

2015

## Fowl feathered fox: Monsters, pipers, families and flocks

Michelle Aslett  
*Edith Cowan University*

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Doctor of Philosophy (Writing)

School of Communications and Arts

Faculty of Education and Arts

**Edith Cowan University**

Course Code L15

**FOWL FEATHERED FOX**

Monsters, Pipers, Families and Flocks

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SUBMITTED

September, 2014



## USE OF THESIS

The Use of Thesis statement is not included in this version of the thesis.

## ABSTRACT

*Fowl Feathered Fox: Monsters, Pipers, Families and Flocks* is a doctoral work consisting of a full-length stage play and an exegesis. An introduction outlines the scope of the doctoral work, while a concluding chapter reflects on research findings and considers staging issues and implications. Appendices include images incorporated into the play's action as well as photographed excerpts from a series of visual diaries used to document the play's evolution.

The play, *Fowl Feathered Fox*, explores the nature of delusion, deception and the tragedy of The Beast Within. Borrowing as it does from the traditions of revenge tragedy, comedy and horror, the style of *Fowl Feathered Fox* is both sensual and sensationalistic. Indeed, by virtue of overstepping traditional ideological, stage and venue boundaries to tap into an audience's faculties of taste, physical sensation and smell, I aim to confront, seduce and repel on every possible sensory level. Here, in keeping with the conventions of Renaissance revenge tragedies as well as contemporary re-imaginings of the genre in popular culture, a tragic protagonist is forced to behave as a detective in order to put an end to a terrible, taboo curse. As a black comedy however, *Fowl Feathered Fox* makes light of taboo topics, as the darkness of the subject matter is buoyed by meta-theatrical gags, ironic humour, word-play and brief forays into interpretive dance. In the tradition of horror film and fiction, my eponymous 'fowl feathered fox' is a specifically Australian re-imagining of the archetypal shapeshifter, blending the qualities of the wolf in sheep's clothing, the false prophet, the Pied Piper and the werewolf. Surrealism, with its roots in psychoanalysis, underscores the play's visual aesthetic: this stage is littered with fearful, surgically invasive and aggressively sexual forms, objects and images.

The exegesis, *Monsters, Pipers, Families and Flocks*, interrogates various mythic, historical and fictional examples of charismatic cult leadership, locating patterns in the paradigmatic nexus shared by monsters, cults and families. A trio of exegetical essays considers the tragic nature of lycanthropy, Nietzsche's conception of the Apollonian/Dionysian dichotomy, the socio-cultural dynamics of charismatic cult leadership and the frightening, fascinating phenomenon of *pseudologia fantastica*. The first exegetical essay explores the lycanthropic and messianic qualities of two real-life malevolent cult leaders: Rock Theriault (Canada) and William Kamm (Australia). The second exegetical essay interrogates the enthralling, intoxicating qualities of the Pied Piper of Hamelin and Greek demi-god Dionysus, finding parallels in tragic revenge narratives wrought by infamous American cult leaders such as Charles Manson and David Berg. Finally, the third exegetical essay examines monstrous, messianic mothers from Greek myth, horror fiction and memoir: specifically, the goddess Demeter, Margaret White from Brian de Palma's *Carrie* (1976) and notorious Australian cult leader, Anne Hamilton-Byrne.

The declaration page  
is not included in this version of the thesis

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>USE OF THESIS</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>ABSTRACT</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>DECLARATION</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>I: INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>7</b>
<i>Welcome to Plankton! Roosters and Rituals on the Rainbow Coast</i>	
The Beast Within Us All	<b>8</b>
Personal Experiences, Artistic Goals, Albany and Plankton	<b>17</b>
Generic Considerations and Theatrical Precedents	<b>23</b>
<b>II: STAGE PLAY</b>	<b>31</b>
<i>Fowl Feathered Fox</i>	
Full-length Stage Play in Three Acts	<b>32</b>
<b>III: EXEGESIS</b>	<b>158</b>
<i>Monsters, Pipers, Families and Flocks</i>	
Chapter 1: Monster or Messiah? Tragic Werewolves and Infectious Flocks	<b>160</b>
Chapter 2: Pity the Piper? Avenging Angels and Murderous Maenads	<b>189</b>
Chapter 3: Kept in the Dark? Archetypal Ice Queens and Daughters of Demeter	<b>216</b>
<b>IV: CONCLUSION</b>	<b>234</b>
<i>The Fox on Stage</i>	
Embracing an Audience: Reflection on Staging Issues	<b>235</b>
<b>REFERENCES</b>	<b>241</b>
<b>APPENDICES</b>	<b>247</b>

## **I: INTRODUCTION**

*Welcome to Plankton! Roosters and Rituals on the Rainbow Coast*

## The Beast Within Us All

Fancy thinking the Beast was something you could hunt and kill!  
You knew, didn't you? I'm part of you? Close, close, close!

William Golding, *Lord of the Flies*

*Fowl Feathered Fox: Monsters, Pipers, Families and Flocks* is a doctoral work consisting largely of a full length stage play and an exegesis. The play, *Fowl Feathered Fox*, including a series of original paintings incorporated into the play's action, explores the nature of monstrosity, charismatic leadership in religious cults and family dynamics. These themes are further examined in a trio of exegetical essays. A concluding chapter, entitled *The Fox on Stage*, is predicated on research that considers the practical implications of the doctoral project on both page and stage. Finally, appendices include extracts from a series of visual diaries and journals used to document the evolution of the play.

The exegesis, entitled *Monsters, Pipers, Families and Flocks*, interrogates various examples of charismatic cult leadership, locating patterns and commonalities in the paradigmatic nexus shared by monsters, cults and families. Essentially, this doctoral project in its entirety explores the wild, triangular territory at the heart of the Venn diagram, below:

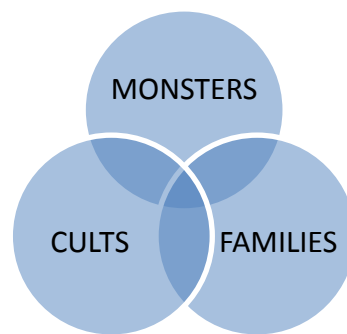


Fig 1.1: Key doctoral preoccupations.

Fundamentally, the topics that exist in this territory revolve around the ecstasies and tragedies of the human condition: life, death, fear, love, anger, passion and redemption. While both *Fowl Feathered Fox* and *Monsters, Pipers, Families and Flocks* explore these topics, in this introduction I use the umbrella themes of duality, deception, doubt

and desire to introduce the specific patterns and commonalities I discovered at the heart of this fascinating paradigmatic nexus.

In 'doomsday cults,' notions of duality (in the form of binary oppositions, dichotomies and clear-cut divisions), are integral verbal and, thus, ideological tools, particularly in terms of a charismatic leader's control over their followers. In *Savage Messiah: The Shocking Story of Cult Leader Rock Theriault and the Women Who Loved Him*, biographers Kaihla and Laver (1993) suggest that the most dangerous cults:

have at their core a belief that current events are hurtling toward some kind of pre-ordained apocalypse. There are only two kinds of people: the doomed sinners and the enlightened saints. (p. 168)

In this scenario, non-believers or non-adherents are resolutely othered, as a clear distinction emerges via the figuring of Unbelievers as 'the damned' and The Chosen Few as 'the saved.' Cult leaders often harness notions of duality, dichotomy and division as ideological tools. Unfortunately, due to a cult's belief that divine law should (and *will*, despite the consequences) take precedence over earthly laws, the absolute commitment of followers to divisive narratives can lead to prejudice, hatred, phobia, violation of social norms or criminal transgressions.

A useful illustration of the dualistic qualities of the archetypal shapeshifter is provided in the Dionysian/ Apollonian dichotomy. In this dichotomy, a concept drawn from Greek myth and developed by Nietzsche (May, 1990; Nietzsche, 1967), two diametrically opposed but interdependent forces exist within one body, forces represented by brothers Dionysus and Apollo, sons of Zeus, the Olympian god. Provisionally, as Nietzsche proposes, we could 'think of Apollo as representing dreams and Dionysus as representing intoxication' (cited in May, 1990, p. 3). Yet, as May explains, while 'Apollo is... the agent of delusion... he is a glorious agent without whom we would be brutish' (*ibid.*, p. 5). In the field of psychoanalysis, this scenario provides a 'startlingly apt metaphor for Freud's idea of the conscious and subconscious minds - or, to be more specific, the contrast between superego and id' (King, 1980, p. 48). Traditionally, the Dionysian represents the forces of the id or the world outside human reckoning, while the Apollonian represents the superego or what we humanly make of the world. A canonical example of this concept in literature, of course, would be Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886), in which both protagonist



and antagonist famously exist within one body. In this paradigm, Dionysian desires are aligned with those of the unconscious, or id, enhancing the primal, bestial, monstrous aspects of the Beast Within. Conversely, Apollonian desires are equated with those of the disciplined, virtuous, ‘civilised’ superego. Ultimately, combining these dichotomous, dualistic qualities produces a frightening scenario where a catalyst triggers the emergence of Dionysian appetites from beneath an Apollonian façade.

A similarly frightening scenario exists in the tradition of the werewolf, wherein a benevolent, human façade masks the periodic emergence of malevolent, bestial appetites. In this conception of the werewolf (or lycanthrope), the human aspect represents the Apollonian while the wolf represents the Dionysian. Literature from the fields of cultural criticism, evolutionary psychology and socio-biology point to possible reasons for the enduring appeal of the man/wolf analogy. As critic Heather Schell notes:

Evolutionary psychology has popularised the notion that men’s everyday behaviour can be better understood by comparison to the habits of large mammals – most especially the more aggressive of the primates – living in patriarchal, aggressive societies. What links us to these other animals is our genes, which carry the atavistic behavioural impulses of our remote ancestors, also patriarchal, aggressive, and social. Our cultural fictions have embraced this narrative wholeheartedly but changed the comparison to more charismatic megafauna: dogs and wolves. (2007, p. 109)

Here, while man’s everyday behaviour can be ‘better understood’ by comparison to the behaviour of cavemen and apes, it seems we much prefer to be likened to smaller (albeit similarly aggressive) mammals traditionally figured as cunning, agile and intelligent despite their ferocious and opportunistic qualities. Sociobiologist David Barash cited in Schell (2007, p. 110) notes that men, under a thin veneer of civilisation, ‘are scarcely different from ravening predators... human beings are of the wilderness, with beasts inside.’ Schell explains the prevalence of this notion in society and popular culture when she suggests that ‘every time someone jokes about a man “marking his territory” with urine, or discusses the “pack mentality” of gangs, or refers to a seducer or rapist as a “sexual predator,” we see an instance of how our culture has internalised the man-wolf analogy’ (2007, p. 114). Furthermore, Metzger notes that ‘no other animal has rivalled the supremacy of the wolf in terms of animal transformation... this may well be due to the fact that for thousands of years, wolves constituted the most common and most

“dangerous” land-based predator throughout Europe’ (2013, p. 343). In Australia, of course, we tend not to lose sheep to wolves. We do, however, often lose fowl to foxes. Thus, in keeping with my Australian heritage and context, I offer a specifically ‘Aussie’ rendering of the wolf in sheep’s clothing. In short, while the man/beast analogies in *Fowl Feathered Fox* rely on the connotative potential of the ‘charismatic megafauna’ described above, my play extends upon the specifically canine and lupine to incorporate the vulpine.

Cult leaders and subsequently, recruited followers, employ cunningly deceptive practices to further increase the numbers in the fold, and thus, ‘cash in the cult coffers.’ As I discuss in the second exegetical essay, the goal of the monstrous cult authoritarian is ‘primarily to attract those whom they can psychologically coerce into and keep in a passive-submissive state and secondarily to use them to increase their income’ (Levine & Shaiova, 1987, p. 19). Michael Langone, cult expert, psychologist and scholar, cites ‘deception, dependency and dread’ as required to invoke absolute faith in the cult’s teachings and dependence on the cult environment (1993, p. 7). In this paradigm, proselytising works to ‘infect’ the victim of the malevolent cult leader, while various phobic fears, particularly the dread of eviction, compound the victim’s dependence upon the cult. In short, proselytising, or the attempt to convert others to a religious or political ideology, functions as a kind of ‘wooing:’ the first step in the process of ‘capturing’ victims. In the initial stages, ‘the promise of reward entices the potential recruit who may view cult recruitment as a kind of courtship’ (*ibid.*, pp. 7-9). This process recalls the moment in horror fiction when a werewolf embeds its fangs into a victim’s flesh. According to horror conventions, a hapless victim is bitten, infected with a fatal curse and thereby rendered ‘contagious.’ Thus, a parasitic cult leader is able to secure and gradually increase income by attracting and ‘infecting’ flocks of selfless, willing labourers via deceptive recruitment practices, then working to maintain this supply of free labour via the inculcation of dread and dependency.

Charismatic cult leaders are often highly adept rhetoricians, using language as a tool of deception to seduce ‘victims,’ placate flocks and quash the emergence of doubt. As I discuss in the first exegetical essay, when William Kamm’s followers checked themselves into the Order of Saint Charbel, they were ‘expected to leave their rationality at the three-metre front gates’ and to seek guidance from Mary if they began

to have doubts or tried to understand the ways of God via human logic (Webber, 2008, p. 94). Often, because the form and structure of language make a greater impact on an audience than the actual content (Guilfoyle, 2002, p. 13), harmful or subversive ideologies embedded in cult doctrines are consumed and disseminated via upbeat catchphrases, flowery monologues, slogans, mantras and diatribes. Cult leader Charles Manson taught his skewed value system to his followers ‘and their attitudes became aligned with his...as they lived together in the desert, they listened to Manson’s ramblings and were exposed to many attitudes toward crime and deviancy that were in opposition to the norms of society’ (Atchison & Heide, 2011, p. 791). Thus, in a cult leader’s career, recruitment drives, sermons, speeches and prophetic outpourings become useful opportunities for distributing propaganda; it also normalises suspect, or even criminal, attitudes and behaviours.

As I show in the second exegetical essay, development of delusional revenge narratives hinges on vengeance-entitling motives, compounded by the falsifying factor of pathological lying, specifically, a type of lying called *pseudologia fantastica* (Birch, Kelln, & Aquino, 2006, p. 299). The term *pseudologia phantastica*, ‘originally coined by a German psychiatrist in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century,’ is often used interchangeably with the term pathological lying, yet, ‘some argue that there is more than one type of pathological lying, and that *pseudologia fantastica* is only the most severe subtype of such lying’ (*ibid.*, p. 300). Furthermore, the notion that *pseudologia fantastica* is ‘a special disorder... characterised by hilarious but still concise stories’ (Newmark & Adityanjee, 1999, p. 90), helps to explain the prevalence of comedy, albeit black comedy, in the cult paradigm I present here. This sense of black comedy is perhaps best exemplified by William Kamm’s laughable conception of ‘The Holy Shining Thing’ as discussed here in the first exegetical essay. Essentially, owing to the phenomenon of *pseudologia fantastica*, fantasy becomes firm belief in the mind of a charismatic leader and thus the desire to rescue wounded children and punish parents involves the manufacturing of a ‘real-life’ family unit.

Clearly, absolute commitment to a malevolent leader involves willingness to act without doubt or remorse. In his critical work entitled *Charisma*, Charles Lindholm speaks of ‘the real, subjective experience of charismatic groups where members feel lost in total love, and are capable of dying, or killing, for the sake of the group’ (1990, p. 72). A

leader's charismatic, worship-inspiring qualities thus enable the tailoring of follower's thought patterns to inspire absolute commitment to that leader's destructive motives; encouraging willingness to act as violent, vengeful surrogates and also to ensure the quashing of doubt.

To prevent doubt, reservation or suspicion on the part of their followers, leaders commonly align themselves with the divine. Figuring themselves as messianic intermediaries between flock and divine forces provides a convenient platform of authority and reduced accountability. Charismatic leaders often see themselves as intermediaries, avatars or Chosen Ones, able to translate and interpret the word as sent from 'on high.' This is the case with William Kamm's messages from The Virgin Mary and Rock Theriault's communications with The God of Light and Dark. In *Fowl Feathered Fox*, I have appropriated this latter conception of an ultimate deity in the form of 'The God of Night and Day:' an omniscient being based on the Roman Catholic conception of God the Father in the Holy Trinity. Ultimately, it would seem that if a leader presents their logic as existing on a higher plane than that of mere mortals, this provides a surprisingly successful antidote to the subversive rise of doubt within the flock.

For followers, excitement and anticipation surrounding the promise of post-apocalyptic life and an unshakeable belief in their leader as divine emissary seems to expel any hint of doubt. In response to doubts voiced by his flock, Kamm used the successful excuse that the End Times were 'delayed but not cancelled' (Webber, 2008, p. 115), blaming anyone but himself for errors, even God himself. Clearly, End Time prophecy is central to the enduring authority of the charismatic leader as 'a prophet who can't predict the future is not a prophet' (*ibid.*). So, when the world does *not* come to an end, blame can be directed at those above by reasoning away the discrepancy as a simple miscommunication or misinterpretation, thus eradicating doubt.

Experiencing doubt can lead to cognitive dissonance, the uncomfortable effect of simultaneous belief in two contradictory ideas. This is similar to George Orwell's conception of 'doublethink' in his seminal dystopian fiction, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949), in which the citizens of Oceania, to avoid 'thoughtcrime' and subsequent 'vaporisation,' have been conditioned to accept that belief in contradictory ideas is a kind of intellectual freedom: the freedom to proclaim that '2+2=5.' Furthermore, in the

paradigm of domestic violence, cognitive dissonance occurs when, to survive distressing, violent episodes, those living with abusive partners ‘will distort (in their mind) the situation by minimizing or denying the reality of the circumstances’ (Kaihla & Laver, 1993, p. 300). Similarly, via conditioning and indoctrination, charismatic spiritual leaders work to promote denial, extinguish doubt and stimulate absolute faith in their authority. In the case of a failed doomsday prophecy, for example, accepting an entirely new belief such as, ‘the world was spared due to our faith and the intercession of our leader,’ lessens dissonance and is thus thought preferable to leaving the safety of the cult. Ultimately, suspicion surrounding the Dionysian aspects of a cult leader’s behaviour is ignored in favour of what appears to be overwhelming proof of their Apollonian qualities.

Cult leaders work to gratify the spiritual desires of potential recruits, offering to heal pain and guarantee successful passage through the Pearly Gates of Heaven. An oft-repeated reminder in the literature concerning cults is that ‘no-one joins a *cult*’ (Salande & Perkins, 2011; Zimbardo, 1997). Indeed, cult recruits tend to believe that they are ‘joining a legitimate and healthy group that will not abuse them’ (Almendros, Carrobbles, & Rodriguez-Carballeira, 2007; Goldberg, 1997; Salande & Perkins, 2011; Shaw, 2003; Zimbardo, 1997). However, a barrage of exciting and exhilarating apocalyptic fantasies lead to the passionately devoted recruit walking freely into the leader’s lair, unable and indeed, unwilling to escape. In a sense, spiritually hungry cult members are ‘death seekers’ actively working for life after death; a release from the temporary pain and suffering of their earthly lives. Former cult members frequently report being ‘enthralled’ by a charismatic leader, explaining that ‘the cult’s touch had an almost hypnotic quality’ (Tobias & Lalich, 1994, p. 11). Initially, captivated by a leader’s spiritual ideals and apocalyptic vision, cult members experience ‘exhilaration, excitement, passion or expectation’ (*ibid.*). Clearly, by promoting the supremacy of life after death, a leader can engage an audience’s spiritual desire for recognition, redemption and retributive justice. Thus, for the malevolent cult leader, understanding the spiritual desires of potential victims leads to an understanding of the specific bait required in the hunt, leading the predatory wolf to feed the flock in order to feed *upon* them. In essence, for the ‘death seekers’ I describe above, an enthralling, hypnotic leader represents an immediate solution to the banality and suffering of earthly life.

While the werewolf abuses society from the outside: savaging, tearing and devouring flesh, the narcissistic, psychopathic cult leader creates a sequestered, utopian society which they proceed to abuse from within. In the first exegetical essay, I argue that while the werewolf tends to be destroyed by a silver bullet, the malevolent cult leader tends to be destroyed when the flock willingly reject that leader's authority and regain their independence. Clearly, a cult leader without followers is not a cult leader. Accordingly, I posit that the silver bullet in the werewolf/cult leader analogy could be the flock's rejection of the narcissistic leader and the subsequent withdrawal of love. Of course, whereas the former scenario relates to violence and extermination, the latter relates more to the notion of disengagement; key nuances in my drawing of this parallel. In the second exegetical essay, I show how Charles Manson inhabited the role of vain, self-absorbed tragic hero, deflecting blame back at authorities by aligning himself with a mirror, recalling the myth of Narcissus. Ironically, while a narcissistic leader 'is incapable of loving others,' the knowledge that they are desired by others is of utmost concern. Essentially, the psychopathic desires of malevolent cult leaders produce an essentially tragic situation akin to that of the werewolf, wherein 'the good must be thrown out with the bad' primarily because, as Captain Spock famously notes, 'the needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few' (Bennett, Phillips, Sallin, & Meyer, 1982).

In short, an examination of the 'fowl-feathered fox' in the contexts of religion and spirituality consistently reveal themes of duality, deception, doubt and desire. While both play and exegesis explore thematic material found in monster, cult and family paradigms as I describe above, here, I specifically examine the individual and collective nature of *The Beast Within* in order to better understand those collective 'panic buttons' so useful to the playwright engaged in a search for the most suitable material to achieve an audience's experience of empathy, pity and fear. While the dualistic nature of malevolent cult leader, werewolf, wolf in sheep's clothing and false prophet may be far from the daily experience of an audience (as indeed, these figures range from the clandestine to the fictional), the manifestation of these archetypes on stage has the capacity to elicit a collective emotional response due to an individual's experience of duplicity, betrayal and the abuse of power. The prevalence of the latter in contemporary society is perhaps enough to recommend continued study of the motives and techniques of charismatic leaders. Similarly, investigation into shapeshifters from history, lore,

literature, film and myth promotes appreciation of humanity's innate dualism and our shared propensity to 'unleash the beast within.'

## **Personal Experiences, Artistic Goals, Albany and Plankton**

So the artist takes the pieces of the world that interest him  
and builds them as a process of self-definition, self-discovery  
and self-enlargement into his art.

Keith May, *Nietzsche and the Spirit of Tragedy*

While I have not been in the thrall of any specific charismatic leader, a loss of faith in Catholic teachings and withdrawal from the Catholic community did produce feelings of betrayal and anger. Losing faith in the Catholic world-view as an eighteen year old was painful and problematic, producing uncomfortable feelings of fear and guilt that gradually began to manifest as anxiety. Samways posits that the Roman Catholic Church is an institution ‘based on guilt and the concept of confession and absolution’ (1994, p. 72). Here, breaking, or even just contemplating breaking the rules, creates guilt, ‘and the more guilt created the greater is the fear in the participant or member, and the greater the power and control of the group or leader’ (*ibid.*). Obviously, leaving a malevolent group like those discussed here would be a supremely difficult and painful experience. Nevertheless, I can empathise to a degree with those suffering a loss of faith and the subsequent feelings of betrayal and anger.

My initial interest in charismatic leadership and apocalyptic belief systems stemmed from a rigorous Catholic upbringing in Albany, Western Australia. The religious experiences of my youth provided a vast array of artistic stimuli: beauty, mystery, ritual and sacrifice. As a primarily visual thinker, the most significant, vibrant memories I retain of my time within the church are solemn, incense-soaked tableaux, ritualised prayer ceremonies and vague, occasionally unintelligible sermons. Here, chanting words stripped of concrete meaning and undergoing lengthy periods of guided meditation served to divorce thought from utterance, quashing the possibility of a too-deep scrutiny, working to ensure the impossibility of doubt. During this time, despite their status as ‘fringe-dwellers,’ a schismatic millenarian cult directed by a charismatic leader was actively involved in the Albany Catholic community. Some of our family friends from the community moved into a communal ‘cult house’ less than a kilometre away from the high school I attended. Subsequently, before and after prayer group meetings, rosaries and Mass, my sister and I were privy to gossip garnered largely through eavesdropping. A surprising amount of information was transmitted to us in this covert



manner and we immediately devoured these mysterious snippets of sensationalised information, imagining the very worst of titillating crimes.

The setting in *Fowl Feathered Fox* is a transmogrified, stylised, anachronistic version of my home-town of Albany, Western Australia. In early drafts, I called the place ‘Oyster Barque’ and figured the location as an oyster: hard, inaccessible and ‘bark-like’ on the outside, salty and sensuous on the inside. As you will see, my original conception of The Shire of Oyster Barque has evolved somewhat since these early drafts. Thus, by amalgamating ideas, impressions and memories gleaned from personal, creative and theoretical exploration, *Fowl Feathered Fox* operates as a kind of cannibalistic ‘flesh blanket:’ a palimpsest or patchwork of select images, themes, characters and plot points from the very earliest drafts.

My honours thesis explored the notions of plague, pestilence and pollution in contemporary ‘re-imaginings’ of Greek Tragedy (2003). My fascination with the plague scenario extends from an interest in the physical manifestation and infectious nature of the disease to an interest in the prevalence of the unscrupulous and parasitic during times of increased social vulnerability. In *The Decameron*, Boccaccio cited in Kohn (2001) provides an eyewitness account of the devastating outbreak of bubonic plague in Florence in 1347, writing of the ‘large number of quacks who emerged during the crisis and how they took advantage of the sick’ (p. 110). As Kohn explains, during outbreaks of The Black Death during the Middle Ages:

people reacted with fear, and the fear gave way to terrible callousness. The sick were often ignored and left to die; husbands and wives deserted each other; and parents deserted children. (*ibid.*)

I would argue that the modern cult leader, like these notorious ‘quacks’ who appeared during outbreaks of plague, is a manifestation of the parasitic wolf in sheep’s clothing, lured by the pain and suffering of the traumatised and vulnerable.

During my candidature, I played with the conventions of tragedy, comedy, crime fiction, western and horror. Research into psychoanalytic theory thus collided with pop culture as I grappled with a central research question: why do people join, and remain in malevolent cults, particularly when physical, practical evidence suggests a violent, dysfunctional or abusive reality? W.H. Auden (2008) suggests one way I might address this question upon the stage:

Drama is based on the Mistake. I think someone is my friend when he really is my enemy, that I am free to marry a woman when in fact she is my mother, that this person is a chambermaid when it is a young nobleman in disguise, that this well-dressed young man is rich when he is really a penniless adventurer, or that if I do this such and such a result will follow when in fact it results in something very different. All good drama has two movements, first the making of the mistake, then the discovery that it was a mistake. (p. 253)

Here, Auden provides a clue for solving the conundrum: perhaps the protagonist's discovery of deception and their subsequent desire to leave a cult was the result of a tragic mistake: specifically, joining the cult in the first place. In the final draft of *Fowl Feathered Fox*, however, I have not even granted Kid Rockwell, the protagonist, the agency to choose cult membership. Kid grows up believing in 'The God of Night and Day' because she was born into it: much like I grew up believing there was real, actual God, and that He was Roman Catholic. Essentially, my personal experience of being born into religion has, at least in some small part, contributed to the characterisation of the cult members within my play.

At one point, I determined to write blood-free psychological dramas incorporating social satire, epitomised in the horror genre by the work of Ira Levin. I was particularly intrigued by the original film version of Levin's *The Stepford Wives*, directed by Bryan Forbes and written by William Goldman, especially the character of Disney, who I feel represents an admirably restrained treatment of the cult leader archetype. The stylised, ritualistic aspects of Polanski's adaptation of Levin's *Rosemary's Baby* also enthralled me. Stephen King notes, 'the best social horror movies achieve their effect by implication, and *The Stepford Wives*, by showing us only the surface of things and never troubling to explain exactly how these things are done, implies plenty' (1980, p.101). Further, studying *Carrie* in preparation for the third exegetical essay, I was reminded that I wanted to create art in the vein of King and Brian de Palma, especially as I had heard the latter was, like me, a 'recovering Catholic,' tortured by abstract fears and bouts of guilt. Ultimately, in the tragic tradition of Aristotle (trans. 1967), I decided that the play should be more often suggestive rather than explicit. In the tradition of 'the best social horror,' I would, as Stephen King suggests, show only 'the surface of things' (*ibid.*).

In 2009, development of a paper for a conference I attended at Oxford University, UK, provided an exciting opportunity to explore monstrosity in the context of charismatic

leadership and further, the links between werewolves and cult leaders. The title of the conference intrigued me immediately: 7<sup>th</sup> *Global Conference of Monsters and the Monstrous*. I was anxious to explore the monstrous aspects of the malevolent charismatic leader, and had already noted some of the paradigmatic overlaps between werewolf and cult leader. The first exegetical essay I present here is a revised and extended version of this conference paper, published by Inter-Disciplinary Press as part of a book collection entitled *The Monster Imagined* (2010).

Research and preparation for this conference paper led to one of the most significant discoveries of the doctoral journey: the most dangerous and potentially horrifying aspect of the cult scenario is the emergence and success of a cult leader who *actually believes in what they say they believe*. Until this point, I had mistakenly assumed that malevolent cult leaders were acutely aware of the deceptive and manipulative nature of their behaviour. I learnt however, of this phenomenon of pseudologia fantastica, which operates like a web of pathological lies fuelled by paranoid delusions. The pseudologue's lies are 'quantitatively and qualitatively distinct from "normal" lying. Quantitatively, [they] must be excessive and chronic... [qualitatively], while the theme of lies can be stereotyped or varied in nature, they are almost always dazzling or fantastical, and often develop into a complicated system of deception' (Birch, Kelln, & Aquino, 2006, p. 301). Listening to The Beatles' *White Album* (1968) for example, sparked a chain of paranoid delusions for cult leader Charles Manson, who 'began to see predictions encoded throughout the lyrics and saw parallels to the ideas he had had about growing racial tension between Blacks and Whites,' explaining to his 'family' that 'the band was trying to push Blacks into rebelling violently against Whites' (Atchison & Heide, 2011, p. 777). As I show throughout the exegesis, pseudologia fantastica works to fuel vengeful narratives constructed by messianic leaders in scenarios not dissimilar to the Boy Who Cried Wolf, but where the boy has actually managed to convince himself that the wolf exists.

Throughout the doctoral process, lecturing and teaching has assisted my playwriting immeasurably. Writing and delivering units in Playwriting and Greek Mythology at Edith Cowan University helped establish and develop ideas pertinent to my research and writing. As well as being great fun to teach, the mythology unit allowed me to familiarise myself with an array of heroes, gods and monsters in epic narratives filled with 'juice:' betrayal, parricidal vengeance, infanticide, regicide, deicide, incest,

bestiality, bloodshed, forgiveness and redemption. To this day I am fascinated by the potential visual and psychological impact of ritualised, violent crime and the enduring power of mythic archetypes and heroic journeys.

French playwright and essayist Antonin Artaud called for a highly-ritualised, reality-shattering theatrical experience in his seminal 1938 manifesto, *The Theatre and Its Double* (trans. 1958). Essentially, it is my hope *Fowl Feathered Fox* will act as a platform for the kind of visceral, vibratory theatrical experience extolled by Artaud in his call for what he labels a ‘theatre of cruelty.’ In the spirit of this call, I offer a plan for performance incorporating multi-sensory stimuli to facilitate maximum audience engagement via the implementation of techniques that work to enhance and prolong the various effects of the drama. In a blatant attempt to mimic the techniques employed by ‘successful’ cult leaders, I aim to manipulate audience reactions to the play on stage via the integration of overt sensory stimuli, tragic scenarios, revenge narratives, the splitting of skin, the shedding of blood, comedic and rhetorical devices and finally, an almost intolerable sense of ambiguity attached to the closing images of the play. Much like a cult leader, I aim to elicit a physically invigorating, ‘orgasmic’ response from my audience. Ideally, the staging of *Fowl Feathered Fox* should affect: a harvest of laughter, outward displays of emotion and perhaps even furious arguments that continue to reverberate around the theatre long after an audience has left. Optimally, meaning will thus continue to resonate beyond traditional spatial and temporal boundaries like the long fingers of an invisible Puppet-Master emanating from the stage, rising over the theatre and into surrounding homes, bars and coffee shops.

As a guiding artistic principle, I seek first to engage, entertain and ‘make magic.’ In a sense, my goal is puppet-mastery: a vital, persuasive, multi-sensory theatrical experience affecting the audience *corpus* as intensely as possible, not only arousing pity and fear in order to purge the body of these negative emotions, but also eliciting laughter for its profoundly therapeutic effect. To this end, I have appealed not only, as is traditional, to the visual and auditory senses, but also to the olfactory, gustatory and tactile. In a sense, manufacturing the desired audience response or reaction relies on ‘tapping into’ audience suggestibility, encouraging a collective ‘suspension of disbelief,’ then pressing specific ‘attraction,’ ‘repulsion’ and ‘panic buttons’ as necessary. Thus, the ‘reach’ of multi-sensory factors will ideally extend beyond traditional structural elements to influence the choice of food and drink served at

interval, the temperature of the environment and even the strategic planting of images and memes in post-performance watering-holes. The emergence of exciting new Western Australian sound technology developed by Mark Posa and Paul Cale: *Four Dimensional Time and Space Quadraphonology* (or '4DTSQ'), permits sound to travel around the theatre or performance space by means of strategically placed speakers and centrally controlled joysticks. Thus, sound is manipulated directionally as well as aurally, offering an audience a novel sense of inclusion in the spectacle. Whispers will become almost tangible, attacking an audience from every side. Using this technology, the slow drone of a fly or the buzzing of a mosquito could drive an audience to air-swiping distraction. Ideally, production of the play on stage will engage *all* of the senses, offering a highly-ritualised, reality-shattering theatrical experience in the spirit of Artaud's conception of a 'theatre of cruelty' (trans. 1958).

Finally, just as characters in *Fowl Feathered Fox* are drugged, abused and infected, this play works to drug, abuse and infect an audience. Like a drug, performance should offer a potent social experience that intensifies perception of sensory details such as sound, taste, touch and colour. Ultimately, the goal is a momentary union of collective bodies, minds and spirits in ritual intoxication. This play abuses an audience, or at least promotes self-abuse, in the sense that if 'the purpose of playing is to hold the mirror up to nature,' the face gazing out from this looking glass is the lycanthropic face of 'the beast within.' Furthermore, this play aims to 'infect' an audience by transcending the conventional limitations of the Western stage, providing opportunities to smash traditional ideological and physical/kinaesthetic barriers. The staging of this play should thus work to elicit the broadest possible spectrum of physical, emotional and intellectual responses from an audience: producing such diverse reactions as laughter, pity, revulsion and delight.

## Generic Considerations and Theatrical Precedents

Tragedy does not admonish; it seduces.

Howard Barker, *Death, the One and the Art of Theatre*

*Fowl Feathered Fox* blends a number of genres, primarily revenge tragedy, black comedy and horror. In keeping with the conventions of revenge tragedy, the protagonist receives a call to vengeance from a ghostly relative and is then forced to behave as a detective in order to put an end to a terrible curse. As a black comedy, *Fowl Feathered Fox* makes light of taboo topics as dark subject matter is buoyed by ironic, satirical humour inspired by the maxim, ‘nothing’s sacred in comedy.’ A staple archetype of horror film and fiction, the shapeshifter has numerous precedents in literature, myth and lore. Here, the eponymous fox is a specifically Australian re-imagining of the shapeshifter, an ‘Aussie mash-up’ of the following sub-archetypes: the wolf in sheep’s clothing, the werewolf, the pied piper and the false prophet. Finally, with its roots in psychoanalysis, surrealism informs the play’s visual aesthetic, perhaps most patently in the play’s setting and imagery, which is clearly underscored by surrealist preoccupations with the unconscious, dream imagery and unexpected juxtapositions.

For me, the maxim, attributed to Confucius: ‘let the man who seeks revenge remember to dig two graves,’ unites the spirit of revenge tragedy with the spirit of black comedy. Here, while crafting the play and the accompanying series of artworks, I investigated generic, thematic and aesthetic parallels offered in a range of films. Aesthetically, I wanted to create art that explored ‘the point at which the country of the horror film touches the country of the black comedy,’ just as Alfred Hitchcock, Stanley Kubrick and Quentin Tarantino did, appreciating that ‘stepping over the borderline into taboo country is as often apt to cause wild laughter as it is horror’ (King, 1980, p. 93-4). Films such as *A Clockwork Orange*, *The Shining*, *Rosemary’s Baby*, *Kill Bill*, *Inglorious Basterds* [sic] and Brian de Palma’s *Carrie* attracted me due to their highly-stylised visual aesthetic and refusal to shy away from disturbing subject matter. In these films, there is a masterful sense of equilibrium between passionate, bloody vengeance and the ‘giggling sadism’ that pervades revenge tragedies such as Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* and *Titus Andronicus* (Kerrigan, 1996, p. 193). Traditionally, revenge tragedy produces its own kind of mirth, yielding the strained laughter of anxiety and despair exemplified in the eponymous Titus’ hysterical glee as he contemplates the killing of a fly. Having

exhausted his tears, Titus resorts to laughter. Having lost all he loves, he skates upon the precipice of madness (a convention of revenge tragedy I employ here as well).

Another convention of revenge tragedy I employ is the incorporation of a ‘play-within-a-play.’ As you will see, the play-within-a-play in *Fowl Feathered Fox* has been designed to elicit shrieks of horror as well as shrieks of laughter. Essentially, the deadly playlet (entitled ‘Cock Forest’) functions as a parody, incorporating elements of horror, black comedy, revenge tragedy and farce. Drama critic, Maik Goth (2012), examines the ‘histrionic appeal of onstage stabbings’ in Renaissance tragedies, noting that in a comedy, a play-within-a-play offers a ‘ludic context in which conventions of onstage skin penetration can be parodied,’ most famously in Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, which ‘features the craftsmen’s miscarried version of the tragedy of Pyramus and Thisbe, in which the performances of the suicides are exaggerated to the point of ridicule’ (p. 161). Dominic Dromgoole (2002), one of Britain’s most innovative directors, opines:

The best sort of delirious laughter is the type that induces a headache. When the noise around you, the noise travelling up your own jaw, the effort of shaking and the sheer *din* of it all just pounds into your cranium and makes it wince with pain. It’s chaos at its best, and abandonment at its least dangerous. The whole theatrical dream of transforming a group of individuals into a tribe is never better achieved than by such laughter. Sentimentality can produce common tears, but is based on a lie; musicals can spread euphoria, but are undone by their own synthetic manipulation; tragedy can chill the bone, but isolates as much as it draws together. The one form that can truly gather folk together in a wild, lawless naked dementia is a comedy or at best, a farce. (p. 88)

Here, Dromgoole’s description of ‘the whole theatrical dream of transforming a group of individuals into a tribe’ seemed to reflect my aim of eliciting the corporeal, kinaesthetic engagement of witnesses and participants by targeting not only collective panic buttons but also collective funny bones. My desire to ‘truly gather folk together in a wild, lawless naked dementia’ finds ultimate expression in the play-within-a-play in *Fowl Feathered Fox*. Clearly, the staging of ‘Cock Forest’ is a farcical affair, in keeping with the comedic aspects of revenge tragedy.

The appearance of a ghost is a convention of revenge tragedy often manifested in the ‘embodiment’ of a herald who calls a tragic hero to parricidal vengeance. Often, as is the case with monstrosity generally, a ghost displays narcissistic traits, as ‘ghosts, in the

end, adopt the motivations and perhaps the very souls of those who behold them... if they are malevolent; their malevolence comes from us' (King, 1980, p. 163). This concept of 'ghosts as mirrors' became a useful tool in plot construction for *Fowl Feathered Fox*, especially when I realised that 'we fear the Ghost for much the same reason we fear the Werewolf: it is the deep part of us that need not be bound by... Apollonian restrictions' (*ibid.*, p. 164). The Holy Spirit, particularly when referred to as The Holy Ghost, suggests links to the archetypal. Thus, for performative purposes, I felt the notion of exploiting a collective fear of 'The Beast Within' could draw from both werewolf and ghost archetypes.

In *The Poetics*, Aristotle (trans. 1967) provides a practical, structural framework for play-construction, dividing the drama into six principles or elements: plot, character, thought, diction, melody and spectacle. Further, Aristotle suggests that 'when the tragic acts come within the limits of close blood relationship, as when brother kills or intends to kill brother or do something else of that kind to him, or son to father or mother to son or son to mother – those are the situations one should look for' (cited in Worthen, 1996, p. 102). Thus, traditionally, the most successful tragic plots hinge on domestic relationships, a key premise I have employed in the writing of *Fowl Feathered Fox*. Below, I outline my approach to these six elements of drama by incorporating practical explanations from Sam Smiley's seminal playwriting manual, *Playwriting: The Structure of Action* (1971/ 2005).

Unlike Artaud's conception of drama, Aristotle considers plot to be the most important constituent element of tragedy, for 'the structure of events, the plot, is the goal of tragedy and the goal is the greatest thing of all' (cited in Worthen, 1996, p. 98). As you will see in the second exegetical essay, by using parallel examples from life, myth and lore, I show how tragic revenge plots typically incorporate themes of seduction, salvation and savagery. Many of the narratives I explore feature a complicated intrigue plot incorporating supernatural agents such as deities or ghosts, while the structure of action revolves around sex, madness and murder. Often, the failure of authorities, parents or care-givers triggers a call to vengeance, where children are co-opted into a manufactured 'family' via seduction (music, sensuality, the promise of hedonistic pleasures), encouraged to commit, or submit to having, savage acts committed against them (physical, psychological and sexual violence) and offered salvation (via religious idealism and apocalyptic world views). These dysfunctional, 'false families' are



mobilised by archetypal avenging angels who claim bloody revenge is necessary for their wounded children.

In *Fowl Feathered Fox*, a flock of abused, ideologically sequestered children, led by Kid Rockwell, decide to wreak bloody vengeance on authority figures who fail them. At the close of the play, a return to ignorance is impossible to sustain, triggering fatal, world-shattering consequences. As Vogler (1998) notes, in the tragic mode, heroes die or are defeated, brought down by their tragic flaws (p. 229). In *Fowl Feathered Fox*, a number of characters, but not all, are 'brought down by their tragic flaws.' In the case of Kid Rockwell, for example, *hamartia* is made manifest in the form of pride, immaturity and the self-delusional narrative wrought by pseudologia fantastica.

In terms of character, the first name of the tragic protagonist in *Fowl Feathered Fox*, Kid Rockwell, aligns her with the notion of a sacrificial goat. Some audiences may recognise the ironic allusion to Norman Rockwell, an American artist famous for his depictions of happy families in a carefree, bygone era characterised by the frothy innocence of milkshakes and diners, crew-cuts and bobby-socks. Further, recalling that 'tragedy' means 'goat song,' Walter Pater (1876) outlines the goat's significance in the Dionysian rites and rituals of tragedy:

The goat was killed, and its blood poured out at the root of the vines... and Dionysus literally drank the blood of goats; and, being Greeks, with quick and mobile sympathies... some among them, remembering those departed since last year, add yet a little more, and a little wine and water for the dead also; brooding how the sense of these things might pass below the roots, to spirits hungry and thirsty, perhaps, in their shadowy homes. (pp. 12-3)

A sacred brew of blood, wine and water thus bonds the living with the dead, connecting the mourners in a tangible solidarity with their 'dear departed.' John Kerrigan opines that 'there clearly *is* a sense in which tragedy gives blood to ... ghosts' as the plots of 'tragedy give the dead substance by recovering an heroic past' (1996, p. 37). This sense of the past impinging urgently upon the present hinges on the catalytic force of the sacrificial goat (represented by Kid in *Fowl Feathered Fox*) in the Dionysian paradigm. In short, during the writing process, I found it useful to think of the play as Kid Rockwell's tragic 'goat song.'

Ultimately, Kid Rockwell functions not only as sacrificial goat but also as archetypal avenging angel. In her heroic quest for vengeance, Kid is ably assisted by an archetypal side-kick (her brother, Blue) and strangely enabled by a particularly impressive invisible friend: the Holy Ghost. Indeed, the characters in *Fowl Feathered Fox* are based on a host of archetypes, stereotypes and stock characters ranging from ghostly heralds to threshold guardians, from boon-granting mentors to shapeshifting shadows. Where the script indicates that ‘all’ characters on stage speak, either in unison or in the form of a canon, I envisage the cast moving and speaking in the manner of the prototypical chorus of Greek tragedy. As Worthen notes, ‘on the tragic stage in Greece, the main characters’ masks were individualized, but the members of the chorus all wore identical masks, giving a special force to the conflict between the unique claims of the protagonist and the more diffuse claims of his society’ (1996, p. 17). During key moments in *Fowl Feathered Fox*, the chorus functions as caucus, congregation or cheer-squad for one or more of the main characters. On stage, even without masks, the use of figurative language and non-verbal communication (gesture, posture) work to represent the divide between the needs of the individual and the needs of society.

Smiley explains that ‘the simplest definition of thought in drama is anything that goes on inside a character – sentience, feeling, recognition, deliberation, and decision’ (1971/ 2005, p. 153). In terms of thought, *Fowl Feathered Fox* explores a fascinating aspect of Roman Catholic dogma. According to Catholic belief, the only unforgivable sin is denial of The Holy Spirit. I felt that if any specific Catholic belief deserved interrogation, this was it. If simply to deny belief in a deity could condemn a human to eternal damnation, I thought this belief could be explored in a play to great effect because it suggested such a high stakes moral conflict between doubt and faith. *Pneuma* is an ancient Greek word meaning ‘breath;’ in a spiritual context, the word means ‘spirit’ or ‘soul.’ In a Roman Catholic context, *pneumatology* refers to the study of the Holy Spirit, generally represented as an omniscient, invisible, enigmatic and benevolent force. As you will see, representation of the Holy Spirit in *Fowl Feathered Fox* is closely linked to the notion of breath. Similarly, the appearance of the ghostly herald is signalled by the sound of her hoarse breathing ‘whipping around the audience space’ with the help of new sound technology developed in Western Australia.

Smiley defines diction as ‘all the words a playwright uses to make a play’ and that ‘the simplest definition of diction is patterned words’ (1971/ 2005, p. 183). Patterned words

in *Fowl Feathered Fox* incorporate the conventions of rhyme, call and response, slogan, maxim, ode, prayer and insult. Here, in the surrealist tradition, the use of diction also features non-sequitur, unusual juxtapositions and stream of consciousness diatribes. Myriad influences have inspired the words I used to construct the world of the play, from song lyric to cinematic dialogue to the language I speak and am surrounded by daily: Standard Australian English (sometimes amusingly referred to as ‘strine’). Importantly though, Artaud (cited in Worthen, 1996) suggests that:

... the theater, which is in no thing, but makes use of everything- gestures, sounds, words, screams, light, darkness- rediscovers itself at precisely the point where the mind requires a language to express its manifestations. To break through language in order to touch life is to create or recreate the theatre. (p. 1272)

To this end, in order to ‘break through language,’ I include very specific stage directions in *Fowl Feathered Fox*. These stage directions serve as suggestions proscribing or delineating the use of multi-sensory techniques and special effects while also hinting at potential affect through the specificity of gesture.

In terms of melody, songs in a tragic play (including choral odes) would ideally be symbolic, recognisable and memorable. In keeping with this premise, Edvard Grieg’s *In the Hall of the Mountain King* (1876) perhaps functions as the most prominent example of melody in *Fowl Feathered Fox*, functioning as a kind of ‘theme song’ accompanying the drama on stage. Originally composed in 1876 to accompany Henrik Ibsen’s *Peer Gynt* (trans. 1985), a five act play in Norwegian verse, Grieg’s suite of the same name is both memorable and evocative. Reflecting upon his composition, Grieg claimed that, ‘for the Hall of the Mountain King, I have written something that so reeks of cowpats, ultra-Norwegianism, and “to-thyself-be-enough-ness” that I can’t bear to hear it, though I hope that the irony will make itself felt’ (cited in Ibsen, trans. 1985, p. 17). Further, drawing clear parallels with *Fowl Feathered Fox*, Klaus Van Den Berg (2006) argues that Ibsen’s *Peer Gynt* is a ‘cinematic script’ that blends ‘poetry with social satire and realistic scenes with surreal ones’ (p. 684). In performance, *Hall of the Mountain King* is played when Peer enters the hall of the troll Dovregubben: the mountain king referred to in Grieg’s title. As the scene opens, the stage directions specify that:

there is a great crowd of troll courtiers, gnomes and goblins.  
Dovregubben sits on his throne, with crown and sceptre, surrounded by

his children and relatives. Peer Gynt stands before him. There is a tremendous uproar in the hall. (Ibsen, trans. 1985, p. 67)

Here, courtly descriptions are juxtaposed with images of the family, reinforcing Dovregubben's status as both monarch and patriarch. The image of the powerful troll 'surrounded by his children' also recalls the imagery of the Pied Piper of Hamelin, discussed here in the second exegetical essay. Furthermore, despite belonging to the classical genre (traditionally considered 'high art'), Grieg's melody is recognised by contemporary audiences due to its enduring popularity. In short, *Fowl Feathered Fox* finds a number of thematic echoes in Ibsen's satirical drama as well as in the incidental music composed by Grieg.

Aside from the requisite inclusion of Grieg's composition, a director is free to create a soundtrack for the play in keeping with their own vision for performance. Ideally, music and songs would be chosen on the basis of their comedic or atmospheric potential, as well as the scope they provide for Irony-Interpretive-Dance. Aristotle, in a manner not dissimilar to Artaud, suggests that, onstage, 'the song composition ... is the greatest of the sensuous attractions ... the visual adornment of the dramatic persons can have a strong emotional effect' (cited in Worthen, 1996, p. 98). Accordingly, analysis in the second exegetical essay suggests that the symbolic nature of both songs *and* visuals lends a unique theatrical aesthetic to the interplay of cult leaders and followers, finding patterns and echoes in their mythological and folkloric counterparts.

Essentially, in terms of spectacle, my aim is to transmogrify the heavy beauty and savage, retributive drama of Roman Catholic narrative and iconography upon an essentially surrealist stage vista. As Aristotle reminds us, 'the force of tragedy can be felt even without benefit of public performance and actors, while for the production of the visual effect the property man's art is even more decisive than that of the poets' (cited in Worthen, 1996, p. 98). In keeping with the overtly presentational nature of the spectacle, I include bold stage make-up and costumes, text and glittery religious kitsch inspired by the artwork of Frenchmen 'Pierre et Giles' (see Appendix B). Aesthetically, I envisage surreal, biomorphic, anthropomorphic forms within a streamlined, anachronistic setting. Chromatically, a restricted palette works to stylise and particularise the spectacle. Intoxicated movement (or 'Irony Interpretive Dance,' a concept I explain in the staging notes of the play) serves to imbue choral scenes of spiritual revelry and sacrifice with Dionysian flavours, while scenes of stylised

bloodletting, a tribute to the enduring, affective clout of *Grand Guignol*, resonate with allusions to instances of far bloodier horrors enacted offstage. Essentially, in mirroring the potent, viral techniques of a nefarious leader, this play attempts to infect or ‘drug’ an audience through heightening their suggestibility.

Drawing from Joseph Campbell’s examination of various hero myths in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1973), Christopher Vogler (1998) uses the medium of film to explain mythic archetypes and the twelve stages of ‘The Hero’s Journey.’ Essentially, Vogler’s text piqued my interest in mythic structure and archetypes. Furthermore, after reading Campbell, I discovered I had found useful templates for the play’s characters and narrative. I vowed I would eventually understand the archetypes and intricacies of the heroic journey so well I could use them seamlessly, effortlessly. My enthusiasm for The Hero’s Journey stems from a belief that mythic structure, symbol and archetype can fuel extension of the playwright’s craft by enhancing and invigorating the use of Aristotle’s six elements of drama (trans. 1967).

In keeping with Howard Barker’s assertion that ‘tragedy does not admonish; it seduces’ (2005, p.1), I have sought to present the tragic material inherent to *Fowl Feathered Fox* by adopting visceral, sensual tactics and jettisoning attempts at edification or ‘soap-boxing.’ However, in keeping with the goals of Multi-Sensory Theatre, play must also be uproariously *funny*, as comedy is ostensibly the genre best suited to ‘gather folk together in a wild, lawless naked dementia’ (Dromgoole, 2002, p. 88). Having said this, I do not feel that the play is a tragi-comedy, either, but rather, a kind of post-modern ‘mash-up’ or ‘cannibalising’ of genres. Chiefly, my intent is to push theatrical boundaries by confounding audience expectations of genre and challenging the physical ‘reach’ of traditional theatrical performance. In the tradition of horror writers Ira Levin and Stephen King and filmmakers such as Kubrick, de Palma, Tarantino and Polanski, the play is characterised by a highly-stylised visual aesthetic and a refusal to shy away from disturbing subject matter. Here, as in Sophocles’ *Oedipus Rex*, catalytic events take place well before the play’s exposition and the blood that does flow onstage is but a drop in the ocean of blood-letting implied by the play’s narrative arc. Ideally, in the sense that *Fowl Feathered Fox* should function as pure entertainment, an audience should feel they have ‘got bang for their buck.’

Welcome to Plankton!

## **II: STAGE PLAY**

*Fowl Feathered Fox*

## **FOWL FEATHERED FOX**

Beware of false prophets,  
who come to you in sheep's clothing,  
but inwardly are ravening wolves.

*Matthew 7:15*



## SETTING

The magical Shire of Plankton on the Rainbow Coast, South-West Western Australia. Sovereign Sound and Lady Harbour divide and sustain two entities: The City of Plankton and Quarantine Island. With the exception of a few brief scenes, acts alternate between mainland and island.

N.B.: It would, of course, be quite easy to ‘universalise’ the action by omitting or changing specific references to Australia to suit the context of production.

ACT I & ACT III: QUARANTINE ISLAND: Former Leper Colony. Enigmatic. Beautiful. Forbidding. Encircled by an ominous granite wall, dubbed The Barnaclian Wall. Apart from this wall, the only structure visible from the mainland is Barnacle Arch in Barnacle Bay: here, guarding island and looming archway, a silver-white statue of Saint Barnacle stands resolute, frozen in a stern gesture of perpetual welcome. Inside the wall: ghost gums, granite outcrops spangled with verdigris, ultra-green grass and emerald waters. The Rockwell family live ‘Uptop’ in The House of Rockwell: a Haven for Unfortunate Children, formerly the Catholic Church of Saint Barnacle. Adjacent to the orphanage is the morgue and pioneer burial ground: Leper Cemetery.

ACT II: PLANKTON: Historic Port City. Epic. Stunning. Famous for whales. The celebrated Oyster Barque Brewery and Guano Farm squats on the foreshore, nestled amid silos. Adjacent to the brewery is The Catholic Church of Saint Lazarus: a phallic, architectural monstrosity. Next to the church: an ominous granite wall, dubbed The Lazarus Wall. On the sandy banks of Lady Harbour sits Oyster Barque Hospital, named after the impressive, mollusc-encrusted pioneer seafaring vessel heralding its location. Surrounding each building: bright yellow sand, ultra-violet grass. The Locality of Mullup-Denham, on the fringes of the city, is home to Womb Rock, Plankton Eco-Bikers Motorcycle Clubhouse and The Cock’n’Bull Tavern.

