the negative associations with showing strength and these exhibits of strength can be used against them (Cixous, Cohen & Cohen 2001). For example, when a woman is assertive she is often seen as a ‘bitch’ or ‘manipulative’. My screenplay aims to turn the tables on some of the negative stereotyping as a means of empowerment. Rather than ignoring current works in the field, women’s sufferings are called out, exalted, named and dissected and this is an effective way to handle injustices (Kristeva 1992).

I also add to discussions the suitability for Rap to function as dialogue. The process of applying Rap had several pros and cons but overall it fulfilled the same functions as spoken dialogue. As a writer and musician, much of what I wrote I tested through performing it myself, to myself, until I felt satisfied with what I aimed to achieve. It will be the effect of the Rap on the audience that will determine how effective the Rap is and whether it can hold the listener, and in this case, viewer’s attention for ninety plus minutes. This was a major criticism in A Day in the Life (2009) and Caught on Tape (2013). To prevent this from happening, I tried making variations in the Rap performance so that it would be delivered at different times as song, battle, narrative, monologue, and conversation.

As noted, my background as a musician and performer led my research. Leavy (2013) states ‘performance is an interdisciplinary methodological genre in its own right’ (p. 343). As I gathered each new piece of information, I performed it by
writing it as a particular draft of the screenplay. A screenplay translates into a performance, and by writing the dialogue in Rap I would often practice and perform the Raps until I perfected them.

In discussing how the setting of share house was the ideal place to explore issues surrounding cohabitation and gender roles, I added significant new knowledge, as there exists little academic research on cohabitation as portrayed in popular culture. Whilst art may be considered ‘inferior knowledge in the academy’ (Webb & Brien 2008, p. 1) I applied academic knowledge to issues arising in the writing of my artefact. As that had already been loosely planned around cohabitation, it led to research areas of cohabitation and share housing and this in turn influenced my final artefact production; thus the two elements of this project are shown as complementary. For example, after coming across research on the safety concerns associated with share housing, I drew on my own experience of a burglary and integrated it into the plot.

This artefact and exegesis together explore how research on cohabitation served to strengthen the couples’ conflicts. Reflection upon the narrative style of the artefact indicated that, from the beginning, I favoured telling the story in a multi-protagonist narrative style, although I researched and experimented with other structures. The share house is the macro of the film as described by Aronson (2010): it is what holds the group together for the duration of the story. I have drawn on FST to explore narratives that draw the female characters together and turn them against each other. The multi-protagonist structure helps me to identify the dynamics of the group and
this is important in establishing the private worlds of each of the protagonists and in particular, the female protagonists.

The artefact was written first and the exegesis second in order to enable me to reflect upon the production of the artefact. I started with what was more pleasurable, familiar, and what I felt comfortable with. As a creative writer I found myself initially more focused on the artistic considerations and less with the academic. Reflection followed on from my artefact production and performed all the functions of PLR. My method of leading with performance is echoed in Hammersley & Aitkinson’s (1994) statement that ‘all research is a practical activity requiring the exercise of judgement in context, it is not simply a matter of following the methodological rules’ (p. 23).

The journal was essential when it came to writing the exegesis. It was a combination of creative findings, experiments and decisions, and scholarly and literary research. Eugen Bacon (2014) recommends keeping three journals: cathartic, academic, and literary. This is the process that I followed during the PhD journey. My academic journal traced how the academic research developed from the creative decisions made at the time of writing the artefact, my cathartic journal recorded my ideas and breakthroughs and discussed what was and wasn’t working, and my literary journal documented anything that I had watched, listened to and read and how this information impacted on my creative decisions.
The exegesis utilised reflective insights into my creative work as a means to enhance and direct my creativity. By improving my process and applying it to future works I will be able to improve my creativity and thus produce better works. I consider it practice for further screenplays and a continuation of my journey to develop a new take on the Hip Hopera.

**Concluding Thoughts**

As my PhD journey draws to a close, it is evident that there is ample room for discussion and exploration on my artefact and creative practice. While a portion of my research contributed to this exegesis and artefact, other material was reluctantly discarded. I will be utilising this information for journal articles, future research, and further creative practice. Although I cast my net wide in the initial stages of research and spent time on in depth analyses of film musicals (both Hollywood and Bollywood), analysis of Hip Hop artist’s songs and Rapping styles, and embarked on a detailed journey into the world of multi-protagonist films, it became obvious that Feminist Standpoint Theory was an essential guiding principle of the project. FST was the thread that tied together my research with my intention to create an even-gendered Hip Hopera that featured strong female protagonists who broke the sexualised stereotypes of the Hip Hop genre and dealt with the trials and tribulations of cohabitation and shared housing.

My PhD journey introduced a fresh approach for me to make a meaningful contribution to knowledge through the process of combining scholarly research with
creative practice. The process has led me to enriched inquiries into existing literary works and how to draw constructive comparisons between them and my own creative productions. I will utilise this approach in upcoming creative projects.

One of the limitations of creating a screenplay, particularly using the multi-protagonist structure, was the danger of incorporating too much thematic complexity. Therefore, many of the initial ideas of including characters of specific ethnicities and diverse sexualities were later abandoned in favour of one overarching theme (relationships of convenience) and a distinct emphasis on the empowerment of the female protagonists. In this sense, the project has taken on an overtly feminist stance in dealing with gender equality.