**CAST** (5 F, 4 M. Doublings below)

Margaret Rockwell	F, 54. Oyster Barque Mental Hospital escapee. Red hair.
Doc Rockwell	M, 36. Failed saxophonist. Spiritual leader. Devastatingly handsome. Six-pack, tattoos, audacious red mohawk.
Cassie Rockwell	F, 34. Amnesia victim. Tall, pale, strikingly beautiful. Initially bald.

Skip Rockwell	M, 18. Cyclopean. Speaks with a lisp. Tall, gangly, shy. Red hair. Pale, emaciated.
Jinx Rockwell	F, 18. 'Special.' Adorable, endearing. Legs fused together from birth. Red hair. Pale, emaciated.
Blue Rockwell	M, 16. Giant cranium. Earnest, bookish. Red hair. Pale, emaciated.
Kid Rockwell	F, 14. Precocious, feisty. Red hair, freckles. Pale, emaciated.
Dr. Deacon Salt	M, 74. Retired MD. Mute. Peripheral. Smiles constantly.
The Ghost	F, 36. Beautiful, ethereal: a 'living statue,' all in white. Weeps constantly. Midwife's uniform: cap, apron.
Sister Mary	F, 36. Catholic nun. Voluminous, royal blue habit. Affected, upper-crust English accent.
Crash Edwards	M, 35. Eco-biker. Entrepreneur. Tall, lean, feline. Black dreadlocks.
Abby Surfcats	F, 25. Eco-biker. Body-Mods apprentice. Vacuous. White dreadlocks.
Stanley Hope	M, 20. Removalist. Slim. Effete. <i>Fabulous</i> .
Bruce Gasket	M, 60. Removalist. Genuine. Rotund.
Wazza Monaro	M, 40. Publican. Moonlights as a pre-dawn Security Guard. Salty sea-dog, wiry.
Shazza Monaro	F, 40. Wazza's wife. Mental Health nurse. Voluptuous, maternal.
Henry Gabriel	M, 45. Political leader. Does not appear onstage.
Claude Edwards	M, 55. Political leader. Does not appear onstage.

## DOUBLINGS

(F): Margaret Rockwell/ The Ghost	(M): Doc Rockwell/ Wazza Monaro
(F): Cassie Rockwell	(M): Skip Rockwell/ Crash Edwards
(F): Jinx Rockwell/ Abby Surfcats	(M): Blue Rockwell/ Stanley Hope
(F): Kid Rockwell	(M): Dr. Deacon Salt/ Bruce Gasket
(F): Sister Mary/Shazza Monaro	

## NOTES ON DOUBLING

While a director may choose to cast individual actors in these roles, there are a number of benefits inherent to using these doublings. There are specific reasons for having chosen these twin pairs: the implication being that we are all merely actors, playing our roles. Depending on context and circumstance, an individual may be a malevolent cult leader: or, he might be a harmless publican. In this context, she may be a nefarious nun: in that context she might be a kindly mental health nurse. Of course, doubling Kid with Cassie might also achieve these kinds of echoes and resonances, but practicality suggests otherwise, largely due to the sheer amount of time each of these characters spends on stage.

## NOTES ON STAGING

Here, I submit principles for a multi-sensory theatre experience from which a director might draw to create their own vision upon the stage. Where the context of staging is restricted by budget, technology or environment, the elements below could be omitted or re-imagined by a production team.

If the goal of a multi-sensory approach is *infectious* theatre, success would be measured by the extent to which the audience's senses are affected *during* performance and how long these 'sensory imprints' linger *after* performance. My goal is to promote and extend the ritual magic inherent to the non-representational genre via the prescription of bold, multi-sensory elements. A full-tilt sensory attack on an audience is the ultimate goal: a reaching beyond the conventions of Western Theatre to hijack an audience's faculties of taste, smell and touch (defined here as any physical sensation). Additionally, the theatrical debut of the sound technology outlined below works to ensure an audience is attacked on a range of levels, from purely aural and visual to atmospheric and vibratory. Ideally, multi-sensory tactics would not be deployed to moralise or 'soap-box,' but rather to engage and excite participants by facilitating maximum audience interaction *with* and involvement *in* the spectacle.

**VISUAL EFFECTS:** The visual aesthetic should conjure the intensity of experience enjoyed by children, featuring the vivid colours and crisp shadows of dream images. On stage, suggestive, sensuous lines should co-exist with strict, geometric forms and structures. These skewed dimensions should work to promote a child's perspective of

space and depth. In Act Two, the stage will need to ‘work a little harder’ in the sense that a number of locations will need to be set up fairly permanently. Here, lighting will be of key importance in guiding an audience’s focus from one scene to the next. Finally, to establish mood and time of day, time-lapse footage of shapeshifting clouds might usefully be looped on the cyclorama.

To facilitate quick costume and scene changes, costume, make-up and set design would be Spartan, stylised: props multi-functional and metonymic. Like an infant’s toy blocks, solid white cubes with letters printed on each side work to present ‘Scrabble Prophecies’ and word-play in a manner accessible to an audience. Furthermore, the cubes can usefully incorporate hinged ‘lids’ to provide onstage storage of key props. Essentially, these cubes could double as props and playing spaces: providing a variety of levels, segregations and blind-spots. Cassie Rockwell’s hospital bed, for example, might consist of three cubes pushed together with a white sheet flung over the top if time permitted. Furthermore, I envisage that the drop toilet featured in scenes at Womb Rock might be a simple structure on casters with a removable or indeed, absent, back wall. The structure might then be turned around to facilitate staging of the short scene that occurs within the toilet walls. Ultimately, this perpetually shapeshifting, transmogrifying array of images, props and actors (especially if doubling and/or cross-casting), should work to conjure the excitement and turbulence of an action-packed dream, evoking a state of flux.

AURAL EFFECTS, or traditionally, SOUND EFFECTS (SFX): Sound technology developed in Western Australia by Mark Posa and Paul Cale: ‘Four Dimensional Time and Space Quadraphonology’ (or ‘4DTSQ’), works to involve the ‘whole’ spectator. This device, yet to enjoy a theatrical debut, permits sound to travel around the theatre or performance space by means of strategically placed speakers and centrally controlled joysticks. Thus, sound is manipulated *directionally*, offering an audience a novel sense of inclusion and immersion in the spectacle. Using this technology, the slow drone of a fly or the persistent buzzing of a mosquito has the potential to drive an audience to air-swiping distraction. Similarly, the innocuous tolling of church bells in the distance has the potential to ‘rush in’ and ‘rain down’ on an audience in a cacophonous din. The foghorn that functions as an aural motif would ideally strike ‘The Brown Tone:’ the incorporation of bowel-shattering bass-lines promoting a corporeal sense of *gravitas*.

GUSTATORY and OLFACTORY EFFECTS: Ideally, an audience would be bombarded with an array of tastes, scents, sensations and odours: stimulating and evocative, but not always pleasant. Various scents might be dispelled into the audience space by means of fans, ducting and/or heaters. During intermission, theatre bar-staff might offer red wine in glittery, kitsch goblets (*This is My Blood*), unleavened bread products (*Holy-Faux-Communion*), or snacks featuring poultry (*Fowl Feathered Fox Filét*) and their by-products (*Bad Eggs: So Bad, They're Good*).

KINAESTHETIC EFFECTS: The goal is to 'infect' an audience in a physical, corporeal sense, eliciting laughter, tears or gasps of horror and disgust. Where possible, the temperature in the venue would be manipulated, tracking and enhancing the 'emotional temperature' on stage. Electric fans of varying sizes should be placed in the pit or orchestra, ready to blast the audience during scenes featuring wild weather. Generally, music suggested in the script should be accompanied by what I call 'Double I.D' or 'Irony Interpretive Dance' (fitting for a play about twin identities). Essentially, Double I.D calls for a literal and therefore comedic interpretation of song lyrics expressed via 'over the top' dance moves, elaborate miming and exaggerated facial expressions. Spinning, stamping and clapping should be a feature of these choreographed dances, promoting vibratory effects (both visual and physical). This focus on intoxicated movement should imbue scenes of spiritual revelry and sacrifice with a ritualistic, Dionysian flavour, serving to draw the audience ever-closer to the drama.

## PROLOGUE

## GENESIS: REAL WEREWOLVES

*(Quarantine Island: Barnacle Bay. Night. Moonlight illuminates a jetty extending seaward from the limey ballasts of Barnacle Arch. Screened briefly onto the cyclorama, above the statue of Saint Barnacle: footage of a large white crow trapped in a glass-house. Arranged seductively on a rock, stage right: Jinx Rockwell bursts into beautiful, wordless, operatic song. Upstage left, shrouded in shadow, Cassie Rockwell lies inert on a kitchen table. Sister Mary's macabre whistling precedes her entrance from the wings, down-stage right. Dragging a heavy sack of chook-pellets in her wake, Mary inches her way toward Cassie. Kid Rockwell follows, engrossed in a weighty tome with large lettering: 'The Werewolves.' Mary retrieves various instruments of torture from sack: 'operates' on Cassie through the following scene. Snapping her book shut, Kid settles downstage: addresses audience directly)*

KID

In horror films, werewolves sprout fake fur 'n fangs 'n claws 'n race around on all fours, like dumb frickin' farm animals. *(Hollow chuckle)* But this ain't a horror film, folks. *(Pause)* This is Real Life and we're talkin' Real Werewolves.

*(Margaret Rockwell emerges in a straitjacket. Sopping wet, she grins maniacally, high on booze and the promise of freedom. She spits out a bright orange prawn and some seaweed: stomps downstage to heckle the audience)*

MARGARET

Seen a chook yard massacre, have ya? Eh? Huh? Have ya? *(Sneers)* Fuck ya.

KID

*(Conspiratorial)* Most important thing to know about Real Werewolves is this... Real Werewolves look exactly the same as normal people.

MARGARET

*(Struggles with straitjacket)* Shitload o' feathers. *(Singles out an audience member at random)* You can get fucked.

*(From Mary's direction, the high pitched whining of a drill)*

KID That's why they're so hard to catch.

MARGARET *(Singles out a different audience member)* And you. Fuck you.

*(Margaret sways, catches herself from stumbling: over-compensates, staggers backwards, recovers. Kid sashays toward the footlights: surveys audience, arms folded)*

KID Terms o' cold, hard percentages... there's likely two o' the bastards right here, right now.

MARGARET *(Singles out yet another audience member)* Fuck you. And your little dog too.

*(Margaret cackles, pleased with herself. Kid laughs, wags a finger at audience)*

KID See? They're shakin' their heads. Smiling away... but that's just part o' the act.

MARGARET Wolf. Fuckin' fox. Big, black Nazi Rottweiler... *(snarls)* lupine, vulpine, canine... whatever. Hairy fiend ain't lookin' for mates, mates. He. Means. Murder.

*(Mary retrieves a mini-chainsaw: laughs evilly as she 'revs it up')*

MARGARET Month down the track? All's left... a treasure trove o' hollow bone... a manky trail of tell-tale feather. *(Struggles, trips: rolls onto her back, exhausted. Berates sky, maudlin)* He saw the best eggs of my generation putrefy! *(Hissing)* Sulphuric whites. Shit-taint yolks. *Both* mine eggs infected, evil...

KID A Real Werewolf's *easy* the most dangerous living creature on the planet.

MARGARET *(Rolls onto her side. Sniffs ground, distracted)* What the bloody hell...

KID (Scoffs) A Real Werewolf can't be destroyed with a silver bullet.

MARGARET                    (*Struggles furiously with straitjacket: breaks free, triumphant*)  
Zounds! I am releaseth!

KID                      The influence of a Real Werewolf extends beyond the grave.

MARGARET           *(Scrabbles in the sand. Unearths a sizeable chook egg)* Crack a fuckin' omelette? *(Sniffs egg, cautious. Cracks shell: reels, disgusted)* Ugh! Something is *rotten* in the Shire of Plankton.

*(Exit Margaret, holding her nose. Kid spins on one heel, exits, engrossed in her book. SFX: A foghorn blarts offensively in the distance. Sister Mary stamps her foot, irate)*

MARY                      Rear entrance. Rear entrance! Can't you read the signs?

*(Businesslike, Mary packs her tools away: exits, dragging the sack. Saccharine pop music fades in. Lights dim. Exeunt)*



## **ACT ONE**

I would believe in a God who could dance.

Nietschze

## 1.1

## BAD EGGS

*(Quarantine Island: Leper Cemetery. Morning. Stage left: slanted rows of blank, weathered tombstones. Stage right: a white, wooden cross. Enter Blue Rockwell, skittish)*

BLUE *(Recites)* Quarantine Island. By Blue Rockwell. *(Blesses himself)* Quarantine Island is our home. We love our island, for she is plentiful. Round her, fish swim. On her, chooks roam. Quarantine Island is our mother; her milk makes us strong. Amen.

*(Doc, Jinx, Skip and Kid Rockwell burst onstage from wings: applauding)*

KID Ripper!

JINX *(Rolls on her back, delighted)* Blue.

DOC *(Chuffed)* That's m'boy!

KID Best Prayer to Island, ever.

SKIP True.

JINX Blue!

SKIP *(Victory punch)* Yeah, boy.

DOC Good job.

KID Well done!

BLUE *(Embarrassed)* Stop it, guys.

KID Come on. Have fun!

*(Pause)*

DOC Natural born poet, our Little Boy Blue.

BLUE *(Giggles)* Shucks.

*(Jinx pedals her leg in the air: energetic, joyful)*

DOC *(Opens arms, teasing)* I heard there was a little boy on this island... deserving of a hug. Anyone deserving of a hug here? Eh? Huh? Anyone?

*(Blue flings himself into Doc's arms, delighted)*

BLUE Doc Rockwell... can we make a picnic? *(Pause)* To celebrate?

*(Long pause)*

DOC Why not?

*(All cheer: jubilant)*

KID Ripper!

DOC Just for you, Little Boy Blue. Oh! See what I did there, children? *(Pause)* That was a rhyme! That was *rhyming*. *(Pleased)* What do we say?

ALL *(Chanting)* We love you Doc Rockwell, 'cause God chose you.

DOC Amen.

*(All link arms, very pleased with themselves: traipse off, laughing and whistling. Blackout. Exeunt)*

*(Quarantine Island. Evening. Sister Mary paces: glued to mobile phone)*

MARY But Henry, darling, I *would* make it worth your while. *(Giggles, coos)* Oh, Henry! *(Coy)* You dirty bird.

*(Dr. Deacon Salt is watching. Mary squeals, drops phone. Retrieves phone, flustered. Deacon 'fires up' his leaf-blower. Mary struts off in a hurry, indignant. Exeunt)*

*(Quarantine Island. A classroom within The House of Rockwell. Jinx, Skip, Kid and Blue sit at desks facing a split white-board/*

*black-board, upstage. On the white-board, a bullet-point list entitled: Things We Like: The God of Night and Day/ Saint Barnacle/ Doc/ Deacon/ Red Hair/ Suffering/ Quarantine Island. On the blackboard, a bullet-point list entitled: Things We Don't Like: The Whore of Babylon/ 'Rangaphobia/ The Unholy Trinity/Babylon o'er Yonder/ Anyone Who Isn't Us. Doc Rockwell waltzes on gaily from wings in top-hat, tails and Y-fronts)*

DOC Votes? Calling all voters. Vote now, or forever hold your peace!

*(Doc extends his hat, theatrical: the children place slips of paper inside, obedient)*

BLUE What a great day. I love today.

KID It's Litany of Rockwell Day!

SKIP Best day ever. Not to miss.

BLUE I tried *really* hard at this.

KID *(Dismissive)* Mere mole-hills to my Everest.

*(Smug)* Clearly, mine are cleverest.

DOC *(Ignores Kid, reads from a slip of paper)* Chosen Leader; Chosen One. *(Nods, pleased)* Simple... but *effective*. Correct use of the semi-colon. *(Pause)* Nice!

*(Collective sigh of relief)*

JINX *(Squawks)* Good!

DOC Friend to All Animals. *(Pause)* Now that's just *lovely*! A really, really good one, that. Lateral thinking at its best.

BLUE Aha, eee! *(Claps, excited)* That's mine! I did that!

DOC *(Nods, thoughtful)* Friend to All Animals. Just like Saint Francis!

KID (To Blue) A wise man once said ‘pride cometh before a fall.’

DOC Probably me.

BLUE (To Kid, scathing) Whatever!

DOC Okay, okay. (Jolly) Order! Order in the class-room, people.  
(Plucks another slip of paper from hat, stern) Favourite Son...  
of the God of Night and Day. (Genuinely impressed) Nice.

SKIP (Victory punch) Yes.

KID (Disgusted) Whatever!

DOC (Reads) He Who Can Not Lie. Wow. Bam! That’s opening line  
material, right there. Shazam! Who did that one?

KID (Bows, smug) Thank you, thank you. Hold the applause...

DOC (Reads) Soul Whisperer. Oh I like that.

KID (Polishes knuckles, chuffed) Thanks.

DOC Lovely. (Dreamy) Lovely, lovely, lovely.

JINX (Squawks) Lovely!  
  
(All laugh: slap thighs, amused)

DOC Oh, Jinx. (Ruffles Jinx’s hair, affectionate) Oh you!

SKIP (Impatient) Back to the names?

DOC (Dangerously quiet) Where are your manners, Skip Rockwell?

JINX (Wags a finger at Skip) Naughty boy.

SKIP (Ducks head, ashamed) Please, Doc... can’t we do the names  
again?  
  
(Pause)

DOC                    (*Sarcastic*) Well, Skip... now that you've asked so *politely*.  
                          (*Draws a slip of paper from hat, reads*) Sacred Vessel... of The  
                          Holy Shining Thing. (*Applauds*) Wonderful. Just *wonderful*, that  
                          one.

BLUE                    (*Hands on hips, pleased*) See? I really *did* try hard today!

DOC                    (*Draws final slip of paper*) And the last one... wait for  
                          it...wait...(gasps) Captain Fanta Pants! (*Guffaws*) Save the best  
                          'til last? (*Slaps his knee*) Gold. Litany Gold, that is.

SKIP                    (*To Kid, smug*) So, what was that you were saying about being  
                          cleverest?

KID                    (*Disgusted*) Shut up, Thkip!

SKIP                    (*Hurt*) Whatever!

                          (*Music fades in: 1970s funk. The children gather around the  
                          slips of paper: pointing and bickering. Doc reclines on the  
                          teacher's desk, observes his flock with satisfaction: sparks up a  
                          massive spliff, exhales luxuriously. Lights dim. Exeunt*)

## 1.2

### ARE YOU RETARDED?

*(Quarantine Island: Barnacle Bay. Morning. Skip and Blue chase Kid on stage: skid to a halt, downstage. Jinx follows on her elbows: commando-style)*

KID *(To Skip)* Whaddaya mean, what? Are you retarded?

SKIP Just tell us what it is!

KID *(Withering)* Skip.

BLUE What's that?

SKIP *(Frustrated)* Don't worry about it, Blue. She's just being an idiot.

KID *(To Skip)* Your face is an idiot. Why not try *listening* for a change? I *said*, for Relent. *(Irate)* Re-lent? Some people, honestly.

SKIP Okay! For Relent. Back off, okay?

BLUE Stop it, you...

KID *Okay. Fine. God!*

JINX Name in the vein! *(Points at Kid, accusing)* Naughty!

BLUE *(Ever the diplomat)* Kid, I think what Skip means is... what is the real, actual *thing*? You know... the actual thing that you're talking about.

KID *(Sighs)* Well why didn't he just say so?

SKIP *(Shouting)* I *did* say so. God!

JINX *(Taps two fingers repeatedly on the opposite wrist, cross)*  
Name! Name. Name in the vein.

KID/SKIP/BLUE *(Cross)* Jinx!

BLUE Just tell us what you're giving up, Kid.

SKIP The actual *thing*.

KID (*Ignores Skip, heraldic*) Relent!

Our forty days of sacrifice:

our penitentiary device.

In honour of our patron saint?

Forty days of fierce restraint!

(*Wags a finger*) That's forty days *without* complaint.

SKIP (*Infuriated to the point of tears*) But what *is* it, Kid? What's the god-damned *thing*...

JINX (*Points at Skip, stern*) Name! Vein!

KID This year... for my Barnaclian Sacrifice... I've decided to give up...

SKIP Just say it!

(*Pause. Skip folds his arms, annoyed*)

KID (*Hushed, dramatic*) I'm gonna give up...being a girl.

(*Direct to audience, ironic*) Gonna give *being a man* a whirl.

(*Jinx, Skip and Blue gaze at Kid: mouth-breathing, confused*)

BLUE You're doing...

KID ... gender! In reverse.

Just you watch, while I rehearse.

(*Stretches*) I. Am. The Greatest. (*Struts*) Look at me!

Stiffest limb on Penis Tree.



Testosterone fills every pore...

why didn't I try this before?

*(Jinx cackles merrily, amused)*

BLUE Switch back, sister. I'm no fan.

KID Piss off, cowboy. I'm The *Man*.

Barnaclian Sacrifice? Best choice ever.

BLUE *Stop* it, Kid.

SKIP *(Snorts, derisive)* Thinks she's clever.

KID *(Gyrates in Skip's direction)* You're just *threatened* by my member.

*(Smug)* Penis Envy. That's Freud, remember?

*(Skip chases Kid offstage. Blue follows, dragging Jinx by her fused ankles: lights fade as the strains of Jinx's delighted giggles gradually recede)*

*(Quarantine Island: Barnacle Bay. Morning. Kid, Skip and Jinx emerge from wings, upstage right: trundle downstage, whistling. On the sand, Kid builds sandcastles, regal: Skip brandishes a stick of driftwood, Jinx plays with a spade and bucket)*

SKIP *(Spits)* Gunna kill snakes.

KID *(Threatening)* Skip.

SKIP *(High kick)* Hi-ya! And they're dead!

KID Skip! *(Smashes sandcastle)* I'm. Talking!

*(Blue bursts on from wings, breathless. He races downstage. A colourful patchwork blanket flies from his shoulders like a cape)*

BLUE *(Crescendo)* Fox! Fox! Fox!

KID (Stern) Calm down. What kind of fox?

SKIP (Snorts, derisive) A red fox! Der. What other kind is there?

KID (Furious) This isn't the *time*, Skip.

BLUE (Hysterical) Foxes!

KID Blue...

BLUE I heard the sound.

KID A sound?

SKIP What sound? A fox-like sound?

KID Yeah. (Strokes chin, ponders) What sound *does* a fox make?

SKIP (Bursts into song) A ring-ting-ting and a...

KID (Cuts Skip off. Shakes Blue, vicious) Use. Your. Words.

BLUE The chooks. The chooks! (Falls into Kid's arms, sobbing) I could hear 'em, Kid.

BLUE I could hear the chooks screaming. Chickens...screaming out for help, but I couldn't run fast enough. Now they're dead.

KID Dead? (Shocked) What? *All* of 'em, dead?

SKIP What about the baby chickens?

BLUE (Wails) All those sweet little eggs. Smashed up on the ground. And... there was a little bit of baby chicken? Still with an eye? A staring eye! (Moans) Oh, Kid... it looked at me! That little baby chicken eye was *looking* at me, Kid. (Exhausted) I tried so hard... but, I couldn't run fast enough.

(Blue cries, heart-broken. Kid and Skip comfort him. Jinx pats Blue's knee, mournful)

SKIP Poor old Blue.

KID                    Must have been awful. Bloody foxes.

BLUE                  Feathers. *(Moans)* Bones.

JINX                   *(Grinds teeth, bestial)* Bones.

*(Blue rocks on his haunches. Kid rises, joins Blue under the patchwork blanket. Skip and Jinx follow suit)*

KID                    Carn, Blue. We always have Mister Hand.

JINX                   Hand!

KID                    Our comfort in the beachy sand.

BLUE                  *(Appeased)* Mister Hand. The *Friendly* Blanket.

*(The siblings squat together, huddled under the blanket)*

BLUE                  Baby chickens. Sweet, sweet, sweet.

ALL                    *(Chirping)* Sweet, sweet, sweet, sweet, sweet, sweet, sweet!

*(Pause. A rooster crows in the distance. Kid leaps up, whips away the blanket)*

JINX                   *(Shrieks)* Red!

*(Pause)*

KID                    Red?

SKIP                   *(Over-joyed)* Red's still alive!

BLUE                  He survived?

SKIP                   Too right. By the sounds.

KID                    *(Resolute)* We gotta find Red... before The Beast does.

*(The Rockwell children gather their weapons: driftwood, spade and bucket, blanket. Exeunt, militant)*

*(Quarantine Island: The Morgue. Heraldic music fades in. Enter Kid, dragging a stick. Brief forays into Double I.D. She squats, inspects scabs on her knees. Uses stick to worry at a mound of ants. Music ceases)*

KID                      What the hell? *(Reaches into ant mound, tugs, falls backward)*  
Damn! *(Reaches back into earth, tugs harder. Unearths a bundle of bloodied white sheets. Exhales noisily)* Great Spirit's Nipple.

*(A boom of thunder, rising wind. The Ghost's hoarse breathing whips around the audience space: threatening)*

GHOST                  *(Wails)* A curse on the House of Salt!

KID                      Fuck me.

*(A crow caws insistently. The Ghost appears within the doorway of The Morgue, backlit)*

*(Indignant)* Who the hell...

*(Rolling thunder, booming echoes)*

GHOST                  *(Barely audible at first: crescendo)* Curse on the. House of the. House of the curse. Salt on the *course* of the curse. In this house! Salt of the earth? On the curse. Of the house! *(Gasps)* A *curse* on the House. Of. Salt!

*(Lightning crack)*

KID                      But...

GHOST                  Something is *rotten* in the Shire of Plankton!

KID                      *(Gestures at bloodied sheets)* You mean this?

GHOST                  *(Maudlin)* Within. Within!

KID                      *(Uses stick to spread sheets, revealing feathers, stones, talismans)* Ick! *(Accusing)* Is this your blood?

GHOST

*(Wails, beseeching)* Can't y'hear the oysters screaming?

*(Kid discovers a two-headed human foetus in the sheets.  
Examines foetus, horrified)*

KID

What the hell?

*(A cock crows thrice, bringing light. Ghost vanishes. Kid peers into The Morgue. Lightning crackles in the distance. Kid, startled, trips backward onto the bloodied sheets. Shrieking, she leaps up, kicks at the sheets, brushes ants from her flesh: obsessive-compulsive. Races offstage, terrified)*

*(Quarantine Island: Barnacle Bay. Dusk. Enter Doc, a saxophone slung over his shoulder on a strap: flanked by Blue and Skip. Skip waves a placard with the maxim: 'Never Ask Why.' Blue totes a billowing white flag: the words 'Unseen, Unheard, Unknown' printed below a large eyeball. Kid follows with a basket of loaves and fishes, reverent. Jinx follows on her elbows, sliding along the ground: in her mouth, she grips a scroll tied in flowing red ribbons. Doc arranges himself to best effect beneath Barnacle Arch: fading afternoon light surrounds him like a messianic aura. He plays the saxophone riff from Careless Whisper. Thunderous applause, cheering. Doc raises one finger for silence)*

DOC

Ours... is a good God.

ALL

*(Strident)* True!

*(Jinx presents Kid with the scroll. Kid unfurls the scroll, presents it to Doc)*

DOC

*(Clears throat, reads)* Quarantine Island, by Doc Rockwell.

*(Pause)* On our island, far from there

*(gestures to the city of Plankton)*... where sin sits heavy in the air,

*our* God keeps us safe from harm,

grips us, snug in saviour's palm.

Former home of dying lepers,

here, manna drifts on briny zephyrs.

Fish from pearl-like seaweed leap!

No hooks or nets need *we* to keep.

ALL (Cheering) No need for nets here, by golly!

DOC From toxic city, over yonder,

brothel streets, where sinners wander,

God plucked us... 'sconced us on this isle,

safe from Satan's snake-like guile.

There, Satan hath a hundred daughters,

harlots soaked in sperm-rich waters.

(Gestures to his pubic region) Curls awash with semen-spunk,

on *sin* the hordes becometh drunk.

ALL Huzzah. Hurray. Huzzah? Hurray!

DOC 'Tis to a *good* God that we kneel,

Babylon's Whore beneath His heel.

ALL A-men! (Ululating) Jesus-Christ-Lightning. A-men!

(Brief hubbub. All tuck into the loaves and fishes)

JINX (Mewls like a sick cat) Fox!

KID (Wipes fish juice from her chin, thoughtful) Doc?

DOC Yes, my child?

KID                   How could a *good* God let that happen? With the chooks, I mean.

DOC                   Damn foxes. Tsk. Like a *plague*. Remember, Kid. The road to salvation was never meant to be easy.

KID                   I suppose.

DOC                   This trial was sent to test us, Kid. I'm just surprised we haven't been faced with *more* trials. You'd think... coming in to The End Times, God's chosen few would have to deal with *more* obstacles. *More* hardships. I mean...our God must be really looking out for us if that's the only ordeal we've had to face until now. *(Pause)* You know?

*(Pause)*

KID                   Wow. You're right. *(Suddenly ashamed)* Sorry, Doc. We are lucky. *(Pause)* We're lucky on our island.

DOC                   *(Nods)* We really are.

BLUE                  Doc?

DOC                   Yeah?

*(Pause)*

BLUE                  You *rock*.

SKIP                  You rock, Doc Rockwell.

BLUE                  How can *one* man...

SKIP                  ... rock our socks so?

*(Music fades in: dreamy, psychedelic pop. The children laugh, clap and caper: run to embrace Doc. Doc dances with each of the children in turn: brief forays into Double I.D. Darkness falls. Exeunt)*

*(Quarantine Island: Leper Cemetery. Early evening. Enter Jinx, dragging herself along on her elbows. She grips a headless, bloodied chook between her teeth. Kid is watching: hidden behind a tombstone. Jinx pauses downstage, releases chook upon the ground. Sniffing at the dried blood, Jinx peers down the bird's hollow throat, curious. Kid pounces on Jinx: tackles her, laughing. Jinx shrieks, startled: pins Kid to the ground, forceful)*

JINX                      Fox! *(Growls, bestial)* Fox.

KID                      Jinx! *(Struggles for breath)* Get off...

JINX                      Fox.

KID                      Get off, Jinx!

JINX                      Fox!

KID                      Stop it.

JINX                      *(Hisses)* Fucking fox.

KID                      Get off me! *(Manages to push Jinx away)* What the hell, Jinx?

*(Kid rises, shaky. Jinx retreats: picks up chook, rocks it gently in her arms, crooning)*

JINX                      Naughty Kid. *(To chook)* She scared us.

KID                      *(Takes Jinx by the shoulders, soothing)* Carn, Jinxy.

JINX                      Naughty.

KID                      Come on. Let's go Uptop. *(Pause)* Time to go home, Jinxy.

*(Lights fade as Kid helps Jinx offstage)*

*(Quarantine Island: The Morgue. Night. Enter Kid and Blue. They approach the pile of bloodied sheets from earlier, hesitant)*

BLUE                    Where is it?



KID                      Should be right there. See?

BLUE                    Where?

KID                      Under the bloody, bloody... thing! *There.*

BLUE                    There's nothing, Kid.

KID                      The bit with the feathers on!

BLUE                    This is *scary*.

KID                      Just do it.

BLUE                    (*Holds nose, lifts sheet*) What the... (*shrieks, falls backward*)... gross! (*Flings himself onto the ground behind Kid's ankles, hugs her knees, shaking*) Make it go away!

KID                      (*Scornful*) It's dead, Blue. It can't hurt us.

                              (*Pause*)

BLUE                    Is that a real, *actual* baby?

                              (*Pause*)

KID                      Mostly.

BLUE                    (*Low whistle*) Scary.

KID                      I know, right?

                              (*The sound of rising wind. Enter Sister Mary, glued to a mobile phone, followed by Jinx and Skip*)

MARY                    ... mere editing, Henry. Shouldn't take too much imagination, especially for a clever man of the law. (*Pause*) Solicitor, fine. You know, I do plan to *repay* your services... What's that?

                              (*Pleased*) Oh, Henry! *Stop* it.

                              (*Mary titters, coquettish. Kid clears her throat, noisy. Mary hangs up in a hurry. The children gaze at her, oblivious*)

KID Sister Mary, will the virgin come from Heaven?

SKIP Or from a boat?

BLUE Or from the ocean, like Aphrodite? (*Dreamy, as if recalling lines from a book*) And thus, Aphrodite, beautiful goddess of love... was born of a humble mollusc. Clam! Progeny of swollen sky-god, her visage...

MARY (*Slaps Blue, vicious*) Paltry. Human. Intellect! *Begin* to fathom... the reasoning of The God of Night and Day?

JINX (*Squawks, upset*) Vir-gin.

(*Blue covers his face: rocks on his haunches, weeping. SFX: tempestuous ocean. Mary chases the children offstage, swishing her habit. Lights dim. Night. Bathed in red light, a sheer curtain descends, printed with bold lettering: Fire Escape. Mary moves to kneel before the curtain: blesses herself, reverent*)

MARY Bless me, brother, for I have sinned.

(*Behind the curtain, Doc lights a cigarette. His silhouette extends and distorts as he paces, smoking*)

DOC Go on.

MARY It has been one week since my last confession.

(*Pause*)

DOC (*Helpful*) And in that time...

MARY You filthy fucker. (*Explodes*) You ‘require’ a fucking *virgin*? In *this* day and age?

DOC (*Barely restraining his fury*) Perhaps, Sister, God chose this job for you in the spirit of *irony*... because you no longer bear fruit.

(*Lightning crack, thunder*)

MARY                    (*Furious*) I am not yet barren!

DOC                    (*Crescendo*) The Last Disappointment would suggest otherwise.

*(Dr. Deacon Salt is watching. Mary yelps involuntarily: rises, scared. Doc stands motionless behind the scrim. Deacon 'revs up' his leaf-blower, grinning. Mary flees: terrified. After a pause, Doc moves to Deacon, places a gas-mask over Deacon's face and attaches a nozzle from a beaker of gas. Deacon inhales, twitches furiously: passes out on the floor, smiling peacefully. Doc lights another cigarette)*

DOC                    So. (*Exhales luxuriously*) About *my* job in this apocalypse.  
(*Smiles broadly, pleased*) I think we can make this work. (*Kicks Deacon, suddenly angry*) Now where the *fuck's* my fucking baby?

*(A boom of thunder, the sound of rising wind. Blackout. Exeunt)*

### 1.3

### SCRABBLE PROPHECY

*(Quarantine Island: Leper Cemetery. Lights up on Doc: lounging on a throne fashioned from Scrabble blocks. Jinx sits patiently at Doc's feet, tethered to his wrist with dog-collar and lead. Kid, Skip and Blue push Scrabble blocks around the stage, excited)*

BLUE *(Thumps chest, zealous)* My life for The God of Night and Day!

KID *(Whining)* Why won't He give the date away?

SKIP *(Implores heaven)* Give us a time, O Lord. A date!

KID Even a hint'd be really great.

BLUE *(Heavenward)* Dear God... reveal your End Time plan.

SKIP Disclose to us... *(gestures at Doc)*... or at least, to your man.

*(Doc Rockwell clears his throat: rubs his temples, concentrates. The children wait, awe-struck, as Doc channels The God of Night and Day)*

DOC *(Hushed)* Our God wishes to be heard. *(Jazz hands: heraldic)*  
Watch out kids, it's time for Scrabble Prophecy!

KID Huzzah!

BLUE Pick *me*.

SKIP No...

KID No!

BLUE It's...

JINX *(Wildly excited)* Me!

*(Doc removes dog-collar from Jinx's throat, smiling)*

DOC                    *(To Jinx, magnanimous)* Your turn, Little Sister. *(To Skip)*  
 Assist her, Brother.

JINX                   *(Jabs a thumb into her chest, proud)* Me.

*(Doc Rockwell produces a white glove and a drawstring bag full  
 of Scrabble tiles)*

DOC                    God's Holy Tiles.

JINX                   *(Overjoyed)* I'm a mermaid!

KID                    Shush, Jinx! It's Scrabble Prophecy?

DOC                    Oh, God of Night. *(Shakes bag, ritualistic)* Oh, God of Day!

*(Jinx rolls onto her stomach in anticipation: pulls herself up  
 onto her elbows. Skip crouches beside her in readiness)*

BLUE                   *(Gleeful)* Many fun.

SKIP                   *Much* excite!

DOC                    We call on thee. Reveal most sacred date!

KID                    *(Heavenward)* What day shall we anticipate?

BLUE                   Oh, catalytic day. *(Swoons)* Oh! Catalytic day!

*(Doc puts on the glove, ceremonial: reaches into drawstring  
 bag, produces a handful of tiles. The children gather around  
 him: clamouring)*

SKIP                    Harbinger...

BLUE                   ... of apocalypse!

KID                    How *long* ...

SKIP                    ... we have awaited...

BLUE                   ... *thee*. Oh!

ALL (Fervent) Long, so *long*... awaited thee!

DOC (Holding Scrabble tiles aloft, triumphant) Final day?

ALL (Shouting) Final day!

DOC Final day... of *evil* era.

(As he reads from Scrabble tiles, Skip helps Jinx to gather the corresponding letters from the selection provided on the surfaces of the Scrabble blocks: pushing them into rows)

BLUE So exciting.

DOC Y, S... A, another A...D... an I. An S, an N and an E... she's a long one! T, L, B, C... another A...R, N... and finally.... an A!

(Finally, the letters spell: SCANDALS BETRAY. All gasp, horrified)

DOC (Puzzled) That can't be it. Turn again, Sister Jinx. The road to salvation is never easy.

(With Skip's help, Jinx rearranges letters to spell: SLY ACNE BASTARD)

ALL (Incredulous) Really?

(Pause. Kid springs to her feet, excited: rearranges letters to spell ST BARNACLES DAY. Doc applauds: Kid steps back to survey her work, very pleased with herself)

BLUE Saint Barnacle's Day!

KID Our patron saint.

(Pause. Kid strokes her chin, thoughtful)

DOC But wait!

KID/BUE/SKIP (Startled) There's more?

*(Once more, Doc rubs his temples: clearly channelling his deity)*

DOC                    Upon Sacred Day, Saint Barnacle's Day... The God of Night  
and Day demands... sacrifice! *(Shakes draw-string bag,*  
*ritualistic. Produces a handful of Scrabble tiles, reads)* L. O,  
V...

KID/BLUE            Love!

DOC                    No.

*(As Doc reads, Skip and Jinx gather the corresponding letters  
from the selection provided upon the surface of the Scrabble  
blocks: push them into rows)*

DOC                    ... B, I, D...

KID                    Boiled something? Boiled something starting with V?

DOC                    ...another O. An N...

BLUE                  Blind mice?

*(Dr. Deacon Salt is watching)*

KID                    Blue! As if.

DOC                    ... R, G ... and finally, most *importantly*... I!

*(Jinx and Skip race to gather and arrange the final letters,  
spelling: LIVING BROOD. All gasp in unison)*

SKIP                  God wants us to sacrifice the chickens?

BLUE                  But the *fox* already ate them.

DOC                    Perhaps...

KID                    *(Races on the spot)* I know!

*(Kid rearranges letters to spell: VIRGIN BLOOD. All gasp. Kid  
steps back, triumphant)*

SKIP Virgin Blood? *Ew.*

DOC *(Rises, messianic)* Upon Saint Barnacle's Day, virgin blood *will* stain our altar red, and we *shall* enter God's Kingdom, snug in *knowing* we are His *Chosen Few*, Remnant *Faithful*, Inheritors of the *New Era*!

*(Pause. Lightning crackles in the distance)*

BLUE What's a virgin?

*(Abrupt blackout. Music: Edvard Grieg's In the Hall of the Mountain King. Under cover of darkness, the scrabble blocks become a science classroom within The House of Rockwell. Lights up gradually on Jinx, Skip, Kid and Blue: rats and scalpels laid out on makeshift 'lab tables' before them. Sporting a blood-spattered lab coat, Doc Rockwell surveys his pupils. On Doc's signal: children raise scalpels aloft. All but Kid plunge their scalpels into rats. Kid hesitates: her scalpel faltering in the air. Grieg's music ceases abruptly. All turn to ogle Kid, shocked)*

DOC Kid?

*(Ominous pause)*

SKIP What's wrong with you, Kid Rockwell?

DOC She's so caught up in thinking, she's forgotten how to breathe. *(Pokes Kid in the chest, menacing)* No life there. No *dance*.

KID Back off, Doc.

*(Jinx, Skip and Blue gasp in unison. Pause)*

DOC Why such *aggression*, Sister Kid?

KID I'm not afraid! *(Swipes at the rat with the scalpel, vicious)* See?

DOC *(Sneers)* Pathetic.



*(Kid grits teeth, dissects rat. Paints stripes on her cheeks with rat entrails, sulky)*

KID Yah!

DOC *(To Jinx, Skip and Blue)* See, children? Kid's ego was getting in the way.

JINX Pro-jec-tion. *(Squawks)* Repression!

DOC *(Chuffed)* Good girl, Jinx. See? No barriers there. No pesky ego.  
*(Stifling tears, Kid storms up to the whiteboard/ black-board: erases 'Doc Rockwell' from the list of 'Things We Like')*

BLUE *(Shocked)* Kid!

JINX *(Gleeful)* Naughty Kid!

DOC *(To Kid, nonchalant)* Forty-eight lashes and a week without bread.

KID But Doc! *(Crosses her arms and drops to the floor, furious)*  
That's not fair!  
*(Doc turns his back on Kid: moves to massage Skip's shoulders, benevolent)*

SKIP *(To Doc)* Do I have a pesky ego?

DOC Of course not, little one. My little Skippy von Skip. Your id flourishes! Your id, Skip, is *generous*.

SKIP *(Chuffed)* Wow.

BLUE What about me, Doc? Is my id generous?

DOC Little Boy Blue. Your id is not only *generous*, but *exciting*! So much fun to play with.

SKIP Is my id fun to play with?

DOC Skip, my *boy*! The best fun *ever*!

KID My id's good too, alright? Just having a bad *day*. God!

DOC Kid. Tsk! My own favourite cowgirl. Your id is perhaps the most playful and inventive of all... but that *ego*. (*Tuts*) Superego!

KID (*Struggles to restrain tears*) But I try so hard to be good! I pray all the time, every day. *All* through *every* day. I prayed so hard last night, it *hurt*.

(*Kid weeps pitifully: races offstage. Pause*)

DOC Ah well. Teenagers, eh? (*Claps thrice*) Run along now, children. Daddy has a play-date.

(*Doc ushers children offstage: moves to teacher's desk, retrieves a bag of pills and a bottle of whiskey. Enter Sister Mary: arms crossed, fuming. Music ceases abruptly*)

MARY And if Cassie won't go?

DOC I'm sure you'll think of something. (*Digs into pill-bag: retrieves and swallows a handful of pills, followed by a whiskey chaser. Digs into pockets of lab coat, retrieves a set of keys*) If you can't... here's the key to Deacon's medicine cabinet. This one's for Deacon's shed... these are Womb Rock.

MARY (*Counts on her fingers*) Front gate, double doors, wine cellar, drop-toilet?

DOC (*Winningly*) All there, darling. (*Nods, encouraging*) All there!

MARY You'll come to regret this decision, Chance.

DOC (*Sunny*) Fuck off, Sheila.

(*Mary swipes keys: flounces off, stage right. Doc rolls a trumpet of a spliff: takes a puff, satisfied. Lights dim*)

*(Quarantine Island: Leper Cemetery. Morning. Lights up on Kid, Jinx, Skip and Blue. Kid paces, kicks at dirt)*

SKIP *(Points at Kid, skiting)* Grumpy!

BLUE *(Rolls on his back, giggling)* Gunna punch the whole world in the head.

KID Stupid world.

*(Spits, disgusted)* I could make a heaps better place.

With heaps better stuff like free travel to space.

We could hunt the full moon in a ship made of thunder!

In *my* world? Everyone's nineteen 'n under.

BLUE Buck Warwick's over nineteen.

SKIP Buck's not *real*. He's radio? Der.

KID No, Skip. Blue's right. Buck *is* in my world. He just goes *back* to being nineteen and *real* handsome.

JINX Me! Soon! *(Claps like a seal)* Just like me!

KID Not really like you, Jinxy, because his *brain* would be *actually* nineteen, unlike your brain, which is about... I dunno, three?  
*(Pause)* In my world, all the grown-ups are dead.

BLUE *(Shocked by the non-sequitur)* What?

SKIP What about Doc?

KID When God discovers...

BLUE What about Doc Rockwell, Kid?

KID Stop interrupting, Blue! God.

JINX *(Squawks, points at Kid, accusing)* Name in the vein. Name!

KID/SKIP/BLUE      (*Stern*) Shush, Jinx.

KID      (*Pause*) In my world, God hates Grown-Ups. That's because the God in my world is actually really clever, so he understands about Grown-Ups being the Root of All Evil.

SKIP      God hates Grown-Ups?

KID      God hates Grown-Ups.

BLUE      Really?

KID      Really. (*Pause*) I suppose Doc *might* get a Holy Dispensation because he *used* to be The Chosen One, before me... but he'd have to step in line.

BLUE      (*Anxious*) Isn't that blasphemy?

KID      (*Ignores Blue*) Buck Warwick's there because he fights with us in the Final Battle... on Saint Barnacle's Day. The Battle of Armageddon. Leading up to that, there's 'The Battle of Kid Rockwell,' the battle between 'Us Kids' and the 'Evil Grown-Ups,' which we *win*, but then...

BLUE      God kills *all* the Grown-Ups? Every single one?

SKIP      There's a battle? (*Sprints on the spot, excited*) Really?

KID      Really. A battle.

SKIP      (*High kick*) Hi-ya!

BLUE      What about Ace Thunderplums?

SKIP      He's a *horse*, Blue? Der.

                 (*Pause*)

JINX      (*Jubilant*) World!

BLUE      Yeah, Kid. Tell us more about your world.

KID                    (*Leaps about, enjoying herself*) In *my* world, I'm an uberstar,  
driven around in a fast, red car.  
Or maybe... in a hovercraft,  
with snap-shots of me, fore and aft.  
If everyone does what I say?  
  
(*Pause. Skip, Blue and Jinx lean in, entranced*)  
  
(*Triumphant*) Snags and oysters... every day!

JINX                  Yoysters. (*Claps like a seal*) Yoysters!

KID                    (*Enjoying herself*) Of course, I'll have my own hairdresser:  
smokin' six-pack sex-professor.  
He never, *ever*, lets me pay.  
He's... (*aside*) secretly in love with me,  
even though he's gay.

BLUE                  (*Concerned*) Would this hairdresser be under nineteen?

SKIP                  Don't be an idiot, Blue.

KID                    (*Explodes*) Shut Von filthy Trapp, Skip! (*Placates Blue*) Don't  
worry, *he's* just jealous. That's because... in *my* world? Skip  
cleans toilets... with his *tongue*.

BLUE                  Ew!

SKIP                  Whatever.

BLUE                  What's *my* job in your world, Kid?

KID                    Blue, you don't *need* a job. You get to hang out with me, in  
Disciple Entourage. (*Counts on her fingers, gloating*) That's

you, me, Jinxy, Hot Hairdresser, Buck Warwick, *maybe* Doc Rockwell, but *definitely* Mister Hand...

BLUE The *Friendly* Blanket!

JINX Thunderplums?

KID *Definitely* Ace Thunderplums.

*(Pause)*

BLUE Way cool.

KID Way. Carn, Blue. *(Links elbows with Blue and Jinx)* Jinx? Let's get this world on the road, eh?

*(Exit Kid, Blue and Jinx: dancing and giggling. Skip stands motionless: arms crossed, fuming. Blackout. Exit Skip)*

*(Quarantine Island: Barnacle Bay. Night. Moonlight illuminates the jetty. Enter Margaret, cradling a glass jar with a screw-top lid, followed by Kid and Blue. The trio settle on the edge of the jetty, swinging their legs. Margaret hands the jar to Kid: reverent)*

MARGARET Just remember. Keeping mum is what you're bound to.

BLUE Keeping *what*?

MARGARET Keeping quiet! *(Brusque)* Now. The jar. The one you hold.

Within? The key to vengeful gold!

Inside, you'll find a holy host.

*(Glares at Blue, who still looks confused)* The Holy Ghost.

KID The real, *actual* Holy Ghost? *(Genuinely impressed)* Wowzers!

BLUE *(Petulant)* It's Holy *Spirit*, Rockwell said.

*(To Margaret, scornful)* What are you? Stupid in the head?

KID Oh, grandmama. I can't *believe* we'd never met!

MARGARET Been banged up *forever*, pet.

KID (*Sighs*) The Loony Bin. So many years!

MARGARET (*Soothing*) Don't think *too* much on that, m'dears.

Just listen up and listen good:

I mustn't be misunderstood!

(*Grasps at her gut, savage*) Evil grew within my womb.

Avenge me. Or we'll all face doom.

Poor souls. Much pain. (*Shakes head, sorrowful*) Such *trials* ahead. (*Stage whisper*) An island-dweller means you harm...

BLUE No! Uh-uh. No way. Not *ever*.

MARGARET Try to stop 'em? Fool's endeavour.

KID (*Aside*) Who knew our gran was such a freak?

MARGARET In truth, the most important thing?

To *hide* that jar beneath your wing.

Secrete it somewhere on your person...

or we die. And *that's* for certain.

KID (*Worried*) But I don't *have* a wing!

(*SFX: The crack of a rifle in the distance. The trio jump: startled*)

BLUE Someone's coming. *Hide*, grandmama!

KID Hide!

MARGARET (*Retreats, flustered*) Just grip the jar with all yer might.

The Holy *Spirit* backs our fight!

*(Exit Margaret. SFX: Rifle shots in quick succession: a thousand squawking seagulls. Kid and Blue wait in vain for someone to arrive, then turn their attention to the jar. Blue sniffs at it, awe-struck)*

BLUE                      The real, *actual* Holy Spirit?

*(Pause)*

KID                        Wowsers.

*(Pause)*

BLUE                      Where are we gunna hide that thing? *(Tugs at his muumuu, rueful)* We don't even have pockets. Sister Mary checks *everything* at bed-time.

KID                        There *is* one place I could hide it. *(Pause)* Well... two places, really.

*(Pause)*

BLUE                      I don't get it.

KID                        Don't worry Blue. *(Pause)* That's probably a good thing.

*(Lights fade. Exeunt)*



## **ACT TWO**

I think, therefore I am.

Descartes

## 2.1

### EXODUS: HOPE REMOVALISTS

*(Plankton: Womb Rock, Locality of Mullup-Denham. Night. Struck into a desolate granite head-land, the windowless façade of a derelict farmhouse conceals a giant, subterranean network of rooms and passageways. Downstage, a dilapidated, corrugated-tin drop-toilet. Kid and Blue huddle together on the steps of the farmhouse: shivering, wretched. Initially, their filthy, threadbare muumuus conceal the fact their ankles are shackled together)*

KID I *hate* it here in Babylon. Wilderness Therapy sucks!

BLUE I miss Quarantine Island.

KID I miss Mr. Hand.

BLUE *(Maudlin)* The *Friendly* Blanket. *(Pause)* Why did Sister Mary steal and bang us up over here? This place smells like soot and poo.

KID I know, right? Who ever heard of a house without windows? All those scary statues, ick.

BLUE We must be the worst kids in the whole entire world, Kid. *(Pause)* At least she didn't get Skip 'n 'Jinx.

KID She *tried*. *(Pause)* Christ. *(Gestures to the entrance to Womb Rock)* Sister Mary's got enough religious kitsch in there to start a fricken army. Enough *wine* for a mid-week orgy.

BLUE Don't remind me. *(Sighs)* I miss our orgies. *(Gestures to Womb Rock)* I found *loads* o' pills 'n' bags 'n' bottles. Just like Doc's supplies at home. *(Meaningful)* And *then* I found two pearl-diving outfits!

KID Really?

BLUE *Really*.

KID

Pearl-diving outfits, eh? (*Low whistle*) Scare-ey.

(*Kid and Blue freeze. Blackout*)

(*Plankton: Side of the road, Skirting Bush Highway, Locality of Mullup-Denham. Night. Cassie Rockwell, clad in whorish lingerie, drags herself onstage from wings, left. Slowly, painfully, she drags her body toward wings, right. The faint sound of a vehicle approaching. Cassie falls, struggles briefly. Falls. Vehicle headlights from wings, stage right, reveal a trail of blood from Cassie's stomach. Cassie raises a hand, heroic. Brakes squeal. Cassie rockets backward, hit. Offstage, the engine shudders to a halt. Moths dance in the dust of the headlights. The vehicle's door creaks open, slams shut. Enter Crash Edwards, stage right: black jeans, tie-dyed t-shirt. He flicks a smoking cigarette butt to the ground: stoops to gather Cassie in his arms. Exeunt, stage right. Sound of vehicle departing. Cricket and frog sounds crescendo and fade*)

(*Lights up on Kid and Blue*)

KID

I know what'll cheer us up!

BLUE

What?

KID

A Friday Night Orgy!

BLUE

Of course. (*Slaps forehead*) Yay!

(*Disco music fades in. Bawdy Double I.D.: lewd, thrusting motions. Music ceases abruptly. Kid gasps: points out into audience, horrified*)

KID

Omigod!

BLUE

What?

KID

What's that?

BLUE

(*Flustered*) Someone saw? No!

KID                                There. (*Points out into audience*) Behind Egg and Bacon Flower. It's white... a big white truck, or a van, can't you see it?

BLUE                              Babylonian sodomites! Come to take us away in their clean white van without windows!

KID                                Sounds a bit like you *want* to be picked up in that van, Blue.

BLUE                              But what if... what if they, you know, *saw* when we were...

KID                                Having our orgy? Don't be ridiculous. We would have felt it. You can feel when people are watching you. You can *feel* them staring.

   (*Kid and Blue gaze out into audience, thoughtful. Pause. SFX: a car horn honks. Kid and Blue jump, startled*)

BLUE                              Maybe Doc's sent someone to rescue us!

KID                                Of *course*. That's the kind of thing he'd do. (*Jazz hands*) Praise Rockwell!

BLUE                              He can *sense* our suffering. Even here, in the moral wilderness!

KID                                (*Points out into audience*) Look Blue! It's moving.

BLUE                              Is it coming towards us?

KID                                (*Peers into audience, gasps*) The Babylonian sodomites just fucking flashed us!

BLUE                              (*Pleased*) Ew.

KID                                Blue. (*Disgusted*) Flashed their *lights*.

BLUE                              Oh. (*Pause*) Maybe they wanna talk to us. Should we talk to them?

KID                                No way. Sister Mary would *kill* us.

BLUE                              What if it's Rockwell, come to rescue us?

KID I dunno. *(Pause)* This is *hard*, Blue!

*(Pause)*

BLUE Carn, Kid. We have to see.

KID Let's wait a bit. Hold hands until we know.

BLUE 'kay.

*(Kid and Blue stare in the direction of the van, holding hands. Moonlight fades. Exeunt)*

*(Plankton: Oyster Barque Hospital. Night. Moonlight streams through a window. Upstage, a comatose Cassie Rockwell lies on a hospital bed. Enter Crash Edwards: hesitant, nervous. He hovers, fidgeting. Checks his watch: stands motionless, gazing out at the moon. A grandfather clock chimes thrice. Crash exits, solemn)*

*(Plankton: Catholic Church of St. Lazarus and surrounds. Early morning. Under cover of darkness, a crowd of placard-wielding, pamphlet-toting political supporters assemble noisily on the church steps: Sister Mary, Bruce Gasket, Stanley Hope, Abby Surfcats, Crash Edwards and Wazza Monaro. A cock crows thrice. Lights up gradually on an election campaign rally. The two major parties are: The White Party, directed by Henry Gabriel and The Yellow Party, directed by Claude Edwards. Neither leader appears onstage. Mary, Bruce and Stanley are White Party supporters. Abby, Crash and Wazza support The Yellow Party. Bruce waves a placard: 'Fraud Edwards: The Future of Plankton?' Wazza waves a placard: 'Don't Risk White Supremacy: Vote Yellow!')*

ALL Sparrow's fart/ Up'n'at 'em/ Sometimes in life, ya gotta take a.../ Chance, stop *touching* that.../ Child, I've told you once. I've told you a *thousand*.../ Times New Roman. Font size twelve/ Outta twenty?/ But, Sir! You didn't *help me*/ Doctor

said, 'arse'/ A *total* arse/ Slap a cork in that bitch's.../ Arse?/  
Appalling/ Shocking/ Unbelievable.

*(Sister Mary steps forward, brandishing a crucifix)*

MARY                      People of Plankton! Lend ears, hear our cause. On the one hand:  
                                 morals and decency. Traditional family values. Honesty,  
                                 fidelity...

WAZZA                     ... cold, hard cash.

MARY                     ... on the other hand? Moral decay! *(Sneers at Abby and Crash,*  
*pointed)* Criminals. Drugs. Dread-locked degenerates.

BRUCE                     Hippy scumbags. *(Spits, disgusted)* Filthy reprobates.

STANLEY                  Pushers.

BRUCE                     Dealers.

STANLEY                  Fornicators.

ABBY                      *(Shouting, furious)* Lies.

CRASH                     All lies!

WAZZA                     *(Scathing)* Nothin' but bulldust, bullet-point stereotypes.

MARY                     *(Studiously ignoring Wazza)* Good People of Plankton...  
                                 embrace the good news. Like his angelic namesake, Henry  
                                 Gabriel calls us to 'show a little faith'... walk hand-in-hand with  
                                 God... uphold the true spirit of Australia. People of Plankton,  
                                 Henry Gabriel promises to fight for the future of our fair city.  
                                 He will fight for our *youth*. Fight for our *families*...

BRUCE                     *(Applauds briefly. Victory punch)* Hail Mary!

STANLEY                  Right on, Sister Mary. You *go*, girl.

CRASH                     For shame.

WAZZA                     *(Wags a finger at Mary)* Shame!

*(The campaign descends into a cacophony of squawking: feathers ruffled, chests puffed)*

MARY *(Stamps her foot, appalled)* Order. Order. Order before the House of God! Order. Order...

*(Mary's voice is drowned by the hubbub. Lights dim. Blackout. Exeunt)*

*(Plankton: Oyster Barque Hospital. Morning. Lights up on Crash Edwards, seated beside Cassie Rockwell on her hospital bed, upstage. She is still comatose. Crash produces a pen and paper: scribbles a note, places it on the bed. Retrieves a mobile phone: dials)*

CRASH Wazza? *(Pause)* It's Crash. Yeah, mate. Need a favour...whack the 'Gone Fishing' sign on th'highway for us? *(Pause)* Been an accident. A crash, yeah. Haha. Crash/ crash, yeah I get it. *(Pause)* Nah, Oyster Barque Hospital. Stayed the night. She hasn't woken up yet... *(Pause)* Thanks, mate. *(Hangs up. To Cassie)* Gotta split. Bangin' headache... nurses won't shout a bloody thing. Number's there when y'need it.

*(Crash hesitates, kisses Cassie on the forehead. She doesn't stir. Blackout. Exeunt)*

*(Plankton: Womb Rock, Locality of Mullup-Denham. Morning. Lights up on Kid and Blue, ankles still shackled. Together they examine the glass jar)*

KID The Holy Ghost is way the coolest god. Like a big bag of wind! Coolest third of our Holy Trinity, anyway. *(Sing-song)* Cooler than the son third, cooler than the father third: Ho-ly Ghost! *(Pause)*

BLUE Isn't that blasphemy?

*(Ignoring Blue, Kid holds the jar aloft: shakes it vigorously)*

KID *(Sings to the tune of 'O Holy Night')* Oh, Holy Ghost...

BLUE ... the stars are brightly shi-ning. *(Falsetto)* It is the night...

KID *(Cross)* Shut *up*, Blue! It's not every day the Spirit speaks.  
*(Pause)* Holiest of ghosts and holy things...*Spiritus Sanctus*,  
speak to us, your Chosen Children... for we believe!  
*(Pause)*

BLUE Speak!  
*(Pause)*

KID *(Shakes jar)* Speak to us.

BLUE *(Slaps forehead)* I know! Take the lid off. Take the lid off, Kid!

KID *(Removes lid, eager)* Speak, Spirit, speak.

BLUE *(Gasps, excited)* I think I heard something.

KID *(Inhales from jar)* The Spirit says....

BLUE Omigod. *Much* excite!

KID *(Adopting a low, masculine voice)* Awake!

BLUE But... I *am* awake.

KID *(Roaring)* I am Spiritus Sanctus! Your soul is sleepy and must  
be awakened. Open your eyes and see!

BLUE But they actually already *are*...

KID Child! In order to see *properly*... you must *see* with the *heart*.  
See with the soul!

BLUE Whoah. *(Squeals, excited)* Is this for *real*?

KID *(Enjoying herself)* I, *Spiritus Sanctus*, decree that you must  
honour me daily, as is right and good. *This* is the humble, human  
frame I have chosen as my earthly avatar. I will communicate



with the citizens of this sad and sorry earth via this girl: Chosen One, most holy, sacred mouthpiece.

BLUE                      Whoa.

KID                        And she shall henceforth be known... not as Kid Rockwell, but... Doctor Kid!

BLUE                      Doctor Kid?

KID                        Doctor Kid is my mouthpiece of choice. Thus, she should *never* be questioned... or disobeyed. (*Pause*) Ever.

BLUE                      Amen.

KID                        (*Exhales into jar, screws lid on tight*) Over and out.

BLUE                      Receiving?

KID                        (*Shakes head*) All done.

BLUE                      Wowzers! That was *crazy*.

KID                        (*Proclamatory*) We *will* carry out your orders, Great Spirit, to praise thee and thy holy name. Name of the Father, Son and *especially* The Holy Ghost. Amen.

(*Kid and Blue spin in a circle, joyous*)

BLUE/KID                The Spirit speaks!

(*Kid and Blue bounce offstage in their shackles: supporting each other as in a three-legged race. Lights fade. Blackout*)

(*Plankton: Oyster Barque Hospital. Night. Lights up on Cassie Rockwell on a hospital bed, upstage. An ambulance siren wails. After a pause, she wakes. Eventually discovers Crash's note*)

CASSIE                    (*Reads*) Sorry I couldn't stick around. Had to get back to work. Name's Crash Edwards. Sorry I hit you with 'The Fruit Ute.' I'll pay up. Whatever's needed, sort you out. What happened to you,

*before I hit you... that just ain't right. Give us a call. Cheers, Crash.*

*(Puzzled, Cassie rings the nurse's bell. Lights fade)*

*(Plankton: Womb Rock. Lights up gradually on Sister Mary: she sniffs at a bloodied muumuu, disgusted. Kid and Blue cower at Mary's feet, wrapped in a prison-issue blanket)*

MARY                      Blood! *(Accusing)* On the muumuu.

KID                        I don't know where it came from. Honest!

MARY                      *(Scoffs)* From *inside* you, darling.

KID                        Where inside? Am I sick? *(Hysterical)* I've got no cuts up there! Why am I bleeding?

MARY                      *(Shrill)* You've been running with boys, Kid Rockwell. Yes... *(sniffs at Kid, thrilled)* I can smell it! Smell the meaty, hairy slut-sweat. Imagine it. Kid Rockwell... running with boys, waist-deep in Cock Forest.

BLUE                      *(Cowers, horrified)* Not Cock Forest.

KID                        No! I don't *know* any boys, apart from Blue...Skip... Doc, but he's more of a ...

MARY                      *(Raises a hand, threatening)* You know God hates it when you lie, Kid. He can *see* you lying.

KID                        *(Adamant)* That blood's not mine.

MARY                      *(Hits Kid around the shoulders with the sides of her palms)* Eve was weak, Kid... Eve. Was. Weak! *(Carnal yelp)* They can *smell* the blood.

KID                        But it's not *mine*, Sister Mary, that blood's not mine, it's not!

*(Pause)*

MARY                    You know what, children? *(Pause)* We're going to try a little *experiment*. We're going to find out... wait for it... how long... humans can survive... without food.

KID/BUE                No!

MARY                    *(Folds arms, smug)* Or water.

BLUE                    Please no, Sister Mary. Please, we didn't...

MARY                    You will however, have free reign over your bowel and bladder movements. *(Evil laugh)* In fact, you'll probably find it difficult to think of anything *other* than piss and shit.

KID                        *(Shrill)* This isn't fair!

MARY                    *(Offended)* It's not like I'm running a concentration camp, Kid.

BLUE                    *(Desperate)* Just say yes, Kid. Say it's your blood, please?

MARY                    *(Spins on one heel to glare at Blue)* And be guilty of the sin of *deceit*? Dread serpent? Garden of Eden?

BLUE                    I didn't mean it like...

MARY                    *(Hissing)* Be still!

*(Blue loses control of his bowels. Disgusted, Mary produces a cigarette: lights it, takes a long drag)*

KID                        I'm sorry, Sister Mary. Please don't...

MARY                    *(Advancing, eyes wide)* I *will* use gladwrap.

BLUE                    *(Covers face, terrified)* Not the gladwrap.

KID                        Please no!

*(Mary drags Kid and Blue into the drop-toilet by their ankles)*

MARY                    Dreadful child. Evil children. Appalling. Shocking. Unbelievable! Into the closet.

KID

No!

*(Mary slams and locks toilet door: hangs 'Out of Order' sign from door-knob. Flicks cigarette butt to floor, grinds it to dust with heel: exits, flouncing. Blackout. Exeunt)*

*(Plankton: Oyster Barque Hospital. Spotlight on Cassie Rockwell in a hospital gown, downstage. She dials Crash's number. Hangs up. Dials again)*

CASSIE

Crash Edwards? *(Pause)* Hi. It's me... I'm the girl from the hospital? *(Long pause)* Well, that's the thing... *(Pause)* I can't remember.

*(Cassie lets the phone fall to the ground: crumples. Blackout. Exeunt)*

*(Plankton: Womb Rock. Drop-toilet interior: spotlight on Kid and Blue, huddled awkwardly around the bowl)*

BLUE

I wish I wasn't naughty. I try *so* hard to be good.

KID

I hate it here. *Bad* things happen.

*(Pause)*

BLUE

*(Piteous)* Why hasn't Rockwell rescued us?

KID

*(Irritable)* Just shut up, alright? I'm thinking.

*(Pause)*

BLUE

Omigod Kid, look! On the wall here. Look! 'Repairs and Maintenance: call 1800 POO BUM WEE.' Ha! That's *funny*.

KID

*(Slaps her forehead, realising)* Oh my god, Blue. Phone number! If we could just get to Sister Mary's phone...

BLUE

*(Shocked)* Kid!

KID

...when she's asleep. Haven't you ever wondered?

BLUE                      No. Der! We're not *allowed*?

KID                        Not once, never even thought it?

BLUE                      Never *ever*. Phones are 'Grown-Ups-Only?' You know that. I can't believe you'd even *think* that. Our ears aren't old enough to withstand the deadly micro-waves? You *know* that!

*(Pause)*

KID                        There must be a way. *(Sighs)* Carn, Blue. I'll give you a hug 'til you fall asleep.

BLUE                      'Night, Kid.

KID                        'Night, Blue.

*(Blackout. Exeunt)*

*(Plankton: Oyster Barque Hospital. Lights up on Crash Edwards, seated next to Cassie Rockwell. Cassie, barefoot in a hospital gown, counts on her fingers: angry)*

CASSIE                    ... in that ridiculous van, dump me here, piss off again.

CRASH                    It's a ute.

CASSIE                    *(Irritable)* What?

CRASH                    It's not a van. It's a ute. *(Sheepish)* The Fruit Ute.

CASSIE                    *(Covers her face, weeps)* Wish I'd never woken up!

*(Pause. Crash pats Cassie, awkward. Lights dim. Exeunt)*

*(Plankton: Womb Rock, Locality of Mullup-Denham. Morning. Music: Upbeat electronica. 'Out of Order' sign on drop-toilet door-knob. A pile of Hope Removalist boxes, downstage. Enter Stanley Hope and Bruce Gasket in Hope Removalist overalls: they work in tandem to carry the boxes off-stage. Enter Sister*

*Mary, swishing her habit. She lights a cigarette in a long, elegant holder. Music ceases abruptly)*

MARY                   *(Charming, upbeat)* Cassie was to receive you at three, down at the old Plankton Port Authority building. *(Peers at the sun)* Oh poo, darlings! It's past three, already. Shame you've missed her. Tea, gentlemen? You must be *exhausted* after all that removalling.

BRUCE                   Go a cuppa, thanks doll.

STAN                   Bruce! *(Taps watch)* Timelines to climb. Customers to grit teeth at...

BRUCE                   White 'n two, thanks love.

STAN                   *(Jazz hands)* Bruce...

BRUCE                   Steady on, Stan. *(Guffaw)* That's what we call 'im. Down the depot. 'Steady On Stan.' That's what we say, don't we Stan, eh? Love havin' a chuckle down the depot at Stan's expense.

STAN                   Christ, Bruce.

BRUCE                   Steady on, soldier. Just lettin' the sheila know a bit about ya.  
*(Sister Mary inhales too quickly, erupts in a spasm of coughing)*

STAN                   Put a scone in it, would'ya?

BRUCE                   *(To Mary)* Hope Removalists. Australia-wide. *(Pause)* Heir to a fortune, he is. We're real proud of Stan, down the depot. Reckon he's top notch.

STAN                   *(Pleased)* Stop it.

BRUCE                   Been thinkin' 'bout the crew who lived here before...

STAN                   *(Taps wrist watch, impatient)* Thank you *so* much for your charming hospitality, Sister Mary, but we really are on a *tight* schedule.

BRUCE                    Didn't get out much, by the looks. Hermits, were they?

STAN                    (*Verging on hysteria*) Bruce, deadlines!

BRUCE                    Right-o Sister, we'll get outta yer hair then. (*Moves toward drop toilet with purpose*) Quick trip t'the shitter, 'fore we head off. Won't take long.

MARY                    (*Panicked*) It's broken!

BRUCE                    Don't matter if it's broke...

MARY                    You'll have to relieve yourself elsewhere.

STAN                    Christ, Bruce! Would you just...

BRUCE                    All a bloke really needs... (*tugs at toilet door without success*) is a hole in th' dirt and a door for 'is decency. (*Grunts*) Can't seem t'...

MARY                    (*Stamps on the floor, stern*) Excuse me, Mr Hope...

BRUCE                    (*Gestures to Stan, unperturbed*) He's Mr Hope. Heir to a fortune. Me? I'm just plain old Bruce bloody Gasket. Proud grandfather o' five and top-notch bloody removalist.

MARY                    Mr Gasket. I'd really rather you didn't. If you must go... use the bushes, over there.

BRUCE                    Bush poo, y'reckon? (*Peers at Mary*) Not really decent though, is it. (*Pause*) That what you been doing, love? Bush poos? (*To Stan: abrupt, businesslike*) Right. No time f'dithering, mate, let's hit the frog 'n' toad. (*Slaps Mary on the back*) Thanks, love. Good luck with settling in. Just you, was it? Moving in?

MARY                    Yes. Just little old me.

BRUCE                    Number's on th' card if y'need it. Call anytime.

MARY                    Thanks again.

BRUCE                      Happy camping. Good luck with the campaign.

STAN                      We're Gabrielites through and through. *Obviously.*

MARY                    (*Charming*) Good to know! (*Waves cheerily*) Ta-ta for now.  
God bless.

BRUCE                    Hoo-roo.

*(Music swells. Exit Bruce and Stanley. Mary lights another  
cigarette, takes a long drag. Glares at drop toilet. Lights dim.  
Exeunt. Music fades)*



## 2.2

### WHIZZ ON THE BASSOON

*(Plankton: Oyster Barque Hospital. Night. Moonlight streams in on Crash and Cassie, cross-legged on a hospital bed)*

CASSIE See what I mean? *Your* memories might jog *my* memories.

CRASH *(Dubious)* Well... Dad's name was Sonny. Sonny met Jane when she was young and happy. *(Ironic)* I know, right? *My* mum. Happy! Whiz on the bassoon. She'd look after me... run the bar at night. Sonny loved Jane behind the bar... said she was what brought the punters in. So bubbly and bright. She'd play bassoon... in between pulling pints. People came from all over. *(Pause)* One day, I come home from school and Dad's gone. Dead. *(Pause)* Never coming back. All I remember... the smell. Ugh. Like burnt ham 'n' off milk.

*(Cassie comforts Crash, awkward)*

CASSIE *(Distracted)* What was the name of the bar?

CRASH Our bar? Cock'n'Bull Tavern. On the coast, right on the water's edge. Mum sold it after Dad died. New people run it now, Wazza Monaro. Shazza Monaro? That's his wife. Mental health nurse.

CASSIE *(Disappointed)* Doesn't ring a bell.

*(Pause)*

CRASH Christ, Dad wasn't even dead five minutes and *he* steps in. His own brother, my Uncle Claude.

CASSIE Claude... Edwards? Like you?

CRASH *(Nods)* Fuckin' snake. Dad would have *hated* it. Came home from school that day and Mum's crying, and this shadow comes down the hall. 'Don't be afraid, Crash... there's been an accident.' So Claude takes me down the hall and Mum's on the

bed, crying. And when she sees me... she says... 'Dad's dead, Crash. Dad's dead.'

*(Crash hides his face in his hands, heaves silently. Cassie holds him tight. Long pause)*

CRASH                      What about... art?

*(Pause)*

CASSIE                    What? *(Suspicious)* Art?

CRASH                    Yeah, art. Y'know... drawing, painting. I used to do a bit. Shitload o'canvases. Paints. Set you up with an easel. I'd offer you a place to stay, but the clubhouse ain't really...

CASSIE                    I'd love to, Crash. Thanks. I wasn't really game to ask...

*(Pause)*

CRASH                    Nah, that's cool. *(Perks up)* I could take you 'round on the eco-bike. All-you-can-eat fruit buffet. *(Ironic)* Part of the complete package.

CASSIE                    Only if it's not a hassle.

CRASH                    And when I find out who hurt you... I'll stab 'em in the eye.

CASSIE                    *(Laughs)* Thanks.

*(The sound of seagulls in the distance. Lights dim. Exeunt)*

*(Plankton: Parish office, Catholic Church of St. Lazarus. Spotlight on Sister Mary at a desk, downstage right, shuffling papers self-importantly. SFX: The phone rings, obnoxiously loud: Mary flinches, recovers, retrieves phone)*

MARY                    Damn that ringer. Damn it right to Hell. *(Picks up phone: sickly sweet)* Catholic-Church-of-Saint-Lazarus-Parish-Office-Sister-Mary-speaking... *(Pause)* Oh, Henry! I *did* ask you to phone right back. You *know* the lead-up to Halloween is our busiest

season. Exorcisms and such. *(Pause)* Frankly, Henry, I don't give a damn. *(Pause)* In my mind, this scenario simply *does not exist*. Thus, you must not exist. I must not be talking to you. I must be having a little blackout, here in the office on my own, not talking to you. *(Pause)* Now you listen to me, Henry Gabriel. You might well have a fancy-dancy university degree, but you don't frighten me, Mr. Briefcase. *(Pause)* Because father simply wouldn't have allowed it! Man was a saint. If he'd lived... *(Pause)* Margaret, you mean? Grounds of insanity, obviously. Mummy Dearest is *mad*, Henry. Completely bonkers. Banged up twenty odd years, now... Oyster Barque Funny Farm. Set fire to her own hair once. Ran through Chinatown ditching bibles at the punters. Completely starkers. Took a good half hour before the Plod rocked up. By then she'd quoted chapters one through five of Revelations and shat on someone's poodle. *(Pause)* You'll do it properly this time? *(Purring)* Good. *(Suddenly brusque)* I mean goddammit Henry. These things take time. Even Mother's pubic hair grew back eventually.

*(Mary hangs up, exits. Blackout)*

*(Plankton: The Fruit Ute, side of the road, Mullup-Denham. Morning. Music fades in: glitchy electronica. Enter Crash Edwards, sporting massive headphones. He stacks apples lovingly into rows. Brief forays into Double I.D. Enter Cassie Rockwell: shy, hesitant. Crash removes headphones: music ceases abruptly. Crash hands Cassie a red apple)*

CRASH                      Royal Gala. Real nice stripe. Mainly red, but green underneath.

CASSIE                    *(Smells apple, pleased)* Like big red countries in a pale green sea.

CRASH                    Go on, eat it. Real sweet flavour. Firm, juicy flesh.

CASSIE                    *(Takes a cautious bite)* Delicious!

CRASH *(Polishes fruit, methodical)* Been in fruit and veg for ten years. Even got long service leave coming up.

CASSIE *(Giggles)* Long service leave?

CRASH I'd never give up fruit'n'veg. Other guys go home stinking o' blood, shit or cash. I just reek o' celery. *(Peruses apples)* Pink Lady. Pink and yellowy. Sweetest o' the apples. Your apple, Royal Gala, she's got the tiger stripe. Then you've got Fuji. Like Pink Lady, but matte rather than glossy. Yellow Del, Apollo's favourite. *(Brandishes a green apple)* Granny Smith's come in different stock sizes, 'pending where they're grown. Sundowner. Jazz. Fairly new on the market, Jazz. Then there's Bonza.

CASSIE What about a Pink Lady, Royal Gala hybrid?

CRASH Lady Gala. *You* can be Lady Gala.

CASSIE Nice. *(Nods, pleased)* Nice.

CRASH Then we get the best of both apples. Could be Royal Pink, but... sounds a bit rude, eh? Royal Pink!

*(Crash and Cassie rock with silent glee)*

CASSIE Lady Gala. *(Pleased)* Lady Gala.

*(Pause. Cassie hands Crash her apple core: crumples)*

CRASH *(Laughs good-naturedly)* It's gunna be okay. *(Rocks Cassie from side to side as she weeps)* You're okay. *(A slow waltz. Cassie wipes away tears, plucks a yellow apple from the stand)* Yellow Del. *(Closes Cassie's hands around the apple, gentle)* Yellow Del, yellow smell.

CASSIE Yellow Del? I'm Lady Gala.

*(Crash and Cassie shake hands, pleased. Music right up. Blackout. Exeunt)*

## 2.3

## REALLY FUCKING GOOD AT IT

*(Plankton: Guano Farm at Oyster Barque Brewery. Night. Kid and Blue emerge from trapdoor wearing pearl-diving outfits: helmets dripping with claggy white guano. Removing helmets with a flourish, they grimace: gagging)*

KID                      Fuck a duck. This place pongs t’high heaven!

BLUE                    Are we in purgatory? We sorta pong too...

KID                      *(Stoic)* We ain’t dead yet, Blue. *(Pause)* Gotta find out what kind o’ brutes we’re up against. Get a better tackling notion if we categorise. Might have to bring ‘em to ground, yet. *(Gags)* Let’s go.

BLUE                    Helmets?

KID                      Leave ‘em.

*(SFX: The cocking of a rifle. Pause)*

BLUE                    What the *hell*?

KID                      Hide!

*(Kid and Blue scramble back into the trap-door, terrified. Wazza Monaro flicks a light switch on a verandah, upstage. He rises, illuminated: long black rifle at the ready. Suspended from verandah, two fluorescent orange jack-o-lanterns swing about either side of Wazza’s face: one grins and one leers, resembling Greek tragic/comic masks. A rocking chair surrounded by empty tinnies creaks behind him)*

WAZZA                   Who’s there? *(Jabs the rifle in the air, militant)* Got this joint surrounded. Speaking of... *(pulls a spliff from his pocket: puffs on it, thoughtful. Points rifle toward Kid and Blue, swaying slightly)* See these cameras? Soon, I’ll have ya thievin’, stinkin’ mug on film. When I get ‘round to fixing th’bastards... I’ll have

ya picture. All th' proof I need. *(Snorts)* Halloween. *(Spits)*  
Every bloody year.

*(Wazza flicks the light switch off: abrupt blackout. He snores, accompanied by a choir of crickets and frogs. Spotlight up on trap-door: Kid and Blue emerge slowly: terrified. They wipe guano unsuccessfully from their hair and faces, leaving white masks and clotted dreadlocks. Shivering, Blue crawls to retrieve his helmet: clambers back into trapdoor. Kid clutches at him, desperate. Urgent stage whispers through the following)*

KID                      Blue! What are you doing? No!

BLUE                    He's gunna *shoot* us.

*(A furious tug-of-war ensues as Kid struggles to pull Blue up out of the trap-door)*

KID                      We can't turn back now.

BLUE                    No! I'd rather go back than be *dead*.

KID                      *(Furious)* His cameras are broken. We have to take a chance,  
Blue!

*(Kid manages to hoist Blue out of trap-door: drags him downstage out of Wazza's ear-shot)*

BLUE                    *(Petulant)* But we'll go to *prison*, Kid. Babylonian prisoners will  
*enter* us, performing perverse *acts*!

KID                      Blue, *stop* it. What would grandmama think?

BLUE                    *(Hyper-ventilating)* We can't help grandmama if we're *dead*.

KID                      *(Grips Blue by the shoulders, shakes him)* Don't you get it,  
Blue? We can't *get* dead. Ever! We're like the two witnesses  
from the Book of Revelation. Der! *(Pause)* We can crawl over  
there, to that fence. See? Tunnel under, suss things out until we  
see something or get somewhere. Besides, Mister Rifle Man up

there was smoking Herb of God... couldn't you smell it? He'll be out for hours, like Doc Rockwell after Satyr Day Services. He might have a car. We could hide in his car!

BLUE I miss Satyr Day Services.

KID *(Cross)* Blue. This is *not* the time. Shut up 'n crawl!

*(Lights fade on Kid and Blue as they crawl offstage: mimicking Jinx's commando style. Blackout. Exeunt)*

*(Plankton: Womb Rock, Locality of Mullup-Denham. Morning. Enter Sister Mary, with cigarette in holder. Removes 'Out of Order' sign from drop toilet, unlocks door. Taps her foot, impatient. Peers into drop toilet, emerges a moment later, furious)*

MARY Where the fuck are they?

*(Mary stomps offstage, militant. Lights dim)*

*(Plankton: Plankton 'Eco-Bikers' Motorcycle Clubhouse, Locality of Mullup-Denham. Night. Music fades in: grungy garage-rock. Empty tinnies litter the stage. An electoral campaign poster of Henry Gabriel with a target painted on it. Numerous signs: We fix Eco-Bikes/ Want 24 Hour Home Delivery? Call: 1800 Veg'n'Boozy/ Backyard Body Mods By Abby Surfcat/Fight For Your Right to the Surgical Implantation of Bestial Accessories: Neo-Evolutionists Unite! Abby Surfcat, in skimpy, tasteless attire, reclines on a bench, smoking. Cassie Rockwell paints at an easel. Enter Crash, with beers. Distributes beers, watches Cassie paint. Music fades)*

CRASH Just got off the phone to Veg'n'Boozy.

ABBY Pricks.

CRASH Bastards.

ABBY Charge a *fortune*.

CRASH Why can't someone else in Plankton open a Twenty-Four Hour Home Delivery Service for alcoholic vegans?

ABBY You know, Crash, we really should stop supporting that business. They *are* Gabrielites.

CASSIE Gabrielites?

CRASH Yeah. Gabrielites. Henry Gabriel supporters. (*Points to campaign poster*) That's him. Wanker.

ABBY Posh cunt.

CRASH Fascist scum.

ABBY Leather shoes, private schools.

CRASH Golf clubs, tanning booths.

ABBY You name it. He's got the whole damn lot. (*To Crash, accusing*) Did you order my schnitzel properly this time?

CRASH (*Sighs*) Yes, Abby. (*Teasing*) Just the way you like it.

ABBY (*To Cassie*) See, that's the thing with the 'Veg'n' Boozy Phony-Polony-Faux-Schnitzel.' It has to be *just* right or there's no point eating it. May as well be a bag o' chunder on a plate.

(*Pause*)

CASSIE So... you're vegan then, Abby?

(*Crash exits, clearing empty beer bottles*)

ABBY Well, I'm a model? So, obviously. Oh! (*Giggles*) Der! I keep, like, forgetting how you don't know stuff. Crash is vegan too. (*Lights up again: smokes. Dismissive*) But he's not a model.

CASSIE (*Stifles a giggle*) Really? (*Leaves easel to sit with Abby*) So. Vegans, eh?



ABBY                    We're *all* vegan here. Part o' the Eco-Bikers 'thing.' For me, it's a way of saying sorry for all those mink coat 'n' shark fin salad days of old. Back in the day, in my cat-walk days, I wore stuff that was practically *made* of leather! And you *had* to. If you wanted to eat. *(Pause)* Except most models didn't. *(Pause)* Eat, I mean. *(Rolls onto her side to face Cassie, conspiratorial)* You wouldn't guess this... but, I'm actually *not* anorexic?

CASSIE                *(Amused)* Really?

ABBY                    Wasn't until I met Crash... well, he pointed out some stuff. Then the whole 'leather thing' was like, a big debate for me. In my head? *(Offers Cassie a cigarette)* I mean, Abby Surfcats is a household name.

CASSIE                *(Genuinely impressed)* Is it?

*(Cassie politely refuses cigarette: returns to easel, resumes painting)*

ABBY                    I just do Body Mods because I'm really fucking good at it. I don't *have* to work.

*(Pause)*

CASSIE                Wow. So... modelling, hey?

*(Abby smokes, ignoring Cassie. Cassie returns to painting. SFX: Doorbell. Abby rises: stretches languorously)*

ABBY                    Finally.

CASSIE                Veg'n'Boozy?

ABBY                    Too right. Fucking Gabrielites.

*(Abby sashays offstage. Cassie paints. Blackout. Exeunt)*

*(Plankton: Cock'n'Bull Tavern, Locality of Mullup-Denham. Music fades in: classic Pub Rock. Late morning. Lights up on*

*Shazza Monaro, drinking at the bar. A sign above the bar:  
Publicans & Proprietors: Warren 'Wazza' & Sharon 'Shazza'  
Monaro. Enter Wazza Monaro: swaggering, he swings his car  
keys on one finger. Wazza moves to bar: pours himself a pint.  
Music fades. Kid and Blue enter: linger in the shadows, hesitant.  
Wazza is first to notice their arrival)*

WAZZA                    *(Surprised) G'day. (Sniffs at the air: wrinkles his nose,  
disgusted) Strike me dead, how long since you two had a bath?  
Christ. What's all that white shit? Smells like bloody guano.  
Poo!*

SHAZZA                *(To Kid and Blue) Poor loves. You look like you could do with a  
good steak.*

WAZZA                    *This is a business establishment, Shazza. Not a charity. (Slams  
his pint-glass down, adamant) They'll clean up or piss off.*

SHAZZA                *You big bully, Wazza. They can rinse off under the hose, can't  
they? Come on, kids. Shout y'a steak. Whaddaya say? (Long  
pause) Do you speak English? (To Wazza, aside) Pale, aren't  
they.*

WAZZA                    *Pasty.*

SHAZZA                *Maybe they're backpackers.*

WAZZA                    *Underage backpackers.*

SHAZZA                *They do look Scandinavian.*

WAZZA                    *No kids without an adult. You'll have to leave.*

*(Kid and Blue stand motionless: frightened)*

SHAZZA                *Boy looks old enough. Surely. (To Blue) Over eighteen?  
(Pause)*

WAZZA                    *Come off it, Shazza.*

SHAZZA                      Fuck off, Waz. They're with me. (*Slams cash on the bar*) This is my money, and I'm buyin' two of yer finest Steak'n'Veg plates, thanks barman.

WAZZA                      (*Scribbles on a docket*) Fine. Just keep an eye on 'em, alright?  
(*To Kid and Blue*) Any tricks... yer out. Got it?

SHAZZA                      Oh poo, Wazza. (*To Kid and Blue*) Don't mind him.

WAZZA                      (*Waves a number on a stand*) Table number?

SHAZZA                      Christ, Waz. There's no one else here.

WAZZA                      It's protocol?

SHAZZA                      (*Shakes head, dismayed*) Protocol!

                                    (*Shazza seats Kid and Blue on bar stools, maternal. Wazza marches off with the docket, scratching his head*)

SHAZZA                      Now. If you hear what I say, hold one finger up. (*Long pause. Kid holds one finger up*) Can you speak English? (*Kid nods*) Can you speak, can you talk? (*Pause. Kid nods*) But ya don't wanna. That it? (*Kid nods*) That's fine. You can just sit. (*Pause*) Long as you want.

                                    (*Kid and Blue sit in silence, swinging their legs. Kid comforts Blue, protective. Lights dim. Exeunt*)

                                    (*Plankton Eco-Bikers Clubhouse. Crash is watching Cassie paint. Cassie pauses: steps back to appraise her work, arms crossed, frowning*)

CASSIE                      Who am I fucking kidding? I can't paint.

                                    (*Frustrated, she tosses the canvas to the floor. Long pause*)

CRASH                      (*Placatory*) Beer?

CASSIE                      (*Resigned*) Beer.



KID Anything! This is an *amazing* thought, this thought about thinking. We could think about... I dunno, the ocean? Snags 'n' oysters? The New Era, The Final Battle... the list goes on!

BLUE (*Slaps forehead, realising*) Buck, Kid! We can think about Buck.

KID Buck Warwick. Of course! (*Laughs, pleased*) Right on, Blue.

(*Kid and Blue drop their mops: strut downstage, arms akimbo. Drawing imaginary pistols from imaginary holsters, they take aim at the audience*)

KID/BLUE Pow, pow, pow! (*Drop pistols, seductive*) Come with us now on a journey through time and space... to a world of cowboys, guns and outback bibles. Cheer on as Buck Warwick and his noble steed, Ace Thunderplums, do battle for the battlers of Oz. Buck 'n' Ace? (*Emphatic*) Best villain slingin' outfit in the West. Aussie, Aussie, Aussie? (*Fist-pumps*) Oi. Oi. Oi!

KID Right on.

(*Pause*)

BLUE Should we hold hands?

KID Nah.

BLUE We could put our foreheads together.

KID (*Sarcastic*) Or... we could just sit by ourselves, like Normal People.

BLUE Right. Right... Normal People. (*Mouths the words to reassure himself*) Normal People. (*Pause*) Normal People.

(*Kid and Blue think hard*)

KID Thinking about stuff. (*Whistles, feigns nonchalance*) Thinking, thinking, thinking.

BLUE (Giggles) But this feel naughty! (Pause) Okay. Thinking about Buck. Thinking...

KID No, silly. *I* think about Buck. Ace Thunderplums is your favourite.

BLUE Oh, yeah. (Pause) Isn't that weird, but?

KID Nothing's weird in the realm of thought, Blue.

BLUE (Slumps, disheartened) It's *hard* to think about things.

KID (Hesitant) We could think about... Sister Mary. In Hell! With the Unholy Trinity... (ticks off on her fingers)... Beelzebub, Satan 'n' Lucifer. All wrestling together in an icy pit. (Stage whisper) In the *nude*.

BLUE (Shocked) That's rude, Kid. Evil!

KID Maybe that's the whole point. We have to *think* evil to test if they can still see inside us. We have to think the most evil thing we can... then wait for a sign.

BLUE I'm scared, but.

KID Well I'm not scared and I'm a girl. *And* I'm youngest. Technically. My brain's oldest... but I'm youngest. Now think!

(Kid takes Blue's hand. They close their eyes. Nothing happens. They resume mopping: lethargic, disheartened. Lights fade. Exeunt)

(Plankton: Plankton 'Eco-Bikers' Motorcycle Clubhouse, Locality of Mullup-Denham. Morning. Enter Sister Mary, wheeling a barrow laden with fabulous religious kitsch. Bold lettering on barrow: Roaming Piety Stall: Catholic Parish of St. Lazarus)

MARY (Warbling, operatic) Ave Maria, grazia plena. Dominus, tecum ...

*(Enter Abby Surfcat, dressed as a Catholic nun in a sequined silver habit: still drunk from the night before)*

ABBY Oh!

MARY Sister? Sister! You *must* be new here. I know anyone who's *anyone* in Plankton. *(Extends a hand, ingratiating)* Sister Mary, at your service! Catholic Parish of St. Lazarus.

ABBY Good morning! Hey, sister.

MARY And your name?

ABBY My name? Oh! I'm ah... Sister... *(coughs, stalling)*... Sister Fantasia.

MARY *(Pumps Abby's hand vigorously, pleased)* Sister Fantasia. Enchantée. *(Sweeping gestures)* Supplies, Sister? Hymnal, crucifix, votive candle? Perhaps a pope-on-a-rope or a Bobble-Headed Jesus. Oh yes. Yes, excellent choice, Sister. Very popular, these. Chainmail Armour Pyjamas: 'be a soldier for Christ, even as you sleep.' I stock those in every size from go to whoa, darling. *(Titters)* You're much more go than whoa, of course... slender little thing. Don't they feed you in that convent? *(Purring)* Oh yes, now those rosary beads are *particularly* stylish... fashioned by Benedictine monks from the broken teeth of penitent werewolves.

ABBY It's all very nice, but... I'm sorry, not today. Thanks all the same.

MARY Oh, I see. *(Taps nose, winks)* Vows of poverty *and* starvation, eh? Nice one, Sister. Well... *(presses a stack of White Party propaganda into Abby's hand)* perhaps you'd find these interesting. Or you could pass these on to a friend. Are nuns from your Order typically *allowed* to have friends?

ABBY Well...

MARY                    Go on, take a few. (*Magnanimous*) I have plenty. The Catholic Church has been *so* generous with their financial support. Bishop Holloway realises it's time *someone* stood up for traditional family values. The problem with this generation is their appalling lack of moral vision. *Obsessed* with the trite and superficial. (*Dusts with vigour*) Oh! Sister, I *almost* forgot. (*Retrieves a pamphlet, furtive*) Latest 'Monastique' catalogue. Just in.

ABBY                      Monastique?

MARY Holy Make-up. Make-up for people who *matter*, darling.

ABBY But isn't make-up... um... vanity?

MARY Oh, pish, darling. (*Dismissive*) Even our Lord's mother wore make-up. You can see for yourself. In the pictures.

ABBY                      In paintings?

MARY                    Of course. I wouldn't be referring to photographs, would I. Silly lamb! Mother Mary died *hundreds* of years ago. (*Pulls Abby downstage, furtive*) Now Sister, as it turns out...I'm doing some important research on behalf of the Plankton Historical Society. A kind of survey, really. Anonymous, if you prefer... no big deal.

ABBY                      Ah...

MARY                    Have you ever been *troubled* by lustful desires, Sister?

ABBY I'm not sure I...

MARY I know, we'll start with this question. Would you say you were  
a) sexually promiscuous, i.e. the convent bicycle, b) a  
pathological prick-tease, c) a militant lesbian, d) frigid, but not  
technically a virgin or, e) a proper, actual virgin?

ABBY                    It's probably time for...



*(Crash bursts on from wings dressed as a Catholic priest:  
staggering drunk)*

CRASH                      Oh, aye ‘n up she rises, oh, aye ‘n *up*! She rises....

*(Clasps Abby around the waist, plants a drunken kiss on her  
cheek)*

ABBY                      Father Edwards! This is Sister Mary.

CRASH                      G’d day Mary. *(Sign of the cross)* God bless you, my child.

*(Crash laughs until he falls over. Abby giggles despite herself)*

MARY                      *(Thoroughly disgusted)* I see I’ve been wasting your time, Sister.

*(Crash slaps Abby’s arse, leering)*

ABBY                      Crash!

CRASH                      *(Tries to focus)* Is that a *real* Bobble-Headed Jesus? *(Impressed)*  
Old-school!

MARY                      Sister Fantasia? *(Cold as ice)* I pray you find Jesus.

*(Mary flounces off, wheeling barrow)*

CRASH                      *(Snorts)* Fantasia?

*(Abby and Crash dissolve into helpless giggles. They exit,  
stumbling drunkenly. Lights dim. Exeunt)*

## 2.4

### HOLY GUEVARA'S CIGAR, GIRL

*(Plankton: Cock'n'Bull Tavern. Morning. Lights up on Kid and Blue, kneeling downstage, praying: large scrubbing brushes attached to their knees and elbows)*

KID/BLUE                   ... save us from The Devil and his upside-down frown. In the name of The Father, Son and Holy Ghost, Amen.

*(Blessing themselves, they gaze out at the audience, mouth-breathing)*

BLUE                       Kid?

KID                         What?

BLUE                       Why *does* The Devil have an upside-down frown? I don't get it. That guy is *always* smiling.

KID                         'Cause he's a super villain? Der. Super-villains have, like, this permanent smile, even when they're mad.

BLUE                       And an evil laugh. Mwa-ha-ha.

*(Kid and Blue fall to their knees and elbows: scrub in crisp, choreographed unison through the following)*

KID                         Heroes, on the other hand, hardly *ever* smile. Hero faces are super still 'n' sexy, like Jesus on the cross. Or The God of Night and Day, except that's more of an angry face. The Holy Ghost...actually, *would* the Holy Ghost have a face? Anyway... Doc Rockwell says that's how you know people have The Devil in 'em... when they smile too much. Or laugh.

BLUE                       Oh.

KID                         But really, he should know all about that. *(Meaningful)* With grandmama.

BLUE Kid! Doc Rockwell said that story's *not* true and we're *not* to talk about grandmama, *ever*.

KID That story *is* true, Blue, I swear it. Cross my heart, hope to die, shove a pitchfork through my eye.

BLUE Doc Rockwell will *kill* us.

KID (*Scornful*) Don't be so dramatic, Blue. Doc Rockwell told me all about grandmama. See, what happened? One day, *The Devil* came inside her!

BLUE (*Simultaneously pleased and disgusted*) Ew!

KID Blue! (*Embarrassed*) Not *that* way. *God*.

BLUE (*Flustered*) I thought you meant...

KID I *meant* that The Devil *went* inside her... you know, like she was possessed. Like when they have to cast devils out of people in the Bible? (*Pause*) Poor ol' stick. Set her own hair on fire, once. That's what ended it. That's when she got banged up at the Funny Farm. (*Pause*) Doc made me swear never to tell, *ever*. He said if Deacon knew *I* knew? He'd carve out my tongue with a serrated knife.

(*Pause*)

BLUE What's a Sir Rated knife?

KID A really, really, *really* sharp knife. (*Indicates with her hands*) Yea big... with *teeth*.

BLUE Oh.

(*Pause*)

KID Did you know our grandpapa Terence was a sailor? Back in the day? Before he became a God-bothering Bible Basher. Terence 'Holy Roller' Rockwell. Sailed in t' Sovereign Sound when

grandmama was just a teenager. When The Devil went inside her, she started ranting about Deacon being a rapist and a murderer, so before grandpapa died, Deacon made him bang Margaret up in the loony bin. Padded walls, straitjacket, the whole bit. And no shoes, either, because *apparently* you can kill people with shoes.

BLUE (Enchanted) Get out!

KID I *know*, right? Something about aglets. *Anyway*, grandpapa Terence was like, really-really-good-looking. Red hair, ‘stache, little goatee...

BLUE (Swoons) Dreamboat.

KID Doc reckons he saw a coupl’ a photos once, but then grandmama Margaret ate them.

(Pause)

BLUE Did grandpapa Terence wear velvet?

KID What?

BLUE Velvet. In the pictures.

KID Maybe.

BLUE (Dreamy) Velvet jacket... flared cords. Cowboy shirt.

KID Big ol’ silver buckle.

(Pause)

BLUE I miss our island.

KID Me too, Blue. (Pause) Me too.

(Lights fade. Exeunt)

(Plankton: Cock’n’Bull Tavern. Lights up on Cassie and Shazza, drinking together at the bar)

CASSIE                    (*Highly embarrassed*) You won't tell Crash?

SHAZZA                 Secret Women's Business, sugar. Take y'up now, if yer keen.

CASSIE                    Silly, isn't it.

SHAZZA                 Not silly t'all, love. What if y'*do* have some kinda disease?  
Doctor up the hospital, she'll treat yer right.

CASSIE                    All I got to go on...

                              (*Cassie turns away from audience to lift her shirt, revealing her  
                              stomach to Shazza*)

SHAZZA                 Holy Guevara's cigar, girl. That's *nasty*. What the bloody hell  
happened there?

CASSIE                    Bled all over the shop.

                              (*Pause*)

SHAZZA                 You're obviously not, then.

CASSIE                    Not what?

SHAZZA                 A whore! No-one carves 'whore' into someone's guts if they're  
really, *actually* a whore, now do they?

CASSIE                    Well, no. (*Hopeful*) I guess not.

SHAZZA                 I'll bet it's some kinda revenge. (*Pause*) Jilted lover.  
Disgruntled stalker. Some kid y'bullied in kindergarten. The list  
goes on. (*Jovial, upbeat*) Christ, girl! You could be a bloody  
virgin f'rall we know. Come on, girl-friend. No time like right  
now, this instant.

                              (*Businesslike, Shazza escorts Cassie offstage. Lights dim*)

## 2.5

### NASTY OR NICE?

*(Plankton: Cock'n'Bull Tavern. Lights up on Wazza, Shazza and Kid, drinking at the bar)*

KID ... mainly because grandmama Margaret's completely mad.  
Troppo, cuckoo, *bonkers* darling.

SHAZZA Grandmama Margaret? You mean Margaret Rockwell?

KID *(Surprised)* How did you know?

SHAZZA I'm a mental health nurse, Kid. How many mental hospitals do you think there *are* in Plankton?

WAZZA Need a few more, by the sounds.

SHAZZA Margaret Rockwell's our most recent escapee.

WAZZA Escapee, eh? *(To Kid)* And *she's* yer grandmother. *Christ.*

*(Wazza shakes his head: downs his pint in a hurry. Lights fade. Exeunt)*

*(Plankton: The Fruit Ute, side of the road, Mullup-Denham. Early morning. Upbeat music fades in. Enter Crash, Kid and Blue in matching white bib and brace overalls. Crash trains Kid and Blue in the art of stacking: Double I.D. Music fades)*

CRASH So you're nineteen, and you're... eighteen?

KID Yes, sir. Just small for my age, is all.

CRASH *(Laughs, good-natured)* Don't call me sir. Name's Crash. Crash Edwards. *(Kid curtsies, extends a hand. Crash shakes it, amused)* And your name was...

KID Doctor Kid.

*(Pause)*

CRASH And your *actual* name is...

BLUE                    She's Doctor Kid. I'm Flounce Curlicue. (*Curtsies*) At your service.

CRASH                  (*Bemused*) Right. (*Pause*) Well, this'll be a Cash-in-Hand jobby. Trust you won't mention that to anyone. *Don't* tell the customers.

BLUE                    Customers? Real, *actual* ones?

CRASH                  You bet.

KID                      Wowzers!

CRASH                  Should we go inside? Coffee, bit of a chat? I'll put the 'Closed' sign up for a bit. Glad the overalls fit. Time to put those muumuu's through the wash, eh?

                              (*Kid and Jinx nod, grateful: follow Crash offstage. Lights dim*)

                              (*Plankton: The Fruit Ute. Later that night. Kid and Blue swing their legs off the edge of the stage, drinking beer from tinnies. Kid slaps the ground: excited*)

KID                      ... because I have extremely important spiritual news to report? Der.

BLUE                    But what is it, Kid?

KID                      *Spiritus Sanctus* came to me in a dream!

BLUE                    (*Gasps*) What did he look like? White? Or green? Or was he see-through? Did he have a *face*? Was he more like a bird, or a plane? Was he scary? Nasty? Nasty or nice?

KID                      (*Enjoying herself*) Well, brother. The Holy Ghost... is made of briny ocean wind and glow-in-the-dark sparkles, like a big ocean glow worm in a cloud of fire 'n' ice. He's big. *Real* big. Big strong arm muscles and a face.

BLUE                    A man face?

KID More like a god face, but not a Father God or Son Jesus face, like a perfect alien being, with no wrinkles. Or hair. Not even *one* hair, anywhere! He's got perfect skin and he's hot, hot, hot. Really-*really*-good-looking.

BLUE Way cool.

KID I know, right? *Way*. The Holy Ghost even *smells* good, like really good quality deodorant.

BLUE Crash has deodorant.

KID Yeah, but The Holy Ghost smells *heaps* better than Crash's deodorant. He uses Holy Deodorant... a mixture of Holy Water and the essence of baby angels. Cherubs.

BLUE (*Awe-struck*) I'd do *anything* for The Holy Ghost, Kid. (*Pause*) Anything!

(*Blackout. Exeunt*)

(*Plankton: The Fruit Ute. Early the next morning. Enter Crash, whistling, followed by Kid and Blue in matching overalls. The trio polish and stack fruit through the following*)

CRASH ... and don't go near the lab, yeah? Don't mention it to any of the customers. Lotta people'd be in a world o' pain if anyone found out about that lab, me included, so just keep mum, okay?

BLUE We know what that means. Keeping mum. (*To Kid, meaningful*) Don't we, Doctor Kid?

CRASH All th' strict illegals like Hydrofluoric get locked away, but still... shit-load of chemicals. Y' certainly wouldn't wanna strike a match when the Vaporub's on the boil.

BLUE (*Hesitant*) Hydrofluoric. Hf? Like... Hydroflouric acid?

CRASH Chemical symbol's Hf, yeah. (*Amused*) Chemistry buff, Flounce?



BLUE                      What's a...

KID                        (*Warning*) Blue.

CRASH                    Dad called it 'Hellfire.' Reckoned it was the *true* sadist's murder weapon of choice. Don't sell much... but now and then, some twisted fuck with mummy issues. Hydrofluoric produces horrific burns. Single drop on yer skin... howling in agony.

KID                        So... it would definitely kill you if you drank it? (*Pause*) It would definitely kill someone.

CRASH                    Kind of an unhealthy interest for a teenager, ain't it?

KID                        Just curious, man. (*Peace sign*) Never hurt a fly. All about the love, man. Doin' it for the kids, y'know?

BLUE                      Yeah. Forest-murdering-corporate-scum.

CRASH                    Whoah back, Flounce. Them's *hateful* words.

BLUE                      Darn it, Crash. I'm so goddamned *confused*. Good words, bad words...

KID                        How would *you* kill someone, Crash?

CRASH                    Guess I could... stab 'em with a poisoned rapier.

KID                        (*Horried*) Stab them? Up *there*?

CRASH                    Rapier, not raper. Christ! It's a kinda sword. (*Pause*) Look, I won't pry, but I am happy t'pop down th' Cop-Shop.

KID                        *Never*.

BLUE                      Cops are Mean People, Crash. Mean People Suck!

CRASH                    You know you're protected though, right? You run with us now.

KID                        Run with... P.E.B.M.C?

CRASH                    Damn straight, soldier.

BLUE                      Whoa.

KID                        We run with Eco-Bikers? Wowzers. What were we *thinking* Blue, hanging out on that silly old island?

BLUE                      Thanks Crash.

CRASH                    No worries 't all. Now, I'm feeling rough as guts today, so you're in charge, Doctor Kid. Gotta date with bong 'n' doona.

KID                        (*Salutes Crash*) At your service!

                              (*Exit Crash, rubbing his temples*)

BLUE                      Who the *hell* is Bongendoona when she's at home? (*Shakes head, disapproving*) Buck Warwick would never cheat on *his* girl.

                              (*Kid and Blue stack apples, whistling. Lights fade. Exeunt*)

                              (*Plankton: Cock'n'Bull Tavern. Early morning. Lights up gradually on Kid and Blue, asleep under a pile of fancy-dress costumes. SFX: birds twitter maniacally outside. Blue wakes, rubs his eyes: rises, exceedingly groggy. He approaches Kid on tip-toes*)

BLUE                      Kid. (*Pause*) Doctor Kid?

KID                        Ugh. (*Groans*) The birds of pain. (*Covers ears*) Make it stop.

BLUE                      Are you awake?

KID                        *Stop* it.

BLUE                      Gunna be sick.

KID                        I'm still asleep. (*Gesticulates, dismissive*) Throw up over there.

                              (*Kid rises, rubs forehead: hung-over. Collects glass jar: hangs it from her neck with ribbon purloined from the pile of fancy-dress*)

KID Spiritus Sanctus, we hear and we obey.

BLUE But I'm *sick*.

KID Nobody *cares*, Flounce. I don't care, the Spirit doesn't care... the Spirit *speaks*.

(*Blue gags and retches. Kid holds jar aloft, oblivious*)

KID Speak to us, O Spirit! Holiest of Ghosts. (*Inhales from jar, fixes her gaze on Blue*) Flounce Curlicue? You have made me *sad*. I sent Grown-Up beverages to test you and you *failed*. Ergo, you must pray to me at least *nineteen* times a day. Anything less is an insult, and may lead to punishment... perhaps death.

BLUE Oh!

(*Kid exhales into jar: replaces lid*)

KID (*Declamatory, joyful*) The Spirit speaks!

BLUE (*Sombre*) Amen.

KID Wowzers. (*Eager*) What did he say, Blue? What did he say?

BLUE He said I made him sad. Because I didn't pass the test. (*Stifles tears, courageous*) How come you didn't hear him?

KID I guess the Spirit's becoming more and more powerful. It did feel a little different this time. Like I was... swimming in a mirror.

BLUE Oh.

(*Pause*)

KID So we made the Holy Ghost sad, did we? Oh *no*. Did I make him sad too?

BLUE No, you're safe. He said you passed the test, but I didn't. (*Pause*) He said we have to pray at least *five* times a day.

KID                      Really. *Five* times, eh?

*(Pause)*

BLUE                    *(Wails)* I'm *scared*, Doctor Kid!

*(Kid beckons for Blue to nestle under her wings. She rocks him in slow motion)*

KID                      With *Spiritus Sanctus* on our side? We can do anything.

*(Blackout. Exeunt)*

## 2.6

### THE SCREAM IN THE MIRROR

*(Plankton: The Fruit Ute, side of the road, Mullup-Denham.*

*Lights up: early morning. Enter Kid and Blue: skylarking, yelping and yodelling. They squabble briefly over a box of fruit, cackling merrily, then sit cross-legged, downstage)*

KID I *know*, right?

BLUE Scrotally!

*(The pair laugh until they hiccup)*

KID Anyway... so I was like, hooking up with this super-hot magician or something? And we were like all *over* each other, just rolling around in the purple shagpile in this orange-coloured sunset bar on the top floor of this amazing hotel-castle thing. I kid you not, Blue... that sunset bar? *(Gazes heavenward, wistful)* That sunset bar was The Shit. Pity it wasn't real.

BLUE *(Intrigued)* How did you know this guy was a magician?

KID *(Scornful)* He was wearing a cape? *(Pause)* Der! Anyway... so we were like, talking and suddenly... uh-oh! Whoa back, Sally... I realised that this wasn't just some two-bit, two-bob, nickel and a dime, say 'boo' magician, this was... hold on... wait for it... our very own *Spiritus*, in disguise! *(Swoons)* Come to me in a dream.

BLUE *(Distracted)* No way. *(Pause)* Hang on... *(turns to Kid, puzzled)* who?