As my creative practice was what led and dominated my research, it was also the first portion of the PhD to be completed. Once I had completed the bulk of the exegesis, I then returned to the artefact. On reflection on my artefact, I considered a rewrite as sufficient time had passed and my skills had developed considerably. This raised in me the questions ‘when is an artist’s work ever complete’? If I am constantly developing and improving in my creative skills and processes, will I revisit the screenplay again in another six or twelve months and make further adjustments and at what stage will the project be considered finished? My decision was to make minor adjustments to the screenplay as any major changes would also require major changes to my exegesis.
The most significant change that I was inclined to perform on my artefact was to the structure as the multi-protagonist structure was the last thing that I had researched and possibly the most difficult to find information on how to execute. If I had begun my research with the analyses and reverse engineering of existing multi-protagonist films, I would have written six different narratives and found a way to tie them together, as currently *The End of Convenience* appears more like a television series.

The main difference that I can perceive between a TV style approach and the multi-protagonist film approach is that a multi-protagonist film generally starts with the telegraphing of information from the future and sets us off with a mystery that we become invested in to discover and is resolved by the ending. Also, each character’s narrative tends to have a beginning, middle and end. In *The End of Convenience* there is less of a beginning, middle and end story for each character and more of an overall character arc.

I am satisfied that both my artefact and exegesis have accomplished what they intended to achieve: to investigate the current state of the film musical and find new ways to contribute to this subgenre of the film musical. I have also gained many insights on how to conduct creative practice that will enable me to contribute to new knowledge. Most importantly, I have learned how to write female characters that challenge the marginalisation that occurs within the Hip Hop. I believe that this PhD adds to scholarly knowledge on Hip Hop and the Hip Hopera and I hope that it will lead to further academic discussion within this field of study.


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APPENDICES

Appendix 1:

The narrative has been divided into six stages: goal, conflict, disaster, reaction and dilemma, each with a different method of delivery ie. Goal (Monologue Rap), Conflict (Conversation Style Rap), Disaster (Battle Rap), Reaction (Narrative Rap), Dilemma (Many Songs, One Voice), Decision (One Song, Many Voices).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Tools</th>
<th>Rhyme</th>
<th>Rhythm</th>
<th>Delivery</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goal</td>
<td>Monologue Rap</td>
<td>Humorous, Story,</td>
<td>Wordplay, simile,</td>
<td>Compound rhymes,</td>
<td>Mixing flow, simple/complex flow, fast/slow, dense/sparse, rests, off/on beat, stressed syllables</td>
<td>Cartoon voices, melodic, clear, sh delivery, expressive smooth, voice overs, muffled, less melodic, nasal, harsh, expressive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Abstract, Braggadocio,</td>
<td>complex vocabulary,</td>
<td>bending, perfect,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Real Life, Fictional,</td>
<td>metaphors, analogy, slang,</td>
<td>assonance, alliteration, consonance, multi syllabic rhymes, entendre, couplets, singles, compound multi</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Controversial,</td>
<td>punch lines, Imaginary</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Conscious, Club/Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conflict</td>
<td>Conversation Rap</td>
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<tr>
<td>Disaster</td>
<td>Battle Rap</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reaction</td>
<td>Narrative Rap</td>
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Appendix 2:

The template as applied to Byron.

BYRON (complex to simple)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Tools</th>
<th>Rhyme</th>
<th>Rhythm</th>
<th>Delivery</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goal</td>
<td>Monologue/Rap</td>
<td>Humorous, story, controversial</td>
<td>Wordplay, simile, slang, complex vocabulary, metaphors, punch lines</td>
<td>Assonance, consonance, alliteration bending, compound rhyme multi liners, multi syllabic</td>
<td>Mixed flow, off the beat, fast, dense, stressed syllables</td>
<td>Cartoon voices, melodic, clear, sharp delivery,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict</td>
<td>Conversation/Rap</td>
<td>Humorous, controversial</td>
<td>Similes, metaphors, punch lines, word</td>
<td>Bending, compound multi liners, multi</td>
<td>Mixed flow, off the beat, fast,</td>
<td>Clear, sharp, melodic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disaster</td>
<td>Battle Rap</td>
<td>Humorous</td>
<td>Similes, metaphors, punch lines, complex vocabulary</td>
<td>Assonance, consonance, alliteration, bending, multi syllabic, compound multi liners</td>
<td>Mixed flow, off the beat, fast-medium, dense</td>
<td>Clear, sharp, melodic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reaction</td>
<td>Narrative</td>
<td>Story</td>
<td>Similes, metaphors, punch lines</td>
<td>Assonance, consonance, couplets, single liners, multi syllabic</td>
<td>Mixed flow, off the beat, medium, dense</td>
<td>Clear, smooth, melodic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dilemma</td>
<td>Many Songs/One Voice</td>
<td>Fictional</td>
<td>Similes, Metaphors, simple vocabulary</td>
<td>Assonance, consonance, couplets, single liners</td>
<td>Simple flow, off and on the beat, dense, slow</td>
<td>Clear, smooth, expressive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision</td>
<td>One Song/Many Voices</td>
<td>Real Life</td>
<td>Imaginary, similes, simple vocabulary</td>
<td>Perfect rhyme, couplets, single liners</td>
<td>On the beat, simple flow, sparse slow</td>
<td>Smooth, expressive</td>
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