KID You *can't* have forgotten already. You know. The Holy...

BLUE Of course I *know* Kid. *(Wags finger, realising)* But you're not *allowed*.

KID Oh yes I am, Brother Flounce. *Spiritus Sanctus* and I have a special relationship.

BLUE But not without me! We made a deal, Kid. (*Stamps feet, enraged*) Not. Without. Me!

KID He chose *my* body as a vessel. Not yours! Doesn't that tell you something?

(*Kid and Blue 'square off.' Blue is first to quit. He spins slowly on one heel, sulky*)

BLUE Whatever.

KID Anyway, what Spiritus told me? In the dream? It's bigger than both of us... it's a god-damned world shaker.

BLUE So what is it. What did he say?

KID Wait for it... wait... (*stage whisper*)... he wants us to get our hands on some of that Hellfire!

BLUE (*Smug*) Hydrofluoric acid. Chemical symbol: Hf.

KID Spiritus says it's our only defence. (*Pause*) He said to get as much as we could, but not to burn our hands with it, because that would hurt. A lot. I *wanted* more information, but... (*shrugs*) over and out.

BLUE I *always* want more Ghost than I get.

KID I say we down tools at smoko, steal the Hellfire, come right back.

BLUE Do we have a container?

(*Long pause*)

KID We've got a glass jar.

BLUE (*Horried*) No!

KID (*Slaps forehead, realising*) Of course, Blue. We can *rationalise*, like Doc Rockwell taught us. (*Adopts an intellectual tone*)

Placing the liquid Hellfire inside the gaseous... ghost... is *symbolic*. The entity as a whole functions as an archetypal image of procreative symbiosis, representing the intense flame of religious fervour in its most pure form. See? The Holy Ghost will understand. *(Pause)* Carn, Blue. Let's fill the bastard up with Hydrofluoric.

BLUE I just wish there was someone who could take us through the safety procedures.

KID *(Snorts)* Where's ya rock'n'roll attitude, Flounce?

BLUE Whatever...

*(Kid and Blue return to stacking fruit. Lights fade. Exeunt.*

*(Plankton: Cock'n'Bull Tavern. Images looped on a screen or cyclorama: Cassie Rockwell's Art Exhibition [see Appendix A]. Enter Cassie and Crash with champagne glasses. Cassie's hair has grown: it is bright red. Cassie addresses audience directly, nervous)*

CASSIE And so, I hereby open my exhibition of anonymous family portraits, lovingly entitled: 'The Scream in the Mirror.' Do enjoy the canapés, and do let me know if you recognise *anyone* or *anything*.... no matter how insignificant or small. Your one small observation could be the key to unlocking these *(taps forehead)* god-damn frozen memories!

*(Clinking champagne glasses, Crash and Cassie exit, smiling. Blue trots on, breathless, followed by Kid)*

BLUE *(Pleading)* I'm busting.

KID Just hurry *up*, Blue.

BLUE Real quick. Promise.

*(Exit Blue, hands between his legs. Kid turns, noticing the images)*

KID Sweet Jezebel's calf muscle. The *fuck*?

*(Dissonant, carnivalesque music fades in. Blue returns: joins Kid. The speed of the images on loop increases, flashing by at a dizzying pace. Strobos pulse. Music ceases. Art Exhibition fades. Kid and Blue fall down, trembling. Enter Crash and Cassie, holding hands. Kid and Blue race to Crash, grab a leg each: hide behind his knees. Kid points at the empty screen, terrified)*

KID Pictures of *us*.

BLUE Devil pictures!

KID *(Glares at Cassie, accusing)* Who's she?

CASSIE You know these kids?

BLUE *(Gasps)* Bongendoona!

CASSIE What the?

BLUE *(Smug)* She must be Bongendoona. *(Gestures to Crash)* Did you know he's two-timing you?

CRASH *(Cross)* Flounce!

KID Who is she? Where did she come from?

CASSIE Flounce? Crash, who *are* these people?

*(Pause)*

CRASH Lady Gala? Meet Doctor Kid... and Flounce Curlicue.

CASSIE *(Snorts, derisive)* They're not *real* names.

KID And Lady Gala *is*?

*(Kid swings Blue's hand, sulky)*



CRASH                    *(To Cassie, apologetic)* They've been helping out with The Fruit Ute. Favour to Shazza.

CASSIE                Where did Shazza find them?

CRASH                Just wandered into the Tav. one day, apparently.

*(Pause. Cassie pounces on Kid, grips her in a head-lock. Kid struggles, indignant)*

KID                    Ow! *Stop* it. What are you, twelve?

CASSIE                Spill the fricken' beans.

KID                    A headlock? Are you serious? Let me go!

CASSIE                *(Shrill, desperate)* How do I know you?

BLUE                 Wait, Kid. I think I *have* seen her before!

CRASH                Where?

BLUE                 On our island.

CRASH                What island?

KID                    He's babbling. Overcome...

CASSIE                What *fucking* island?

KID                    *(Aside, hissing)* *Stop* it, Blue! She's a Grown-Up? She could be Mean People.

BLUE                 Quarantine Island.

*(SFX: a church bell tolls in the distance)*

CRASH                Out in the Harbour there? In Sovereign Sound?

CASSIE                *(Cries out, remembering)* Yes, yes, Quarantine Island... I can't see over the table, so I'm little, I must have been quite young... I'm looking at some kind of table and there's a bed... a bunk bed?

BLUE

*(Eager to please)* We have bunk beds. On our island. We have them in our orphanage.

*(Music fades in: Grieg's In the Hall of the Mountain King)*

CASSIE

Orphanage? *(Pause)* Orphanage. *(Pause)* That fucking... fuck-arse!

*(Music right up. Cassie raises palms to cheeks: unleashes a silent scream. Blackout. Exeunt)*

### **ACT THREE**

Those who can make you believe absurdities can make you commit atrocities.

Voltaire

### 3.1

### GOD IN A BIRD

*(Quarantine Island. Barnacle Bay. Night. The sound of distant thunder. SFX: the low rumble of Eco-Bikes slows to a halt, just offstage. Anthemic rock music fades in. Lights up gradually. Enter Crash, Abby, Cassie, Kid, Blue, Shazza and Wazza, walking in slow motion: all kitted out in super-stylish Eco-Bikers gear. The Eco-Biker helmets having proven too small, Blue sports a pearl-diving helmet. Music ceases. Shazza, Wazza and Abby retrieve supplies from Eco-Bikes, offstage: set up a camp concealed by rocks and brush. Crash, Cassie, Kid and Blue move downstage: excited, upbeat)*

KID ... on and on about God in the sky and God on the cross...

BLUE *(Removes helmet with a flourish)* ... but they always forget about God in a bird!

KID God in a ghost. *(Emphatic)* The *Holy* Ghost.

BLUE *(Proud)* The Holy Ghost helped us.

CRASH *(Condescending)* Did he? That's nice. *(To Kid)* But it doesn't explain why you broke into my lab when I *specifically* asked you not to ...

BLUE *(Oblivious)* Just think! Of all the kids in the whole world... the Holy Ghost chose me 'n' Doctor Kid!

CASSIE *(Grumpy)* I thought we left Doctor Kid on the mainland.

BLUE *(Reminisces)* Oh yeah! And Flounce.

CRASH *(Insistent)* Kid!

KID *(To Cassie)* Are you still Lady Gala?

BLUE *(To Cassie, sassy)* What *is* your name, girlfriend?

CRASH *(Shouts, fuming)* Kid! I'm fucking *talking* to you.

(*Kid rolls her eyes, insolent*)

(*Livid*) I asked you really nicely not to go anywhere near that lab. I thought I could trust you. I left The Fruit Ute under your care. (*Meaningful*) My *ute*. I was training you up for my long service leave.

KID (*Wheedling*) But he *told* us to steal the Hellfire...

CRASH Oh, grow up!

BLUE Chemical symbol, Hf! (*Smug*) True sadist's weapon of choice.

CRASH (*To Kid, frosty*) Pathetic.

KID (*Adamant*) But Crash, the Holy Ghost *said*. The curse here runs too deep for normal weapons. It has to be... exploded out, like a pimple or an in-grown hair, but *worse* because it's bigger and it's taking all the space. (*Mimes*) Like when you can't get a grip under a pimple... get that proper leverage... bits get stuck and it turns all gangrenous. (*Pause*) The Holy Spirit *speaks through me!*

CRASH (*Unimpressed*) Did you just say...

CASSIE ... the Holy Spirit *speaks* though you?

(*The Ghost is watching from The Morgue. She wrings her hands: sorrowful, pitiful*)

CRASH Who the *fuck* is that?

KID Oh, that's the ghost. She's *always* hanging around.

BLUE (*Helpful*) Doesn't like sunlight much. She won't be here for long.

CASSIE Hang on... she's familiar! (*Smacks forehead*) Remembering, remembering...

GHOST (*Piteously*) Away! Away...

*(A cock crows thrice. The Ghost vanishes. Kid claps for attention: gestures to morgue entrance, tense)*

KID                    Hide in here, you lot. Just stay out of sight. Doc ‘n’ Deacon don’t come down here much... we’ll be safe, but we gotta fill ‘em in before we trot you out.

BLUE                  *(Reassuring)* Once we tell ‘em what’s what, they’ll be *raring* to meet you! It’s just, well...

KID                    ... they don’t get out much.

BLUE                  Not good with strangers.

ALL                    That’s *fine*. All good. Hey! No bloody worries.

*(Exit all but Kid and Blue)*

BLUE                  *(Nostalgic)* I really missed our island.

KID                    Time to *man* up, Kid Rockwell. It is Relent. *(Adjusts an invisible penis)* Gotta get ready for our entrance.

BLUE                  *Just* like being in a play, but different. How exciting!

KID                    Carn, Blue. *(Clicks fingers)* Hustle!

*(Exeunt. Blackout)*

*(Quarantine Island. A classroom within The House of Rockwell: a split white-board/ black-board, upstage. On the white-board, a bullet-point list entitled: Things To Do: Find Virgin/ Get Blood/ Buff & Polish Tombstones/ Construct Temporary Basilica for The Rapture/ Decide on name for Basilica: Barnaclian Basilica? Blood-Nut Basilica? On the black-board, a bullet-point list entitled: Things Not To Do: Forgive Sister Mary for the Betrayal of the Century/ Forget How Much it Hurt Us when Sister Mary stole Our Children From Us/ Neglect our Barnaclian Sacrifices/ Release Skeletons from Closets/ Entertain Doubt/ Give Up Hope. Lights up gradually. Doc*

*Rockwell waltzes on from wings in top-hat, tails and Y-fronts, followed by Jinx, Skip, Kid and Blue. The children take their places at makeshift desks fashioned from Scrabble blocks)*

DOC Kid. Blue? (*Shakes head, emotional*) Little lambs. My lost, little lambs. Mine prodigals...*come* to me. Come to Papa!

*(Group hug)*

DOC We missed you so much. Didn't we kids?

SKIP (*Sarcastic*) Much.

JINX So... much! Moo. (*Plucks at her muumuu*) Muumuu!

*(All laugh. Doc ruffles Jinx's hair)*

DOC Oh, Jinx. Oh you!

BLUE We went to Babylon, you kids. (*Proud*) It was scare-ey.

KID (*Scoffs*) I wasn't scared.

DOC Except when you looked in the mirror.

*(All laugh, slap knees: amused)*

SKIP (*To Kid and Blue*) Where *did* you get those weird clothes?

DOC (*Thoughtful*) They do look different after their stint in rehab. I mean, Wilderness Th...

BLUE What's rehab?

DOC Wilderness Therapy. After your stint in The Wilderness, Blue. (*Smiles winningly*) Run along now, children. Daddy has a play-date.

*(Doc ushers the children off-stage. Reclines on a desk, retrieves a bag of pills and a bottle of whiskey. Enter Deacon, brandishing his leaf-blower. Doc rises, stands to attention.)*

*Deacon approaches Doc: whispers in his ear. Lights dim.  
Exeunt)*

*(Quarantine Island: Barnacle Arch. Night. Enter Crash and  
Cassie on tip-toe, sharing a torch. They prance and frolic:  
drunk)*

CASSIE I wonder what the apocalypse will smell like.

*(They settle downstage: unsteady on their feet)*

CRASH Burnt ham ‘n’ off milk. *(Pause)* Shit ‘n piss o’ Damned Sinners.

CASSIE Gunpowder... something.

CRASH Gun-powder and pork crackling? Blood Sausage and...  
Dynamic Lifter!

CASSIE Ew. *(Pause)* You’re a Blood Sausage.

CRASH No, but I *have* a blood sausage.

*(Both laugh uproariously. Pause. Crash pulls Cassie to  
standing: pulls her into his chest. Cassie removes her dress.  
Crash turns off the torch. Blackout. Exeunt. Lights up gradually:  
morning. Downstage: three heads gradually emerge from a pile  
of Hope Removalist boxes dumped unceremoniously on the jetty:  
Margaret Salt, Stanley Hope and Bruce Gasket)*

BRUCE Phwoar. Bumpy ride, eh?

MARGARET Almost lost me bloody breakfast!

*(The trio struggle, finally escape from boxes)*

BRUCE Thought they’d suss us out, for sure.

MARGARET *(Smug)* Didn’t though, did they?

BRUCE Bloody genius, Margaret.

MARGARET *(Chuffed)* Did you ever doubt it?



STANLEY                    (*Checks armpits, thoroughly disgusted*) Ugh. I have sweat. Is there a shower on this island?

BRUCE                     No time for hygiene, Stan. We're on a mission, mate.

MARGARET                Just you wait. The looks on their faces!

BRUCE                     So what's the plan, doll?

MARGARET                Gather 'round lads. I'll whisper.

                              (*The trio form a huddle: Margaret whispers at length*)

BRUCE                     (*Impressed*) Y'know what, Margaret Rockwell? You missed your calling. (*To Stanley*) God-damned media mogul in the making, ain't she? Damn-fine detective skills to boot.

STANLEY                   (*Jealous*) She's alright, I suppose... for a mental hospital escapee.

BRUCE                     (*To Margaret*) So, love. We done?

MARGARET                Done. Sorted?

BRUCE                     Sorted. All good?

STANLEY                   Good. Long as *she* does the talking.

MARGARET                Fine.

STANLEY                   Good.

BRUCE                     Good! Let's scarper.

                              (*Exeunt. Lights dim*)

                              (*Quarantine Island: Leper Cemetery. Late afternoon. Kid, Skip and Jinx sit upon tombstones: hard at work constructing a huge dome shape from chicken-wire. Jinx rolls in the dirt, shirking her duties*)

KID                   It's so *weird* how you have sex and go to the toilet from the same place. *(Pause)* Why didn't The God of Night and Day make a different place for it... like, make a different hole altogether? Like in your ear or up your nose.

JINX                   *(Shoves a finger up her nostril)* Nose!

KID                   *(Enjoying herself)* He could have put it here *(grasps chest provocatively)* or here *(twists to show off the small of her back)*.

SKIP                   Stop it, Kid. So rude!

KID                   *(Struts toward Skip, provocative)* Not rude at all, cowboy. Doc Rockwell told me all about it... just last night, in fact. Doc says sex is a *gift*. A gift from The God of Night and Day. He says it's supposed to be normal and healthy and really, *really* fun.

*(Enter Blue, whistling)*

                          As long as Doc approves, you're allowed to do anything.

*(Pause)* Anything you want.

*(Kid thrusts her pelvis out: gyrates provocatively)*

SKIP                   Not that man stuff again.

BLUE                   Rude!

KID                   You guys are just repressed. *(Spits, disgusted)* We're gunna bow outta this with our heads held high.

SKIP                   How is that even possible?

KID                   *(Sharp)* What?

SKIP                   *(Mimes to clarify his point)* Bow out? Head held high? Der!

KID                   *(Cross)* Stop blathering, Skip. You're boring me to tears.

BLUE Well he does have a point, Kid. Except, of course, if you meant it as a kind of oxymoron... in which case, I'd be quite impressed!

KID (*Glowers at Blue*) As I was about to say... before I was so rudely interrupted... we're finally ready for battle. (*Counts on fingers*) Got a time, a day, a date.

SKIP We don't have virgin blood.

KID (*Cross*) Shut up, Skip. You're such a glass-half-empty person.

SKIP (*Annoyed*) This 'Dome' idea sucks.

JINX (*Squawks*) Sucks. Sucks. Sucks...

KID Jinx! I'm. *Talking*. Honestly. *Be* the death of me. Where's your muzzle? (*Pause*) Where's her muzzle, you kids? (*Pause*) God!

(*Kid clicks her fingers, points offstage. Skip and Blue rise: drag a reluctant Jinx off-stage. Blackout. Exeunt*)

(*Quarantine Island: Barnacle Bay. Early evening. Lights up on Margaret and Bruce: seated in a dinghy tethered from the jetty with thick white rope. Enter Kid and Blue via Barnacle Arch. Bruce assists them in boarding the dinghy. Blue is almost hyperventilating with excitement. Kid is anxious and uncommunicative*)

BLUE Grandmama! This is *just* like being a spy! Or a pirate. We came as quick as we could. No-one saw. I know, because I checked. *Twelve* times. Just to be sure.

MARGARET Gotta love that attention to detail. Now sit. Stop rocking the boat! (*Cackles merrily*) Turns out yer old grandmama ain't *completely* useless. (*Smug*) I've found someone to rescue us. Kid? Blue? Meet Bruce. Bruce Gasket. Undercover cop. Detective, actually.

BRUCE Too right, Margaret. (*Chuffed, to Kid and Blue*) Well, Detective *Sergeant* really, but you can call me Bruce.

MARGARET Our Brucey's been playing the removalist. Had Henry Gabriel under close surveillance for six solid months now, eh?

BRUCE Often *too* close, Margy. That filthy fuck. Turns out he was more than happy to oblige our requests. So... thanks to me new 'Best Mate *Ever*,' Henry Gabriel, got our hands on a sample'a Sister Mary's D.N.A. Ran some tests. (*Double thumbs-up*) Came up trumps!

KID (*Suspicious*) Trumps with what?

BLUE (*Innocent*) How did Henry Gabriel get Sister Mary's D.N.A?

MARGARET Let's just say... it's time to bang those sick fucks up. (*Nostalgic*) All those years... I wasn't mad. I was just *angry*.

BRUCE With good bloody reason, pet.

KID (*To Margaret, businesslike*) That's all very well grandmama, but more importantly... (*gestures to Bruce*)... is he baptised?

(*Oblivious to Kid, Bruce and Margaret gaze at each other: sentimental*)

BRUCE How was our timing, eh?

MARGARET Pretty bloody good! Christ, if I hadn't seized that one chance to escape when I did...

BRUCE Or if I hadn't been posted to Plankton on the Gabriel undercover detail...

MARG/BRUCE ... we might never have met!

BLUE Aw. Unison. True love!

KID (*To Blue, irritable*) Like *you* would know. (*To Margaret, officious*) Bruce *will* have to be baptised... before Saint

Barnacle's Day. Otherwise he can't come with us to The New Era.

BRUCE Hey, hey. Whoa back...

KID *(Abrupt, snappish)* Don't blame the messenger! I'm under strict instructions from the Holy Ghost. *I'm* in charge of this journey. It's been *decreed*? I make the schedules, I make sure...

BRUCE *(Grips Margaret around the waist, protective)* We ain't goin' anywhere, scamp.

*(Kid and Blue stare at Margaret, expectant. Pause. Margaret averts her eyes: shrugs)*

KID/BLUE *(Disappointed)* Grandmama!

KID The Holy Ghost *said*! He *said* you're coming with us.

BLUE *(Reverent)* The Holy Ghost never lies.

BRUCE Guess we'll take our chances.

KID *(Barely managing to restrain her rage)* We're not planning a fishing trip, grandmama. No round o' tinnies 'n' Winnies down the local pub! Hello? We're talking *Armagedon*, people! Apocalypse? End of the world? New Era? Four Horsemen? Acid rain? Buck Warwick? Ace Thunderplums? Bleeding? People bleeding? People... being... shot in the head?

*(Kid kneads her temples, seething with frustration and anger)*

BLUE *(To Bruce, helpful)* Armagedon is the place where the final battle between Evil and Good takes place. *(Stage whisper)* Right here... on this island!

BRUCE Right here on Quarantine Island, eh?

BLUE (Nods, eager) It all happens on St. Barnacle's Day. The Damned Sinners burn in Hell for eternity while The Chosen Few get to point and laugh.

BRUCE Imagine it'll be you lot doing the pointing and laughing... rather than the other way 'round?

BLUE Well, duh! (*Unimpressed*) We didn't go through all that suffering just for fun.

KID (*Saccharine, over-bright*) I was trying to organise the end of the world for you... made a neat little schedule... rose-hip tea... cucumber sandwiches, sugared cream buns. (*Puzzled*) But if people don't follow the schedule, how am I supposed to... how can the end of the world... all-fucking... fuck a duck?

BLUE (*Worried*) Um, Kid?

(*Kid shakes her wrists, rubs her hands together, cackles maniacally*)

BRUCE Y'seem a little tense, love.

BLUE Are you okay?

KID (*Mimes a hen having laid an egg*) B'gerk! Boc, boc, boc, boc, boc, boc. B'gerk! Boc, boc, boc... (*coughs vehemently, gags: doubles over in agony. Adopts a deep, velvety tone*) Away, away!

BLUE Spiritus? (*Cocks hand to ear*) Is that you?

KID (*Shakes head, wags a finger*) Curse befall tragedy...

BLUE (*Eager*) Speak to us, your chosen children, for we...

KID (*Pace increases: sing-song*) All aboard ark... or the sky-fall underwater. All aboard... ark! (*Obnoxious belch*) Or the...

MARGARET And they thought *I* was troppo.

KID (Strident) All aboard ark!

MARGARET (Sniggers) Heark!

(Lightning crackles overhead. Thunder reverberates through the audience space.)

KID (Flings herself at Margaret, knocks her to the ground: vicious, bestial. Snarls) Board the fucking ark, Margaret, or reap the fucking consequences!

(Blackout. Exeunt)

(Quarantine Island: Leper Cemetery. Lights up on Mr Hand, The Friendly Blanket, draped over the wooden cross, stage right. Enter Kid, Skip and Blue, hands clasped in prayer)

KID (Calls offstage) Jinx? Jinx! (Irritated) Late for rehearsal. Honestly, Jinx. Be the death of me?

(Enter Jinx, hurriedly sliding along on her elbows, eager. Kid drapes the blanket over Jinx's shoulders, ceremonial)

ALL Yea, though we walk the abyss under shadow of death, we will fear no Satanic Ice-Kingdom! Taking arms against plague fleas of trouble, we do... by supposing... end them.

(Skip and Blue lift Kid onto the cross: attach her limbs securely with fluoro duct tape. Jinx rolls on her back on the floor, jubilant. Blue hangs the glass jar from Kid's neck, solemn. Blue hoists Jinx up to kiss Kid on the cheek. Blue and Skip drop to their knees. Kid pretends to die. Long pause. Kid 'wakes up.' All cheer. Skip and Blue help Kid off the cross through the following scene)

SKIP So solemn. Many fun.

BLUE Much epic.

KID                      Wow! (*Pause*) That was *totes* amaze. (*Impatient*) But it just won't work if there's no stabbing. One of you needs to stab me.

SKIP                     Why?

KID                      We have to. It's the rules. Tell 'im, Blue.

BLUE                    In a play like this, there *has* to be a slicing of the fleshy envelope.

KID                      My fleshy envelope. Just like with Jesus, except he had one stream of blood and one stream of water.

BLUE                    Omigod. Let's *do* that. I. Want To. Do. That!

SKIP                     We *could* use a hose.

BLUE                    (*Hisses, excited*) Two hoses!

JINX                      (*Frantic*) Me! Pick me!

KID                      Alright Jinxy. Careful, but.

JINX                      (*Grinds teeth, bestial*) Care-ful.

                              (*Skip retrieves a stick, hands it to Kid: ceremonial*)

KID                      This is The Stabbing Stick, Jinxy. (*Hands stick to Jinx, ceremonial*) Practise?

                              (*Kid shows Jinx how to stab her in the chest. Jinx rocks on her haunches: excited*)

SKIP                     So how do we do the real, *actual* revenge bit? With the... revenge?

KID                      We'll say it in the script. You know. Make it happen in the words.

BLUE                    (*Smug*) That's called *dialogue*.

SKIP                     Oh. (*Lying*) I get it. Cool.



KID Best fun *ever*!

*(Group hug. The siblings clap and caper. Upbeat music fades in: Double I.D as lights fade. Blackout. Lights up gradually on Deacon, Doc, Kid, Jinx, Skip and Blue: they polish tombstones with old muumuus, fastidious. Enter Sister Mary, breathless, dragging a gagged, hand-cuffed Cassie behind her. Cassie holds material ripped from Mary's habit in her fists. Both are soaking wet. Jinx retreats into her muumuu: makes whale sounds, anxious)*

MARY *(Triumphant)* I have it.

DOC Slut! You stole *half* my flock...

KID *(Crowing)* Betrayal of the century.

DOC Dare you set foot on this island.

MARY *(Disgusted)* Whatever. *(Dumps Cassie on floor, unceremonious)* Here.

*(Cassie struggles furiously, manages to remove her gag)*

CASSIE *(Roars)* I'm not a fucking virgin!

ALL What the? Not a virgin?

CASSIE I swear. I'm not.

MARY *(Stamps her foot, irate)* Yes, you god-damned *are*.

JINX *(Shrieks)* Name in the vein!

*(Sister Mary pushes Jinx to the floor in one clean movement: advances on Cassie, taunts her, leering)*

MARY According to the records at Oyster Barque Hospital, you most certainly *are* a virgin. *(Haughty)* Only one on the books.

CASSIE How dare you. *(Enraged)* Confidential!



### 3.2

#### SAINT BARNACLE'S DAY

*(Lights up gradually on Leper Cemetery. Late afternoon. Scrabble blocks demarcate a playing area: blocks arranged to spell: 'Unseen. Unheard. Unknown.' Hope Removalist boxes fashioned into a makeshift Drop-Toilet, centre: on a platform, upstage, flags made from sticks and dirty pillowcases surround a canvas on an easel. Enter Kid in a glittery white muumuu and angel wings: strutting, sassy. Toting a hand-made megaphone and scroll, she spruiks: ad-libbing. Enter Deacon, wearing a chef's hat, carrying a pie on a tray. Enter Doc in a vibrant, blue cloak adorned with peacock feathers: he smokes and drinks red wine from a chalice through the following scene. Kid seats Doc and Deacon downstage, ceremonial. Disco music fades)*

KID *(Heraldic)* Welcome ye, diverse Australians, and hearken. In honour of Saint Barnacle's Day... we present a playlet.

DOC Hurrah! *(Applauds)* The Barnaclian Play.

KID *(Deep bow. Reads from scroll)* Dear Saint Barnacle... we gather here today to celebrate tripartite mysteries: your miraculous birth, martyrdom and subsequent resurrection. In these, our last moments on this sad and sorry earth, we call upon your glorious intercession. Saint Barnacle, as we approach the Threshold of Judgement, pray with us for *mercy* from The God of Night and Day. *(Hand to forehead: melodramatic)* May he cast us *not* into The Abyss of Shame!

*(Deacon raises a hand)*

Yes?

*(Deacon beams, gestures to his pie)*

*(Slaps forehead)* Of course!

DOC *(Applauds)* The Barnaclian Pie. Hurrah, hurrah!

*(Deacon slices and offers pie to Doc and Kid. Doc accepts: wolfs pie down, tipsy. Kid refuses, polite. Deacon offers pie to audience, gregarious. Doc motions for Kid to continue)*

. KID *(Direct to audience)* Encircled by chook-dirt in this dusty O, ye shall encounter a backed-up, blocked-up, out-back out-house... the odd barnyard shenanigan and a pair of foul, ice-hearted daemons. We call our play 'Cock Forest.' *(Spits)* I'm Kid Rockwell and I'm The Avenging Angel. *(Sneers)* I'm also the goddamn playwright.

BLUE *(Calls from offstage, irate)* But we helped!

*(The following takes place offstage but should be clearly audible)*

SKIP Shush, Blue. They can hear us?

BLUE *(Cross)* That's not the point. She should have *said*. We all helped.

SKIP Blue! *God*.

JINX *(Shrieks, excited)* Name in The Vein!

SKIP/ BLUE *(Cross)* Shush, Jinx!

JINX Name! Name.

KID *(Shouts, furious)* Quiet back-stage!

*(A screen descends, displaying painting from appendix: Cock Forest: Mean People Suck. It bumps Kid on its descent. Kid rubs her head: more embarrassed than hurt)*

KID *(Shouts heavenward, snappish)* Bruce!

DOC *(Jovial)* Bruce? So many bloody characters... hard to keep up!

KID *(Rattled)* First, may I present...

DOC                   *(Slaps knee, thoroughly enjoying himself)* Who the hell's Bruce when he's at home, Kid? Eh? Huh? *(To audience)* Anyone?

KID                   *(Calls offstage, desperate)* Jinx. Now!

DOC                   How come I didn't get a part? *(Aside, to Deacon)* I wasn't even approached for an audition! Every bloody man and his dog...

*(Jinx scrambles onstage dressed as a blow-fly, a black tulle dress puffed into a solid sphere around her: retro pilot goggles, bright yellow face, flagellant whip spooled over one shoulder. She drags a placard: 'The God of Night and Day is Watching')*

KID                   Jinx Rockwell, everyone. Everyone? Jinx Rockwell!

*(Jinx drags herself to the Fourth Wall: slow, awkward. She stabs the placard into the ground, downstage. Buzzing and bumbling, she attaches her hands to the invisible wall, head cocked toward the playing area. Doc and Deacon applaud)*

DOC                   Hurrah!

KID                   *(Forceful)* Jinx plays Daphne... a filthy-dirty Dunny-Diver.

JINX                   *(Direct to audience, jubilant)* I'm a fly!

DOC                   Oh, I get it, a fly-on-the-wall! *(Nudges Deacon, tipsy)* Huzzah! Hurray.

*(Enter Skip, dressed as a plumber, wielding a plunger)*

KID                   Next, Skip Rockwell as... Stu Dolley.

                          Catholic plumber, family man...

                          ... all-round humble handyman!

SKIP                   *(Salutes)* Ahoy!

*(Enter Blue, dressed as a Catholic priest, a blow-up doll in a nun's habit hoisted over one shoulder)*

KID Blue Rockwell as... Father Cliff Rockface!

BLUE I'm a parish priest. This is Sister Mumsy Mannequin. She's my real, *actual* sister and also a nun. (*Blue manipulates the doll, puppet-like, into an awkward curtsy. Falsetto*) Hello, poppets.

(*Enter Cassie Rockwell, clad in Chainmail Armour pyjamas*)

KID Lastly, a chick called Palette. Palette was an *honest* artist. Indeed... this was her unique curse: she could paint the truth and nothing else.

DOC (*Belligerent*) Kid! Kid... you didn't say who...

CASSIE (*Cuts in, strident*) This is the story of what Palette saw...

KID ... unseen, unheard, unknown ...

CASSIE ... in hidden country of Cock Forest.

(*Cassie moves to easel: paints furiously through the following scene. Doc and Deacon lean forward, intrigued. Blue manipulates Mumsy's hands into a prayerful pose. Shazza Monaro enters on tip-toe: unseen by Doc and Deacon, she crawls in their direction, readying two full syringes. The cast of Cock Forest hum a low chord: branch into a series of hummed harmonies: reminiscent of a pipe-organ or an angelic choir. Kid raises megaphone to her lips. Humming ceases abruptly*)

KID (*Through megaphone*) Servicing the coastal Parish of Cock Forest and roundabout, Father Cliff and Sister Mumsy worked *tirelessly* in the name of The Lord...

ALL Name of the Lord. (*Jazz hands*) Aim of the Lord! (*Gospel harmony*) In the name of the Lord.

KID This zealous, god-fearing couple called Cock Forest home. Hugged by dense scrub and swathes of egg-and-bacon flower, their Presbytery was formidable in its... oppressive, stark-

rigid... impenetrability? (*Clears throat, embarrassed*) Anyway, one day... Stu Dolley, Catholic plumber of choice, was called to unclog the Presbytery ablutions.

*(Blue dials an invisible phone. Skip steps forward, picks up an invisible phone: gesticulates. Blue hangs up. Skip hangs up. Exit Blue with Mumsy. Skip performs an elaborate dumb-show: he gallops furiously on a horse, dismounts, beats through dense scrub, brushes flowers from his hair and raises a plunger heavenward, heroic. Jinx applauds. Pleased, Skip marches into makeshift drop toilet, closes door behind him. Enter Margaret Rockwell with a stun gun, unseen by Doc and Deacon. Jinx detaches herself from the Fourth Wall, crawls to open door of drop-toilet, bumbles around Skip. He swats at her through the following)*

SKIP                   Shoo, fly! Backed up with bog roll, I'd reckon... bog roll or turd o'granite.

KID                    Waist-deep in the pipes of the outdoor shitter...

SKIP                   Shoo!

KID                    ... Stu Dolley came to discover...

ALL                   (*Heraldic*) Da, da-da-da dah-dah.... dah!

KID                    ... a hush-hush, low-down...

ALL                    ... (*jazz hands*) filthy-dirty secret.

SKIP                   (*Gasps*) In God's name, the what? I've seen some strange turds, but this beats the lot.

*(Skip emerges from drop-toilet: reveals a two-headed doll. Holds doll aloft, ceremonial)*

ALL                   (*Gasp. Furious jazz hands*) Two heads... from one spine!





SKIP Ahoy! Father Cliff? Are you there, Sister Mumsy?

KID Finding Priest and Nun feeding poultry, out back, Stu Dolley was embarrassed to find he'd not read the sign.

*(Enter Blue with Mumsy, irritated. Kid holds up a sign: Cock Forest Presbytery: Rear Access Only. Quiet Please: Prayer in Progress)*

BLUE You *blind*, Dolley? *(Gestures to Kid)* Sign's there for a reason.

SKIP Sorry Father. Thought it polite to give you the old 'heads up.'  
*(Awkward)* The old... 'ahoy there, captain!'

BLUE *(Unimpressed)* Good *God*, man. Lend a hand with the chooks, then.

*(Skip and Blue scatter invisible chook pellets, whistling)*

SKIP So, ah...

BLUE *(Cross)* Spit it out, Stu.

SKIP ... about those ablutions.

*(Skip hands the mummified, two-headed doll to Blue)*

KID After what seemed an *eternity* of awkward pauses, Stu Dolley came to reveal... the wee mummy.

BLUE Gasp! *(As Mumsy, falsetto)* Get that thing from my sight!

KID ... screeched Sister Mumsy, deflated.

SKIP Two heads! What a *hell* of a lot. Poor mite.

BLUE You'd better have a damn good reason for scaring my sister, Dolley. *(Snatches tiny mummy from Skip)* Now piss off!

*(Exit Skip, downtrodden. Exit Blue with both dolls. Deacon stirs: struggles. Jinx strikes him repeatedly with her flagellant whip)*



*(Cassie spins easel to reveal painting from appendix: Our Family Tree. All gasp. Acting as a lecturer through the following, Cassie talks the audience through various close-ups of the painting via a PowerPoint Presentation, or similar, projected onto the back wall)*

CASSIE                    That's me, I'm here. *(Exhales, nervous)* I'm Cassie Rockwell.

ALL                        *(Cheer)* Huzzah!

MARGARET              *(To Cassie, frowning)* Cassandra darling. *(Stage whisper)* Classier.

CASSIE                    *(Ignores Margaret)* It all starts here. Right here, on Quarantine Island. *(Uses a paintbrush as a pointer through the following)* That's Esme Salt, née White, up top. Esme, a misty-eyed missionary, devoted her life to nursing poor, limb-challenged lepers. Joining her on the dangerous nautical mission to Quarantine Island was a handsome young doctor and his sullen twin brother... a run-of-the-mill anaesthetist.

MARGARET              *(Tuts)* Identical twins.

CASSIE                    The doctor, brilliant, albeit mute, specialising in skin diseases... well, he intrigued Esme immediately.

ALL                        Love at first sight!

CASSIE                    So the beautiful nurse and the brilliant young doctor fell deeply in love. Planned a wedding! Life on the island bounced to a buoyant rhythm. Crops were plentiful... the island reverberated with the sound of lepers whistling as they worked. *(Pause)* That brilliant young doctor... was our very. Own. Doctor Deacon Salt!

ALL                        Doctor Deacon? *(Applause)* Our very own Deacon!

CASSIE                    But not *everyone* on the island was happy.

ALL (Shocked) In such a happy place? But *who*?

CASSIE Levi Salt, of course. Deacon's identical twin. Sullen anaesthetist? You see, Deacon was not the *only* island medico to have fallen deeply, *irretrievably*... in love with Esme White.

ALL Poor Levi. (Sighs) Unrequited love. *So* sad. Too bad.

(Deacon nods, touched)

CASSIE A week before the wedding, Levi died in a mysterious fishing incident, here, just off Barnacle Bay. The body was never found. Esme and Deacon were so traumatised... they postponed the wedding. Shut up shop for two whole weeks. (Pause) They *did* get married... eventually. (To the crowd) May I present... Esme and Deacon's only child. (Gestures to Margaret) Margaret Rockwell, née Salt.

ALL (Helpful) The one who's bonkers.

MARGARET (Chuffed) Completely bonkers. *Troppo*, darling.

CASSIE So, tick-tock went the clock, and so were the days of their lives. Until, one day, Esme was horrified to discover... a teenage Margaret was pregnant with twins.

ALL Shock, horror!

CASSIE Unwilling to accept Margaret's claim that hers was an *immaculate* conception... Deacon and Esme managed to persuade a pious young travelling bible salesman to marry Margaret and claim the twins as his own. Terence 'Holy Roller' Rockwell. (Restrains a sob) My dad!

MARGARET (Moves to comfort Cassie) Terence and I were married. Had twins: Chance and Sheila Rockwell.

KID (Gestures to Family Tree, theatrical) A.K.A Doc Rockwell and Sister Mary!

MARGARET            Then Cassandra was born. *(To Cassie)* Good times!

KID                    *(To the crowd)* But the Good Times came to a sudden end.

ALL                    *(Gasp)* No!

CASSIE                One night, when Terence was on a god-bothering mission to the mainland, *my* grandmama, Esme... disappeared in mysterious circumstances. *(Stamps in Deacon's direction, shrill)* Strangled and drowned! No *wonder* mum went bonkers. Didn't take Deacon much to persuade our poor young bible salesman to have his wife committed. *(To Deacon, irate)* Guess it's hard to object after you've been murdered!

ALL                    *(Whisper in a round, crescendo: accusing Deacon)* Mur-der-er. Mur-der-er. Mur-der-er, oh!

CASSIE                Before he died, Terence did manage to smuggle me over to the mainland in a crate of apples. *(Pause)* Womb Rock.

*(SFX: A foghorn in close proximity. With supreme effort, Deacon breaks one hand free: rips gaffer tape from his mouth, triumphant. All gasp in unison)*

DEACON                Believe this rot? *(Pause)* What proof?

*(Long pause)*

ALL                    *(Shocked)* He just spoke. Did he just speak? He spoke. I swear! I swear, he spoke!

KID                    He speaks. *(Strident)* Proof enough.

ALL                    *(Confused)* Of what? *(Mouthing the words)* Proof of what?

*(Pause)*

KID                    Proof that he's... well, he *must* be...

BLUE                   *(Impatient)* What?

SKIP	Spit it out, Kid.
KID	Wait for it...
BLUE	What, Kid? Just <i>say</i> it.
KID	( <i>Smacks forehead</i> )... and I've got it.
BLUE	What?
SKIP	( <i>Cross</i> ) Got <i>what</i> ?
JINX	( <i>Squawks</i> ) What!
ALL	Shut <i>up</i> , Jinx!
BLUE	( <i>Cross</i> ) Just tell us!
KID	( <i>Points at Deacon</i> ) He's Levi. ( <i>Pause</i> ) He's Levi Salt. That means... he's been <i>pretending</i> to be mute for over thirty years.
ALL	Pretending?
KID	He <i>pretended</i> to be a brilliant doctor. He faked that smile. ( <i>Points at Deacon</i> ) He ain't a doctor at all.  ( <i>All gaze at Deacon, reproachful</i> )
DEACON	( <i>Disparaging</i> ) Say I did kill 'Deacon.' Say I assumed his identity... the mutism. <i>Even</i> say I killed my wife. But <i>incest</i> ? ( <i>Pause</i> ) Nuh.
KID	( <i>Gestures at her siblings, scornful</i> ) Are you blind? Have you <i>met</i> us?
DEACON	( <i>To Kid</i> ) Well, <i>you</i> look fine. Because <i>your</i> parents <i>aren't</i> twins.
ALL	( <i>Jazz hands</i> ) Unholy twins!
DEACON	Kid's the only kid Doc <i>didn't</i> father on his twin.
ALL	Appalling. Shocking! <i>Fornicating</i> .

KID                                   *(Hands on hips)* Who the fuck are my parents then?

DEACON                               Sister Mary, real name Sheila... *is* your mother. Father? Dirty sailor. Fondness for Gingers. Don't think Sheila knew the name. *(Gestures to Doc)* Doc here... real name Chance... never knew. He still thinks you're *his* kid, Kid.

KID                                   *(Maudlin)* Our Family Tree hath so few branches!

*(Blue comforts Kid as she wails and smacks her forehead, distraught)*

BLUE                                 Don't worry, Kid. At least you don't have twins for parents. I mean, in terms of genetics...

*(Doc wakes, groggy: removes gaffer tape from mouth)*

DEACON                               Oh! *(Gestures to Barnaclan pie)* And then I baked Sheila into that pie.

*(All gasp, shocked. A grandfather clock strikes thirteen as bright red blood oozes from Saint Barnacle's icy, granite lips. Doc shrieks, scratches at his tongue: sticks his fingers down his throat, gagging. Margaret stuffs boiled eggs into Deacon's mouth, rendering him speechless. All erupt in a flurry of squawking: the Rockwell children wail)*

MARGARET                           *(To Deacon, operatic)* I like the way you die, Dad.

ALL                                   Slay ravenous fox. Free sheep-like flock!

KID                                   It's fuck this fucked-up shit o'clock.

*(SFX: a foghorn bellows, close by. All stamp in unison, ululating. Abrupt stop. Kid holds the glass jar aloft: it is filled with glowing green liquid and printed clearly with the chemical symbol: Hf. Kid removes boiled eggs from Deacon's mouth. Margaret pours contents of glass jar down Deacon's throat. All stand motionless. 'Deacon' dies, screaming. Thus, Levi Salt is*

*dead. Above Saint Barnacle, footage screened briefly on  
cyclorama: the great white crow from the prologue escapes  
from the glass-house. Thus, Esme ascends heavenward, set free.  
Lights fade. Exeunt)*



## EPILOGUE

## REVELATIONS: BIRDS OF A FEATHER

*(Leper Cemetery. Dreamy music fades in: atmospheric electronica. Enter Crash and Cassie, holding hands: beach towels slung over their shoulders. Music pauses)*

CRASH                      Enough about me. What do you want to be when you grow up?

CASSIE                    Been thinking about that. I've decided I might go into the family business...

CRASH                    *(Bursts into laughter, incredulous)* Surely not?

CASSIE                    Crash! *(Cuffs him over the head, playful)* The Rockwell family business, silly. The *actual* Rockwells, not the bloody Salts. *(Pause)* Gunna produce a series of illustrated bibles. Sell 'em one day... down the track.

CRASH                    *(Ironic)* They say apple never falls far from tree.

CASSIE                    *(Pleased)* True that.

*(Music resumes. Crash and Cassie circle each other, grinning. Cassie swipes at Crash's t-shirt, misses. Crash eventually catches Cassie. Hesitant, they embrace. The saxophone riff from Careless Whisper honks offensively in the distance. Startled, Crash and Cassie spring apart: hasten offstage, giggling. A full moon rises. Surrounding the cross, stage right, the completed chicken-wire dome has been inverted to form a kind of barque. The cross thus acts as a central mast. Mr. Hand, the Friendly Blanket, is stretched tight over the wire frame as caulking. Doc Rockwell's freshly severed head acts as a mast-head: 'blood' cascading from his empty mouth. The pillow-case flags from the previous scene act as make-shift sails. Scrabble blocks spell: ARMAGEDON. Kid, Jinx and Blue Rockwell emerge upstage. They gallop downstage in slow motion: grinning, eager, facsimile. Kid plays Doc's saxophone, Jinx rolls on her back in the sand and Blue plays with Jinx's spade and bucket. Enter*

*Skip, brandishing a large fox's head impaled on a stick. The fox's head is crowned with a vibrant cox-comb and adorned with feathers. All gasp in unison)*

BLUE Holy Beelzebub.

ALL Red?

SKIP Yep. (*Proud*) Red's dead, people.

ALL (*Overjoyed*) Red, Red, Red!

BLUE (*Perturbed*) Did you find the *whole* body? Or... just the head?

SKIP (*Matter of fact*) Tongue missing. Some of 'is teeth. Inside bits all burned out, rotten. Buried those bits, but. (*Grimaces*) Bit skanky.

KID (*Slaps knee, pleased*) Not to worry, brother. (*Pats Red's head, affectionate*) Don't matter if he's dead. God-damned Red's back, people! (*Slaps her thigh, pleased*) Good ol' god-damned Red.

BLUE Huzzah. Hurray!

KID (*Strokes her chin, thoughtful*) We could use him as our mascot.

SKIP Whack 'im in the Dome, Kid! (*Shoots and blows smoke from imaginary pistol*) Best damn cock in the west.

(*Skip capers, delighted. Jinx cheers him on, clapping. Blue rearranges Scrabble blocks to spell RANGA DOME*)

KID/SKIP/BLUE (*Chanting, perhaps in a round*) From wood, build ladder/  
Oyster? Barque!/  
From ash, knit hope/  
Ghost breath, life-spark.

KID (*Claps thrice for attention*) This is for really *real* this time, you kids.

JINX (*Claps like a seal*) Real, real, real!

BLUE

*Really real?*

SKIP

*(Sarcastic) Actually, really?*

KID

*(Meaningful) Fuckin' oath!*

*(Skip and Blue lift Kid onto the cross: attach her limbs with fluoro duct tape. Blue hangs the glass jar around Kid's neck, solemn. Furious wind: electric fans at base of stage 'crank up' to full power. Blue blesses himself, drops to his knees and bows his head. Skip hoists Jinx up to kiss Kid on the cheek. SFX: a single, bowel-shattering chord on the pipe-organ as Jinx stabs Kid repeatedly in the chest with The Stabbing Stick: not pretending. Two hoses attached to the wooden cross spray dual streams of liquid: one clear, one bright red. Skip, Jinx and Blue clamber aboard the barque, taking up glass jars filled with varying volumes of glowing-green liquid. The wind abates. Staring resolutely out into the audience, the trio tap the jars gently with forks, producing a magical soundscape. Skip and Jinx turn to face Blue: motion for him to drink from his jar. Blue hesitates. Skip and Jinx gesture to their own jars, encouraging. Blue raises the jar to his lips, falters. Abrupt blackout)*

ALL

*(Whispering in the darkness, 'on loop,' recitative) This is the day that never ends... it just goes on and on my friends.*

*(Lightning crackles in the distance. Exit Blue))*

*(Lights up gradually on Jinx and Skip lounging on Scrabble blocks: hinged lids propped open to simulate lounge chairs. Both are kitted out in 1940s Hollywood glamour: Jinx, clearly pregnant, sports a headscarf, sunglasses and bright red lips. Skip smokes, sporting a luxurious dressing gown with a carnation in the lapel. Dropping the 'special' act, Jinx produces Kid's copy of 'The Werewolves' from the prologue: reads directly to the audience, assured and perfectly articulate)*

JINX

... false prophets, feathered foxes. *(Pause)* Could *you* recognise a Real Werewolf if you saw one?

*(Jinx snaps the book shut. Skip places one hand on Jinx's belly)*

*(The sound of rising wind)*

*(Jinx and Skip laugh until they hiccup)*

*(The sound of wind becomes unbearable)*

**The End.**

### **III: EXEGESIS**

*Monsters, Pipers, Families and Flocks*

## PREFACE

### *Cults, Crimes and Charismatic Con-artists*

Never ask why.

Manson 'Family' maxim

Although initial research spanned the history of a range of spiritual groups, this exegesis focuses on selected examples most pertinent to the thematic concerns and artistic goals of the play. Thus, the chief emphasis is on narratives and images from history and fiction that involve sensationalistic, 'titillating' examples of monstrosity, tragedy, criminal activity and morally reprehensible, even comical, ideologies. The first exegetical essay, *Monster or Messiah? Tragic Werewolves and Infectious Flocks*, explores the lycanthropic qualities of two 'real-life' malevolent cult leaders: Rock Theriault (Canada) and William Kamm (Australia). The second essay, *Pity the Piper? Avenging Angels and Murderous Maenads*, investigates the enthralling, intoxicating qualities of Dionysus and the Pied Piper of Hamelin, exploring parallels in 'real-life revenge tragedies' wrought by infamous American cult leaders such as Charles Manson and David Berg. The third essay, *Kept in the Dark? Archetypal Ice Queens and Daughters of Demeter*, examines monstrous, messianic mothers from myth, horror fiction and memoir, with a particular focus on the goddess Demeter from Greek myth, Margaret White from the horror film/fiction *Carrie* (1974; 1976) and malevolent Australian cult leader, Anne Hamilton-Byrne.

## 1. MONSTER OR MESSIAH?

### TRAGIC WEREWOLVES AND INFECTIOUS FLOCKS

The life of the wolf is the death of the lamb.

John Clarke, *Paremiologia Anglo-Latina*

#### 1. The Tragedy of the Beast Within

At the heart of the werewolf myth lies a tragic conundrum. The werewolf, or lycanthrope, a hirsute and indiscriminate killer, spends the majority of its life in human form: benign, endangered by, and perhaps secretly ashamed of the emergence of its monstrous alter-ego. Adam Douglas, author of *The Beast Within: a History of the Werewolf* (1992) claims that witnessing cinematic ‘episodes of blood-boltered ferocity alternating with scenes of bewilderment and pathos’ (p. 1) remind the viewer that the werewolf paradigm encapsulates a moral problem: kill the malevolent wolf and destroy the benevolent human, or allow the werewolf to live, thereby endangering countless lives. So, as is the case for key characters in *Fowl Feathered Fox*, destroying the beast requires destroying the human, an inherently pitiable situation.

This chapter explores the capacity of charismatic leaders of new religious movements for malevolent as well as benevolent leadership, and thus the capacity to embody opposing archetypal positions of scourge and saviour. In this paradigm, inhumane and illegal acts necessitate an interventionist ‘silver sword’ or judicial ‘silver bullet’ in the case of the publicly benevolent leader who exploits and abuses ‘behind closed doors.’ Here, I examine the slick messianic façades of two such ‘wolves in sheep’s clothing:’ William Kamm (or *The Little Pebble*) of The Order of St. Charbel religious community, operating in Cambewarra, Australia, until his imprisonment in 2005 and Rock Theriault (or *Moses*) of The Ant Hill Kids commune, operating in Burnt River, Ontario, Canada, from 1977 until his imprisonment in 1989. In each case, peering behind a slick messianic façade reveals the criminal desires of a monster; essentially, these desires produce a tragic situation akin to that of the werewolf.

Important traits are shared by the werewolf and his victims (as well as the wolf in sheep’s clothing and his chosen flock): they are cursed and compelled to curse others, condemned to be victim and victimiser, tortured by guilt or the lack of it and exiled to outsider status by society. Comparing and contrasting these scenarios suggests that not

only is truth ‘stranger than fiction,’ but also more dangerous, as hypothetically, a werewolf is less dangerous to society than a wolf in sheep’s clothing due to the periodic and thus predictable metamorphosis of the former, in contrast to the randomly occurring, unpredictable violence of the latter. Yet, whereas the werewolf is a fantasy figure fighting against periodical transformation and essentially not having much control over the transformation, the wolf in sheep’s clothing is a metaphorical construction that seems to incorporate control over, or at least an ‘embracing’ of the transformative process. In terms of difference, key nuances include the fact that the werewolf generally hides behind a façade of total normality, while the wolf in sheep’s clothing hides behind a façade of grandeur, religious abnormality and unusual power.

In both cases, incarceration can only ever be a temporary solution for the abused prey or flock. Imprisonment merely acts as a ‘Band-Aid cure’ owing to the beast’s inevitable compulsion to seduce, exploit and abuse. According to psychologists Salande and Perkins, ‘denial can continue to protect the cult member’s beliefs even after the cult leader has been shown to be a charlatan’ (2011, p. 389). Furthermore, ‘loyal members of a cult believe that their leader has magically transformed their lives and relieved their longing and suffering. On that basis, they will staunchly defend their leader even when his or her crimes are exposed’ (Shaw, 2003, p. 118). Here, I show how a beast at large will commit crimes against humanity unless a ‘silver weapon’ destroys the ‘werewolf’ or the relationship of dependence is severed between the wolf in sheep’s clothing and his fragile, forgiving flock.

Traditionally, with the advent of the catalytic full moon, the werewolf is compelled to devour to sate its accursed appetite, destroying the flesh and viscera of society *sans* remorse, empathy or regard for institutionalised ethics. In traditional werewolf narratives, tension builds as the protagonist approaches his fate, oblivious to ‘the implanted bacillus doing its destructive, invisible work within... as inevitably as the monthly reappearance of the full moon in the night sky, the signal for that cataclysmic eruption when the monstrous *alter ego* will burst forth in all its snarling, hackle-raising fury (Douglas, 1992, p. 1). Once bitten, the lycanthrope is condemned to perpetuate a vicious cycle of bloodshed and infection until, ‘at last the terrible curse’ is eradicated ‘at the sad cost of the life of the hero’ (*ibid.*, p. 2). In the cult paradigm, nobody is exempt from being infected by the contagious potential of the lycanthropic charismatic leader because ‘contemporary cults target individuals throughout their lifespans and across all



socioeconomic brackets and ethnicities' (Whitsett & Kent, 2003, p. 491). Thus, cursed and compelled to curse others, both literal and figurative werewolves are trapped in a cyclical *dance macabre* of contagion.

A 'flock' seduced by a 'wolf in sheep's clothing' is similarly condemned to perpetuate a cyclical 'dance' of abuse. Typically, the narcissistic cult leader devours the faith, trust, and innocence of his followers, leaving behind, according to expert psychopathy researcher Robert Hare, a 'broad trail of broken hearts, shattered expectations, and empty wallets' (1993, xi). Seduced, then trapped into a relationship of dependence, the followers of William Kamm and Rock Theriault learned to fear and shun the evil of the outside world while working toward a post-apocalyptic future in which they, The Chosen, would rule and The Damned would be annihilated. Having been seduced by the charismatic monster's posturing and proselytising, the fragile flock manages the unpredictable wrath of the beast via appeasement and swift forgiveness of random acts of violence. Megalomaniacal, unable to empathise with others, and seeming to lack any sense of guilt or remorse, the 'beast' lacks the skills essential to democratic processes and social harmony.

In *Fowl Feathered Fox*, the tragedy of the beast within finds expression in a number of characters, but most clearly in the characterisation of Doc Rockwell. At the outset, Doc is a sympathetic character enjoying the company of 'his' children. In keeping with the play's themes of duality and deception, however, he is gradually revealed as a dark, antagonistic force. While Doc Rockwell's slick messianic façade initially conceals the criminal desires of a monster, there is a sense of ambiguity surrounding his 'werewolf' status as an audience gradually discovers, or at least suspects, that he functions as a puppet manipulated by his 'mute' father/ grandfather 'Dr. Deacon Salt.' Regardless of *where* exactly these criminal desires originated, their existence produces a tragic situation akin to that of the werewolf. As a 'real werewolf,' Doc is cursed and compelled to curse others in a cycle of incest and abuse. Furthermore, unbeknownst to an audience, Jinx represents the potential for the beast to replicate itself within the family tree as a form of legacy. In the final scene, Jinx is revealed to be pregnant, possibly to her twin brother, Skip. Thus, in the tradition of Doc Rockwell and Sister Mary (actually siblings Chance and Sheila Salt), Jinx and Skip are thus presented as a replacement set of 'evil twins,' extending yet again the cycle of incest, curse and horror.

Like Kamm and Theriault, Doc and Deacon represent publicly benevolent leaders who exploit and abuse ‘behind closed doors.’ Kid’s realisation that Doc, beloved ‘messiah’ and ‘father-figure,’ will not cease committing criminal acts as a call for an interventionist silver sword or judicial silver bullet. Exiled to outsider status by society, the ‘Rockwell’ children learn to fear and shun the evil of the outside world: a world they refer to as Babylon. As was the case for the flocks of Kamm and Theriault, the Rockwell Family actively work toward a post-apocalyptic future in which they will rule and the Babylonians will be annihilated. Unfortunately, in *Fowl Feathered Fox*, destroying the ‘Rockwellian’ beast requires destroying the ‘Rockwellian’ life-style. In essence, destroying the dystopian aspects of life on Quarantine Island necessitates the destruction of the island’s utopian elements.

## 2. Being the Beast

Horror writer Stephen King’s archetypal categorisation of monsters into *The Vampire*, *The Thing without a Name* (Dr. Frankenstein’s creature being a useful example), *The Ghost* and *The Werewolf* would posit the monstrous messiah as the latter. Here, monsters falling into the werewolf category would not be limited to lycanthropes, but would include any being that episodically manifests the binary qualities of ‘good’ and ‘evil.’ Robert Louis Stevenson’s *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886) is an example of the literary werewolf wherein, famously, Mr. Hyde is ‘a Dionysian psychopath, locked up behind the Apollonian façade of normality... but slowly, dreadfully emerging’ (King, 1980, p. 47 - 50). As with the Apollonian/ Dionysian dichotomy, the Jekyll/ Hyde dichotomy finds parallels in werewolf and cult leader scenarios, most clearly in that a persistent malevolence hides beneath a taut façade of benevolence.

Both William Kamm and Rock Theriault episodically manifested the protean, dichotomous qualities of ‘messiah’ and ‘monster.’ Briefly, Kamm, spiritual leader of The Order of Saint Charbel, had a ‘dark side’ which often ‘overshadowed the respectable, mild mannered public persona of The Little Pebble to perpetrate vile deeds against the child’ (Webber, 2008, p. 18). Unfortunately, his admirable traits were often applied to ‘achieving his own selfish, wicked goals’ as his considerable talent for rhetoric and persuasion was utilised in obscuring inconsistencies, hypocrisies, and blatant lies. The Little Pebble revealed awareness of his dichotomous traits by saying, ‘publicly I am always careful and once behind closed doors, the Dr. Jekyll and Mr.

Hyde comes out' (cited in Webber, 2008, p. 1). Rock Theriault's wives, while never revealing the full scope of their savage messiah's reign, occasionally hinted to outsiders that he 'wasn't quite the gentle shepherd he made himself out to be' (Kaihla & Laver, 1993, p. 260). The contradictory, ambivalent nature of these messianic leaders as they 'code-switch' between 'messiah' and 'monster' thus serves to align them with the archetypal werewolf.

One quintessentially cinematic werewolf motif hinges on man becoming wolf with the catalytic advent of the full moon. The werewolf (the Latin word was *versipellum*, literally 'turn-skin' [Douglas, 1992, p. 52]) emerges due to the appearance of the moon to proceed on a bloody killing spree. Reliance on the lunar calendar contributes to the cyclical nature of werewolf legend, which has its ultimate basis in the prehistoric association of a killing fury when a human takes on animal attributes and the full moon acts as a signal for the timing of these occurrences (*ibid.*, p. 49). Historically then, the silvery orb of the full moon enjoys a tradition of signalling the onset of startling, periodic transformations, invoking interrelated symbols of monthly cycles. In this paradigm, the flow of menstrual blood is aligned with blood spilled in periodic hunting rituals. The human aspect of the werewolf, much like the benevolent aspect of the cult leader, is periodically submerged and unleashed via a lunar catalyst, prompting cyclical manifestations of bestial killing furies.

Subsequently, I suggest that catalysts work not only to effect transformation from man to wolf, but also messiah to monster. For Kamm, the catalyst for the unleashing of the Beast was being 'behind closed doors' (Webber, 2008, p. 153-79). A litany of sinister crimes attributed to this 'serial child molester' (*ibid.*, p. 358) confirms this, as sexual exploitation occurred repeatedly after doors slammed on various hotel rooms, offices and bedrooms. Camouflaged by religious and family values, 'Kamm schemed to create opportunities to be alone with young girls under the guise of spiritual counselling' (*ibid.*, p. 154). Privacy and secrecy were the abstract catalysts for the emergence of this Beast Within, and while 'flattery and charm were to be expected of The Little Pebble...it was surprising how rude and obnoxious he could be when the doors closed to outsiders' (*ibid.*, p. 107). Locking one door behind him, he unlocked another, permitting The Beast Within to rage forth: a wolf-man preying upon and devouring virgin lamb and hogget, belittling his flock, concealed by the private darkness of a locked and segregated pen.

For Theriault, the catalytic influence was alcohol, which frequently evoked in him ‘a kind of monstrous brutality’ (Kaihla & Laver, 1993, p. 112). Cult members explained to authorities that as Rock ‘became more intoxicated, he started boasting about his wealth and surgical skills... a sure sign that blood would soon flow’ and that ‘when he drank, everything in his head changed’ (*ibid.*, p. 265- 301). Whereas prison psychiatrists reported he was ‘restrained and intense and gives no indication of his potential for violent and sadistic acts,’ a litany of horrors in Kaihla and Laver’s *Savage Messiah* details Theriault’s regular exhibition of violent, sexually depraved and quasi-cannibalistic appetites’ (*ibid.*, p. 278). The catalogue of Rock’s violent acts includes knife, glass and bullet wounds, burns, broken bones, ‘do-it-yourself’ medical procedures including castration and amputation of fingers, toes and limbs, a ‘backyard’ abortion and hysterectomy, a murdered wife and a dead baby (*ibid.*, p. 215-17). Horrifyingly, none of Rock’s medical ‘procedures’ were carried out under anaesthetic.

Speculation surrounding the drives to commit monstrous crimes such as those committed by Kamm and Theriault tends to suggest that both leaders could be considered psychopaths. In their ‘Overview,’ the editors of *Adult Psychopathology and Diagnosis* (Beidel, Frueh, & Hersen, 2014) review the diagnostic characteristics of psychopathology in four categories: mood disorders, including depression and schizoid manifestations (p. 8); personality disorders, including emotional instability resembling schizophrenia (p. 14); alcohol and substance abuse, including ‘addictive-like behaviours’ (p. 12) and sex addiction; and finally, intellectual disability (pp. 19-20). Regarding psychopaths, Hare (1993) notes: ‘completely lacking in conscience and in feelings for others, they selfishly take what they want and do as they please, violating social norms and expectations without the slightest sense of guilt or regret’ (p. xi). Prominent neurologist and neuropsychiatrist Richard Restak suggests that malevolent cult leaders are individuals whose ‘narcissism is so extreme and grandiose that they exist in a kind of splendid isolation in which the creation of the grandiose self takes precedence over legal, moral or interpersonal commitments’ (1982, p. 6). According to Tobias and Lalich (1994), ‘at the core of the psychopath is a deep-seated rage which is split off (i.e. psychologically separated from the rest of the self) and repressed’ (p. 74). When this rage is unleashed, the monstrous werewolf or pseudo-messiah develops an overwhelming desire to infect and devour those around them, no matter the cost to those in their way. Thus, while the psychopathic werewolf abuses society from the outside:

savaging, tearing and devouring flesh, the narcissistic cult leader creates a sequestered, utopian society which he continues to abuse from within.

As lycanthropy, ‘the transformation of a man into a wolf’ (Douglas, 1992, p. 2), afflicts the werewolf, so too does mental illness compel the monstrous charismatic leader to abuse his flock. Understandably, Theriault’s psychological health was the focus of public fascination during his trial and subsequent incarceration. A psychiatrist’s preliminary finding was that Rock suffered from:

... a ‘constellation’ of mental illnesses, probably including sexual sadism. Many of his symptoms fit the classic definition of what doctors call the narcissistic personality disorder: a grandiose sense of self-importance, preoccupation with fantasies of unlimited success, power, brilliance, beauty or ideal love; exhibitionism; exploitation of others; lack of empathy toward others, including an inability to appreciate the distress of those who are seriously ill; and a propensity for relationships that alternate between extremes of idealisation and denigration. (Kaihla & Laver, 1993, p. 278)

Examining the impulsive, antisocial and aggressive behaviour of monstrous messiahs in this light reveals their status as mere spectators and manipulators of the emotional life of others. However, they are clearly more than bystanders in the sense that cult leaders tend to ‘set up’ their plans and then stand back to observe *as if* a bystander, watching others put their plans into action.

In the psychopathic universe, objective truth does not exist. A synonym for pseudologia fantastica is ‘mythomania,’ a term coined by the French psychiatrist Dupré meaning ‘the pathological tendency, more or less voluntary and conscious, to lie and create imaginary stories’ (Douglas, 1992, p. 6). In instances of clinical lycanthropy, ‘one of the oldest diagnoses in psychiatric literature’ (*ibid.*, p. 7), mythomania is often employed diagnostically to describe the scenario in which a person genuinely believes they periodically metamorphose into a wolf. Similarly, pseudologia fantastica impels the cult leader to ‘create a complex belief system, often about their own powers and abilities, in which they themselves sometimes get caught up’ (Tobias & Lalich, 1994, p. 74). As I explain earlier, a pseudologue essentially believes what they are saying is real due to the fact ‘the only ‘truth’ is whatever will best achieve the outcome that meets their needs’ (*ibid.*). In the first English language review of the phenomenon of pseudologia fantastica, Healy and Healy (1915) describe how ‘individuals with [pseudologia fantastica]... tend to indulge in a veritable orgy of lying’ (p. 25). Equally, when

interrogating the nature of William Kamm's sanity and criminality, his biographer suggests that *The Little Pebble* was perhaps 'the ultimate self-made madman who dripped himself fantasies and refused to accept correction for so long that he grew madder and badder' (Webber, 2008, p. 352). Thus, gazing deeper into the abyssal implications of pseudologia fantastica reveals the monstrous possibilities presented by a beast who actually believes his own prophecies and convoluted conspiracy theories.

In *Fowl Feathered Fox*, I drew on elements of both Kamm and Theriault to construct dualistic characters affected by both literal and abstract catalysts. As was the case for Theriault, drugs and alcohol have a catalytic effect on both Doc and Deacon. Here, Doc and Deacon function as archetypal drug addicts. Doc drinks, smokes cannabis and pops pills, while Deacon, a doctor posing as an anaesthetist, prefers to inhale gas. While the catalyst for William Kamm's transformation was 'being behind closed doors,' the catalyst for Doc Rockwell's transformation is 'being high behind closed doors.' On the island, classroom, bedroom and morgue doors hide a multitude of sins. In essence, Quarantine Island acts as a spiritual laboratory for Doc Rockwell's twisted fantasies and fleshy experiments, a concept echoed in the rat dissection scene. It is of course, implied that Doc is merely acting on instructions whispered by Deacon: Doc's father *and* grandfather. Here, catalysts work not only to effect transformation from messiah to monster, but also from fowl to fox. In this case, Red, the Rockwell family's rooster, is a literal example of a fowl feathered fox, while Doc Rockwell most clearly represents the metaphorical figure suggested by the play's title.

The sense of duality apparent to the cult leaders in my play manifests not only in their behaviour and ideology but also the extent to which these have been both projected onto, and accepted by followers: in Doc's case, the Rockwell children. In the rat dissection scene, conflict stems from Doc's ideological and lexical manipulation of Freud's concept of the superego and the id. Kid is made to feel inadequate when she fails to connect knife with *corpus*, foreshadowing her difficulties enacting revenge in the final scenes of the play. Furthermore, the splendid isolation of the Island enables Doc Rockwell to create a belief system that he seems to come to believe himself. Later, Kid acts in a similar way with 'the holy jar' and *Spiritus Sanctus*. Here, Kid represents the manipulative, monstrous potential of a 'prophet' who actually believes her own prophecies due to the phenomenon of pseudologia fantastica.

Due to psychological conflict and a repressed, deep-seated rage, narcissistic cult leaders can create a sequestered, utopian society which they proceed to abuse from within. We see this in *Fowl Feathered Fox* as ‘Dr. Deacon Salt’ and Doc Rockwell create and exist within a kind of splendid isolation in which the creation of the grandiose self takes precedence over legal, moral or interpersonal commitments. Here, like Kamm, ‘the ultimate self-made madman,’ privacy and secrecy act as catalysts for the emergence of the leader’s insatiable appetites. In the tradition of Greek Tragedy, blood is shed offstage. Here, sin and violence lurk in the wings, hiding behind closed doors, both literally and symbolically. In this dualistic scenario, the dystopian nature of the island is hidden beneath a utopian façade, much like in William Golding’s *Lord of the Flies* (1954). In Golding’s novel, the fruit eaten by the boys gives them diarrhoea: drawing a parallel with the ‘poisonous fruit’ from the Tree of Knowledge in the Garden of Eden.

### 3. Heritage of the Beast

The wolf does not hunt in solitary like other predators, but in packs. For this reason, the lone wolf raises suspicion and engenders fear. Rejection by the pack may be due to fear of infection. It would be wise, for example, to beware rabid wolves. Once the symptoms of rabies, an infectious disease, have ‘begun to show themselves, death is practically inevitable’ (Douglas, 1992, p. 287). The idea that ‘lycanthropy is like an infectious disease, transmitted from werewolf to innocent person, is essential to the cinematic conception of the werewolf’ (*ibid.*, p. 301). As we see in seminal werewolf films such as *An American Werewolf in London* (Landis, 1981), *The Howling* (Dante, 1981) and *The Wolfman* (Waggoner, 1941), contracting the lycanthropy contagion compels a victim to infect others and is essentially fatal for both victim and victimiser.

In the Bible, the ferocious, bloodthirsty wolf is repeatedly named as the special foe of flocks, a metaphor for men of evil spirit who lust for dishonest gain and power. Scripture warns us to ‘beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves’ (Matthew 7:15). As the wolf is the natural enemy of the lamb or sheep, Christian iconography has tended to align the wolf with Satan: the ultimate embodiment of evil. In this sense, where the sheep or the lamb is aligned with Christ, the wolf is aligned with the Antichrist. In Ezekiel, princes are compared to ‘wolves tearing... prey’ as they ‘shed blood to destroy people... and get dishonest gain’ (22:27). In Acts, Paul warns church elders that ‘after my departure, savage wolves will

come in among you, not sparing the flock' (20:29). Additionally, in Matthew, God sends his people out 'as sheep in the midst of wolves' (10:16). In the public imagination, the lupine aspects of the biblical false prophet serve to connect the latter with the canine imagery of the underworld including Cerberus from Greek and Satan's hellish menagerie of horrifying, anthropomorphic creatures. A significant amount of anxiety surrounding the predatory, bestial aspects of the 'wolf in sheep's clothing' thus stems directly from the Bible.

Just as forested sanctuaries are favoured by messianic leaders, the isolation of a secluded wilderness is favourable to the inculcation of apocalyptic belief systems. In the Cambewarra compound, 'once followers were convinced that The Little Pebble was beyond reproach, Kamm became ensconced in the secrecy of the cult he created' (Webber, 2008, p. 360). Rejected by society at large, the lone wolf thus builds an isolated utopia in which the creation of a unique moral code is prepared and ingested by a band of recruits. After 'hunting' down these recruits, Kamm effectively 'dragged his prey' back to his secluded woodland 'lair,' severing a kind of invisible umbilical cord to wider society and replacing it with his own. In the malevolent leader's quest for ultimate power over his 'flock,' isolation from society would appear to be a rudimentary psychological technique for achieving submission.

The tradition of horrifying, anthropomorphic figures in lonely woodlands stretches back to pre- Little Red Riding Hood narratives of blood sacrifice. Noted Greek mythologist Forbes-Irving (1998) notes 'there is much evidence in ancient texts for the wilds as a place without sexual order' (p. 64). This 'sexual disorder' is reflected in the sexually menacing and vaguely perverse aspects of deceptive wolves in Angela Carter's dreamlike re-imagining of Little Red's tale: *The Company of Wolves* (Brown, Woolley, & Jordan, 1984). Forbes-Irving adds that 'men living in the wilds among animals and hunting them inevitably take on a certain animal savagery' (p. 83). Rock Theriault, like Jesus a skilled woodsman and carpenter, was in his element in the forests of Quebec. After a warrant had been issued for his arrest, there were wild rumours circulating locally 'that a mad-man was loose in the woods, armed with a chainsaw' (Kaihla & Laver, 1993, p. 271). The danger, mystery and allure of forested, wild, or woodland areas add a mythical dimension to such rumours, enhancing the positive perception of Theriault as a kind of 'misunderstood Shaman.' Isolated and surrounded by trees, the



elemental guru thus exists within a mythical realm where purity and innocence is juxtaposed with the horrifying and predatory.

Just as ‘battered women may choose to remain with an abusive partner and accommodate to his many demands, isolating themselves from others who may be able to help them’ (Kaihla & Laver, 1993, p. 300), the isolation of an infectious flock can lead to catastrophic outcomes. According to Webber (2008), in the Cambewarra compound, a climate of ‘prolonged unease cultivated paranoia, irrationality, individual weakness and disempowerment as members relinquished their own dreams and ambitions in favour of Kamm’s... the final result was total isolation and dependence on The Little Pebble’ (p. 113). For Kamm’s followers, periods of prolonged unease stemmed largely from failed doomsday prophecies and growing suspicion within the flock regarding his ‘extra-curricular’ social and sexual exploits. In the cultic paradigm, generally, shunning contact with the outside world can warp perception of reality, culminating in what may appear as ‘hysterical’ reactions, and sometimes, horrifyingly, mass suicide or murder.

The killing of a god and subsequent consumption of that god’s body and blood enjoys a long-held tradition in myth and ritual. Among these:

... the mystery cults, in the deaths of the gods Attis, Adonis and Osiris, and in the Dionysiac ritual in which an animal, usually a bull, was torn apart and eaten raw, apparently to commemorate the mythical occasion on which the Titans, the ancestors of man, had eaten Dionysus, whom they had killed, then boiled and roasted. (Douglas, 1992, p. 105)

Rock Theriault periodically performed ritualistic ceremonies in honour of The God of Light and Dark in which he would ‘strip off his clothes and descend into a pit, smear himself with goat’s blood and rise up before his entranced assembly in a kind of mock resurrection’ (Kaihla & Laver, 1993, p. 178). This finds an echo in Greek mythology as the goat traditionally slaughtered as a central feature of bloody Dionysian rituals is aligned with the god’s essentially regenerative and redemptive nature.

The wolf is traditionally understood not only as a satanic emissary but as a savage predator and an outsider, in opposition to the aims of a civil society. In the ancient world, the wolf was not merely ‘like the lion or bear, a symbol of animal savagery, but more particularly a symbol of the outcast, fugitive, or outsider’ (Forbes-Irving, 1998, p. 77). In Greek mythology, King Lykaon of Arcadia, the original shapeshifting

lycanthrope, was condemned for feeding the gods, his abused guests, a cannibal feast. Zeus punishes Lykaon's impiety by transforming him into a wolf (*ibid.*). Having once been a founder and civiliser, the Arcadian king becomes a savage, greedy cannibalistic beast: an abuser of human institutions. Further, Forbes-Irving notes:

... it is of course appropriate that a savage man should be transformed into a savage and greedy animal, the wolf. In particular, the notorious hunger of the wolf (which can extend to cannibalism) seems particularly appropriate to the holder of cannibal feasts. (*ibid.*, p. 92)

Thus, the notorious hunger of the wolf condemns it to outsider status. Like the dangerously contagious werewolf, the 'unclean' wolf is quarantined or relegated to the fringes of society like a biblical leper. In keeping with these biblical and mythological traditions, the representation of 'incest deformities' serves to condemn the Rockwell children, like the wolf or the leper, to outsider status. The idea of 'performing deformity' in *Fowl Feathered Fox* stems from the ritualistic rather than the realistic, having more in common with the Greek tragic convention of wearing masks than computer generated prosthetics featuring in contemporary films.

Both Kamm and Theriault lived off the life-blood and labour of their weakened, exceedingly fragile and helpless followers, displaying traits akin to the scavenger and parasite. Whereas scavengers have the job of cleaning the earth of organic garbage, parasites benefit at the expense of their host. The psychopathy checklists of Hervey Cleckley and Robert Hare include the propensity toward a parasitic lifestyle (Hare, 1986, p. 18). Wolves, eaters of carrion, both hunters and scavengers, play an important role in the ecosystem by contributing to the decomposition of dead animal remains. Some 'authorities argue that man's earliest identification with the wolf may have arisen because both were reduced to mere scavenging, and that the wolf usually proved better at it than man' (Douglas, 1992, p. 44). Conversely, in times of hardship, war or plague, the wolf is drawn toward the weak or helpless, gaining a reputation as an opportunistic hunter, a 'feaster on the slain in battle' (*ibid.*, p. 46). Dubbing his commune members 'The Ant Hill Kids,' Theriault invoked imagery of the ant, which, like the necrophagistic wolf, is a scavenger. During hard times, according to biographers Kaihla and Laver (1993), Rock instructed The Ant Hill Kids to scavenge for food and goods, as well as shoplift from local businesses, resulting in 'virtual orgies of petty thievery' (p.

151). In order to survive, it seems the parasitic leader must exploit the obedience, goods and services of his ardent, passionately devoted congregation.

In *Fowl Feathered Fox*, I extend the wolf/sheep metaphor, updating and ‘Australianising’ the animals used in the biblical metaphor by introducing the character of the ‘fowl-feathered fox.’ Here, I substitute the fox for the wolf and the fowl for the sheep. Doc Rockwell, a lone wolf, arouses fear and suspicion in outsiders (‘Babylonians’), due to his potential to seduce and thus infect his followers isolated on the island. Whereas biblical imagery posits the wolf as a metaphor for evil men, in my play cultural associations with the ‘wily’ or ‘sly’ fox mark Doc Rockwell as the potential slaughterer of his ‘flock’ of chooks, literally the children. Here, the secluded wilderness of Quarantine Island becomes an isolated utopia in which Doc Rockwell’s unique moral code is prepared and ingested by his infected and thus infectious flock. Furthermore, I have simulated Theriault’s vision of The God of Light and Dark in Doc Rockwell’s God of Night and Day. Essentially, this vision of a dualistic deity works to amplify the theme of Apollonian/ Dionysian tension.

#### **4. Desiring the Beast**

Leadership and charisma are largely perceptual phenomena, dependent on audiences, congregations or flocks. In *The Charisma Effect*, Desmond Guilfoyle (2002) suggests that charisma is ‘a result of perceptual processes in the heads of followers, rather than a mystical state of being’ (p. 12). Via conditioning and indoctrination, the charismatic spiritual leader works to extinguish doubt and stimulate absolute faith in his authority. Thus, suspicion surrounding the inhumane aspects of the leader’s behaviour is often ignored in favour of what appears to be overwhelming proof of his humanity. One of Theriault’s devoted wives complained that:

... everybody talks about Rock the monster. But most of the time... he was a marvellous man who was full of passion, intelligence and originality. He loved to laugh and dance. This is the side people have to get to know. (Kaihla & Laver, 1993, p. 290)

In this scenario, followers respect absolutely and bestow loving adulation upon their self-appointed leader, despite practical evidence that the opposite may be the more appropriate emotional reaction.

Cult expert Michael Langone cites ‘deception, dependency and dread’ as requisite factors in inspiring a potential recruit’s faith in a cult teachings and securing their dependence on the cult environment (1993, p. 7). In the initial stages, a recruit might be wooed or courted with the promise of personal, spiritual rewards (*ibid.*, p. 9). Next comes a stage of dependency, or a ‘honeymoon phase,’ in which techniques such as public confession, mind altering experiences, and modelling of preferred behaviour are employed. These techniques are followed by threats of punishment, or being ‘cast out’ from the group, in which the member learns to dread the loss of the group’s psychological support (*ibid.*). The use of ‘phobia induction’ in this final phase adds to the sense of dread felt by the member, cementing their commitment to the group (*ibid.*). Thus, compounded by various phobic fears including the fear of eviction, proselytising works to ‘infect’ the malevolent cult leader’s victim. In a sense, the recruit has been infected with an ‘addiction’ to the cult.

Recruitment drives, sermons, speeches and prophetic outpourings are all opportunities for distributing propaganda and normalising suspect or criminal attitudes and behaviours. When The Little Pebble’s followers checked themselves into the Order of Saint Charbel, they were ‘expected to leave their rationality at the three-metre front gates’ and to seek guidance from Mary if they began to have doubts or tried to understand the ways of God via human logic (Webber, 2008, p. 94). ‘Repetition, repetition, repetition was the formula’ for Kamm, who successfully conditioned his flock via a never-ending diatribe from Heaven (*ibid.*, p. 95). Kamm’s constant refrain was to:

‘... *put aside human logic*’ and Isaiah 55 verse 8-9 was paraphrased into a well-worn mantra: ‘*God’s ways are not man’s ways.*’ As Kamm quoted Jesus as saying during a locution: ‘*Learn to love the will of God... do not try to understand it... place human logic aside and live on faith... once you have even a flicker of doubt you will become weak.*’ [italics in original] (*ibid.*)

Charismatic leaders tend to be highly skilled rhetoricians, using language to seduce their audience. Because the form and structure of language often make a greater impact on an audience than the actual content (Guilfoyle, 2002, p. 13), harmful or subversive messages may come cloaked in positive, upbeat catchphrases and jargon. In *Fowl Feathered Fox*, Doc manufactures humorous, upbeat rhymes to conceal dangerously hateful messages about the ‘other.’ Doc reassures his flock in language reminiscent of

the works of Roald Dahl and Dr. Seuss when he says ‘from toxic city, over yonder, brothel streets, where sinners wander, God plucked us... ‘sconced us on this isle, safe from Satan’s snake-like guile.’ Also, dramatic irony ‘comes into play’ here as an audience is able to fill textual gaps and silences with their understanding of stereotypes surrounding cults and contemporary manifestations of charismatic leadership.

Cult leaders offer to heal pain and guarantee successful passage through the Pearly Gates of Heaven. Exciting and exhilarating apocalyptic fantasies lead to the passionately devoted recruit walking freely into the leader’s lair, unable and unwilling to escape. Hare states that ‘psychopaths are social predators who charm, manipulate, and ruthlessly plough their way through life’ (1993, *xi*). The goal of the tortured, monstrous authoritarian is ‘primarily to attract those whom they can psychologically coerce into and keep in a passive-submissive state and secondarily to use them to increase their income’ (Levine & Shaiova, 1987, p. 19). In a sense, cult members, the spiritually hungry, are ‘death seekers,’ actively working for life after death, a release from the temporary pain and suffering of their earthly lives. Former cult members report being ‘enthralled’ with a leader, his vision and ideals, experiencing ‘exhilaration, excitement, passion, or expectation’ and that the cult’s touch had an almost ‘hypnotic quality’ (Tobias & Lulich, 1994, p. 11). Thus, for the psychopathic cult leader, understanding the spiritual hunger of potential victims leads to an understanding of the specific ‘bait’ required in the hunt, leading the predatory wolf to ‘feed’ the flock in order to feed upon them.

It is no accident that a large number of cults include or allude to the word ‘family.’ As with domestic violence and parricidal abuse, a ‘victim’ is taught to depend on social bonds and financial security within the power structure of the family. That victim is then taught that loyalty to the family unit exceeds any other moral responsibility, making it extremely difficult for them to leave despite increasingly dangerous and violent outbursts. Despite witnessing the wounds and distress of Rock’s wives, neighbours did not alert the police. The façade of familial devotion was too firmly established, leading neighbours to claim apologetically, ‘there was a lot of love in that family, a lot of love’ (Kaihla & Laver, 1993, p. 261). Thus, great courage is required for a victim to leave as they must negotiate the idea that they are betraying their family, the primary social unit. Clearly, a flock beaten into submission believe there is nowhere

else to go, especially in cases where the leader has promoted the idea that family members and friends from ‘the outside’ are ‘evil.’

Tending to plagiarise or ‘cannibalise’ beliefs and ideas from other systems, serving up ‘scrambled eggs theology from the pulpit’ (Webber, 2008, p. 100), spiritual con-men create eclectic belief systems that appear both preposterous and predatory, at least to the outsider. Catholic catechism, with a particular focus on biblical passages from Revelations, informed Kamm’s ministry (*ibid.*), while Theriault’s belief system was a ‘crazy blend of pagan ritual, mysticism and perverted Old Testament theology’ (Kaihla & Laver, 1993, p. 169). Coincidentally, both men aligned themselves with the biblical figures of Moses and David: the former to reinforce their status as prophets, the latter to excuse their predilection for multiple spouses.

Despite being potentially very dangerous, outlandish prophecies and eccentric doctrinal ‘truths’ may appear blackly comedic to the outsider. Possibly the most comedic aspect of William Kamm’s doctrine was also the most sickening. In a bizarre manipulation of traditional patriarchal power structures, Kamm created a harem of adolescent and pre-pubescent girls revolving around a system of ‘princesses and queens’ (Webber, 2008). These girls were led to believe that if invited to join ‘The Royal House of David,’ they would be impregnated by Kamm’s ‘Holy Shining Thing’ and give birth to generations of post-apocalyptic citizens (*ibid.*). Encouraged by their enthralled parents, certain that this was a great honour divinely bestowed, dozens of sequestered, ideologically sheltered teenage girls were in for a rude shock when The Little Pebble’s Holy Shining Thing was revealed ‘in the flesh.’ As their parents were:

... in the chapel praying... Kamm was preying on as many daughters and wives as he possibly could... his abominable sacrilege even sank as low as sneaking out during the midday rosary for a ‘‘quickie’... to administer the sacraments of his Holy Shining Thing to a queen or princess. (*ibid.*, p. 18)

Preceding the toppling of The Little Pebble’s tyrannical organisation, the sexually charged Beast emerged repeatedly behind closed doors to indulge its insatiable, criminal appetites.

Theriault’s religious rituals ‘seemed to have little rationale other than to exalt Moses and mock the beliefs, symbols and rituals of the Catholic Church’ (Kaihla & Laver,

1993, p. 171). The messianic delusions of this monstrous Moses inspired a favoured pastime:

holding two naked babies by their ankles upside down over a fire, roaring with laughter like some crazed god and saying, 'I might just throw one of these babies into the flames. Which one will it be?' The mothers would be on their knees, tears streaming down their faces as they begged and pleaded for *their* child to be saved. (*ibid.*, p. 181)

Along with enacting mock crucifixions, organising nude wrestling matches and group paedophilia and masturbation sessions, Rock regularly sacrificed the children's pets to his deity. Charismatic, manipulative and skilled in persuasion, this spiritual con-man created a predatory and eclectic belief system that resulted in the sadistic treatment of his disciples, regardless of age.

Excitement and anticipation surrounding End Time prophecy is central to the enduring authority of the charismatic leader as 'a prophet who can't predict the future is not a prophet (Webber, 2008, p. 115). Unfortunately for Kamm, the signposts prophesied as preceding The Great Tribulation never came, despite staging appeals to The Virgin Mary for the 'exact date of The Warning - even the year will do' (*ibid.*, p. 127). In response to doubt voiced by his followers, Kamm used the successful excuse that the End Times were 'delayed but not cancelled' (*ibid.*), blaming anyone but himself for errors, even God himself. Theriault predicted The End of the World on numerous occasions, but was not troubled by the scepticism or doubt of his followers as:

... a less dedicated group of believers might have questioned the wisdom of their exalted leader, but Rock's group gave him the benefit of the doubt. Besides, Moses had a logical explanation. (Kaihla & Laver, 1993, p. 115)

Accordingly, the flock's excitement and anticipation of post-apocalyptic life, as well as an unshakeable belief in their leader as divine emissary and shepherd seemed to outweigh the 'banality' of scepticism and doubt.

Financial manipulation is common in communities modelled on despotic power structures. The Little Pebble, adept at raising funds under false pretences, built a vast real estate empire, amassing millions of dollars in personal wealth at the expense of his trusting flock. In 1997, a federal MP told the Australian parliament that the government had failed to address the 'financial devastation caused by fraudsters such as Kamm (who) found religion to be the perfect cloak for their activities' (Webber, 2008, p. 184).

More than once, Theriault ordered one of his wives to have intercourse with a local shopkeeper in return for groceries, whilst welfare cheques received by each group member went straight into Rock's bank account (Kaihla & Laver, 1993, p. 112). In the analogous paradigm of domestic violence, one reason why 'abused women do not leave abusive relationships is economic dependency and fear of leaving the situation for lack of alternatives' (*ibid.*, pp. 301-2). Thus, the cult leader succeeds in achieving financial manipulation of his flock because, in the modern world, financial survival is tantamount to the drives toward sex and predatory violence in the primordial universe.

To prevent reservation, doubt or suspicion on the part of their followers, leaders commonly align themselves with the divine. A messianic intermediary between flock and divine forces provides a convenient platform of authority and reduced accountability. As is the case with Kamm's messages from Mary and Theriault's communion with The God of Light and Dark, cult leaders often see themselves as intermediaries, avatars, or Chosen Ones: able to translate and interpret 'the word' as sent from 'on high.' Thus, when the world does *not* come to an end, blame can be directed at those above by reasoning away the discrepancy as a simple miscommunication or misinterpretation. If the leader presents his logic as existing on a higher plane than that of mere mortals, he provides a surprisingly successful antidote to the subversive rise of doubt or scepticism within the flock.

Doc Rockwell in *Fowl Feathered Fox* is essentially perceived as desirable and charismatic as a result of 'perceptual processes' in the minds of the Rockwell children rather than in his characterisation as a 'mystical state of being' (Guilfoyle, 2002, p.12). Via conditioning and indoctrination from their 'arrival' on Quarantine Island at birth, Doc Rockwell works to extinguish doubt and stimulate absolute faith in his authority as suspicion surrounding the inhumane aspects of his behaviour is ignored in favour of what appears to be overwhelming proof of his humanity. Because the Rockwell children truly believe Doc Rockwell is 'The Chosen One,' crimes and inconsistencies are considered mere trifles in the grand scheme of life. The reward of a glorious, pain-free after-life more than compensates for the trials and tribulations of earthly life. The notion of proselytising as a form of seduction is reflected in the play when the Rockwell children 'swoon' over Doc's sermons and prophecies; here, Doc's words elicit a physical, wordless, almost sexual reaction. Having 'been bitten' by the metaphorical werewolf in their infancy, the Rockwell children know no other existence; 'addiction' to



the cult is compounded by various phobic fears, particularly the dread of eviction. Clearly, exile to 'Babylon' is a terrifying prospect for a child raised on anti-Babylonian propaganda; Kid and Blue have every right to feel terrified when Sister Mary smuggles them onto the mainland against their will. Further, great courage is required by Kid and Blue upon their return to the island as they are forced to negotiate the idea that by choosing to quit the Rockwell cult, they must betray their family: the only social unit they have ever really known.

While the appetites of the werewolf revolve around tearing and devouring flesh, Doc Rockwell and Dr. Deacon Salt consume not only *literal* flesh on stage but the innocence, faith and trust of the 'Rockwell' children. It is implied a number of times in both text and sub-text that the Rockwell children are subject to sexual abuse, neglect and severe emotional and psychological abuse. In this sense, Doc Rockwell, and by extension, Dr. Deacon Salt, are like predatory wolves, 'feeding' the flock in order to feed upon them. Furthermore, having plagiarised ideas from rigid, authoritarian systems and 'cannibalising' beliefs from Catholic dogma, Doc Rockwell serves up 'scrambled eggs theology' to his adoring flock (Webber, 2008, p. 100). Similarly, just as some of the most comical aspects of William Kamm's doctrine were also the most sickening, the laughs in *Fowl Feathered Fox* often derive from macabre jokes about in-breeding and incest deformities. Ultimately, the Rockwell Family's excitement and anticipation of post-apocalyptic life, as well as an unshakeable belief in their leader as divine emissary and shepherd seem to outweigh the 'banality' of scepticism and doubt.

## 5. Managing the Beast

To survive distressing, violent episodes, those living with abusive partners 'will distort (in their mind) the situation by minimizing or denying the reality of the circumstances' (Kaihla & Laver, 1993, p. 300). Experiencing doubt can lead to cognitive dissonance, the uncomfortable effect of simultaneous belief in two contradictory ideas. One of Theriault's wives explained:

Rock said I must obey him... I tried to agree with what Rock said, but there were too many bad things. Rock had formulated in my mind that I must obey him. (*ibid.*, p. 301)

After ripping out eight healthy teeth and slicing two tendons in her hand in a drunken rage, another of Rock's wives admitted her husband was 'alcoholic, but I love him, and

I know that if I stay I can cure him' (*ibid.*, pp. 265). In losing the perceived ability to escape, and attempting to adapt to the unpleasant situation in order to minimise pain, the abused wife 'believes that if she could somehow find a way to help her partner, with whom she has a loving bond, then the "mean" part of his personality may disappear' (*ibid.*, p. 300). Accepting a new belief, such as 'if I can cure my beloved master everything will be alright,' or in the case of a failed doomsday prophecy 'the world was spared due to our faith,' lessens cognitive dissonance, and is thought preferable to leaving the safety of the cult.

In order to maintain a satisfactory self-image and avoid cognitive dissonance, the cult member refuses to acknowledge the unpleasant aspects of external reality via denial and 'splitting' the world around them into the binary opposites of 'good' and 'evil.' 'Splitting,' one of a number of ego defence mechanisms favoured by those in religious or spiritual environments is 'a way of dealing with anxiety by dividing the object of anxiety in two, one bearing all the negative feelings while the other embodies all the positive feelings one wishes to substitute for the anxieties the object or situation provokes' (Freud, 1914, in Rivkin & Ryan, 1998, p. 121). In Freudian theory, ego defence mechanisms are necessary when the impulses of the id are in conflict with each other or with the values and beliefs of the super-ego, or when an external threat is posed to the ego (Freud, 1914, in Rivkin & Ryan, 1998, p. 119). Thus, for a cult member, unpleasant aspects of external reality such as extreme violence is rearranged in the mind or 'explained away' to eliminate the need to 'cope' with reality.

In the cultic paradigm, submission to violence may be perceived as both deserved and desirable. Numerous letters from Rock's followers reveal their constant desire to appease and still the wrath of their 'beloved Papy and well-loved Master' (Kaihla & Laver, 1993, p. 111). For The Ant Hill Kids, their leader was simply a channel of divine justice. The violence was in fact being sent from above and therefore must be deserved: a desirable aspect of the quest for eternal life with God. Kaihla and Laver reveal that:

none of Rock's victims blamed him for their injuries. He was simply following the master's orders. Rock called it 'the law of reciprocity:' they had sinned and had to be punished. When Rock beat, stabbed and shot at them, he was only trying to rid their bodies of Satan. He was helping them. For as Moses himself explained, those who did not suffer during this life would never be allowed to enter heaven. (*ibid.*, p. 217)

Thus, it would seem that the more vicious Rock's attacks became, the more his flock revered him, reaffirming their adoration whilst making it clear that they did not take the attacks personally. Perversely, Rock 'rewarded turncoats by assigning them the task of punishing people they had turned in' (*ibid.*, p. 170). In short, the victim's perception of submission to violence in this paradigm is perceived as a form of 'heroic surrender' and thus the violent or monstrous act becomes both warranted and sought-after.

The power of the heroic myth reverberated within Theriault's spiritually hungry flock, yet, failing to recognise the Beast Within him led to the regrettable sacrifice of lives. While emulating the transformative and self-sacrificing hero Jesus Christ, Rock Theriault 'disfigured every one of (The Ant Hill Kids), emotionally and physically, yet they repaid his brutality with adulation and sacrifice' (Kaihla & Laver, 1993, p. 283). By the end of The Ant Hill King's reign, one of Rock's wives had 'sacrificed her life' as had one of his infant sons (*ibid.*). In the life and death struggle that accompanies apocalyptic belief systems, it seems 'people can bring themselves to do almost anything' (*ibid.*, p. 168). Self-sacrifice in this case is the tragic outcome of manipulation of the hero archetype by one man in his narcissistic bid to increase his personal power, wealth, and influence.

The frighteningly unpredictable oscillation between extremes of praise and condemnation is problematic for the devotee of the monstrous, dichotomous messiah. William Kamm, accepted by his followers as 'God's Prophet,' warned that suspicion and doubt were sins, leading them to give him the benefit of the doubt, with disastrous consequences. Theriault's alcoholic rages caused extensive and sadistic violence, yet, 'when he sobered up, Rock became an angel of mercy' (Kaihla & Laver, 1993, p. 217). In the comparable paradigm of domestic violence, 'battered women often describe their abusive partners as having a 'Dr. Jekyll/Mr. Hyde' personality' (*ibid.*, p. 300). Unfortunately, giving a Mr. Hyde or a ravening werewolf the benefit of the doubt can prove a fatal mistake. In the examples explored here, absolute faith in messianic monsters led directly to adversity, pain and suffering.

To manage the beast in *Fowl Feathered Fox*, the Rockwell children distort distressing, violent situations in their minds by denying the reality of their circumstances. Furthermore, according to 'Rockwellian' ideology, submission acts as a form of 'heroic surrender' and thus, violent and monstrous acts become both warranted and sought-

after. In this paradigm, submission to extreme violence is clearly perceived as both deserved and desirable. Thus, the more vicious Doc's attacks become, the more his flock revere him, reaffirming their adoration whilst making it clear that they do not take the attacks personally. Furthermore, like Kamm, the monsters on Quarantine Island exploit and abuse 'behind closed doors.' Like Theriault, Doc's alcoholic rages lead to sadistic violence. When he sobers up however, he becomes an angel of mercy. Because devotees can bring themselves 'to do almost anything' in the life and death struggle that accompanies apocalyptic belief systems, there is sometimes a need for society to 'step in' to facilitate the 'slaying of the beast.'

## 6. Slaying the Beast

While a silver weapon is the traditional nemesis of the werewolf, rejection will mortally wound the charismatic cult leader whose livelihood and sense of self-worth depend on the adulation of his flock. Nevertheless:

despite his rhetoric, a lot of followers did break free from Kamm's mind control; it was often the younger ones who realised that Kamm's ways were not God's ways so they put aside The Little Pebble's logic.  
(Webber, 2008, pp. 95-6)

So, unless the victim rejects the predatory messiah's authority, or an interventionist 'silver bullet' is employed, the leader's super-human knack of understanding and manipulating his human prey allow him to entrap, dominate and feast.

For cult members, intense feelings of guilt are difficult to overcome in the detachment process. Whitsett and Kent (2003) propose that while 'accepting responsibility for committing harmful acts may be very traumatic... therapy should focus on moving clients from self-definitions of "victims" or "perpetrators" to those of "survivors"' (p. 499). Often, a decision to exit the cult follows a 'turning point' similar to the metamorphic experience of the shapeshifting werewolf, wherein the whole world seems to 'turn upside down.' This turning point, often noted by ex-cult members as the moment in which they became aware of the leader's lack of power over them, came for one member of The Ant Hill Kids when, imprisoned for crimes committed under Theriault's reign, he 'realised that he didn't know why he was behind bars' (Kaihla & Laver, 1993, p. 283). Slowly, he regained his psychological distance from Rock 'and at one point even fantasised about killing him' (*ibid.*). For another member, 'the macabre

events of the past three weeks had finally shattered her dependence on Rock' (*ibid.*, p. 268). Yet another, describing himself as having been a 'virtual zombie for twelve years' (*ibid.*, p. 269), gathered the courage to announce his exit from the group in a letter. To Rock, he wrote:

I can no longer see in you the Man of God, nor any tenderness, nor any peace. And the more you continue, the more you seek the blood of your people. (*ibid.*)

Rejection by his flock is the Achilles heel of the cult leader, for ultimately, like a werewolf without prey or a shepherd without sheep, the cult leader lacking disciples faces a loss of livelihood and ultimately, 'starvation.'

The suffering experienced by a member of the flock upon being ejected by the leader and thus being denied eternal life is potentially catastrophic. Upon exit, suicidal thoughts are common, and ex-members experience 'intense moments of despair,' feeling like they live in 'limbo land' (Tobias & Lalich, 1994, p. 226). In a sense, these ex-cult members have 'crossed over to the other side', forced to endure a living hell as they re-adjust to society' (*ibid.*). In the case of Kamm's followers, 'the post-cult blues set in for former members who had to return to normal lives after believing that God had chosen them for special missions' (Webber, 2008, p. 356).' Some of Kamm's ex-members suffered 'severe mental disturbances and/or substance abuse' (*ibid.*) after having their families divided or being impregnated and then abandoned by the errant Cambewarra prophet. While outsiders and dissidents were condemned as evil, wicked, and destined to burn in Hell, if they decided to 'repent and be converted,' they were welcomed into the fold with open arms, especially if they were accompanied by sizeable bank accounts or attractive teenage daughters. Possibly the least of Theriault's estranged members' worries was that they felt 'guilty about everything' as the 'toll of Rock's eleven year fury is still being counted' (Kaihla & Laver, 1993, pp. 285-6). It appears that the mental, emotional and physical harm suffered by the survivors may take a lifetime to counteract.

Appropriating images of strength and righteousness for the benefit of his flock, the cult leader strives to build a stable self-image and accordingly, a solid sense of self-belief. Jesus Christ referred to St. Peter as 'the rock on which I build my church' (Matthew 16:18), the word 'rock' connoting a solid, foundational form: impervious, resistant, inflexible, and rigid. William Kamm's moniker of choice, The Little Pebble, 'the name

that became a laughing stock' (Webber, 2008, p. 51), also refers to a geological formation, albeit a smaller, less innocuous one. He also made various calls for donations to *Kammrock Pty. Ltd.*, a 'private company of which Kamm was the only Director and shareholder' (*ibid.*, p. 208). The Virgin Mary bestowed titles such as 'Little Rock of Truth and Fidelity', 'Rock of True Humility', and 'Celestial Stone of Truth' upon her 'Little Pebble of Love' (*ibid.*, p. 92). Baptised Rock Theriault, the charismatic con-man changed his name to Rock after moving to the Gaspé wilderness (Kaihla & Laver, 1993, xi). Building upon a foundation of sturdy imagery, both Kamm and Theriault alternately charmed and tortured their followers, protected by a façade of invulnerability.

Yet, a rock can be shattered and the werewolf is not completely invulnerable. Beneath the sadistic cult leaders' carefully crafted façade of strength is a fragile shell filled with desperation and insecurity. Fromm cited in Kaihla & Laver (1993) notes that:

while the masochistic person's dependence is obvious, our expectation with regard to the sadistic person is just the reverse: he seems so strong and domineering, and the object of his sadism so weak and submissive, that it is difficult to think of the strong one as being dependent on the one over whom he rules. And yet... the sadist needs the person over whom he rules, he needs him very badly, since his only feeling of strength is rooted in the fact that he is master over someone. (p. 140)

Of utmost concern to the sadistic cult leader is the knowledge that he is still wanted, desired, and needed. Thus, while the werewolf may be destroyed by a single silver bullet, the cult leader may be destroyed at the instant his flock willingly reject his authority and regain their independence.

In *Fowl Feathered Fox*, Doc Rockwell's livelihood and sense of self-worth depend on the adulation of his flock. Beneath a carefully crafted façade of confidence and strength is a fragile shell filled with desperation and insecurity. Clearly, he would be mortally wounded by the rejection of his little flock. Furthermore, Levi Salt's super-human knack of understanding and manipulating his human prey, including Doc Rockwell, allow him to entrap, dominate and feast. The name 'Rockwell' connotes not only the strength and imperviousness of a geological formation, but also an abundant, inexhaustible supply implied by the image of a 'wellspring.' In the Bible, a wellspring is figured as a life-sustaining source as 'the wellspring of wisdom' is likened to 'a flowing brook' (Proverbs, 18:4). Additionally, for cult members such as the 'kids' on Quarantine Island, intense feelings of guilt are difficult to overcome in the detachment

process. Sister Mary's decision to exit the cult, while not made entirely of her own volition but rather according to Doc Rockwell's forceful suggestions, follows a 'turning point' similar to the metamorphic experience of the shapeshifting 'turn-skin' or *versipellum* (Douglas, 1992, p. 52), where 'the whole world turns upside down.' Like Kamm and Theriault, Doc Rockwell and Levi Salt build upon a foundation of sturdy imagery to charm and torture their followers, protected by a façade of invulnerability. By appropriating images of strength and righteousness for the benefit of his flock, Doc Rockwell strives to build a stable self-image and accordingly, a solid sense of self-belief. However, Doc Rockwell is clearly destroyed at the instant his flock willingly reject his authority and regain their independence. In short, the Rockwell children's 'slaying of the beasts' represents a slaying of 'the beast at large.'

## 7. The Beast at Large

King proposes that the enduring popularity of the werewolf archetype is due to humanity's collective fear of the beast within (1980, pp. 47-51). Duclos (1998) concurs, finding that:

the werewolf myth has... maintained throughout the ages that all human beings are of one nature: that of a savage, brutal, voracious, vicious being which needs only to rise to the surface, and which single-handedly holds the civilizing force of repression in check. (p. 141)

Exploiting a collective fear of this savage, brutal, voracious, vicious beast within, manufacturers of lycanthropic film and fiction continually reinforce the idea that in the monster's death throes, we witness not death of the beast, but of the man. At this moment, fear for the man within the beast replaces fear of the beast within the man. We fear for the man as he signifies the universality of the threat from within. Here, the indiscriminate and unpredictable werewolf contagion, or dichotomous curse, has the capacity to unleash the id, disengaging it from the civilising force of the superego.

Douglas (1992) suggests 'all horror cinema is adolescent' (p. 303). The cinematic tradition of the werewolf is no exception as it taps into collective adolescent fears about the mutating body and what might 'lie beneath the flesh.' Theorists Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (1987) have noted that wolf-men are significant to social groups practicing rites of sexual initiation (p. 247). The transmogrification of the human body as it prepares for sexual initiation during adolescence, growing hair and enlarging in

odd places, has a clear parallel in the metamorphosis of the werewolf. After all, as Velasco (2005) notes, ‘aren’t children who touch themselves in indecent manners told that they will suffer grotesque hair growth?’ (p. 34).

Psychology in popular culture has led to an increased demand for titillating information and entertainment concerning psychological disturbances and transgressions, providing a modern day ‘fear outlet’ akin to the role of catharsis in Greek Tragedy. Mark Seltzer, in *The Serial Killer as a Type of Person*, suggests that:

the convening of the public around scenes of violence has come to make up a *wound culture*: the public fascination with torn and opened private bodies and torn and open psyches, a public gathering around the wound and the trauma. (1998, p. 100)

Proof of this phenomenon may be established by the success of HBO’s controversial television series, *Dexter* (2006). Inspired by the novels of Jeff Lindsay, *Dexter* follows the story of a gifted ‘blood spatter’ expert for the Miami Police Department who is also a prolific serial killer. The audience identifies with Dexter as he cleans up the streets of Miami like a grisly Robin Hood, or a Mr. Hyde periodically unleashed from the forensic laboratory of a Dr. Jekyll. Dexter’s Apollonian qualities, manifested in his roles as forensic scientist and judicial representative, are juxtaposed with Dionysian desires for ritualised bloodshed. The audience, harbouring a collective fear of the Beast Within, experiences catharsis via identification with Dexter as Anti-Hero.

For otherwise well-meaning outsiders, feelings of shame or guilt may lead to denial, or ‘turning a blind eye.’ Discussing the prevalence of ‘selective ignorance’ under Hitler’s regime, Webber (2008) declares that ‘Kamm’s theft of innocence from chaste young women obviously falls a long way short of genocide, but the response to each form of tyranny is comparable’ (p. 319). In these scenarios, it would seem that where abuse is perpetrated by a tyrannical leader, dredging up the trauma of the past may induce shame or guilt in bystanders who felt themselves powerless to intervene.

The concept of the werewolf returning to his or her human state upon destruction by the silver bullet has a parallel in the idea of the charismatic leader becoming less influential. The leader becomes more human and less divine upon society’s denunciation of him or her as evil, or upon his or her death or incarceration. Nevertheless, in 2008, even ‘after twice being jailed for paedophilia, Kamm continued to lure the unwavering respect and



loyalty of some 80 followers' (Webber, 2008, p. 355). In 1993, when Kaihla and Laver published their expose of this 'savage messiah' from Quebec, 'three of Rock's wives remain[ed] as devoted to him as ever' and having been allowed conjugal visits, one of his wives 'bore Rock his twenty eighth child in 1991' (p. 287). Clearly, incarceration and the condemnation of a leader by society at large do not necessarily mean the leader's organisation has been read its final rites.

While surrendering independence is an essential aspect of the monstrous regime and a personal choice on the spiritual journey, the unfortunate outcomes are far removed from the goals of spirituality and democracy. Ex-cult members describe themselves as feeling like 'zombies,' 'robots' or 'vegetables' (Kaihla & Laver, 1993, p. 277). However, Webber (2008) notes that:

a common misconception about mind control is that subjects roam about like zombies under a spell, unable to think for themselves. William Kamm was more like a computer virus which had invaded the hard-drives of his victims' minds to corrupt their individuality and reprogram them. By their own consent, thought patterns gradually changed under the influence of Kamm's manipulative reasoning...that's why members of Kamm's cult didn't want to be rescued – they felt in control of the decisions and lifestyle they believed they had chosen of their own free will. (p. 112)

Society does have the legal power to intervene when members of such groups become a danger to themselves or others, yet 'by their very nature, apocalyptic cults shield themselves from the outside world' and 'even when the authorities *do* suspect abuses, it is rarely possible to delve beneath the cloak of secrecy' [*italics in original*] (*ibid.*, p. 284). Thus, in a democratic society, adults are permitted to make their own choices and as Kaihla and Laver speculate, if some 'choose to surrender their independence to a self-styled prophet and authoritarian master, there is little that anyone can do about it' (*ibid.*, p. 283).

In *Fowl Feathered Fox*, by exploiting a collective fear of the savage, brutal, voracious, vicious beast within, I hope to reinforce the idea that in the monster's death throes, we witness not death of the beast, but of the man (and indeed, woman). For example, during climactic scenes in the play, fear of the evil within Rockwell should be replaced by fear for the loss or destruction of the good in Doc Rockwell. Ultimately, we fear for Rockwell as he signifies the universality of the threat from within. Here, an audience is encouraged to empathise with the monster onstage as they recognise that the

indiscriminate and unpredictable werewolf contagion or curse has the capacity to unleash the id in all of us, disengaging it from the civilising force of the superego. Furthermore, by incorporating various generic conventions of horror in the play, I am able to tap into collective adolescent fears about the mutating body and what might 'lie beneath the flesh.' *Fowl Feathered Fox* is clearly a play for a post-pubescent audience. In this sense, every audience member should be able to relate to the adolescent experience of bodily transmogrification as it prepares for sexual initiation, growing hair and enlarging in odd places. This concept is reflected in the play when Sister Mary interrogates Kid over her bloodstained muumuu. Here, an audience is encouraged to empathise with Kid as she grapples with the physical facts of her bodily transformation. As I discuss in the third exegetical essay, Kid is unaware of the existence of menstruation, much like Carrie White. Kid is therefore horrified by the emergence of blood, crying out hysterically, 'I've got no cuts up there... why am I bleeding?' This scenario is made even more uncertain or ambiguous due to the implication that Kid has transported the glass vessel vaginally to the mainland. Furthermore, it would appear that the condemnation of a leader by society does not necessarily mean that leader's organisation has been read its final rites. In the case of Doc Rockwell's regime in *Fowl Feathered Fox*, bystanders feel themselves powerless to intervene, claiming that in a democratic society, adults are permitted to make their own choices. The attitude seems to be that if some choose to surrender their freedom to a self-proclaimed prophet, there is little else that others can do about it.

## **8. Legacy of The Beast**

Of primary concern to the monstrous, narcissistic cult leader is the adulation of his flock, and the knowledge that he remains a necessary facet of their lives. So, while the werewolf may be destroyed by a single silver bullet, the cult leader may be destroyed at the instant his flock willingly reject his authority and regain their independence. Thus, while awareness and education regarding monstrosity in the cultic paradigm continues to develop, these tragic werewolves and their infectious flocks are condemned to kill, exploit and contaminate, perpetuating cycles of vengeful violence. Despite our empathetic regard for the benevolent being without, not until a silver bullet hits its target will the beast on the loose refrain from slaughtering the flock.

Indiscriminate and ruthless, both ravening werewolf and monstrous messiah view their prey as objects, targets, or opportunities rather than unique individuals. Proselytising, as symbolic infection or contagion, mirrors the werewolf's compulsion to infect victims, propagating the cyclical legacy of 'curse.' Scrutinising this cyclical violence reveals how, in the cases of William Kamm and Rock Theriault, a seemingly benign façade concealed the sadistic appetites of a narcissistic monster. In both scenarios, the slow, dreadful emergence of the Dionysian beast within, no longer imprisoned behind the Apollonian façade, presents a tragic conundrum: destroying the predatory monster endangers the benevolent human within. Due to the inculcation of dependence and absolute trust in their followers, heightened by the indoctrination of fear and guilt, the savage, indiscriminate appetites of the cult leader were allowed free reign within the secret isolation of totalitarian woodland 'sanctuaries.'

In *Fowl Feathered Fox*, of primary concern to monstrous, narcissistic leaders is the adulation of various little flocks, and the knowledge that they remain a necessary facet of the life of each individual 'under their spell.' Horrifyingly, despite their blood ties, Levi Salt and Doc Rockwell fail to view their offspring as unique individuals worthy of nurture and care. Rather, they view their youthful 'prey' chiefly as objects, targets and opportunities. Thus, due to the inculcation of dependence and absolute trust in their children, fathers and grandfathers are able to control via the indoctrination of fear and guilt. In the play, the savage appetites of Levi Salt (and by extension, Doc Rockwell) are allowed free reign within the secret isolation of a totalitarian, woodland 'sanctuary.' Initially, Quarantine Island represents a utopian refuge in that the isolated land form acts as a geographical and ideological barrier from the terrors of the 'real world.' Eventually though, the island is revealed as infectious and diseased, much like its former and current inhabitants. Consequently, to reinforce this concept, I have two characters in the play echo one of the most recognisable lines from Shakespeare's oeuvre. In *Hamlet*, Marcellus says to Horatio, 'something is rotten in the state of Denmark!' (1600/ 2002, p. 58). Similarly, in *Fowl Feathered Fox*, I have Margaret and her ghostly mother, Esme Salt, cry: 'something is *rotten* in the Shire of Plankton!' In short, despite our pity for the benevolent 'being without,' not until 'silver bullet' hits 'target' will the indiscriminate and ruthless beast refrain from slaughtering the flock.

## 2. PITY THE PIPER?

### AVENGING ANGELS AND MURDEROUS MAENADS

We know them, if we know them at all, by their acts.

Simon, *Bad Men Do What Good Men Dream*

#### 1. Revenge Tragedy

In this chapter I explore the tragic patterns in myth, folklore and historical events via a psycho-dramaturgical reading of ‘real-life’ revenge tragedies wrought by such infamous charismatic leaders as Charles Manson and David Berg. I show how these charismatic leaders, like the Pied Piper of Hamelin and Dionysus from Greek myth, star as archetypal avenging angels in tragedies of their own devising, firmly believing they are rescuing ‘children’ from authority figures who fail them. I show how these men not only ‘star’ in, but also script, produce and direct something akin to revenge tragedy: orchestrating sensationalistic, ‘real-life’ stage pictures featuring rape, incest, paedophilia and parricide. At the same time, pseudologia fantastica, a system of pathological lies, works to provide a false framework for revenge triggered by betrayal and broken promises, culminating in tragic, blood-soaked climaxes. Thus, for these dualistic ‘anti-heroes,’ drives to vengeance trigger scenes of seduction and savagery.

Janet Clare (2007) has argued that revenge ‘as the infliction of harm in righteous response to perceived injury or injustice, is a universal practice, transcultural and pan-historical,’ manifesting in Judeo-Christian terms as an ‘eye for an eye’ in Exodus (p. 1). Furthermore, she claims that the ‘shockingly spectacular theatre of Renaissance revenge tragedy’ enacts such forms of ‘retaliation’ in acts of bodily mutilation that tends to exceed the original offense. She cites Hamlet’s familiar lines ‘Now I could drink hot blood’ to exemplify the heated passion under which the revenger contemplates retribution (*ibid.*). We could just as easily cite a number of Elizabethan revengers, such as the lesser known Titus Andronicus in Shakespeare’s ‘bloodiest tragedy’ (Bate, 2000, p. 1) whose grief and rage result in murder and cannibalism; or, as Clare also points out, in Kyd’s *The Spanish Tragedy*, where Hieronimo imagines the fate of his son’s murderers that stops ‘just short of devouring them’ (2007, p. 2). Indeed, revenge plays correlate appetite metaphorically with the desire for extreme and murderous vengeance.

The original crime is understood as so extreme that only an increase in retaliatory wounds can restore the balance between parties. It is this sense of original crime that requires punitive retaliation to restore social and familial order that I draw on in my play.

The Elizabethans predicated revenge theatre on the tragedies of Seneca, drawing upon his treatise regarding anger, which aligned the emotion with Bacon's idea of revenge as 'a kind of wild justice' (Clare, 2007; Boyle, 2013). In terms of the conventions of Renaissance revenge tragedies, the influence of Seneca's *Thyestes* can be seen in a number of plays belonging to the genre, most particularly in the establishment of a 'framework' for the gruesome, retaliatory acts depicted onstage (Mellor, 1989, p. 6). For example, in his seminal work on revenge tragedies, Gamini Salgado writes that plays such as *Thyestes*:

have as their subject matter the great crimes of classical antiquity... the crimes themselves are described with horrifying realism and there are detailed accounts of physical torture (though it is probable that Seneca's plays were intended to be recited rather than acted on stage). The theme of blood revenge for murder is heavily emphasised and we also find certain Senecan devices being widely used by his English imitators – characters who unwittingly become accessories to the act of revenge or are tricked into becoming accomplices, the ghosts of the dead clamouring for revenge and many others. (1964, p. 6)

Indeed, in 1594, Shakespeare's *Most Lamentable Romaine Tragedie of Titus Andronicus*, partly based on Seneca's *Thyestes*, titillated English audiences with detailed accounts of violent crimes in a plot driven by blood revenge for murder (Mellor, 1989, p. 7). In 1600, Shakespeare's *Hamlet* titillated audiences yet again with stage pictures of seduction and cruelty as the eponymous Danish prince famously struggles to commit vengeance at Elsinore. Revenge conventions here include a play-with-the-play, themes of betrayal and madness, suicide and a ghostly clamouring for revenge. Furthermore, in keeping with Aristotelian conventions, both *Titus* and *Hamlet* incorporate the notion that the tragic protagonist's *hamartia*, or fatal flaw, essentially leads to their downfall.

Traditionally, revenge tragedy incorporates an element of dark humour. In *Titus Andronicus*, examples of this dark humour include the killing of the fly (3.2), which Jonathan Bate suggests is 'a glorious comic parody of tragic empathy' (1594/ 2000, p.

121). In contemporary re-imaginings of the genre, such as *Kill Bill* (Bender & Tarantino, 2003), while the tragic protagonist is forced to enact vengeance and behave as a detective in order to put an end to a terrible, taboo curse, there is also a clear element of sardonic humour. In an interview, Tarantino agreed that *Kill Bill* was ‘definitely... a very black comedy,’ due to the ‘outrageous’ nature of the violence and the juxtaposition of bloody scenes with self-reflexive devices such as ‘when we hear Nancy Sinatra singing “Bang, bang, my baby shot me down”’ (Phase 9 Entertainment, 2003). Furthermore, Kerrigan notes that ‘Western attitudes to vengeance have for so long been ambivalent that treatments of the subject often develop a comic tonality... sour wit and giggling sadism are recurrent traits of the revenger’ (1996, p. 193). For these reasons, I investigate the blackly comic tonality inherent to revenge tragedy, showing that a consideration of charismatic cult leaders through the lens of comedy sheds light on the nature of self-styled, archetypal ‘avenging angels.’

The case examples presented here find parallels in revenge tragedy, including generic conventions such as ‘a complicated intrigue plot in which the hero is forced to commit murder in order to avenge himself; madness and supernatural agents (ghosts) are also a common feature’ (Worthen, 1996, p. 1309). Typically, the genre incorporates a call to vengeance delivered by a ghostly herald, a detective-like protagonist fuelled by the pursuit of vengeance, and a veritable ocean of bloodshed in the final scenes.

Furthermore, revenge plots tend to hinge on domestic relationships. Aristotle suggests that ‘when the tragic acts come within the limits of close blood relationship, as when brother kills or intends to kill brother or do something else of that kind to him, or son to father or mother to son or son to mother – those are the situations one should look for’ (cited in Worthen, 1996, p. 102). In the case studies I discuss here, avenging angels manufacture false families, figuring themselves as both wounded child and messianic father figure. Motivation includes the desire to ‘save’ fellow wounded children in order to punish authoritarian failure. In most cases, authoritarian failure is also regarded as kind of parental failure. As I will show, parental figures tend to be cast as villains in Dionysian, Piper and cult leader narratives.

As I have indicated above, cult leaders operate as virtual actors, carefully crafting duality, status and emotional affect via a combination of theatrical effects including visual representation. On Dionysus’ tragic stage in Greece, ‘the main characters’ masks were individualized, but the members of the chorus all wore identical masks, giving a

special force to the conflict between the unique claims of the protagonist and the more diffuse claims of his society' (Worthen, 1996, p. 17). Furthermore, Aristotle reminds us that while, in fact, the 'force of tragedy can be felt even without benefit of public performance and actors,' in the production of visual effects, the 'property man's art is even more decisive than that of the poets' (cited in Worthen, 1996, p. 98). In the real-life revenge narratives in question, the symbolic nature of the visuals lends a unique theatrical aesthetic to the interplay of cult leaders and followers, finding patterns and echoes in their counterparts from folklore and Greek myth. Similarly, the verbal and vocal elements of theatre inherent to the tragic plot in Dionysian, Piper and cult leader narratives work to attract attention, inculcate commitment to the vengeful cause and mobilise action. Just as skilful verbal technique furthers the cause of malevolent leaders on vengeful missions, so too does the emotive potential of vengeful songs. Aristotle claims 'the song composition ... is the greatest of the sensuous attractions, and the visual adornment of the dramatic persons can have a strong emotional effect' (*ibid.*). Thus, songs and visuals are, by necessity, blatantly symbolic and intensely memorable in Dionysian mythology, the folkloric tale of Pied Piper and the real-life revenge tragedies wrought by infamous cult leaders.

### **Revenge Tragedy and *Fowl Feathered Fox***

Before turning to the case studies themselves, a brief stocktake of revenge connections in *Fowl Feathered Fox* will establish the pertinence of these examples to my work. *Fowl Feathered Fox* follows the revenge tragedy paradigm as set out here. That is, I base the play on Aristotle's premise that the tragic action will ideally 'come within the limits of close blood relationships, as when brother kills or intends to kill brother or do something else of that kind to him, or son to father or mother to son or son to mother' (cited in Worthen, 1996, p. 102). A ghostly relative also delivers a call to vengeance to a flawed hero. In this scenario, the ghost is Esme Salt, Dr. Deacon Salt's unfortunate wife and Kid's great-grandmother, while the flawed hero is Kid, ably assisted by her brother, Blue Rockwell. Here, Kid is the 'chosen one' or at least figures herself as such. Clearly though, Kid Rockwell is not the only character in *Fowl Feathered Fox* to orchestrate revenge. The litany of crimes revealed in the play's denouement reveal that Doc Rockwell and his mentor, Dr. Deacon Salt, produce 'real-life' stage pictures implying, if not explicitly featuring rape, incest, paedophilia and parricide. Thus, the structure of events in both Kid and Doc Rockwell's self-styled pseudo-narratives follow a tragic

pattern, where a call to vengeance both precedes and follows scenes of seduction and savagery.

Another convention of revenge tragedy I adopt in *Fowl Feathered Fox* is the staging of the play-within-the-play. In 'Cock Forest,' the figure of the avenging angel is adopted by Kid Rockwell in a very literal sense. Dressed 'in a glittery white muumuu and angel wings,' she introduces the play with a sneer, saying, 'I'm Kid Rockwell and I'm The Avenging Angel... I'm also the goddamn playwright.' As is the case with the 'Mouse-Trap Play' in *Hamlet*, 'Cock Forest' functions as an elaborate ruse to force the truth out into the open; in his soliloquy at the close of 2.2, Hamlet reveals that 'the play's the thing/ Wherein [he'll] catch the conscience of the king' (1600/ 2002, p. 84). Here, Kid not only stars in, but also scripts, produces and directs a revenge tragedy. More specifically, in the tradition of meta-theatre, she stages a revenge tragedy *within* a revenge tragedy.

Furthermore, similar to the songs and visuals inherent to the vengeful narratives surrounding the Pied Piper, Dionysus and the malevolent cult leaders discussed here, the songs and visuals embedded within *Fowl Feathered Fox* have an overtly symbolic function. Here, the inclusion of Grieg's *In the Hall of the Mountain King* (1876) functions as a kind of aural motif, enhancing an audience's appreciation of the intertextual links shared by *Fowl Feathered Fox* and the narrative which inspired Grieg's music: Henrik Ibsen's surreal, satirical verse drama, *Peer Gynt* (trans. 1985). Significantly, Grieg's *Mountain King* accompanies onstage images of trolls and goblins, finding a parallel in the eerie, otherworldly tale of the Pied Piper.

## **2. Archetypal Precedent #1: The Pied Piper**

The folklore surrounding the mysterious Pied Piper of Hamelin, as popularised for an English speaking audience in Robert Browning's poem (1842/ 1983), reveals dualistic aspects of the Piper's character. This sense of duality is echoed in the final lines of Browning's work, when the narrator reminds us that: 'whether they pipe us free from rats or from mice, if we've promised them aught, let us keep our promise!' (p. 54). Here, the archetypal Piper functions as both libertarian and potentially retaliatory force. Furthermore, the Pied Piper stands as a charismatic, messianic figure in the same vein, as we shall see, as Dionysus, Charles Manson and David Berg. Essentially, I argue that the Pied Piper enacts 'revenge by proxy' on the parents of Hamelin by using their



children as surrogates. This notion of revenge by proxy will be significant in both these case studies and also in my play, as I show below.

In the revenge narrative surrounding the Pied Piper, a broken promise acts as a catalyst for the seduction, salvation and savagery of children. In his dual role as scourge and saviour, the enigmatic ratcatcher promises deliverance from Hamelin's plague of rats. The broken financial promise of the authorities, however, elicits the Piper's wordless promise of deliverance to the town's children. Essentially, the Piper, with his unique skills, seduces the children with assurances of a magical, post-apocalyptic future far from the abusive, apathetic behaviour of their parents. Conversely, while the Piper promises salvation, the implication is that the children will be submitted to perverse and savage acts (Rosenman, 2000, pp. 39-41). Thus, betrayal by Hamelin's smug, self-satisfied authority figures acts as a clear trigger or catalyst for the Piper's vengeful quest.

Atypically, the Pied Piper is a charismatic leader characterised by his mastery of non-verbal communication. Basing his ambiguous script on intuition, passion and instinct rather than cerebral prowess: the Pied Piper's lack of verbosity contrasts with his prodigious musical talent and seemingly telepathic communication with rats and children. According to the academic Edward Dudley Hume Johnson, in Browning's world (and he includes the Pied Piper here):

the prophets and artists, the lovers and doers of great deeds are never primarily remarkable for intellectual power. Their supremacy is the result of a genius for experiencing life intuitively. They possess a phenomenal capacity for passionate emotion, combined with a childlike reliance on instinct. These qualities put them in conflict with conventionalized modes of social conduct. (1952, pp. 92-3)

As Stanley Rosenman (2000) notes more recently in relation to the Pied Piper and malevolent cults, a leader articulates 'collective fantasies into a quasi-rational ideology that seems to make sense out of the members' baffling life experiences... often taking on apocalyptic tones, the ideology entails the annihilation of allegedly insidious, polluted antagonists' (p. 30). In conflict with social convention, the Piper's willingness to engage rats and children in their fatal seduction is prompted not via dialogue, but by intuition, emotion and instinct: in other words, reactions associated with affective rather than rational responses.

Furthermore, if in seducing first the rats, then the children, the Piper is a hero who causes suffering, he is also a suffering hero, just as Dionysus, 'the strange god, the gay reveller, the cruel hunter, the lofty inspirer: was also the sufferer' (Hamilton, 1942/ 2011, p. 63). In promising to lead the children 'to a joyous land/ Joining the town and just at hand/ Where waters gushed and fruit-trees grew/ And flowers put forth a fairer hue/ And everything was strange and new' (Browning, 1842/ 1983, p. 16), the Piper offers the children false promise of a brighter future. In reality, of course, he enacts his revenge by proxy: punishing authority figures by seducing children through the mountainous orifice into a dark, sealed cave.

One might posit that in 'rescuing' the children of Hamelin from their apathetic, perhaps secretly antagonistic parents, the Pied Piper is avenging them, performing a benevolent rather than malevolent act. Rosenman (2000) proposes that 'the unconscious organiser of this story is the antagonism between parents and children. The rats that are underfoot everywhere, eat everything, make messes, and torment the citizens, stand for the detested children' (p. 35). In Hamelin, 'after the children's march begins, the parents stand by idly... even as the children proceed to the edge of town, no one calls out to lock the town gates' (*ibid.*, p. 39). Further, Olssen proposes that the Piper represents the children's 'big brother,' providing a possible motive for siblicidal vengeance owing to an 'older sibling's resenting the loss of his childhood when saddled with the younger siblings' (1994, p. 96). However, in this scenario, the Pipers' desire to subjugate the children is, at least initially, a direct attack on 'inadequate, uninterested, burnt out, and/or malicious' parents (*ibid.*). In this reading of the Pied Piper, the children's disillusionment stems from parental failure in the forms of apathy and antagonism, lending weight to the Piper's claim to vengeance.

Seducing the children of Hamelin into the mountain, where everything is 'strange and new,' the Piper's mysterious intent is cloaked in false promises of 'salvation.' Most versions of the narrative depict the mysterious stranger offering the children salvation in retribution for the broken promise of the authorities. Rosenman (2000) argues, 'in this apocalyptic tale of social disintegration, broken promises, revenge, captivity and death, the irremediably damaged children lose all hope after entering their sunless environs' (p. 36). In following their adulated leader, the children of Hamelin 'forgo any opportunity to develop self-reliance and to become a self-ruling group... although promising them euphoria and protection, the leader delivers enslavement (*ibid.*).

Essentially, once the children are sealed within the orifice, hopeful expectation turns to disillusionment. Furthermore, like abused children who deny parental cruelty, Rosenman argues that the children ‘turn to the tormentor for solace’ (p. 43). In short, whether the children hope to avenge themselves, or trust they will be avenged by repentant parents or guilt-ridden authorities, here, a desire for vengeance continues to operate in a cyclical fashion.

In terms of staging and theatricality, the pied clothes of the Piper represent the plurality of his role, his status as an outsider and particularly, his exciting visual appeal, especially to children. In a sense, as scourge and saviour, the Piper is also a ‘turncoat,’ inhabiting this role in a very visual sense, while the image of a heraldic, mysterious figure in colourful clothing also recalls the roles of conjurer, troubadour and ringmaster. In terms of costuming, the word ‘pied,’ referring to ‘markings of two or more colours’ (Steavenson, 1998, p.1), can enhance the representation of a leader’s ideological multiplicity. In terms of the outlandish outfits often favoured by cult leaders, ‘the hodgepodge conveys the discrete elements of many religious and philosophic systems loosely woven together by the cult leader out of his affective requirements to justify the yearning for power’ (Rosenman, 2000, p. 42). In short, visually, the Piper’s appeal hinges on his difference, his ‘otherness.’ As Rosenman notes further, ‘the Piper’s gay colours... belie the grim dolorousness of his existence’ while the ‘uniformly grey or brown coats of the rats connote the failed individuation of the children’ (*ibid.*). Thus, the Piper’s mosaic clothing serves to garner attention, establish status, hint at plurality and, at least initially, inspire reverence.

### **3. Archetypal Precedent #2: Dionysus**

Whereas the Pied Piper relied on his magic flute, Dionysus, ‘the tragic god’ (Hamilton, 1942/ 2011, p. 63), used a potent combination of something akin to ‘sex, drugs and rock’n’roll’ to seduce a devoted band of mainly female followers. These followers, known as maenads, became Dionysus’ violently enthusiastic accomplices. Traditionally associated with intoxication and sexuality, Dionysus forged a narrative littered with riotous sensuality, religious fervour and regicidal vengeance. Dionysian rituals echoed the god’s essentially tragic nature; his worship invoked both ‘freedom and ecstatic joy’ and ‘savage brutality’ (*ibid.*, p. 59). The licentious, orgiastic quality of the Dionysian experience was enhanced by the incorporation of religious rites and rituals, often

involving the slaughtering of animals. Furthermore, the god Pan, traditionally a companion of Dionysus, was, in Greek mythology, a god of flocks and nature, and especially pastoral and forested land. Pan played the pan pipes, drawing a parallel with the Pied Piper, who invoked terror in a similar fashion using two flocks of his own: first the rats, and then the children of Hamelin. Pan's association with flocks and ability to invoke terror, or 'panic' (hence the etymology of his name), by playing music in the rustling bushes, draws a parallel with the 'terror in the secluded woodlands' idea favoured by cult leaders, as discussed previously in the first exegetical essay.

Fittingly, the myths surrounding the god of tragedy reveal a number of parallels in the generic conventions of tragedy, but more specifically, in the conventions of revenge tragedy. Dionysus enacts regicidal vengeance twice, first upon King Lycurgus, who is destroyed for opposing Dionysian worship and also, more spectacularly, upon Pentheus, after 'Dionysus showed himself in his most terrible aspect,' making the women mad. Consequently, 'the women thought Pentheus a wild beast, a mountain lion, and they rushed to destroy him, his mother first' (Hamilton, 1942/ 2011, p. 60). Numerous instances of madness litter the Dionysian plot, as do encounters with the supernatural in the form of gods, goddesses, shades (the ghosts of Hades) and magic, adhering to the conventions of revenge tragedy. Here, Dionysian instances of seduction, salvation and savagery find an echo in the macabre tale of the Pied Piper of Hamelin.

Dionysian religion relied on the god's divinely charismatic authority and violent influence over followers. Appealing to humanity's 'love of mystery and that proneness to revert to savagery which seems to be innate in most men' (Frazer, 1960, p. 509), Dionysus harnessed the enthusiastic loyalty of smitten observers, who killed or died in frenzied rituals performed in the god's honour. Similarly, in the real-life experience of charismatic groups, Lindholm argues that 'members feel lost in total love, and are capable of dying, or killing, for the sake of the group' (1990, p. 72). Dying and killing were frequent aspects of Dionysian worship, not only was 'the rending and devouring of live bulls and calves... a regular feature of the Dionysiac rites,' in a number of places, 'instead of an animal, a human being was torn in pieces at the rites of Dionysus' (Frazer, 1960, p. 516). Charisma as a by-product of Dionysus' divinity thus worked to invoke violent desires and actions in his vengeful surrogates.

Parental failure for Dionysus, god of the vine and mystic ecstasy, consists primarily of parental absence. Dionysus, the original ‘born again’ deity, received numerous triggers to vengeance, yet the first stems from the god’s premature birth. In requesting from Zeus a vision of the lightning god in his entire, burning glory, Dionysus’ mother, Semele, unwittingly condemns herself to death, thereby prematurely aborting and abandoning her unborn child. In a sense, for Dionysus, his mother’s request for a kind of ‘orgasm to end all orgasms,’ and consequent failure to bring him to full term, is the first in a string of authoritarian failures. Furthermore, although Zeus secretes Dionysus in his thigh to await successful, full term birth, he later betrays Dionysus in failing to protect his son from the malevolence of Hera, Zeus’ wife and thus Dionysus’ ‘evil step-mother.’ According to mythologist Edith Hamilton (1942/ 2011), Hera’s jealousy indirectly causes Semele’s death, prompting Zeus to reject the fruit of his adultery. Zeus passes the child on to Hermes, who in turn abandons Dionysus, bequeathing him to surrogate parents, who are driven mad by a vengeful Hera. Revelation of her step-son’s existence thus triggers Hera’s call to vengeance, directly opposing Dionysus’ call to vengeance received in disappointing, disturbing childhood experiences of jealousy, fury and rejection.

Songs and visuals in the Dionysian mythos represent both ecstasy and savagery, working to signify duality, status and emotive effect. Dionysus, ‘personification of the vine and of the exhilaration produced by the fruit of the grape’ is also traditionally associated with duality, tragic drama and theatre in general, resurrection, the bull, shapeshifters and vegetation, including ivy, corn harvest and the winnowing fan as well as the ‘wild dances, thrilling music, and tipsy excess’ that characterised his ecstatic worship’ (Frazer, 1960, p. 509). Among the ‘surviving monuments of antiquity,’ images of Dionysus typically invoke the bovine, as ‘on one statuette he appears clad in a bull’s hide, the head, horns, and hoofs hanging down behind,’ while in another, ‘he is represented as a child with clusters of grapes round his brow, and a calf’s head, with sprouting horns, attached to the back of his head’ (*ibid.*, p. 513). In examples from visual art, followers mimic the representation of their god as the ‘Bacchanals of Thrace wore horns’ and the image of a ‘wand, tipped with a pine-cone, [was] commonly carried by the god or his worshippers’ (*ibid.*, p. 514). Dionysus was also an archetypal shapeshifter, as he evaded the assaults of his enemies by ‘turning himself into various shapes, assuming the likeness successively of Zeus and Cronos, of a young man, of a

lion, a horse, and a serpent' (*ibid.*, p. 511). Frantic shouts and bloodthirsty cries, while vocal rather than specifically verbal, are characteristic of Dionysian worship, as is the concept of resurrection, espoused in rituals surrounding the deity of spring. In the ritual worship of Dionysus, festivals were held at which 'the passion of Dionysus was represented in every detail' and all that the god had 'done or suffered in his last moments was enacted before the eyes of his worshippers, who tore a live bull to pieces with their teeth and roamed the woods with frantic shouts' (*ibid.*, p. 512-3).

### **Archetypal Precedents and *Fowl Feathered Fox***

A number of parallels exist between the tale of the Pied Piper and *Fowl Feathered Fox*, not least in the themes of seduction, salvation and savagery. While the Pied Piper enacts 'revenge by proxy' on the parents of Hamelin, Doc Rockwell, and by extension, Dr. Deacon Salt, enact revenge by proxy on the society that has failed them by 'monsterring' children within the microcosm of Quarantine Island. As Doc, Deacon and Sister Mary would have them believe, the Rockwell children are merely an assorted collection of abandoned children: lucky to have been 'rescued' by Sister Mary and raised by Doc, their philanthropic father figure. In reality, with the exception of Kid, the Rockwell children are the illegitimate incest children of fraternal twins: Doc Rockwell and Sister Mary. As the children discover, of course, their parent's names are actually Chance and Sheila Salt: themselves the product of the non-consensual, incestuous union between Margaret and her father, Deacon Salt. To complicate the family's genealogy even further, Deacon Salt is in fact, Levi Salt, posing as the identical twin brother he murdered. In short, in the supposed absence of a nuclear, biological family, the Rockwell children function as an 'undifferentiated mass of siblings... [competing] for the group's and/ or cult leader's approval' (Markowitz & Halperin, 1984, p. 147).

In *Fowl Feathered Fox*, costumes function not only to imply the Rockwell's marginalised status in the microcosmic Shire of Plankton, but also to differentiate the leader from his followers. While the Rockwell children wear 'filthy, threadbare muumuus,' Doc presents himself in a fabulous array of audacious, provocative outfits. Essentially, as in the case of the Pied Piper, Doc's visual appeal hinges on his difference or 'otherness.' Further, to reinforce his figurative representation as a type of fowl, I have him adopt the gaudy trappings of a peacock in the 'Cock Forest' scene. Finally, in terms of the musical elements of production, the Piper's phallic pipe finds an onstage

echo in Doc Rockwell's saxophone. As a staple instrument of the jazz ensemble and brass band, the saxophone is equally favoured by orchestras and rock bands. So, while the Piper's instrument is typically depicted as a kind of magical flute, the saxophone perhaps suggests a wider range of cultural associations in our contemporary context, especially those relating to 'cool' jazz and 'hip' rock ensembles.

Similarly, various aesthetic elements surrounding the Dionysian mythos work to signify duality, status and emotive effect, lending a uniquely recognisable quality to the interplay between leader and followers. Just as music and imagery inherent to the Piper's tale work to signify thrilling euphoria and false hope, Dionysian songs and visuals inspire a range of responses from the ecstatic to the feverish and frenetic. Like Dionysus, Doc Rockwell in *Fowl Feathered Fox* engenders ecstatic vocal reactions from his 'liberated' followers, exemplified in the scene where the children exclaim 'you rock, Doc Rockwell. How can *one* man rock our socks so?' Here, vocal and verbal elements of 'performance' work to instil fear and guilt in the targets of retaliatory vengeance, as in the scene where Sister Mary, actually Sheila Salt, returns to Quarantine Island. Furthermore, the vicious, spontaneous qualities of Dionysus and his maenads find a clear echo in this scene when Sheila is savagely mauled to death by her family. As we shall see, like enraptured children following the Pied Piper, Charles Manson's children obeyed and accepted his directives without question, and, like Dionysian maenads, carried them out despite their sadistic nature.

#### **4. Case Study #1: Charles Manson**

It is fairly common knowledge that in 1969, 'Charles Manson and his "Family" of followers killed innocent people in an attempt to start a counterrevolution in the United States' (Atchison & Heide, 2011, p. 771). 1960s America represented an era in which 'young people across the nation were rebelling against conservative values and norms by growing their hair long, rejecting traditional dating graces, and demanding rights for minorities, women, and homosexuals' (Atchison & Heide, 2011, p. 772). As one Manson biographer claims, 'heading swiftly to San Francisco in March 1967, Manson was greeted by the peace and love brigade with open arms and legs' (Wells, 2009, p. 3). While it is thought that 'the Manson murders brought the end to an era of free love, peace, and happiness' (Atchison & Heide, 2011, p. 772), in the original context of the 1960s, Manson was a 'hit' with disillusioned young people seeking answers to the

existential crises raised by widespread rebellion against social norms and traditional social behaviours. Like the Pied Piper of Hamelin, Charles Manson functioned as archetypal avenging angel to disenchanted flower children to the degree that his followers 'ended up fighting for him, stealing for him, even killing for him... and when they finally ended up facing the full retribution of law and state, their love for Manson remained unabated' (Wells, 2009, p. 2). In this scenario, Manson's followers thus also resemble Dionysian maenads as the ideal of free love was transmogrified into savage brutality and hateful acts of violence.

Manson espoused a violent, amoral and frequently contradictory ideology, retreating into philosophical abstractions to explain vengeful acts. This tragic troubadour taught his followers an amoral system of philosophy, which provided complete justification for their acts. According to Wells (2009), 'the racial divides that existed within the microcosm of jail helped lay the foundations for the Family's unbridled racism' (p. 3). In addition, a Family associate insisted '*Fear turns Charlie on,*' as Manson apparently espoused the belief that 'fear was the same thing as awareness' [*italics in original*] (Bugliosi, 1992, p. 320). Another associate said when questioned:

I'm scared shitless (of Manson). I'm petrified of him. He wouldn't hesitate for a second. If it takes him ten years, he'd find that little boy of mine and carve him to pieces. (*ibid.*, p. 152)

Further, in a revealing statement, when questioned about Hitler, Manson said that 'Hitler was a tuned-in guy who had levelled the karma of the Jews' (*ibid.*, p. 317). Like Hitler, Manson 'believed in the three basic tenets of Nietzsche's philosophy: women are inferior to men; the white race is superior to all other races; it is not wrong to kill if the end is right' (*ibid.*, p. 641). Manson's philosophical abstractions thus cloaked an amoral, frequently contradictory ideology in which fear and hate were central themes.

Generally, fear and anxiety regarding the 'End Times' provides a solid basis from which a religious leader can frighten and coerce their converts into acquiescence. Employing the rhetoric of revenge and resurrection, Manson offered his followers false promise of a post-apocalyptic future in which they too, like the children of Hamelin, would be secreted in an orifice within the earth. Reference to a 'bottomless pit' in the Book of Revelations was supposedly a biblical reference to a pit on Spahn's Movie Ranch at Death Valley, the place where Manson would take his Family to await the outcome of Armageddon. According to a Manson Family associate:



Charlie was going to lead them to the desert... There was a hole in Death Valley, only Charlie knew where it was, but deep down inside, in the centre of the earth, there was a whole civilization. And Charlie was going to take the 'family,' the chosen few, and they were going to go to this bottomless pit and live there. (Bugliosi, 1992, p. 107)

Post apocalypse, Manson's Family of '144,000 as predicted in the Bible - a pure, white master race - would emerge from the bottomless pit' (*ibid.*, p. 333). Manson's 'need, amounting almost to a compulsion, to challenge the strongest authority' (*ibid.*, p. 199) informed this vengeful pseudo-narrative, where antagonistic authorities were destined to meet a violent fate on Judgement Day. Also, locating themselves on an abandoned movie set lent an eerie sense of the staged and stylised to the narratives concocted there.

Aimed at a global audience, Manson's revenge narrative revolved around a hatred of authority figures, beginning with his mother. While one police witness testified that 'Charlie had two enemies...the police and the niggers, in that order' (Bugliosi, 1992, p. 144), it could be argued that Manson's first enemy was his mother. Manson and his mother 'seemed drawn together, yet unable to stand each other for any length of time' (*ibid.*, p. 190). Interestingly, when examined by a psychiatrist in 1955, his 'much abbreviated version of his past' included the claim that he had first been sent to an institution for 'being mean to [his] mother' (*ibid.*). Manson apparently 'had a horrendous upbringing,' revealing that:

his mother was an alcoholic... [who] once sold him as a baby for a pitcher of beer. An uncle retrieved him a week later. Eventually rejected again by his mother, Manson was in and out of boys' homes for most of his childhood. (Bickel, 2009)

Further, Manson claimed openly that he experienced 'more rejection from his mother and family than love or acceptance' (Atchison & Heide, 2011, p. 783). Betrayal in the form of abandonment and rejection by his mother may thus have prompted the delusional, vengeful desires of the young Charles Manson, exacerbated when institutionalised in the Indianapolis School for Boys, where Manson faced 'what he called the worst place of confinement he had ever experienced' (Atchison & Heide, 2011, p. 784). Manson was apparently 'abused within 3 hours of intake procedures' and later, 'beaten by a supervisor with a leather strap' (*ibid.*). In another instance, Manson was 'forcibly raped by four schoolmates... when discovered by a supervisor, the attackers were told to quit horsing around and leave the area' (*ibid.*). As these examples demonstrate, betrayal by an authority figure, in this case, the anonymous supervisor,

may have acted as catalysts in the production of Manson's anger, shame and further, the development of his now infamous revenge plot.

Charismatic power played a central role in the promotion of Charles Manson's vengeful social ambitions and the harnessing of his Family's willingness to act without doubt or remorse. Manson's charisma enabled him to divine the particular needs of potential converts and 'supply at least a semblance of it, whether it was a father surrogate, a Christ figure, a need for acceptance and belonging, or a leader in leaderless times' (Bugliosi, 1992, p. 483). For any cult leader, 'having charisma is perhaps most useful during the stage of cult formation' as 'at the time a person is under the sway of charisma the effect is very real,' however, 'in reality, charisma does nothing more than create a certain worshipful reaction to an idealised figure in the mind of the one who is smitten' (Tobias & Lalich, 1994, p. 68). Thus, as Bugliosi notes, in an 'observable pattern... Manson managed to get something from almost everyone with whom he associated' (1992, p. 198).

Bugliosi argues that Charles Manson was not a Pied Piper in the sense of universal appeal but rather, he attracted individuals who 'had within them a deep-seated hostility toward society and everything it stood for which pre-existed their meeting [him]' (1992, p. 653). Like Dionysus and his maenads, however, Manson's acts of vengeance were performed via mostly female recruited surrogates. Manson seemed to have a unique power to persuade '*others to murder for him*, most of them young girls who went out and savagely murdered total strangers at his command, with relish and gusto, and with no evident signs of guilt or remorse' [italics in original] (*ibid.*). The majority of Manson's followers were:

easily led and impressionable young people. Many were middle-class white girls, librarians, clerks, students, university graduates, and teachers. They provided easy guru-fodder for Manson. (*Murder in Mind*, 1997, p. 16)

Later, one of Manson's 'girls,' Susan Atkins (convicted of murder), reveals the entrancing power of his verbal utterances, claiming that 'she followed his orders without question...he was their father, their leader, their love' (Bugliosi, 1992, p. 107). Cult members' zeal in following the leader is evinced not only by what the members will subject themselves to, such as suicide, but also by what 'cult members are willing to do to outsiders at the behest of the leader, such as in the crimes committed by

members of the Manson family' (Salande & Perkins, 2011, p. 388). Reflecting upon his crimes, Manson claimed that 'if you keep pushing something off on a person, pretty soon that person stops fighting the reputation and becomes everything he is accused of being... you start to think, "Fuck them... if that's what they think I am, and I have to bear that cross, I got nothin' to lose in being all they think I am"' (Emmons, 1986, pp. 47-8). During a ten year jail term for fraud in the early 1960s, Manson began to study mind control and psychology and became 'highly adept at manipulating certain personalities for his own ends' (Wells, 2009, p. 3). Thus, while seen as 'little more than a freak by fellow inmates, Manson was left alone to read, write and fester' (*ibid.*).

Manson refined his projected persona of vain, self-absorbed tragic hero, deflecting blame back at authorities by aligning himself with a mirror, recalling the myth of Narcissus. In this myth, falling in love with one's own image is seen as punishment for being incapable of loving another (Baxter, 2007). Freud designates narcissism as 'a state in which one's body or ego as a whole is "cathected," or taken as an object of desire' (cited in Eagleton, 1983, p. 154). Further, he posits that formation of an ego-ideal thus becomes 'the target of the self-love which was enjoyed in childhood by the actual ego... the subject's narcissism makes its appearance displaced on to this new ideal ego, which, like the infantile ego, finds itself possessed of every perfection that is of value' (Freud, 1914, in Rivkin & Ryan, 1998, p. 151). This ideal ego is then 'the substitute for the lost narcissism of his childhood in which he was his own ideal' (*ibid.*). In defending his actions in court, Manson claimed 'I am only what lives inside each and every one of you... I am only what you made me... I am only a reflection of you' (Bugliosi, 1992, p. 526). Here, Manson figured himself as a mirror to society or to the world at large, claiming, 'I have stayed a child while I have watched your world grow up... *You made your children what they are... These children that come at you with knives, they are your children. You taught them. I didn't teach them. I just tried to help them stand up*' [italics in original] (*ibid.*, p. 525). In encouraging his followers to reject their biological family, shed their egos and confront the taboos of patricide and matricide, Manson metaphorically severed and swapped his follower's umbilical cords: from biological parents to Manson himself. Of Manson's female followers, Bugliosi (1992) notes:

Each was, in her own way, a pretty girl. But there was a sameness about them that was much stronger than their individuality. I'd notice it again

later that afternoon, in talking to other female members of the Family. Same expressions, same patterned responses, same tone of voice, same lack of distinct personality. The realization came with a shock; they reminded me less of human beings than Barbie dolls. (p. 179)

In this scenario, the beatific smiles of killer Barbie dolls reveal a lack of individuation, a 'shedding of the ego' for followers. In a revealing episode, a Family member 'had a child by [Manson]... the whole Family participating in the delivery, Manson himself biting through the umbilical cord' (*ibid.*, p. 223). One member of the Family was overheard speaking to another, stating, 'I've finally reached the point where I can kill my parents' (*ibid.*, p. 179). To explain this overt disregard of the parricide taboo, sociologist and critic Max Weber proposes the theory that followers recognise in their leader 'supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities,' translating into 'complete personal devotion to the possessor of the quality' (cited in Eisenstadt, 1968, pp. 48-9). Thus, complete personal devotion in the case of Manson's flock involved their acceptance of and participation in their leader's convoluted, apocalyptic revenge narrative and violent desire for retribution, both on personal, familial terms and in the wider social context.

The seduction scenes in Manson's revenge tragedy were violently sensuous, orgiastic, intoxicating affairs based on false promises, fear, coercion and accompanied by rock'n'roll soundtracks. In the sexual seduction of his 'family,' Charles Manson employed fear and coercion to develop and maintain savage control over fleshly orifices, simultaneously uniting and conquering whilst offering false promises of salvation. Figuring himself not simply as divine emissary or Chosen One, rather, Manson actually claimed to *be* Jesus Christ and God, (as well as the Devil) (Bugliosi, 1992, p. xi), allowing him complete sexual control over his followers. As Tobias and Lalich (1994) explain, 'in cults where the leader is regarded as God, sex with him or her may be interpreted and rationalized as spiritually beneficial' (p. 173). Just as in the tale of the Pied Piper, 'control over the anal sphincter, that milestone of individuation' marks an ego boundary, and losing this control acts as a harbinger of disillusionment (Rosenman, 2000, p. 42). Charles Manson's first sexual experiences were characterised by sodomy and violent coercion. Less than a month before a parole hearing in February, 1952, Manson 'took a razor blade and held it against another boy's throat while he sodomized him' (Bugliosi, 1992, p. 189). By August of that year, Manson had 'committed eight serious disciplinary offenses,' three of which involved violent,

homosexual attacks (*ibid.*). At the same time, Manson could also stage alternate charismatic personalities. Treading the boards of a real-life stage, Manson was a consummate performer with an uncanny ability to engage an audience. By 1961, at age twenty-six, Manson had apparently ‘become something of an actor’ (*ibid.*, p. 195). For example, an evaluation by prison staff in that year noted that:

[Manson] hides his loneliness, resentment and hostility behind a facade of superficial ingratiation... An energetic, young-appearing person whose verbalization flows quite easily, he gestures profusely and can dramatize situations to hold the listener’s attention. (*ibid.*)

Charismatic, theatrical verbal facility thus characterised Manson both in and out of institutionalised contexts.

Manson was highly skilled in drawing attention and sustaining faith in his delusional revenge plot, employing visual spectacle in epic proportions. Like Dionysus and the Piper, Manson ensured he was visually distinguishable from his throng of disciples. While his followers wore shabby, communal, recycled clothes, Manson himself wore ‘fringed buckskins, which were not inexpensive’ (Bugliosi, 1992, p. 183). The ‘most widely publicised image of Manson’ (*ibid.*, p. 22, photographic essay), is remarkable for the wild, wide-open eyes and cross carved between his brows. The consummate actor, Manson played the role of avenging angel with relish, staging a global revenge denouement via his performative attitude toward media and courtroom. His animalistic performances were legendary, as an observer once noted of Manson:

the electricity was almost pouring out of him. His hair was on end. His eyes were wild. The only thing I can compare it to... is that he was just like an animal in a cage. (*ibid.*, p. 340)

During his murder trial, Manson ‘trimmed his beard to a neat fork and completely shaved his head, because, he told newsmen, “I am the Devil and the Devil always has a bald head”’ (*ibid.*, p. 594). Chillingly, one of Manson’s girls reluctantly declared to a packed courtroom, having previously been removed for disruptive conduct, ‘we should be able to be present at this play here’ (*ibid.*, p. 406). It seemed to Manson’s followers that they were merely taking part ‘in a play,’ perhaps due to their leader’s skill in sustaining their faith in his charade of innocence.

The real-life revenge tragedy of the Manson Family was ‘aesthetically’ enhanced by drug use and shared musical experiences as well as the carefully crafted language of

persuasion. During the regular orgies staged at Spahn Ranch for the benefit of guests, Manson worked as an artist sculpting in naked flesh, choreographing orgies:

arranging the bodies artistically, directing who should do what to whom and how. There were no holds barred – Manson encouraged both sexes to perform acts that were unnatural to them as this would set them ‘free.’ Every woman who joined the Family was initiated... first with a ‘tab’ of LSD and then with a few hours of sex. (*Murder in Mind*, 1997, pp. 14-5)

Here, Charles Manson’s apparent ‘verbal diarrhoea,’ accompanied by the dramatisation of situations to maintain the attention of an institutionalised audience highlights the development of a unique verbosity enhanced by his intrinsic charisma and understanding of individual need and desire. Furthermore, for Manson, hallucinogenic drugs were ‘an important device for unlocking troubled minds, and bending them his way,’ furthermore, ‘LSD’s ability to desensitise the psyche to every imaginable horror was hugely appealing to Manson’s darker side’ (Wells, 2009, p. 5).

Music, used as a seductive tool and later, a prophetic text in Manson’s revenge plot, was a personal source of both fanatical obsession and jealous frustration. The Beatles’ *White Album* was both soundtrack for revenge and key prophetic text in Manson’s tragic narrative, interpreted at will to provide justification for apocalyptic violence. A frustrated musician who ‘failed to make the big time, Manson numbered among his targets those who had’ (Bugliosi, 1992, p. 39, photographic essay). Dennis Wilson of The Beach Boys, a Manson Family associate, claimed ‘he liked the “spontaneity” of Charlie’s music,’ but added that ‘Charlie never had a musical bone in his body’ (*ibid.*, p. 339). In 1961, Manson claimed that he had ‘never settled upon a religious formula for his beliefs’ and was ‘seeking an answer to his question in the new mental health cult known as Scientology’ (*ibid.*, p. 195). This all-consuming interest in Scientology was later mirrored in Manson’s fanaticism for ‘practising his guitar’ (*ibid.*, p. 196). Mary Brunner, the first member of Manson’s family, was recruited, as were others, as the panhandling itinerant ‘sat on the steps of the Sather gate entrance to the University of California, playing his guitar’ (*ibid.*, p. 221). Later, as ‘Beatlemania’ swept America, Manson’s obsessions extended to include the Liverpoolian quartet, yet ‘there was more than a little jealousy in his reaction... he told numerous people that, given the chance, he could be much bigger than the Beatles’ (*ibid.*, p. 197). The lyrics and indeed, ‘hidden lyrics,’ of The Beatles’ *White Album* were, ‘he told his followers, direct communication to him, Charlie/ JC’ (*ibid.*, p. 328). For Manson, music seemed to provoke both

fanaticism and jealous fury, functioning as both seductive device and vengeful manuscript.

Manson thus clearly exhibited *pseudologia fantastica*, pathologically lying to followers and antagonists alike (Birch, Kelln, & Aquino, 2006; Hare, 1993). As noted by Healy and Healy (1915) in their seminal work on *pseudologia fantastica*, ‘all pathological liars have a purpose, i.e., to decorate their own person, to tell something interesting, and an ego motive is always present... they all lie about something they wish to possess or be’ (p. 16). In essence, Manson’s lies worked to create a starring role in the apocalyptic drama set to take place on a world stage based on the type of invented personal success Appel (cited in Rosenman, 2000, p. 41) notes is common to ‘self-defined messiahs of malevolent cults.’

The power of charisma plays a central role in the promotion of a malevolent cult leader’s socially mobile ambitions. In his seminal work on the subject of charisma, German sociologist Max Weber defines charisma as ‘an exceptional quality in an individual who, though appearing to possess supernatural, providential, or extraordinary powers, succeeds in gathering disciples around him’ (1963, p. 3). While *pseudologia fantastica* works to project a leader’s social ambitions onto the public sphere, a leader’s charismatic qualities work to galvanize the complete commitment of followers. A leader’s charismatic, worship-inspiring qualities assist in their manipulation or ‘tailoring’ of follower’s thought patterns. Possible effects of this manipulation include: the quashing of doubt, the establishment of absolute commitment to a leader’s destructive motives and the inculcation of retributive, vengeful desires. Furthermore, characteristic of the cultic paradigm is the ‘loss of normal ego boundaries in a sense of profound merger with the leader and the group’ (Wilson & Kwileck, 2003, p. 30). The cult experience ‘taps into unconscious attachment needs that motivate and direct the cult member’s behaviour... [and] an intense process of dissociating and manipulating experiences set the stage for an ego regression’ (Salande & Perkins, 2011, p. 384). This ‘setting of the stage,’ while finding a parallel in the theatrical paradigm, also blurs the boundaries between individual and group, enabling a leader to harness the thought patterns of their followers. Clearly, a follower’s absolute commitment to a malevolent leader involves the manufacturing of that follower’s willingness to act without doubt or remorse. Manufacturing a semblance of unity, a charismatic leader thus creates a self-styled, ‘false family,’ in which he inhabits the role of messianic father. Further,

according to LeRoy, a clinical psychologist, ‘cult leaders work among the isolated, lonely, oppressed, and depressed... [to offer] answers and promise purpose, meaning and freedom from society’s way’ (2004, p. 2). Clearly, when a cult leader promises hope, albeit false hope of salvation and redemption, the offer can seem too good to refuse.

## **5. Case Study #2: David Berg**

David Berg was the son and grandson of ordained ministers in mainstream Protestant churches. Trained as an itinerant evangelist himself, he founded an alternative religious movement in the 1960s, a group of counterculture young people who for a time received the blessing of even such Evangelical icons as Billy Graham. Before long, however, Berg’s group (known variously over four decades as ‘The Family International’, ‘Teens for Christ,’ the ‘Children of God’ and the ‘Family of Love’) signified to the public a highly sexualized religious environment that promoted sexual acts between and with children (Lattin, 2007, 1-3). Indeed, as David Riches argues, with Berg at its centre, the ‘Family of Love’s charismatic leadership’ was its ‘central cultural feature’ (2010, p. 781). Thus, similar to Manson, David Berg reflects both sexual and familial dysfunction in his revenge narrative. However, while Charles Manson had ‘found a new profession: pimping,’ early in his career (1958), his success would never quite match Berg’s prowess in the field of prostitution (Bugliosi, 1992, p. 192). Berg’s use of prostitution for religious recruitment became a global phenomenon. According to Lattin, it was among the ‘mirror balls of London’s swinging social scene that the Lord gave Berg his most infamous revelation... Berg was to become God’s pimp’ (2007, p. 18). Arguably, Berg’s successful leadership owed much to his understanding of, and participation in, the youthful social milieu of America in the 1970’s: nightclubs and discotheques were ‘prime mission territory for Berg, a prophet who definitely liked his drink’ (*ibid.*, p. 68). The ‘Law of Love,’ a central tenet of the Family’s belief system, and the consequent doctrine of ‘Flirty Fishing’ or ‘FFing,’ relied on the sexual charms of Berg’s most youthful, nubile followers. By ensnaring potential converts via their libido, Berg maintained a visceral, physical hold on his converts, claiming ‘we have a sexy God and a sexy religion with a very sexy leader with an extremely sexy young following... so if you don’t like sex, you better get out while you can’ (*ibid.*, p. xv). This novel approach to proselytising was, understandably, hugely successful in the era of ‘free love.’



In Berg's self-styled mythology, he claims to have been both sexually aroused and shamed by his mother, providing inspiration for the development of a convoluted sexual ideology in which incest and paedophilia became actively encouraged within the cult. Berg claims he was 'nineteen or twenty' when, 'for the first time in [his] life [he] had sexual feelings about [his] mother!' (Lattin, 2007, p. 18). Berg later hypothesised, 'Perhaps [I could have] satisfied both of us and our mutual tremendous sexual needs... it could have developed into a beautiful sexual relationship' (*ibid.*, pp. 18-9). Berg's vengeful sexual ideology was thus clearly triggered by both positive and negative emotions surrounding his maternal relationship. For Berg, sexual delight was repeatedly juxtaposed with the threat of violence and castration. His earliest childhood memories were of a sexually punitive mother 'constantly scolding him for playing with himself,' claiming that he almost never forgave his mother for 'threatening to cut it off and embarrassing me in front of the family' (*ibid.*, p. 16). Berg claims his mother sexually shamed him further when she fired his babysitter 'who used to suck [him] to sleep for [his] nap every afternoon' 'slapp[ing] the poor little Mexican girl out of the house' (*ibid.*, p. 17). A psychoanalyst might posit that after his mother had shamed him sexually, Berg retaliated by wreaking sexual vengeance on his own children, grandchildren and later, the children of his followers worldwide. In short, for Berg, the death of his mother in 1968 acted as a clear trigger for the unleashing of the effects of years of sexual abuse and repression. Here, in a manner similar to the 'revenge by proxy' wrought by the Pied Piper of Hamelin, Berg 'punished' his mother by 'seducing' the children of his followers.

The cyclical nature of intergenerational violence engendered by Berg's sexually exploitative revenge plot is perhaps best exemplified in the sad tale of Ricky Rodriguez, designated as archetypal 'saviour' in Berg's apocalyptic scenario. David Berg raised his 'son' Ricky to be:

one of the heroes in their theological fantasy... yet, upon reaching adulthood, Rodriguez left Berg's flock in disillusionment, harbouring vengeful desires against his sexually exploitative father and colluding, apathetic mother. Later, consumed with rage, Ricky would become the reluctant martyr for an abused army of troubled souls – a lost generation that would return to haunt [the surviving members of Berg's Family]. (Lattin, 2007, pp. xx - 1)

Here, Ricky Rodriguez, fatally ‘wounded’ vengeful saviour, thus represented a ‘lost generation’ of disillusioned, vengeful children. Furthermore, visual representation of domestic activity served as a globally communicable script in Berg’s revenge narrative. Much of the educative material produced and disseminated by Berg in his publications and ‘Mo letters’ relied on visual representations of ‘correct’ behaviour, including incest and paedophilia. Photographs depicting incestuous acts and child pornography were used to illustrate *The Story of Davidito*, a kind of ‘child care manual’ promoting Berg’s narcissistic personal mythology, distributed to members of The Family worldwide. Yet, as Lattin notes:

there’s something especially eerie about this family scrapbook. The heads of all the family members are covered over with drawings of their hair and facial features. They are half photograph, half cartoon. And they are always smiling... Ricky was Davidito – prophecy embodied. Davidito was a child sexually liberated. They were not raised to be normal children. They were born to be exemplars of the great child care revolution of David Berg. (2007, p. 79)

One reason the human faces beneath may not have been smiling was the proscription of personal identity, as demanded by Berg’s perverse ideology. Revenge thus not only incorporated sexual savagery of innocents, but also the theft of their individuality.

The very name of Berg’s group, ‘The Children of God’ and later ‘The Family,’ as well as alternate names ‘The Jesus Children’ and ‘Teens for Christ,’ suggests the promotion of childlike innocence and unquestioning faith among followers. Not only did Berg figure his followers as children, he revelled in his self-appointed paternal role, encouraging his followers to call him ‘Dad,’ and later ‘Grandpa’ (Kent, 2000; Whitsett & Kent, 2003). Often, ‘the language that cults use to describe themselves frequently is filled with family images, especially ones in which leaders take on parental roles’ (Deikman, 1994, p. 76). For Berg, ‘just as his family context provided the initial environment in which he felt guilt, so too was it in his family context later as an adult that he discharged that guilt’ (Kent, 2000, p. 11). Like Manson, David Berg clearly espoused a sexually manipulative and exploitative ideology within the ranks of his ‘family.’ It appears that:

in the COG social environment, Berg would “work out” his childhood sexual traumas through the deviant policies and practices that he initiated in the name of God... With Berg’s subsequent extension of his family to include all of the Children of God, he extended the range of people onto

whom he could impose, through claims of revelation, his own sexual wishes' (*ibid.*).

Thus, sexual repression was presented as the primary motivator of Berg's gospel of rebellious, exploitative sexuality.

Costume, or visual representation of the self, was equally symbolic for David Berg, who, following his initial proclamation against systematic repression by the older generation, 'took off his tie, let his hair and beard grow, and began to preach' (Lattin, 2007, p. 40). Berg used verbal techniques to 'steal the limelight,' denigrating members by lowering their status in order to enhance his own, ensuring his supremacy. David Berg's granddaughter, Davida, explains, 'Grandpa was the mouthpiece of God... everything he did was done in the name of Jesus and, therefore, it couldn't be wrong' (*ibid.*, p. 79). Some of David Berg's sermons 'sound like they were written by a teenage rebel, not a man in his early fifties... as much a rebellion against all those stupid parents out there than they were a prophetic witness against social injustice' (*ibid.*, p. 40). One dinner guest recalled:

Dinner could go on for hours... Berg was a religious drunk. You listened to him. It was stream of consciousness. It would be about something he'd been reading. If someone had been bad in the group, you'd hear a rant about that. If he was in a good mood he'd start singing a song or want to hang around and play with the kids. (*ibid.*, p. 78)

For Berg, music, generally performed by surrogates, functioned as a proselytising tool as well as an instantly recognisable symbol of the youthful counter-culture movement of the 1960's. Berg's biological son Aaron, who later committed suicide while still a member of the Children of God, was 'pushed into the limelight,' of his father's Teens for Christ ministry (*ibid.*, p. 36). Proselytising with his sister, Faithy, they 'would strum guitars and sing pop songs interspersed with spiritual phrases' (*ibid.*, p. 37).

Recognising the potential benefits of a youthful, physically attractive Children of God recruitment team, Berg thus exploited not only his surrogate children, but his biological children also.

### **Case Studies and *Fowl Feathered Fox***

These two case studies of 'real-life' cult leaders and their followers reveal a number of echoes in *Fowl Feathered Fox*. Like the Pied Piper and Dionysus, music was a chief mode of seduction in Charles Manson's revenge 'script.' Similarly, Doc Rockwell uses

his saxophone to seduce, entertain and silence his followers. Manson's verbal entwining of biblical abstractions with the 'prophecies' embedded in popular music served to promote the unquestioning reverence of his followers: much like Manson's flock, the Rockwell children proclaim their leader's supremacy 'in a tone of childlike wonder' (Bugliosi, 1974, p. 116). In short, perhaps the clearest parallel between Manson and Doc Rockwell is the latter's characterisation as a consummate orator and performer with an uncanny ability to engage and inspire a youthful audience. Furthermore, just as the narcissistic Manson inhabited the role of vain, self-absorbed tragic hero, deflecting blame back at authorities by aligning himself with a mirror, Dr. Deacon Salt in *Fowl Feathered Fox* gazes in the mirror only to be haunted by the ghost of the twin brother he murdered. Clearly, for the children of Rockwell and the children of Hamelin, the Greek maenads and the members of Manson and Berg's 'families,' absolute commitment to a malevolent leader involves a willingness to act without reservation or regret.

As suggested by David Berg's 'gospel of rebellion,' the perverse ideologies espoused by Doc Rockwell in *Fowl Feathered Fox* incorporate the (implied) savagery of innocents and also the theft of their individuality. Here, as the children are forced to wear identical muumuus and adhere to prohibitive rules and regulations, the proscription of personal identity serves not only to 'homogenise' the children, but also to reinforce the moral divide between the Rockwell family and outsiders. Furthermore, while Berg figured his followers as children, adopting a paternal role and encouraging his followers to call him 'Dad' or 'Grandpa,' Doc Rockwell and Dr. Deacon Salt extend this notion even further to excuse an implied predilection for unethical surgical experimentation and promote an air of intellectual superiority by using the prefix 'Doctor.'

## **6. Conclusion**

There are endless examples of charismatic pipers leading their followers on a 'merry dance' to enact vengeance on authority figures who fail them. For example, Jim Jones, infamous founder of 'The People's Temple,' offered his followers salvation provided they enact their roles willingly, including submission to acts of sexual humiliation and savagery. Investigation into the People's Temple reveals that physical abuse in the name of divine salvation was common, escalating in intensity over the course of Jim Jones' savage regime. As the apocalyptic revenge plot at Jonestown 'thickened,' the leader

demanding total submission, as ‘children were beaten if they failed to call him Father or were otherwise disrespectful, or if they talked with peers who were not members of People’s Temple’ (Wooden, 1981, p. 11). Violence and revenge in the case of this charismatic leader was not limited to the orchestration of suicide en masse at Jonestown. Preceding the mass fatality, Jones implemented mandated relationships, public humiliation and cruel sadism as effective methods of sexual control. An example of the abjection to which he exposed his followers was:

the ordering of married men to strip naked before the assembled residents, get on hands and knees in a circle, each with a finger in the anus of the man in front. Men had to watch their wives have sex with other men, and Jones would sleep with married women while forbidding the husbands to have sex – except with him as the dominator. (Rosenman, 2000, p. 41)

Here, Jones’ control over anal interaction served to destabilise independence among his followers, as Rosenman notes, ‘developing control of the anal sphincter by the individual threatens the interdependency of the gang’ (*ibid.*, p. 48). Jones thus ensured the dependence of his followers by manipulating their desire for salvation into acceptance of sexual humiliation and savagery. Examples of escalating physical savagery serve to illustrate the prevalence of abuse within Jim Jones’ spiritually themed revenge narrative. Violence was enacted repeatedly upon wayward children, as:

belts were used at first, then were replaced by elm switches, which in turn were replaced by the “board of education,” a long, hard piece of wood... Jones had a habit of making young girls strip almost nude in front of the full membership and then forcing them to take cold showers or jump into the cold swimming pool... unequal boxing matches gave way to beatings with paddles, then electric shock, and finally something [Jones] called a “blue-eyed monster,” which hurt and terrorized the younger ones in a darkened room. (Wooden, 1981, pp. 11-12)

Here, by figuring his penis as a ‘blue-eyed monster,’ Jones works to deify his appendage in a manner similar to William Kamm’s promotion of the ‘Holy Shining Thing’ as discussed in the previous essay.

In the next chapter, I show how, within Anne Hamilton-Byrne’s manufactured ‘family,’ the children’s desire for attachment and comfort was negated by a malevolent, dysfunctional reality. Even basic human drives were perceived as a threat by this messianic, monstrous mother. Importantly, while the first and second exegetical essays have examined the relationships between father figures and their ‘children,’ the third

essay will focus on the family dynamics specific to ‘mothers’ and ‘daughters.’

Historically, the representation of females as monsters functions within the parameters of a tradition of patriarchal violence. This is, for example, a preoccupation of such ‘feminist’ writers as Joyce Carol Oates and Carmel Bird. Here, where the first essay explored the relationship between messianic father figures and their flocks, this essay extends the discussion to examine, albeit briefly, the role of messianic mother.

### 3. KEPT IN THE DARK?

#### ARCHETYPAL ICE QUEENS AND DAUGHTERS OF DEMETER

Unseen. Unheard. Unknown.

Hamilton-Byrne 'Family' maxim

##### 1. Into the Orifice

While the daughters of Hamelin dance willingly into a mysterious, mountainous orifice, never to be seen again, the daughters discussed in this chapter are concealed in dark cavities against their will. Here I examine three narratives featuring violent mother/daughter splitting to reveal eerie thematic parallels in case examples from myth, horror fiction and memoir. In *The Rape of Persephone* from Greek mythology, Hades, mythical Lord of The Underworld, abducts Demeter's daughter Persephone, hiding her in a dark, craggy, subterranean enclosure. Subsequently, Demeter, archetypal ice queen, covers the world's crops in a blanket of famine-inducing frost in a world-shaking display of grief and misdirected vengeance. Brian de Palma's film based on Stephen King's horror novel, *Carrie*, (1976; 1974), provides an example of a monstrous ice queen and her doomed and deceived daughter, not only in the context of horror fiction, but also (in keeping with exegetical themes) in the context of revenge tragedy. Finally, I examine charismatic cult leader Anne Hamilton-Byrne of *The Family* (also known as *The Brotherhood* or *The Great White Brotherhood*), of Eildon, Victoria, Australia. In this case, my primary source is Anne's 'daughter' Sarah's memoir, *Unseen, Unheard, Unknown* (1995), principally because the very act of publication provides an example of 'real-life revenge.' Here, to guard against abandonment and humiliation, archetypal ice queens maintain or relinquish control over 'daughters' via isolation and deception, with world-shattering consequences. I also show how light and dark have an overtly symbolic function in each narrative, and I argue that while daughters are hidden by a variety of facades and forcefully imprisoned in fetid, sunless cavities, these facades and cavities also offer the potential for escape (transcendence) and deliverance.

##### 2. Mythic Precedents: Demeter and Persephone

Persephone, Demeter's daughter and unwilling queen of the Underworld, is often figured in Greek mythology as pre-pubescent, or at least childlike (Bulfinch, 1985;

Hamilton, 1942/ 2011). Gathering flowers with her companions, Persephone is startled when, as Bulfinch euphemistically puts it, Hades ‘saw her, loved her, and carried her off’ (1985, p. 65). When ‘in her fright she dropped the corners of her apron and let the flowers fall, childlike she felt the loss of them as an addition to her grief’ (*ibid.*). *The Rape of Persephone*, then, incorporates a vaguely paedophilic aspect as the supremely powerful god of The Underworld snatches the young, initially powerless, virginal maiden of the spring. Granted, my reading of the Demeter and Persephone myth is but one of a multiplicity of readings, yet, as I show below, the fountain Arethusa claims that Persephone’s ordeal endows her with a certain power. In much the same fashion as Carrie White and Sarah Hamilton-Byrne, as we shall see, Persephone gains access to this power only after negotiating the threshold into adulthood.

Similar to the dark, mountainous cavity in the Pied Piper narrative, Hades abducts and imprisons the childlike Persephone in the subterranean darkness over which he reigns. Hades, in his ‘chariot drawn by coal-black steeds,’ rises up ‘through a chasm in the earth’ and bears her away ‘weeping, down to the underworld’ (Hamilton, 1942/ 2011, p. 51). As the children of Hamelin might have eventually, Persephone calls for her mother in vain. At last, Demeter discovers the truth. Persephone is ‘down in the world beneath the earth, among the shadowy dead’ (*ibid.*). Here, this dislocation results in a violent, sorrowful split between mother and daughter.

As archetypal, vengeful ice queen, ‘wasting away with longing for her daughter’ (Hamilton, 1942/ 2011, p. 53), Demeter recalls another vengeful, grieving, maternal figure from Greek myth: Medea. Specifically, Seneca’s representation of Medea is full of wrath which she blames on love (Seneca, trans. 1986). As Nussbaum argues, “there is no erotic passion that reliably stops short of its own excess. That very way of caring about an external uncontrolled object yields uncontrol in the soul” (1997, p. 221). Nussbaum cites such lines of Seneca’s *Medea* as, “how often I have poured out death and bloodshed irreverently, but I have committed no crime in wrath: unhappy Love provoked me” (*ibid.*, pp. 134-6). Like Medea, Demeter faces potential shame via the threat of abandonment and social humiliation. Yet, while Medea is fuelled by furious anger, for Demeter, fear and grief are compounded with shame to produce an example of catastrophic, famine-inducing, misdirected vengeance.



In this mythic scenario, the tragic mother stands as the vengeful figure. Forced to endure the abduction of her daughter, the goddess Demeter takes vengeance upon the earth, with far-reaching consequences. Blaming the earth for granting passage to Hades, Demeter cries, ‘ungrateful soil... which I have endowed with fertility and clothed with herbage and nourishing grain, no more shall you enjoy my favours’ (Bulfinch, 1985, p. 67). Consequently, Demeter, ‘in her terrible grief... withheld her gifts from the earth, which turned into a frozen desert,’ while all the ‘green and flowering land was ice-bound and lifeless because Persephone had disappeared’ (Hamilton, 1942/ 2011, p. 51). By covering the soil in a blanket of ice, Demeter effectively punishes the whole world. While allegorical, this singular act of vengeance is monumental in scale, securing Demeter’s place within the monstrous paradigm.

Subsequently, the fountain Arethusa assures Demeter that the earth is not at fault, imploring the goddess to ‘blame not the land’ as ‘it opened unwillingly to yield a passage to your daughter’ (Bulfinch, 1985, p. 67). This complicates the role of the earth, and specifically the chasm through which Hades drags Persephone into the Underworld. Describing the physical, geographic aspects of Persephone’s subterranean prison, Arethusa explains that the goddess Athena:

cleft the ground, and I, endeavouring to escape him, plunged into the cavern, and through the bowels of the earth came out here in Sicily. While I passed through the lower parts of the earth, I saw your [Persephone]. She was sad, but no longer showing alarm in her countenance. Her look was such as became a queen – the queen of [Hades]; the powerful bride of the monarch of the realms of the dead. (*ibid.*, p. 68)

Here, in contrast with Arethusa’s essential powerlessness, Persephone is presented as a stoic, powerful force: queen of all she surveys in the dark shadows of the Underworld. Furthermore, the compromise eventually struck between Demeter and Hades dictates that Persephone must be permitted to leave her underground prison in the Spring, foregrounding the notion of seasonal regeneration.

Here, much like in the paradigm of the werewolf, the symbolism surrounding the binaries of light and dark function in tandem with notions of cyclicism and seasonal regeneration. Allegorically, the mythic narrative offers a joyful and ultimately hopeful message. Bulfinch (1985) notes that Persephone:

signifies the seed-corn which when cast into the ground lies there concealed – that is, she is carried off by the god of the underworld. It reappears – that is, [she] is restored to her mother. Spring leads her back to the light of day. (p. 69)

Thus, as Persephone emerges from her dark prison into light, so the seasons function cyclically, the harvest emerges from dark earth and the night gives way to day. As Cicero notes, The Eleusinian Mysteries, (the ritualised worship of Demeter, goddess of the Harvest), ‘have not only shown us the way to live joyfully, but they have taught us how to die with a better hope’ (cited in Hamilton, 1942/ 2011, p. 49). Thus, while the fusty, subterranean cavity acts to imprison and isolate, it also offers the potential for both transcendence and deliverance in the form of hard won power, new life and sustained hope.

While, in *Fowl Feathered Fox*, the ‘children’ of Quarantine Island exist willingly on that sequestered isle, when taken to the mainland, Kid and Blue Rockwell are concealed in dark, stinking cavities against their will. They are first of all trapped in the subterranean environment of ‘Womb Rock,’ and later, to hide them from Stanley Hope and Bruce Gasket, Sister Mary secretes the unhappy pair in the drop-toilet. Thus, the childlike figure of Persephone is most clearly echoed in the representation of Kid Rockwell. Here, violence is largely emotional and psychological, but Sister Mary does hit ‘Kid around the shoulders with the sides of her palms,’ dragging her ‘into the drop-toilet by [her] ankles’ before sentencing her to imprisonment in that putrid cavity without ‘food... or water.’ The implication is, of course, that the putrid hollow, by its very nature as a drop-toilet, lacks water, and the only ‘food’ in sight would hasten rather than prevent the onset of sickness and death. Finally, in *Fowl Feathered Fox*, as in the Greek myths surrounding Demeter and Persephone, dark, cavernous spaces offer the potential for release and liberation, thus drawing parallels with the cautionary, incendiary tale of Carrie White.

### **3. Precedents in Horror Fiction: Margaret and Carrie White**

In Brian de Palma’s *Carrie* (1976), Margaret White isolates and deceives her eponymous child in an attempt to guard against abandonment and humiliation. Here, Margaret detects a burgeoning sense of independence in her daughter. Subsequently, proselytising and punishment coexist in the confines of a frighteningly claustrophobic space as Carrie is repeatedly sent to her ‘cupboard, to pray.’ Carrie’s bedroom and the

'cupboard' in which she is regularly imprisoned are dark, constrictive, bowel-like spaces where Margaret White, archetypal ice queen, maintains control over her emergent adult daughter. Furthermore, Margaret White represents the quintessential cult leader with a membership of one, and is also an archetypal 'Obscene Mother' (Greven, 2008). According to Greven, 'Mrs. White indexes the entire history of religious intolerance over sexuality and the eroticisation of this intolerance; reliving her own sexual past, Mrs. White reveals herself not as the film's maternal superego but as its obscene mother, the mother who makes her own sexuality a spectacle for the child' (*ibid.*, p. 14). By eroticising the intolerance of sexuality, Margaret White offers her daughter a frighteningly prohibitive vision of sexuality, seeming to both invite and repel Carrie at the threshold between childhood and adulthood.

An invisible umbilical cord connecting Carrie White to her mother is threatened by the onset of puberty and sexual awareness. With menstruation providing physical proof of Carrie's entrance into adulthood, Margaret wages a campaign of pre-emptory vengeance upon her daughter to keep her close. That is, 'terrorised but captivated by sex,' while registering the 'violence enacted against women yet acting violently towards a woman,' the ambivalent Mrs White dramatically realises the untenability of the mother-daughter bond (Greven, 2008, p.15). Here, Margaret White attempts to destroy the burgeoning threat of Carrie's individuation by alternately reinforcing and severing the bond of dependence. The invisible umbilical cord thus attaches and detaches during episodes of physical intimidation, coercive violence and sensory deprivation. Yet ultimately, for Carrie, failure in the dangerous realm of knowledge (symbolised by light) prompts a desire for a return to the dark safety of 'the cupboard' and what it signifies in the psychoanalytical sense: the rectal cavity of a maternal ice queen.

Cognisance of betrayal precipitates the painful separation of daughter from mother as Carrie is forced to negotiate the implausibility of returning to the dark safety of home. Here, the mother's religiously fuelled sexual shame is forced onto the daughter, as the mother's perception of filicidal betrayal triggers fears of abandonment and memories of sexual shame and humiliation. Here, the impossibility of returning to the safety of dark, bowel-like spaces offers the potential for transcendence and deliverance only through the channels of death and destruction. In this sense, Carrie is a tragic hero as she comes to accept self-sacrifice as her only possible fate, drawing a parallel with the tragic possibilities offered to the werewolf.

*Carrie* opens with a horrifying vision of the eponymous tragic protagonist's first experience of menstruation, setting up notions of violence, shame and humiliation. Operating on the periphery of the largely teenage microcosm of High School, Carrie's estrangement causes her to reach puberty being completely unaware of the mechanics of menstruation. This is largely because concepts relating to social and sexual growth are strictly censored by Carrie's über-controlling mother, but also because Carrie is denied social access to the burgeoning, unfettered sexuality of her female classmates. An uninhibited display of burgeoning sexuality is embodied in the opening scene of de Palma's film as teenage girls frolic, like a band of Dionysian maenads, through brightly lit, steam-filled change rooms in various states of undress. Here, the character of Chris Hargensen is figured as a kind of Dionysian queen or murderous maenad, foreshadowing her vengeful actions. Essentially, Hargensen leads a pack of She-Wolves in Sheep's Clothing to attack the archetypal Black Sheep as Carrie is violently shunned by society. Later, the looming threat of shame and humiliation is enhanced in the scene where Carrie hallucinates, hearing her mother's terrifying voice, bleating repeatedly 'they're all going to laugh at you' (de Palma, 1976). Furthermore, while another student might have chosen to investigate 'supernatural phenomena,' 'ghosts,' or even 'magic,' when Carrie begins to research telekinesis, she goes straight to the 'miracles' section, a visual clue as to how far removed she is from the student milieu. Like Medea, Carrie is clearly a social exile, and like Persephone and the Hamilton-Byrne children, is *in* exile until freed by the negotiations of nefarious power-brokers.

In *Carrie*, pre-menstrual tension assumes a decidedly macabre quality. In the fictional society depicted in Stephen King's novel, 'both medical and psychological writers on the subject are in agreement that Carrie White's exceptionally late and traumatic commencement of the menstrual cycle might well have provided the trigger for her latent talent' (King, 1974, p. 15). Here, latent talent refers to telekinesis, the 'ability to move objects by effort of the will alone' (*ibid.*, p. 11). The startling transformations inherent to puberty are lycanthropic in nature: hair appears in unusual places, the body distorts and enlarges, facial flesh ruptures and blood flows. Carrie White's first experience of menstruation acts as a catalyst for a kind of lycanthropic transformation, as blood from an inexplicable 'wound within' triggers literal, psychological and symbolic bloodshed 'without.' The film's climax is, arguably, the scene at the school

dance, where the 'final straw' of the pig's blood incident tips Carrie over an invisible threshold into unfettered violence.

Furthermore, following these climactic scenes, the death of messianic mother, Margaret White, is presented as both suicide and matricide (de Palma, 1976). Greven posits that Margaret White 'chooses death as compensation for the traumatic loss of her daughter,' explaining, 'her attempt to kill Carrie is also an attempt to kill herself, one that spectacularly succeeds: well aware of Carrie's power, her mother must know that any attempt to harm her may have fatal consequences' (2008, p. 15). Like Medea, Margaret White enacts vengeance upon offspring after being abandoned by a husband. In de Palma's film, Mrs. White receives a call to filicidal vengeance as Carrie pins her to a bed via telekinetic force, a manifestation of both rejection and betrayal. As the camera zooms in on Margaret, maternal harbinger of doom, she utters 'thou shalt not suffer a witch to live' (de Palma, 1976). As the camera lingers on the rigid frame of the monstrous mother, Margaret's psychic distress barely registers beneath her stoic mask. Here, Margaret White's drive to enact filicidal vengeance produces the ultimate untenability of the mother/daughter union.

For Carrie White, failure in the dangerous realm of knowledge (symbolised by light) prompts a desire for a return to the dark safety of 'the cupboard' and what it signifies in the psychoanalytical sense: the fetid rectal cavity of a maternal ice queen. Repeatedly imprisoned in dark, sunless cavities, Carrie is 'forced to undergo her humiliation so that the social order can remain ignorant of its most fervent and artfully maintained designs' (Greven, 2008, p. 10). Thus, in *Carrie*, the failure experienced by the eponymous anti-hero in the world of knowledge, signified by light, prompts a tragic finale. Unwilling to accept the impossibility of repair and the implausibility of return, Carrie takes refuge in her dark, secret cupboard.

Initially, being too powerless to destroy her antagonists, Carrie instead displaces her anger onto the objects surrounding them. Like Medea, Carrie White acts upon objects, physically transforming 'things' via supernatural means to murder antagonists in histrionic displays of vengeance. Later, during a symbolic turning point, Carrie shatters a mirror via telekinesis, splitting her reflected image. Here, a daughter shatters bonds of dependence between both her mother and her Catholic faith, an idea underscored by the reflected image of Christ's face emerging from the gloom behind Carrie in the shattered

mirror. Additionally, in the apocalyptic finale, Carrie transforms light bulbs, causing them to pop and shatter, symbolising a complete loss of hope. In a sense, this represents a 'switching off' of any light that may have appeared 'at the end of the tunnel.'

As a stage play, *Fowl Feathered Fox* is able to incorporate a very literal, physical representation of light/ dark symbolism, as the Rockwell children, specifically Kid Rockwell, are hidden behind a variety of facades and forcefully imprisoned in sunless cavities. However, these facades and cavities, particularly the drop-toilet, clearly offer similar potential for escape (transcendence) and deliverance, drawing parallels particularly with the Greek myths surrounding Demeter and Persephone. Furthermore, the scene where Sister Mary accuses Kid of 'running with boys' in the suggestively named 'Cock Forest' provides an example of violent mother/daughter splitting. While Kid is unaware that Sister Mary is, in fact, her biological mother, she is, regardless, the clearest example of a mother figure in Kid's life hitherto. Just as Margaret White attempts to destroy the burgeoning threat of her daughter's individuation by alternately reinforcing and severing bonds of dependence, in *Fowl Feathered Fox*, the invisible umbilical cord that connects Sister Mary (actually Sheila Salt) to her offspring attaches and detaches during episodes of physical intimidation, coercive violence and sensory deprivation. Here, Kid Rockwell is forced to negotiate the notion of self-sacrifice as an ideal, upheld in the Roman Catholic tradition of Christ-like surrender. Below, using the 'real-life' example of a cult based on quasi-Catholic ideals, I explore this notion of Christ-like surrender in the context of the enforced suffering and private pain endured by a group of innocent, ill-fated children. Significantly, whereas Demeter's grief over the loss of her daughter led to her wreaking vengeance on the whole world, Margaret White's grief over the potential loss of her teenage daughter is expressed via the infliction of suffering and pain upon that daughter. This latter scenario is similar to the displaced grief inflicted upon Anne Hamilton-Byrne's 'children' due to her spiritually fuelled, vengeful desires.

#### **4. Memoir as Revelatory Device: Anne and Sarah Hamilton-Byrne**

Dr. Sarah Hamilton-Byrne is the 'daughter' of Anne Hamilton-Byrne, 'the leader of a small sect in the Dandenongs called the Family or the Great White Brotherhood' (Hamilton-Byrne, 1995, p. 1). Like the Pied Piper, Anne Hamilton-Byrne collected a gaggle of children to make a kind of 'false family.' Sequestered on a small, secluded

property in Victoria, just inland from the east coast of Australia, the Hamilton-Byrne children were routinely abused, neglected and frightened by the intimidating figure they understood to be their mother. Ex-sect members have said they were aware Anne was creating a 'breeding program' in the late 1960s, consisting of 'invisible kids, because they had no papers and there is no proof that they ever existed' (Hamilton-Byrne, 1995, p. 2). Here, I will show how Anne Hamilton-Byrne, representative of an archetypal ice queen, guarded against abandonment and humiliation by maintaining strict control over her flock of 'invisible children.' Furthermore, by revealing the intensity of the horrors endured by the children, publication of Sarah Hamilton-Byrne's memoir, *Unseen, Unheard, Unknown* (1995), had world-shattering consequences in the sense that the truths contained therein had the potential not only to condemn and incarcerate, but subsequently, to abolish 'the world according to Anne.'

Within this secretive, secluded utopia in Eildon, Victoria, Anne Hamilton-Byrne worked to invoke absolute dependence in her 'children.' In this sense, her tactics draw clear parallels with the tactics employed by the male parental figures discussed in the two previous essays as well as Demeter's desire to maintain control of Persephone. In the communal environment called 'Uptop,' the children were 'taught to be frightened of everything outside the big brown gate that guarded the property from the evil outside world' (Hamilton-Byrne, 1995, p. 10). Samways (1994) explains:

The children were isolated at the cult home in the country. The cult's influence within the Department of Education gained its 'private school' official recognition and it was subject to only minimal government supervision and interference. When locals' concern or complaints were received by Community Services, the cult's contacts within that department alerted it about raids being planned to investigate its activities. Consequently, it took many years before the cult was successfully exposed. (p. 18)

This cult deliberately targeted health professionals and some social workers so that it could 'legally' adopt over two hundred children (*ibid.*). Surrounding herself with wealthy, respectable and well-educated sycophants and enablers, Hamilton-Byrne was able to wreak a twisted kind of vengeance upon her children by subjecting them to a series of cruel rituals and inhumane punishments. Raised in total isolation, the Hamilton-Byrne children were subjected to a 'bizarre and cruel regimen' in which every aspect of the children's lives was strictly proscribed (Hamilton-Byrne, 1995, p. 2). Unlike in the case of Carrie White, the children of 'The Family' were hidden from the

social milieu of school life. 'We were hidden when visitors or trades-people came to the house... As far as the authorities were concerned, we went to schools in Melbourne, so a lot of effort went into hiding us from visitors' (*ibid.*, p.11). Samways explains:

It is common for children in cults actively to be denied adequate education and thus prevented from obtaining skills that could make them independent of the cult... [as] cults do not consider themselves answerable to the wider community. Their extreme isolation from the balancing values and perspective of outside society gives further power to the techniques they use. (1994, p. 18)

Here, in the malevolent reality faced by the children, the sensory experience of imprisonment was replicated via the use of isolation, drugs, rigid punishment schedules and the stifling of individuation.

Sarah Hamilton-Byrne relates that Anne 'always seemed to be on about sex and yet physically she was a fairly cold person' (1995, p. 36). Like Margaret White, Anne Hamilton-Byrne exemplifies not only the Ice-Queen, but also the archetypal 'Obscene Mother,' simultaneously revelling in and condemning sexuality. Instructing her shocked pre-pubescent female children that 'life all came down to gynaecology,' Anne Hamilton-Byrne explained crudely, that as she'd been a nurse (a false claim), she:

knew a thing or two about loose women. She talked about how she had seen when she was a matron prostitutes 'strung up with their legs apart' and great cancers coming out of their genitals 'because they had been such sluts.' she said she'd 'smelled enough fannies in her time to know a slut when she met one.' (Hamilton-Byrne, 1995, p. 36)

Reeking of misogyny, this anecdote reveals a kind of fetishisation of religious intolerance. Here, as with the dialogue employed by the fictional Margaret White, Hamilton-Byrne's manipulation of language serves to shock, disgust and titillate. Clearly, it could be argued that *Carrie* is in fact a deeply misogynist text, in that it represents a mother's disgust at female abjection as being at the root of the problem. Where Margaret White's diatribes about sex are largely reflective of religious discourse, however, Anne Hamilton-Byrne's condemnation of sexual activity is couched firmly in 'the language of the gutter.'

Anne Hamilton-Byrne's twisted ideas about intimacy and sexuality even extended to paranoid delusions that her pre-pubescent daughters were 'stealing her limelight.' Sarah Hamilton-Byrne (1995) explains that even when they were:



tiny children, the girls would get into trouble for allegedly “wagging the hips” in a provocative manner while walking when there were men in the house... we girls were often accused by Anne of “staring” at men if we were caught looking directly at them, because it was somehow supposed to be perverted. She would punish us for that and make out that we were sluts... she used to have our underwear inspected, we were never quite sure for what.’ (p. 36)

Here, Anne Hamilton-Byrne’s fetishisation of religious intolerance works not only to invoke absolute compliance, but also to establish physical and psychological control over the limits of her daughters’ sexuality.

In terms of psychology, Sarah Hamilton-Byrne (1995), a practising psychoanalytic theorist, suggests that her mother ‘does exhibit some of the characteristics of psychotic thought disorder: her thoughts skip and derail, she seldom finishes a sentence and she has fantastic and grandiose delusions’ (p. 37). Here, the daughter philosophises about the mother, saying:

I think anyone who has created such a fantasy world around them and been able to sustain it for so long despite the outside reality – and indeed to create her own delusional world – would be unbalanced. Thirty years of being deferred to as a living deity would upset anyone’s equilibrium... everyone she surrounds herself with reinforces her delusions. Because of the professional people she commands, she has been able also to get away with manipulating the outside world enough to create the reality she desires. (*ibid.*, p. 38)

Thus, Anne Hamilton-Byrne sustained her image as a ‘living deity’ by concocting and disseminating narratives based on fantastic and grandiose delusions. Here, the willing acceptance and promotion of these narratives by loyal followers and the effects of pseudologia fantastica further complicate the fantasy world constructed by the malevolent leader.

In the fantasy world concocted by Anne Hamilton-Byrne, she ‘fancied herself as a healer’ (Hamilton-Byrne, 1995, p. 22). Through Anne’s influence at a local private psychiatric hospital, drugs were procured free of charge and administered without scrutiny. Anne, a self-proclaimed expert in homeopathic medicines, regularly administered homeopathic remedies to the children. Children were regularly plied with ‘major tranquillisers such as Anatsol and Serepax’ and given ‘the benzodiazepines Valium and Mogadon on a daily basis’ (*ibid.*). In a notorious initiation ritual called ‘going through,’ Anne administered hallucinogenic drugs, particularly LSD, to teenage

cult members. Sarah Hamilton-Byrne (1995) explains, ‘Anne is the divine Mother, the follower is encouraged to sink into her arms like an infant, like one reborn as a child of Christ, and the feeling of purgation and emotional renewal after an LSD “clearing” contributes to this emotional tendency’ (p. 47). Hamilton-Byrne’s invented reality was thus undergirded by the complicating factor of pseudologia fantastica but maintained by a facade of respectability, and, in turn, reinforced by her charismatic leadership skills.

Just as Medea employs her two sons as surrogates to deliver the poisoned dress that will kill Jason’s new wife and father-in-law, the King, Hamilton-Byrne used scapegoats to defer blame in efforts to maintain the illusion of innocence. Hamilton-Byrne required strict control over every facet of her children’s lives and she enforced this control largely via her punitive surrogates, the ‘Aunties.’ Hamilton-Byrne encouraged the children’s ‘fantasy of a loving and kind mother’ by scapegoating these Aunties (Hamilton-Byrne, 1995, p. 39). According to Sarah Hamilton-Byrne, Anne was ‘the one who had set all the punishments in the first place... often we didn’t realise this and we blamed the Aunties instead’ (*ibid.*, p. 38). Aunties used physical intimidation and violence to keep the Hamilton-Byrne children in check, using ‘anything they could find, bits of wood with nails and knobs, bamboo sticks... shoes, whips, basically anything handy that would hurt children’ (*ibid.*, p. 17). Thus, by suspending the children’s disbelief as she play-acted God, scapegoating worked to maintain her public persona as a ‘goddess on earth.’

Also, by scapegoating children, Anne Hamilton-Byrne managed to defer blame and increase feelings of guilt and worthlessness. According to Sarah Hamilton-Byrne, her mother believed in discipline absolutely, as:

Anne’s religion practically called for child-abuse... Because she travelled so much she left two books of instructions called ‘Mummy’s Rule Books.’ These books listed penalties for infractions. They had entries such as: ‘If David rocks or sways during meditation, he is to be hit over the head with a chair’ and rules about everything...She encouraged the Aunties to belt us. (*ibid.*, p. 14-5)

Similarly, just as attainment of the Afterlife was apparently reliant on the obedient behaviour of the Hamilton-Byrne children as stipulated in ‘Mummy’s Rule Books,’ the behavioural rules governing David Berg’s ministry were set out on paper in various publications such as the infamous ‘Mo Letters.’ Furthermore, as the children were blamed for Stephen’s epilepsy and for Cassandra’s comatose spells, they were led to

believe punishments came directly from Heaven as the widespread violence was really just ‘God punishing us for our bad behaviour’ (*ibid.*, p. 20). This shifting of blame recalls the ministries of Rock Theriault and William Kamm as they encouraged followers to embrace suffering to increase their chances of attaining eternal life.

Adept at ‘embracing suffering,’ the Hamilton-Byrne children were subject to routine mistreatment and abuse. Cassandra, the youngest ‘daughter’ at Uptop, was so badly abused that she became mute for over eight years and suffered debilitating fits (Hamilton-Byrne, 1995, p. 24). Anne’s ‘infamous temper’ led to a beating that brought a two year old child to the brink of death. The story is related as follows:

Anne tried to put some food into Cassandra’s mouth but Cassandra grabbed the spoon and started waving it around, sending food flying. This had made Anne furious. To punish Cassandra for this show of ‘disobedience,’ Anne had taken her out of her high-chair and given her the biggest belting she had ever given anyone. She told us that she had ‘really laid into her’ and how she had to be stopped by one of the Aunties for fear that Cassandra would be killed. It was from this moment [Cassandra] stopped talking and became withdrawn. (*ibid.*)

While the other children were blamed for Cassandra’s fits, Sarah Hamilton-Byrne posits that instead, it was ‘her extremely poor diet and the extreme emotional deprivation to which she was subjected,’ and that ‘if Cassandra had not scavenged in the rubbish bins and eaten the birds’ bread and seeds, she surely would have died,’ because her strict diet ‘was not enough to sustain anyone for long’ (*ibid.*, p. 25). Clearly, this extreme example of physical abuse serves to illustrate the criminal, morally reprehensible aspects of Anne Hamilton-Byrne’s reign of terror.

The children at ‘Uptop,’ were constantly hungry and therefore forced to scavenge:

we were starving and it was Anne’s policy that we were. We were so hungry we ate dirt and leaves. We were so hungry we ate grass and scavenged in the rubbish bins. We were so hungry we ate the cats’ and dogs’ food, we ate bread and seed left out for the birds. (Hamilton-Byrne, 1995, p. 20)

In fact, basic human needs were perceived as a sexual threat in the secluded ‘utopia’ at Eildon. Sarah Hamilton-Byrne reveals that ‘after a belting,’ children would ‘rock to and fro,’ calling in vain for comfort from ‘Mummy, Daddy’ (*ibid.*, p. 16). However, rocking was ‘considered to be bad because, even when we tiny children it was interpreted as a form of sexual gratification’ (*ibid.*). Thus, within Hamilton-Byrne’s paradoxically

named *Family*, even basic human drives are perceived as a threat by the monstrous mother as the children's desire for attachment and comfort are negated by the malevolent, dysfunctional reality.

Sarah Hamilton-Byrne's first experience of menstruation was remarkably similar to the fictional experience of the eponymous Carrie in Brian de Palma's collision with Stephen King's seminal horror narrative (1976; 1974). Like Carrie, Sarah Hamilton-Byrne's lack of sexual education caused the first experience of menstruation to be a shameful, bewildering affair. Just as witnesses express revulsion as Carrie's menstrual blood stains their white clothing (de Palma, 1976), Sarah Hamilton-Byrne (1995) recounts her own, remarkably similar experience:

When I got my first period I thought that I had cut my leg. Then when I washed my leg and saw there was no cut there, I went to see Auntie Christobel. She wasn't very impressed, she just gave me some pads to wear... said I wasn't sick and seemed a bit revolted by me. (p. 41)

In this paradigm, biological and sexual processes are promoted as unnatural and shameful, as the appearance of blood elicits shock and fear from the teenager experiencing menstruation for the first time, prompting revulsion in witnesses. For both Carrie White and Sarah Hamilton-Byrne, shame, disgust and bewilderment coincide with the onset of puberty via the inciting experience of menstruation.

To avoid detection, the children at Uptop were routinely imprisoned in a tiny, dark cavity underneath the house. In *The Ego Ideal* (1985), Chasseguet-Smirgel (cited in Rosenman, 2000) posits that a craving to hold others captive in bowel-like spaces originated from:

jarring bowel training in which [a] youngster is forbidden to evacuate except at signal from the prohibitive mother. Her forbidding the desired release spins up imagery of being trapped within her bowels. (p. 43)

The Hamilton-Byrne children were subjected to rigid and prohibitive bowel training, being allowed toilet breaks only at specified times (Hamilton-Byrne, 1995). Thus, at Uptop, scatological concerns were at the forefront of the children's experience as they were forced to endure their matriarch's compulsion to imprison them in dark, malodorous cavities.

Jarring bowel training under the Hamilton-Byrne regime resulted in a number of outcomes, the most significant being the routine occurrence of bed-wetting. There was

also a rumour among the children that ‘one of the kids used to eat his own faeces... according to some, he also used to smear it on the toilet wall’ (Hamilton-Byrne, 1995, p. 21). Sarah Hamilton-Byrne relates:

every morning I awoke to the sounds of children howling as they got their first belting for the day. Rare was the day that no-one wet the bed, at least until 1986, and even then the younger boys continued to do so on occasion. (*ibid.*, p. 6)

Here, loss of bladder and bowel control signifies the physical manifestation of the children’s absolute terror. In the case of David, one of the youngest children at Uptop, the threat of punitive violence led to the manifestation of terror in literal expulsion: loss of bowel control. Sarah Hamilton-Byrne (1995) relates his reaction to the interrogation of an Aunty who:

probably wanted to give him a belting because he’d wet his bed which he did every night. But this morning David was so terrified when he heard her calling his name that he simply stood, rooted to the spot, and just lost control of his bowels. We all watched in horrified fascination and anticipation of what terrible trouble he would be in now, as pieces of shit dropped out of his pants and onto the concrete. [Aunty] Trish, very annoyed that he hadn’t jumped to it, and interpreting his action as a new defiance, dragged him upstairs and gave him an even bigger belting than usual. (p. 15)

Thus, Anne Hamilton-Byrne’s vengeful surrogate, Aunty Trish, augments the humiliating consequences of the child’s loss of bowel control with a ‘belting,’ both as retaliation against the child and as a deterrent to other potentially dissident children.

Vanity and the related themes of appearance and breeding were central to Hamilton-Byrne’s philosophies. Anne, ‘a very rich woman who never spared herself anything,’ vacationed in Hawaii for ‘lipo-suction and reductive surgery every year’ (Hamilton-Byrne, 1995, p. 34). Sarah Hamilton-Byrne writes that ‘appearance was all in The Family’ (*ibid.*). Indeed, she reveals that ‘ugly children were treated appallingly, as if they were less worthy’ (*ibid.*). Sarah Hamilton-Byrne further argues that a form of eugenics was practiced in that the children were meant to reflect well on Anne as ‘her’ children and ‘carry on the work of the sect’ (*ibid.*).

Here, façades and exteriors are of paramount importance in Anne Hamilton-Byrne’s apocalyptic revenge narrative, as her obsession with body shape and weight belies an

unconscious terror of physical imperfection. Further, as one witness to the rituals and ceremonies of The Family relates:

bleached blond hair, singing like the von Trapp family, living out Anne's fantasy of, in her thoughts, I'm sure it was, something like an Aryan race. Horrific. (Sixty Minutes, 2009)

Here, in a bizarre amalgamation of *The Sound of Music* and the frightening imagery of the legions of Hitler Youth, a memory of the visual spectacle of the Hamilton-Byrne children presents a terrifying image of homogeneity, not unlike Charles Manson's 'killer Barbie dolls.'

The sect's motto or maxim, 'Unseen. Unheard. Unknown,' had great psychological power over followers and subsequently, far-reaching and long-lasting effects. As Sarah Hamilton-Byrne (1995) explains:

the thought of the consequences of betraying that motto still worries me sometimes. I've had death threats from sect members before. They may try to kill or hurt me for speaking out against Anne, but only under her direct orders. Many sect members have taken a vow to kill those who harm their Master. (p. 3)

Upon exit from The Family, Sarah Hamilton-Byrne reported feeling 'an immense sense of betrayal at how [she] had been duped for so long' (*ibid.*, p. 31). This draws a parallel with Carrie White's situation, as Greven notes, 'hypocrisy and betrayal are, perhaps, the central themes of de Palma's oeuvre' (2008, p. 10). Furthermore, the publication and promotion of Dr. Sarah Hamilton-Byrne's memoir operates as its own effective form of revenge. Hamilton-Byrne (1995) claims her memoir is an attempt to answer the following questions:

why did Anne collect all of us children and make this 'false family?' Was it just to satisfy her ego? To satisfy her great need to be worshipped and adored by those around her? Why did she raise us in almost total isolation, miles from anywhere, with minimal contact with other humans apart from the sect members who looked after us? Why did she subject us to the bizarre and cruel regimen in which we grew up? (p. 2)

In posing these questions, however, Sarah Hamilton-Byrne undertakes a great risk by betraying the cult's maxim. Essentially, by 'blowing the whistle' on Anne and The Great White Brotherhood, Sarah risks violent, climactic retaliation.

In short, my research into the sorry plight of the Hamilton-Byrne children largely inspired characterisation of the children in *Fowl Feathered Fox*. Like Anne Hamilton-Byrne, Sister Mary inflicts vengeance on her children, re-enacting the pain and suffering of her own childhood. Like the Hamilton-Byrne children, Kid and Blue are starved, most overtly in the drop-toilet imprisonment scene. Also, prior to this imprisonment, Blue Rockwell ‘loses control of his bowels’ after being bullied by Sister Mary. The characterisation of Sister Mary’s mother, Margaret Rockwell, was initially inspired by an account of Anne Hamilton-Byrne’s mother setting fire to her curly red hair (Hamilton-Byrne, 1995, p. 32). However, whereas de Palma’s film presents a fiery apocalypse, I present the Rockwell children’s notion of Hell as being a cold and frozen exile. This decision was inspired by Anne Hamilton-Byrne’s belief that Hell was an icy cavity within the earth, in contrast with the more traditional notion of Hell as a burning pit. Sarah Hamilton-Byrne (1995) relates various examples of her mother’s conception of Satan’s realm, and the children’s fear not of a fiery end but a frozen death. In a bizarre transmogrification of voodoo doll rituals, Anne would often ‘write people’s names on ice blocks and bury the ice blocks deep within the household freezer, thereby consigning that person to Hell’ (*ibid.*, p. 32). Furthermore, although the Rockwell children have individualised ‘incest deformities,’ I have them wear identical clothing and hairstyles to heighten their lack of individuation under Doc Rockwell’s leadership. This decision was inspired by the visual spectacle, or ‘costumes,’ of the Hamilton-Byrne children. Significantly, though, I have the Rockwell children sport ‘bright red hair’ rather than the bleached blonde locks preferred by Hamilton-Byrne and indeed, by another monstrous, world-shattering figure from history: Adolf Hitler.

The ‘real-life’ violence enacted by Anne Hamilton-Byrne as discussed in the previous essay makes the actions of Sister Mary, her fictional counterpart in *Fowl Feathered Fox*, seem like those of a lamb in comparison to this particular ‘wolf in sheep’s clothing.’ Similarly, the cruel regimes of William Kamm, Rock Theriault and the malevolent cult leaders discussed in the second exegetical essay further confirm that truth is potentially both stranger and more violent than fiction. No matter how depraved or ‘sick’ the actions depicted in my play, far more disturbing examples persist in ‘real-life.’

Thus, audience members may flinch in horror and disbelief, but in light of the exegetical findings here, I envisage that a number of audience members may have at

least some experience of authoritarian regimes and violent crimes. Furthermore, I would argue that eliciting sympathy for a dualistic and therefore at times thoroughly *unsympathetic* protagonist would seem to be a pre-requisite for the theatrical manufacturing of empathy, pity and fear. Ironically, as empathy is by definition an emotion inaccessible to the psychopathic, narcissistic cult leader, *Fowl-Feathered Fox* calls upon the humane and charitable qualities of an audience in the form of their propensity for empathy, while also targeting a fear of the threat from deep within. By tapping into a collective fear of The Beast Within, which stems from the tradition of Greek tragedy, an audience is invited to entertain the notion that the evil one seeks may turn out to be the evil inside oneself, just as Sophocles' eponymous King Oedipus searches ruthlessly for the root cause of plague which actually swells inside his own breast.

A key point in my original paper for the '7<sup>th</sup> Global Conference: Monsters and the Monstrous: Myths and Metaphors of Enduring Evil' in 2009 was that monsters often represent a manifestation of collective fears about the monster in the mirror or 'the beast within us all.' Now, in 2014, I recognise that the concept of 'monster as metaphor' is perhaps a little clichéd, but I feel that my focus on the specific nature of the beast within, whether a Pied Piper or an Ice-Queen, is an enduring theme that will appeal especially to contemporary, youthful audiences who have been considered 'a generation of narcissists' (Squires, 2013).



## **IV: CONCLUSION**

*The Fox on Stage*

## Embracing an Audience: Reflection on Staging Issues

Drama is life with the dull bits cut out.

Alfred Hitchcock

Essentially, *Fowl Feathered Fox* was always intended to be a very exciting, provocative play representing ‘life,’ as it were, without ‘the dull bits.’ At the outset of my doctoral journey, I proposed to create a uniquely Australian villain for a new generation of theatre-goers. I wanted to create a ‘thrilling new psychopath’ for a generation fascinated by werewolves with sex appeal and vampires that glittered in the sunlight (exemplified in the hugely popular *Twilight* saga). Due to a long-held fascination with the secretive nature of cults and the phenomenon of charismatic leadership, I felt certain I could construct a drama with this kind of subject matter. Having read Aristotle, I was sure I could make cults and monstrosity ‘work’ on stage by combining these themes in the key image of a tight-knit family.

In the main, the crimes depicted and implied in *Fowl Feathered Fox* are morally reprehensible. Indeed, my play is not intended as a glib, flippant comment on ‘real-life’ instances of pain, suffering or deformity. Rather, I employ the generic conventions and techniques of revenge tragedy and horror to elicit the appropriate response to perhaps the most frightening crime of all: the abuse of power, especially sickening when harnessed to inflict fear and suffering upon children. *Fowl Feathered Fox* functions as a drama by presenting fearful, pitiful situations on stage. By positioning an audience to respond favourably to the Rockwell family, particularly the children, when they first appear on stage, an audience is invited to witness their worst fears being ‘played out’ in front of them. In discussing the purpose and potential power of theatrical performance, Artaud (cited in Worthen, 1996) explains that a ‘theatre of cruelty’ means:

a theatre difficult and cruel for myself after all. And, on the level of performance, it is not the cruelty we can exercise upon each other by hacking at each other’s bodies... but the much more terrible and necessary cruelty which things can exercise against us. We are not free. And the sky can still fall on our heads. And the theatre has been created to teach us that first of all. (p. 1272)

Accordingly, I propose that a key function of theatre and especially tragedy is to facilitate mental rehearsal of, and thus preparation for, ‘life with the sky about our heads.’ Furthermore, the play resonates with collective fears about invasion (i.e.

refugees and the potential of conflict arising with our Asia-Pacific neighbours). Essentially, Quarantine Island functions as a microcosm of Australia, itself an island: fears surrounding invasion and warfare feature in the play's sub-text in the form of subconscious drives that I have assumed might motivate the actions of key characters. Thus, despite their location in the 'impossible world' of the play, by highlighting the similarities to any individual audience member and minimising the differences, thus reinforcing the 'human' qualities of Kid, Blue and Cassie, these characters should function as guides or 'avatars' for an audience during their 'journey' through the play.

With *Fowl Feathered Fox*, my goal was to approach an Artaudian conception of theatre that would, as Worthen explains, 'assault the representational dynamics of traditional theater and break the boundaries between actor and audience, stage and spectacle' (1996, p. 1271). Because the mythic precinct of the theater would ideally be used for highly-ritualised, reality-shattering theatrical experiences (Artaud, trans. 1958), my aim was to approach this ideal by using an array of presentational techniques, not only multi-sensory tactics, but also the incorporation of rousing music and interpretive dance. Initially, to ensure that 'Double I.D' (Irony Interpretive Dance) achieved maximum comic potential on stage, I chose a series of songs and typed their names into the stage directions. Upon reflection however, this choice seemed certain to 'date' the play, which would have been a pity after I had worked so hard to avoid setting the play in any recognisable time frame. There are some exceptions, including my decision to retain Edvard Grieg's *Hall of the Mountain King* (1876), largely for its intertextual echoes, but also because it had an important function in the process of writing the play, serving as a kind of 'germinal sound-bite' inspiring the play's mood and atmosphere. As a classical piece that had already endured for more than a century, I did not feel its inclusion would date the play in the same way that specifying the use of contemporary music might.

As a researcher, writing the play served to expand my thoughts on the application of theatrical techniques in that many potential modes and methods, while interesting and exciting, simply did not transcend the limitations of the genre of dramatic performance. For example, by exploring and testing the practicalities of various multi-sensory techniques related to food and drink, I came to recognise that ethically, theatrical experimentation should never trump the interests of public health and safety. In terms of public liability, a playwright simply cannot force an audience to eat, drink, dance or smoke during performance, no matter how effective this might be in terms of experience

and spectacle. Furthermore, the process of writing served to challenge some of the theories explored in the thesis such as the ‘fire and brimstone’ approach of Artaud. Because Artaud was significantly ‘anti-text,’ his plays, such as they are, remain troublesome and fraught. Consequently, I came to recognise that many Artaudian theories were simply impossible to stage, despite their powerful symbolic, philosophical and theoretical qualities.

During the final stages of drafting *Fowl Feathered Fox*, I came to reflect on the nature of Kid Rockwell and how she functions as a kind of ‘burgeoning’ cult leader, inspired by the techniques and successes of the handful of leaders she encounters in her ‘brief hour’ in the Shire of Plankton. For example, in scenes where Kid claims to be acting as the mouthpiece of *Spiritus Sanctus*, she creates an atmosphere of suspense by forcing her audience to wait for the thrilling revelations of the supernatural being in question, hanging on her every word, much like Doc Rockwell in the ‘Scrabble Prophecy’ scene. Kid learns from Doc how to thrill, excite and control her audience, albeit an audience of one (her brother, Blue Rockwell). In the scene where Kid first adopts the *Spiritus Sanctus* persona, she speaks to Blue in the third person, saying ‘and she shall henceforth be known... not as Kid Rockwell, but... Doctor Kid!’ This is a clear reference to the ideological and hierarchical conditions in which Kid and Blue have been raised– the people with power and influence on Quarantine Island both use the prefix ‘Doctor.’ Ironically, neither of these two characters is ‘a real, actual doctor,’ but rather, they adopt the title to create a false sense of authority and intelligence.

In the scene when Kid reveals to her siblings what she has decided to ‘give up for Relent,’ she explains that she is ‘doing gender... in reverse!’ Here, by ‘sacrificing’ her age and gender, Kid reveals an instinctual understanding that only adult men are capable of holding and retaining positions of power on Quarantine Island, and later, in the Shire of Plankton generally. It is perhaps ironic then, that in the epilogue, Jinx Rockwell is revealed to be the character with the most power and influence of all: Jinx is neither male nor adult and could certainly not ever pass herself off as a doctor. Importantly though, one could consider Jinx either the ‘ultimate fowl-feathered fox’ or an archetypal representation of a ‘snake in the grass’ in a manner similar to Levi. Like the serpent in the Garden of Eden, this kind of monster is highly aware of the destruction they wreak. Like Levi Salt (an anagram for ‘Last Evil’), Jinx represents a kind of ever-present evil, in contrast to the uncontrollable, cyclical emergence of the werewolf or ‘were-fox.’ The

chief difference between Levi and Jinx is that Jinx, having endured years of sexual, physical and emotional abuse including gross neglect, oppression and starvation seems to have clear reasons for behaving like a monster. Levi's drives to evil stem from mere jealousy and unrequited love. Thus, I feel an audience may ultimately have more sympathy for Jinx, even though she represents propagation of the 'curse on the House of Rockwell' through the foreshadowing of the birth of her child in the epilogue. Here, the most important function of the epilogue is to reveal that Levi Salt was not, after all, 'The Last Evil' as Kid (and perhaps an audience) had assumed. Rather, Jinx is. Or more specifically, her offspring might be. In this case, 'last' may refer to merely the most recent in a long line of evil figures.

A key consideration in the staging of *Fowl Feathered Fox* will be the manner in which 'disabled bodies' are presented onstage. In *A Comparative Discourse of the Bodies Natural and Politique*, English political writer and playwright Edward Forsett (1606) suggests that, 'the body may have imperfections and deformities, yea [*sic*] may be bereaved of whole parts, and yet retain still the name and nature of a body' (p. 51). Furthermore, in one example from revenge tragedy:

Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* is full of moments that direct our attention towards the isolated parts of the body that later become, literally, isolated *from* the bodies in the course of the drama. As heads, hands and tongues are referenced and then violently removed, *Titus Andronicus* places a distinct emphasis on the disabled body as a product of violent action. (Imbracsio, 2012, p. 291)

In *Fowl Feathered Fox*, the problem of staging 'disabled bodies' is most apparent in the characterisation of Jinx Rockwell; in the casting notes, I specify that Jinx is 'special' and that her legs have been 'fused together from birth.' Here, I use the word special as a euphemism for 'intellectual disability,' while the fused legs imply that she has 'mermaid syndrome.' In the epilogue, of course, an audience discovers that, like Levi Salt, Jinx has been 'pretending:' she is not intellectually disabled at all. Thus, despite her physical disability (if not her intellectual disability), Jinx is capable of the kind of 'violent action' Imbracsio describes above.

Financiers of stage-plays are by definition required to consider a play in terms of commercial potential. While I concede that in having the play's action shift so rapidly between locations I risk alienating potential producers, I do make it clear in the playwright's notes that these shifts need not be expensive. Indeed, with a little

imagination and resourcefulness, most of the ideas incorporated into the notes and stage directions could be achieved on a very tight budget. Shifts in location and time of day might be established via text projected onto the cyclorama or even, in the tradition of Brecht, on hand-lettered placards. Importantly though, where Brecht incorporated placards to alienate an audience, my goal is to seduce an audience on every possible level. When I think of placards, I think of girls parading around boxing rings and enthusiastic AFL fans. Brecht's placards have more in common with industrial strikes or political mutiny. In the latter scenario, anger and blame are projected outwards onto the politician or organisation under attack. The placards used at sporting events are used to draw people in – to unify the group in shared anticipation of having 'backed a winner.' Essentially, by keeping an audience at arm's length, Brecht wished to distance an audience to affect objective analysis. Conversely, by embracing an audience with open arms, my aim is to enthrall, engage and excite. Furthermore, a director may choose to make substantial cuts while actors might work to render some of the dialogue redundant, working with the principles of physical theatre to achieve a distillation of the play's essence. By slashing and burning vast swathes of action and dialogue, a director might produce a very fine interpretation of the play indeed. Because I strongly believe that the re-imagining of a text should be the prerogative of the theatre director, I look forward with great anticipation to a production of *Fowl Feathered Fox* that is successfully trimmed by a judicious director and brought to life by a playful and imaginative cast.

One final point needs addressing. Cassie Rockwell's paintings are, of course, my paintings. Here, the writing process has been fuelled, informed and improved by the discoveries inherent to the painting process. For me, writing and painting must coexist. The processes are as inseparable as the Apollonian and Dionysian aspects of the werewolf. So, while rhyming verse and choral odes work to establish the rhythms of ritualised experience: painting, presentational techniques and multi-sensory tactics work to 'shatter reality' in the manner proposed by Artaud (trans. 1958). The character Cassie is crucial here. Furthermore, due to the mythic connotations of the name Cassandra, I decided to bestow this name upon the figure of the visual artists as her role is largely to prophesy, but, similar to her counterpart in Greek myth, no one is able to believe her prophecies. Conversely, where Cassandra from Greek myth is aware of the truth of her prophecies, Cassie Rockwell is unaware of the prophetic potential of her paintings.

Significantly, the paintings only evolved in subconscious and temporal conjunction with the written project. I was largely unaware of the link between the two until a few years into the project. After making this link, many of my ‘draft paintings’ started to ‘make sense:’ they eventually became the paintings you see onstage in *Fowl Feathered Fox*. Here, the twin processes of creation (writing and painting) initially worked in a fairly organic manner. Later, these processes operated in a more dualistic, mutually exclusive fashion (in keeping with key preoccupations of the doctoral project). Indeed, excerpts from the visual diaries that feature in the appendix track the progression of the play’s characters, themes and aesthetic, with a particular focus on the crafting of a bold surrealist visual aesthetic based on ‘impossible’ stage sets in the tradition of M.C Escher, costumes inspired by the work of fashion luminaries like Jean-Paul Gaultier, hair-design (unnaturally red locks, bowl-cuts, dreadlocks and old-school mullets) and striking make-up, body-paint or masks (should a director choose this latter route – perhaps useful for swift costume changes). Finally, as an example of Multi-Sensory Theatre, *Fowl Feathered Fox* will ideally provide an opportunity to bombard an initially disparate group of people with an array of physical sensations in order to affect a temporary bond. Having been blasted by industrial fans and seduced by music and noise that surrounds and titillates the entire corpus of the audience, individual audience members will hopefully feel an instinctual, almost tribal ‘coming together’ in shared experience of the play.

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## APPENDICES

## **APPENDIX A: CASSIE ROCKWELL'S ART EXHIBITION**

*The Scream in the Mirror*

## PREFACE

Imagination is more important than knowledge.

Albert Einstein

These paintings were completed in conjunction with the writing of *Fowl Feathered Fox* over a period of eight years. In that time, the images you see here went through a number of startling transformations. As a largely self-taught artist, these images do not comply with traditional painterly techniques, but rather, a process of ‘trial and error.’ Nonetheless, I feel this is in keeping with the style of artwork Cassie Rockwell might actually produce: while it is possible she produced artwork before her ‘accident’ and subsequent loss of memory (amnesia), an audience will assume that her painting technique will be quite basic. This is because her painting is an attempt to ‘jog the memories’ of her viewers in an effort to discover clues about her mysterious past, rather than to garner artistic credit. In short, Cassie Rockwell’s paintings, as I present them here, function to enhance and extend the aesthetic of the play. Specifically, my use of vibrant, almost grotesque colour and a reliance on surrealist forms and pre-occupations should serve to inspire the work of the production team. Ultimately, it will be a director’s prerogative to choose which of these images should appear as part of the onstage exhibition.

Photography by Michelle Taylor, 2014.





**DEACON & ESME**





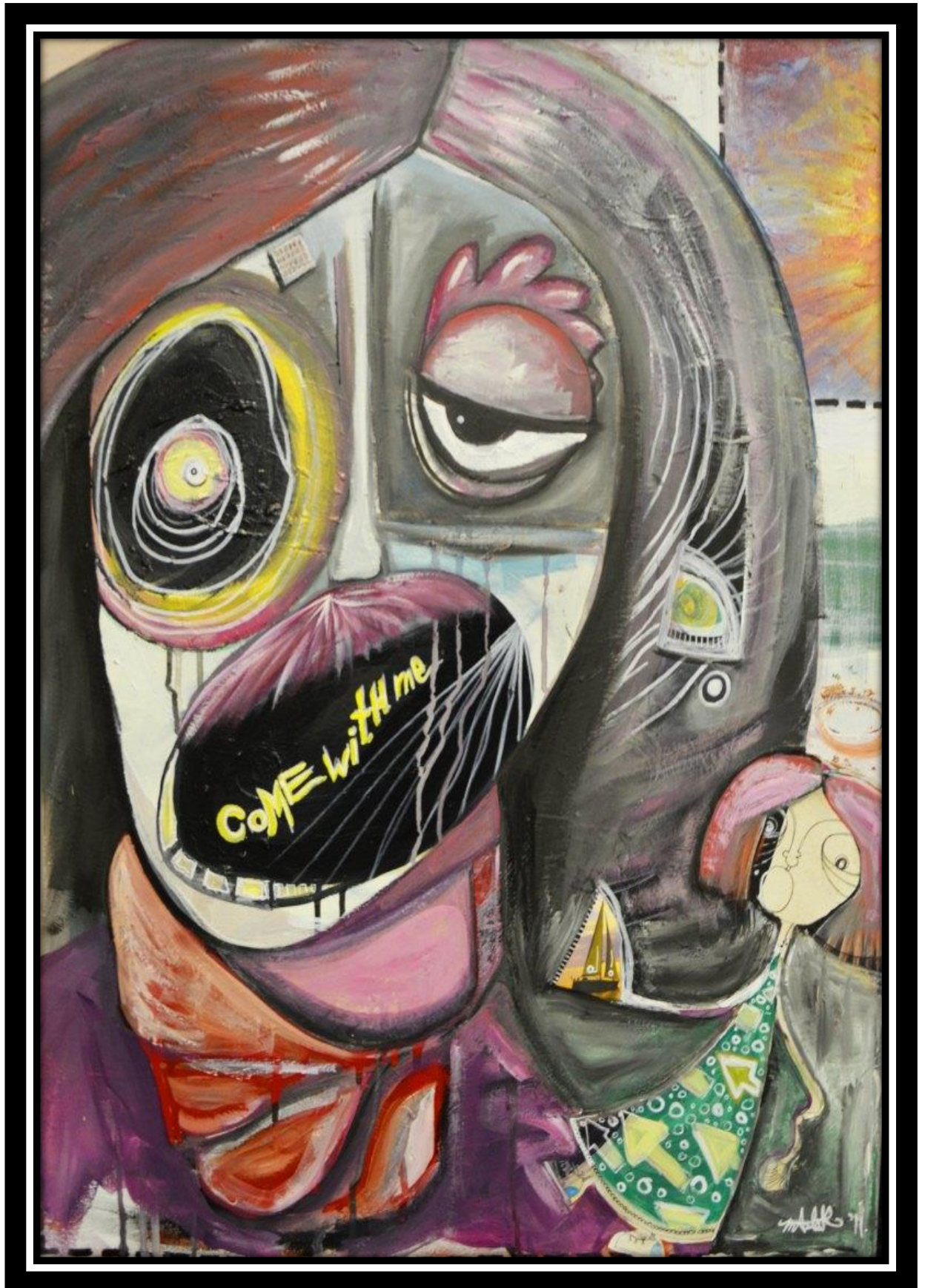
**MARGARET ROCKWELL**





**TERENCE 'HOLY ROLLER' ROCKWELL**





**COME WITH ME**





**IN OYSTER BARQUE**





**OYSTER BARQUE: HANDS OFF**





## THE TROUBLE WITH TWINS





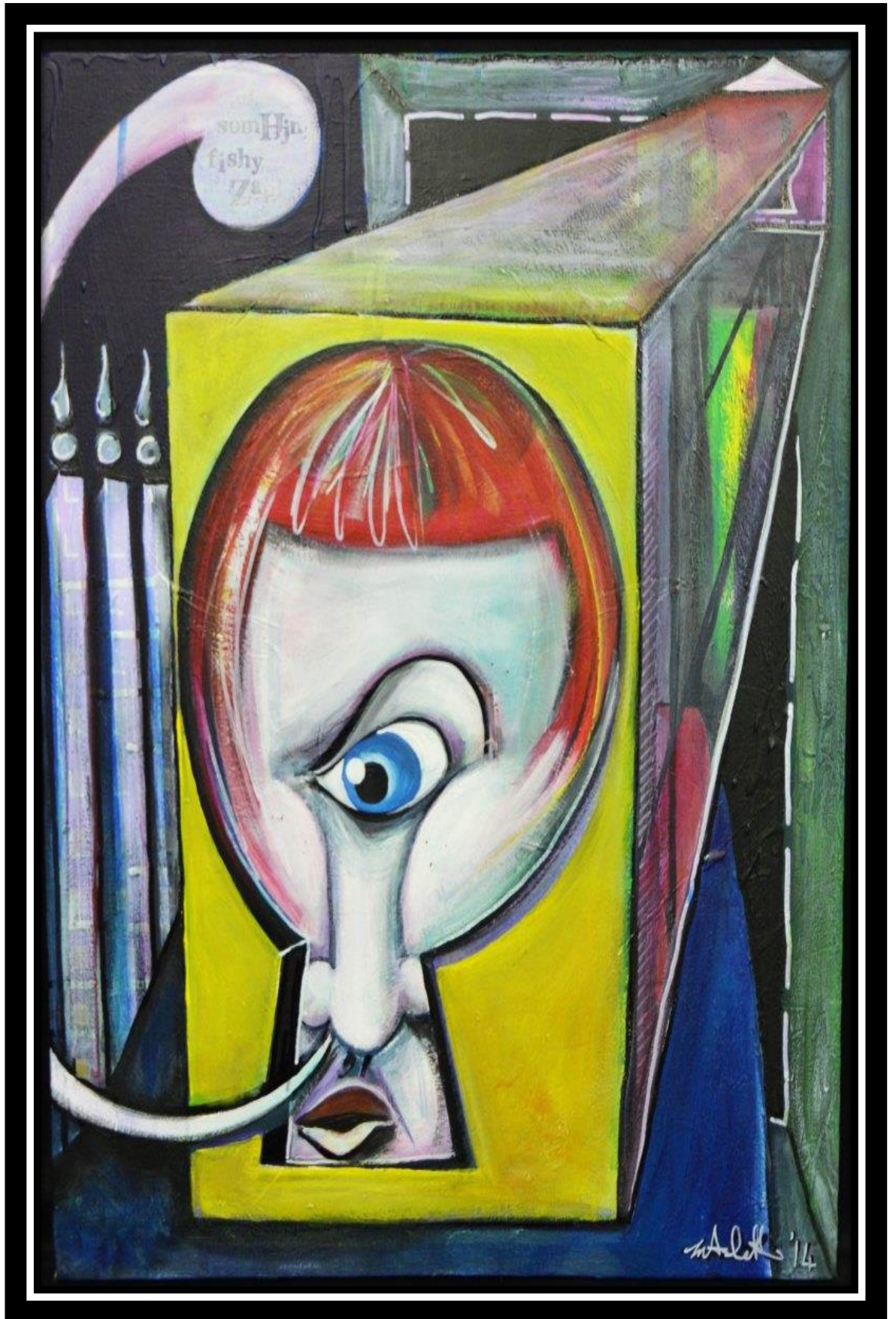
**SISTER MARY**





**DOC ROCKWELL**





**SKIP ROCKWELL**





**THE GOD OF NIGHT AND DAY IS WATCHING**





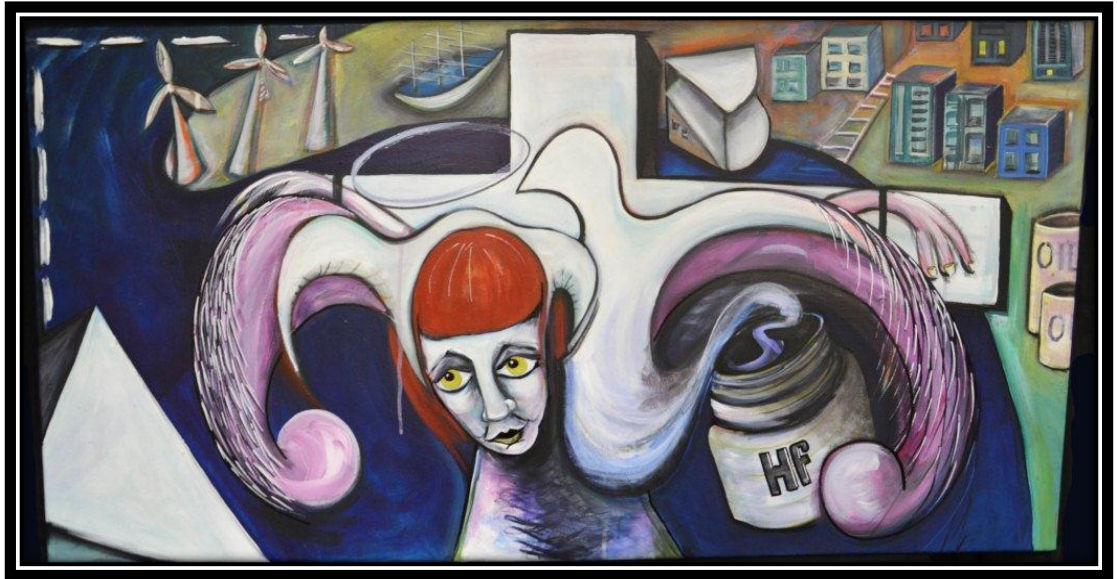
**JINX ROCKWEL**





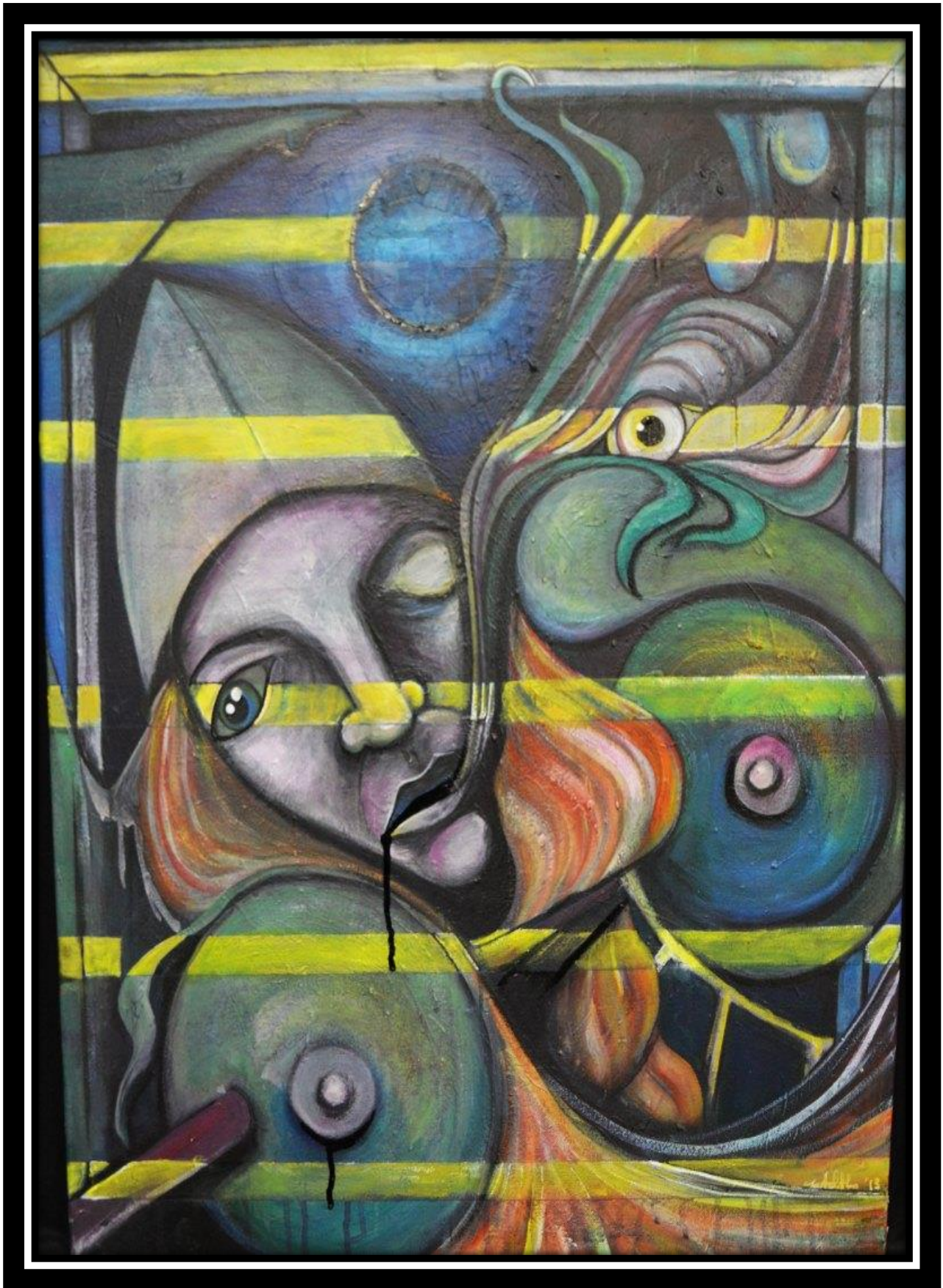
**BLUE ROCKWELL**





## THE CRUCIFIXION OF KID ROCKWELL





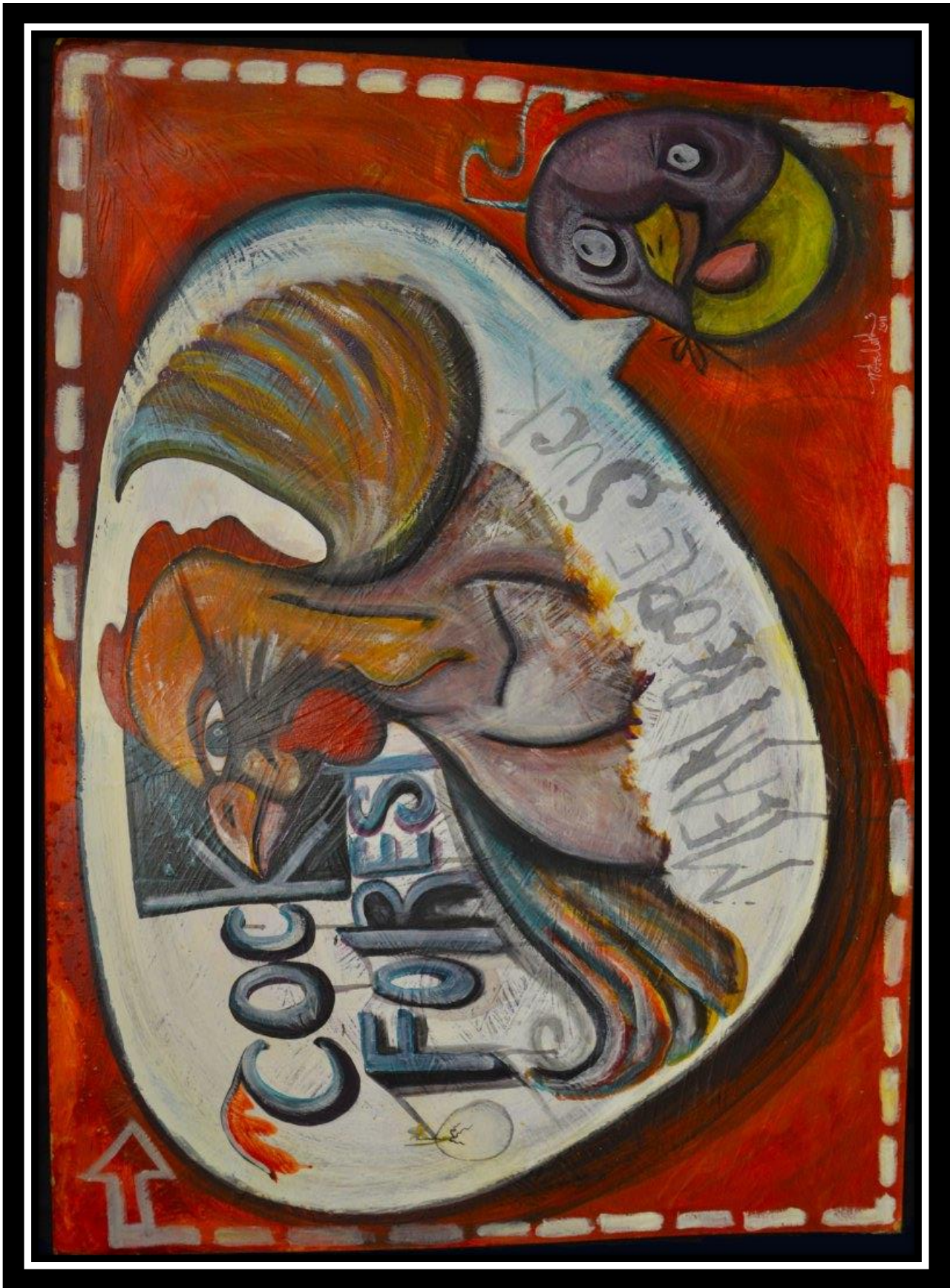
**SALIENCE & ST. BARNACLE**





**CASSIE ROCKWELL: SELF-PORTRAIT**





## COCK FOREST: MEAN PEOPLE SUCK





**FUCKED-UP FAMILY TREE**

## **APPENDIX B: VISUAL DIARY EXCERPTS**

*Documenting the Journey*

## PREFACE

Ideas are elusive, slippery things.  
Best to keep a pad of paper and a pencil at your bedside,  
so you can stab them during the night before they get away.

Earl Nightingale

Here, I include excerpts from a trio of visual diaries used to chart the artistic and ideological development of the play. I include these excerpts largely as documentation of my journey into the related fields of visual art, photography, design, music and film: charting the array of theatrical possibilities and potential directions I encountered along the way. As you will see, my process was not entirely linear: indeed, extrapolation was a key technique in discovering the most appropriate solutions to the problems raised by the play's development.

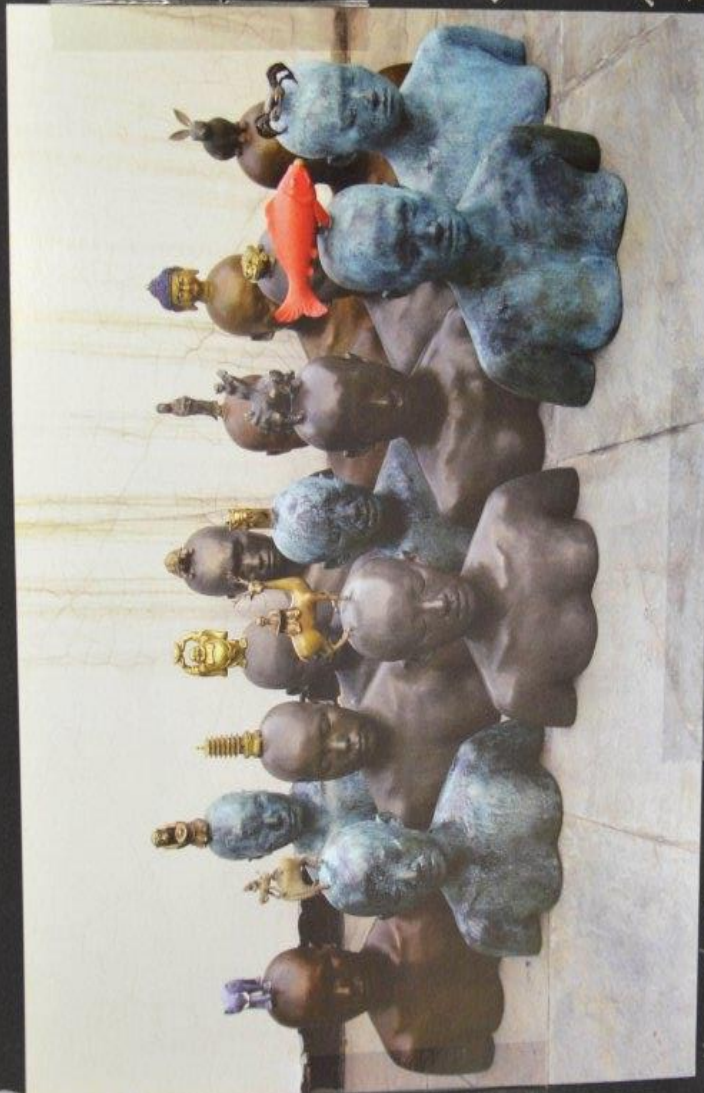
Photography by Michelle Taylor, 2014.







(26)



\* 2008/09?

★ I saw this piece exhibited at GOMA, Brisbane, earlier this year. Each bust was displayed on a white shelf on a white wall, at bust height. The effect was extraordinarily dramatic; all these Busts lined up, evoking an army-style regimentation, but with a

## SYMBOLS

Ah Xian. "Metaphysica" series, 2007.

## Simplicity



← This green look is what I'm going for.

Tarnished copper?

How to achieve in

costuming/body

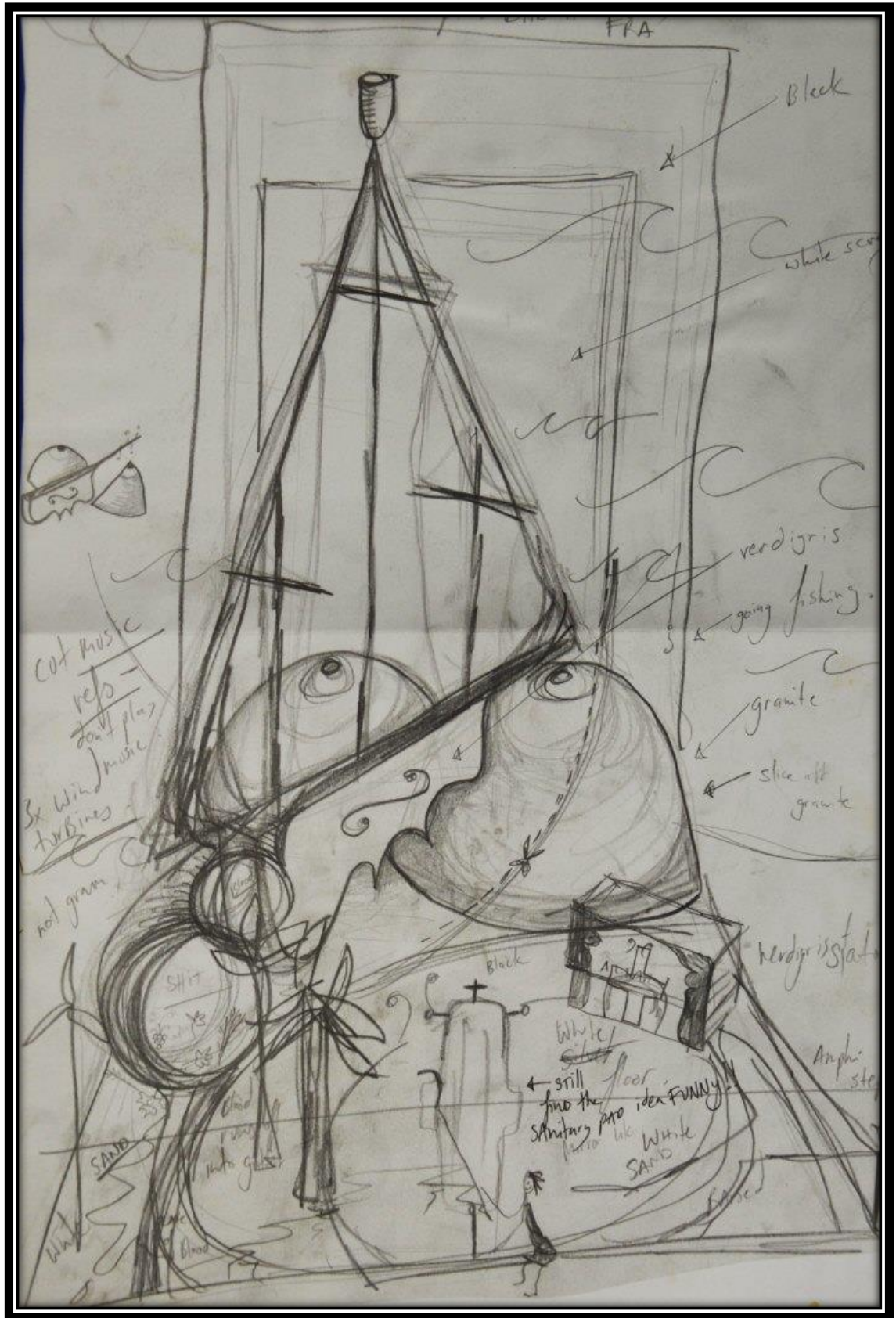
paint? Investigate.

★

2014: This is JINX in COCK FOREST: the PLAY WITHIN THE PLAY.

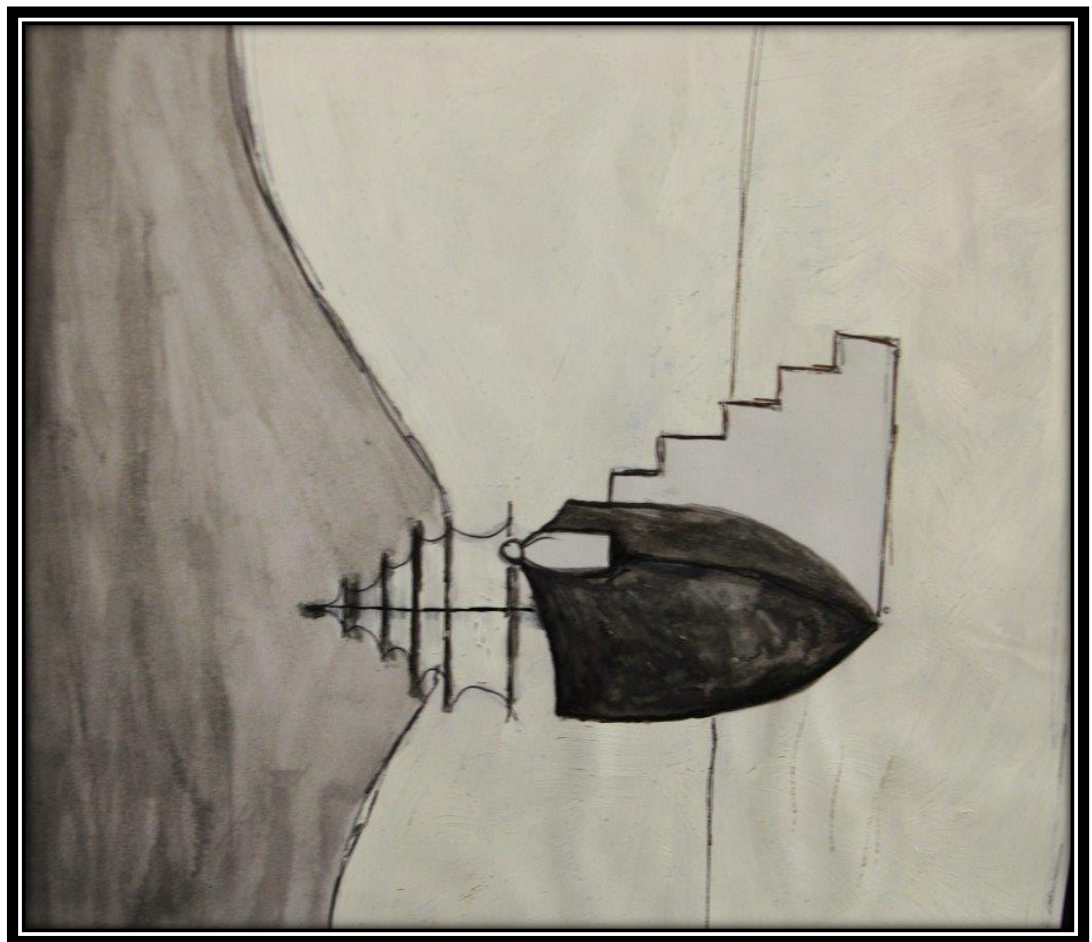
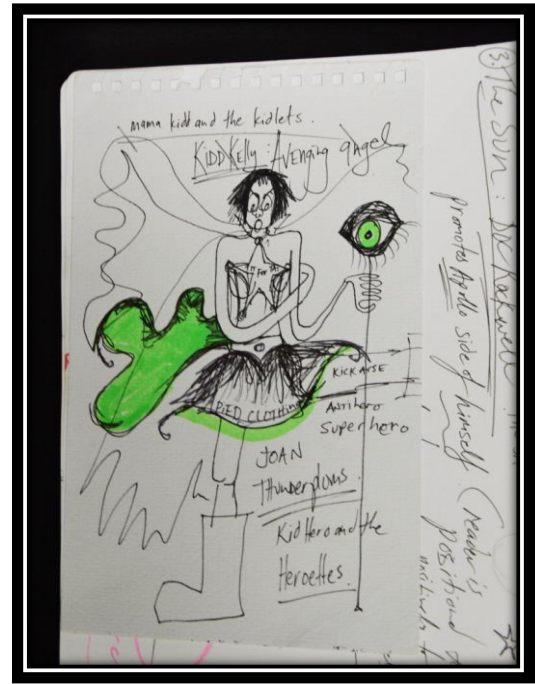
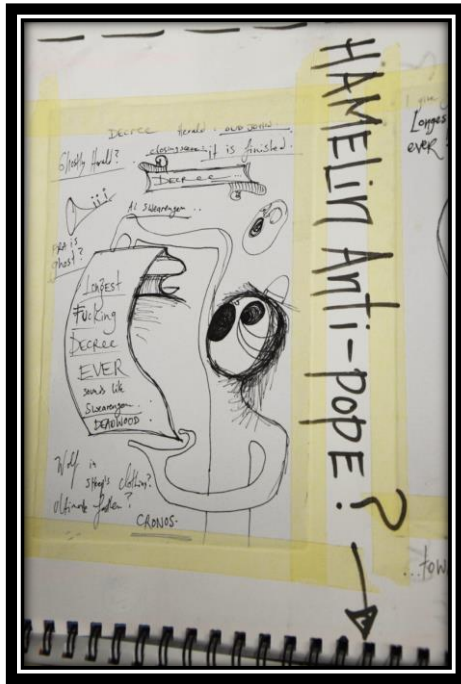






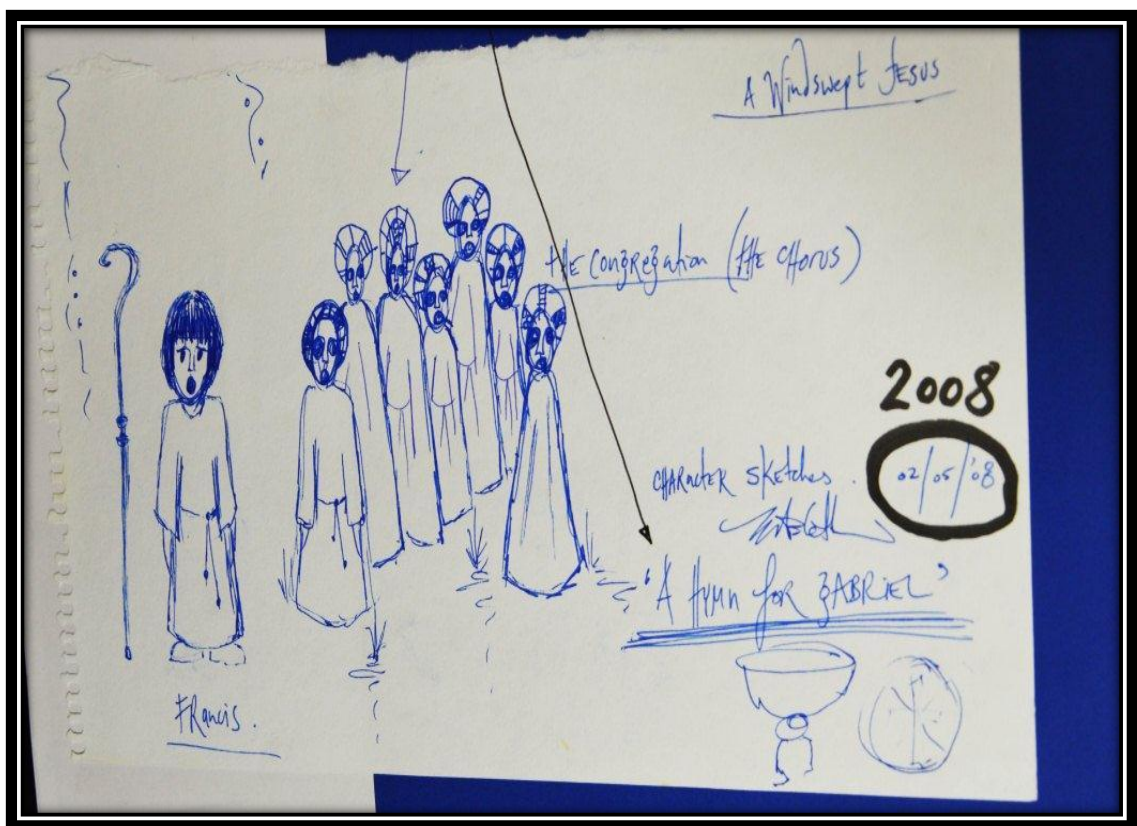
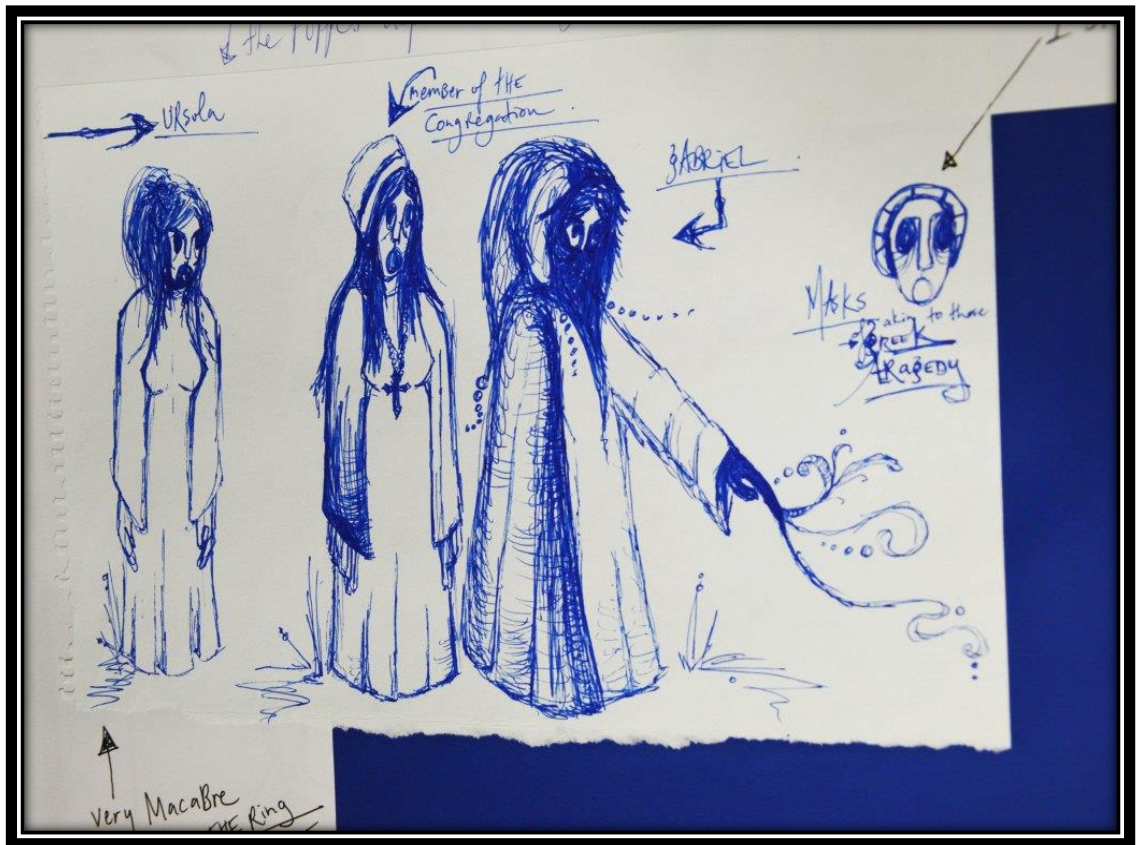






















④ JEN DARK, OLD BAG WITH A SPARK ✓ keeping this.

JEN: Primarily A THRESHOLD GUARDIAN.



MY BIRTHDAY CARD  
HEH HEH!! FROM PETE!

Love  
this  
kind of  
Humor.



"ONCE A ROCKER,  
ALWAYS A ROCKER."

Visual Aspects:  
Act 1: Black & White -  
Act 2: Black & White -  
Act 3: Black & White -  
Act 4: Black & White -

These visuals (along with a conversation with MARK POA,  
OL OF OF) prompted me to create a totality  
of a whole that would in acts 1-3, with  
the visual of a figure with incorporate GREEN (Act 2).  
- The visual of a figure with incorporate GREEN (Act 2).  
- The visual of a figure with incorporate GREEN (Act 2).  
- The visual of a figure with incorporate GREEN (Act 2).



JEN DARK → THRESHOLD GUARDIAN ✓



She's got with Rite!  
She needs to look a  
bit like a TOAD!  
(in keeping with the  
mythological/fairy folk  
tale resonances of the  
Threshold Guardian  
Archetypes)



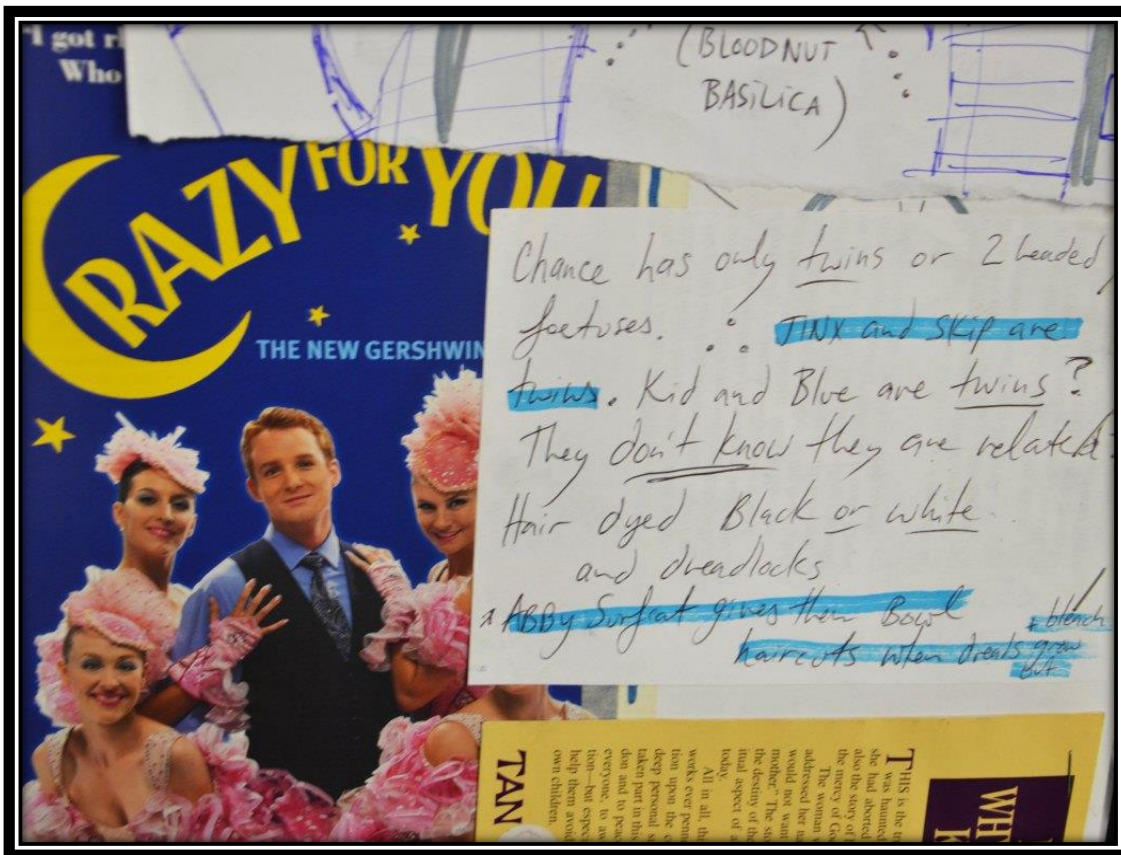
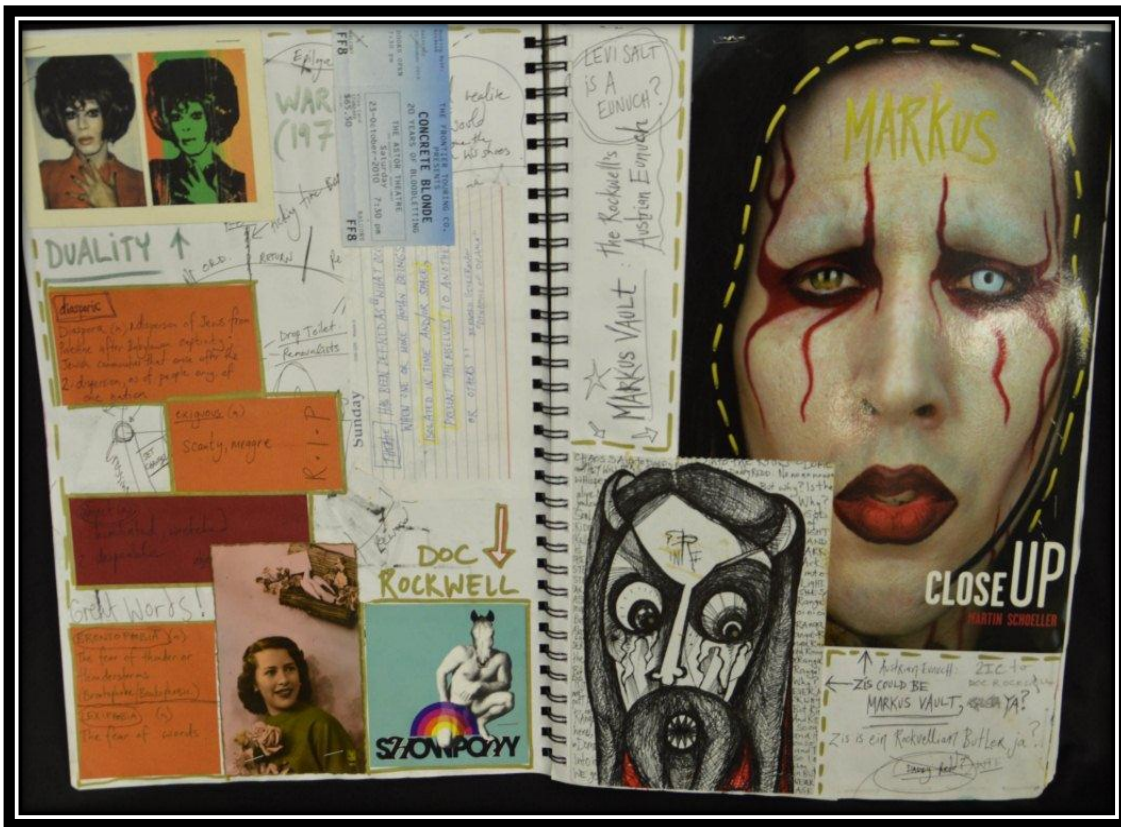
A friend from WELDA ASSET.  
Laminated picture: "Jen of Age"  
by John Batten - Legage (1918-20)  
reproduced courtesy of Metropolitan  
Museum of Art, NY, USA.  
[A French painter in the J.F. Knet  
tradition, hence Joan as a  
Lorraine peasant. He was also an  
eminent portraitist.]  
→ the shot/shore element is  
perfect for Rite's journey.





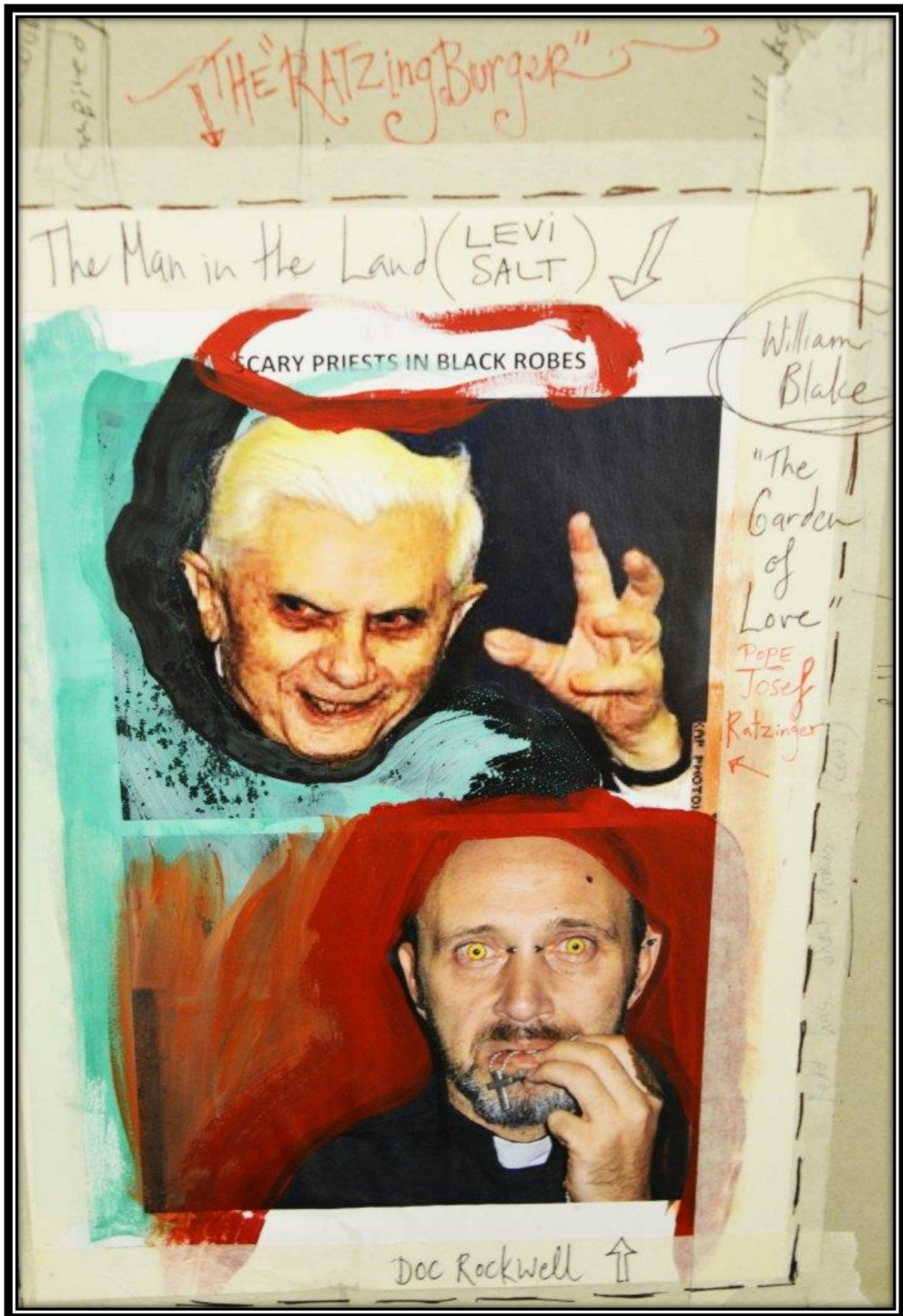












THE "RATZING Burger"

The Man in the Land (LEVI SALT) ↓

SCARY PRIESTS IN BLACK ROBES

William  
Blake

"The  
Garden  
of  
Love"

POPE  
Josef  
Ratzinger  
←

Doc Rockwell ↑



