

Shaun Watson

The Logbook

Year of Lodgement 2023

School of Language and Culture

A thesis submitted to Auckland University of Technology in fulfilment of the requirements  
for the degree of Master of Creative Writing.

### **Abstract**

This thesis consists of practice-led research in the form of a full-length script for a feature film; plus a 7,000 word essay (exegesis). A summary of the script is as follows:

*In the isolated waters bordering New Zealand's coastline, a German U-Boat embarks on one of the longest distanced voyages in World War Two. When KLAUS VON WOLFF, the son of a high-ranking Nazi official arrives ashore one day to steal milk for his crew, he finds himself stranded and unable to make contact. Desperate to avoid capture, his journey leads him to a lighthouse on an isolated cape where he encounters KATHRYN GUTHRIE, a war-widow hiding from an estranged wealthy father-in-law (PETER GUTHRIE) seeking custody of her son. Klaus takes Kathryn and her son hostage, using them as a means of acquiring parts needed to fix his damaged radio transceiver but when an uninvited arms-dealer turns up one night, Klaus is convicted to protect them and Kathryn must decide who the enemy really is.*

The script is framed by an Exegesis which is a 7,000 word essay on the subject of:

- (a) the genre of the script
- (b) the development process from synopsis to second draft

**Table of Contents**

|                                |        |
|--------------------------------|--------|
| Attestation of authorship..... | IV     |
| Script.....                    | 1-90   |
| Exegesis.....                  | 91-116 |
| References.....                | 116    |

**Attestation of Authorship**

“I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning”.

*Shaun Watson*

## **Exegesis**

## **Introduction**

My thesis is creative practice as research, comprising a creative artefact (a screenplay) accompanied by a critical component (an exegesis). This confirms to AUT University's guidelines for a 'Format Three' thesis, as described in the Postgraduate Handbook 2021, which states 'practice does not serve to illustrate theory but is more appropriately understood as the site of research; the exegesis relates directly to the practice-oriented work and as such does not have a research topic or question of its own; the purpose of the exegesis is to elucidate and clarify the relationship between the central concept, key contexts, relevant critical context' (pp. 109-113).

Accordingly, in my exegesis, I provide a discussion which overviews the creative work, which will include:

- A synopsis of the creative component and an explanation of my intentions.
- A review of key texts relevant to development of the creative work, in the form of a comparative analysis.
- A detailed description of the process and methodology used, and a reflection on the outcomes of this creative practice as research.
- Discussion of theoretical, historical and critical context where relevant.

## **PART ONE: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS**

### **Contents**

|                                      |         |
|--------------------------------------|---------|
| Introduction to part one .....       | 94      |
| Commonalities between the texts..... | 95-100  |
| Differences between the texts.....   | 101-105 |

## **PART TWO: EXEGESIS**

### **Contents**

|                          |         |
|--------------------------|---------|
| Introduction.....        | 106     |
| Synopsis.....            | 106-107 |
| Intentions.....          | 107-108 |
| World of the story ..... | 108-109 |
| Protagonist.....         | 109-112 |
| Antagonist.....          | 112     |
| Dramatic tension.....    | 112-113 |
| Key turning points.....  | 114     |
| References.....          | 115-116 |

### **Introduction to Part One**

The first part of this exegesis will relate the central theme of my screenplay *The Logbook* to six other works which instrumentalise the same theme. The exegesis will draw upon a range of key elements to explore the primary similarities and differences in the way these scripts treat the same central theme.

The central theme in my screenplay, which is the same or similar to a theme in the five other texts, is *love for an enemy versus duty to a community*. The texts chosen for comparative analysis are *The Exception* (Burke, 2016), *Allied* (Zemeckis, 2016), *Avatar* (Cameron, 2009), *Captain Corelli's Mandolin* (Slovo, 2001), and *Brooklyn* (Hornby, 2015). These works contain a central conflict which forces protagonist(s) to choose between love for someone that will complete the development of their character arc, and a community that deems the commitment as dangerous, treasonous or an obstacle to a certain goal. I will begin the comparative analysis of the five texts, and then draw on critical texts to place this analysis in a wider context.

## Commonalities between the texts

### **Element One:** *Commonality of narrative structure*

The first element I wish to discuss is narrative structure, with specific reference to action and relationship lines in *The Exception* (Burke, 2016), and *Allied* (Zemeckis, 2016), in relation to my work *The Logbook*. Linda Aronson, in *The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Screenplay* (2010) states that ‘The first event in the action line...is the disturbance. This simply means something unusual happening in the normality...’ (Aronson, 2010, p. 68).

In *The Logbook* the action which brings together the two main characters Klaus Von Wolff (a German U-boat officer) and Kathryn Guthrie (a war-widow and member of the New Zealand Land Army), sets in motion the core conflict that underpins the entire plot. Klaus’s stranding on the shores of New Zealand’s North Island forces him to encounter, exploit, and rely upon a woman he would have otherwise never sought or accepted as a counterpart.

This disturbance and unforeseen intersection of events takes both protagonists by surprise and is dramatized by the indication of an on-the-spot attraction between them.

There are ‘conventions, formulas, and expectations through which we identify certain genres and distinguish them from others’ (Corrigan and White, 2015, p. 317). A strong signifier of the romance genre is to establish some kind of instant and spontaneous connection or moment of attraction between the ‘soon to be’ lovers that offers the viewer an indication that this concealed desire will grow and encounter obstacles inside the world they find themselves. Klaus and Kathryn represent two nations at war, which becomes an obstacle to their inner wants and desires. The reader will therefore be watching for how their emotions come into direct conflict with the events on the action line, as a relationship is very unlikely to change until events force it to change (Aronson, 2010).

In *The Exception* (Burke, 2016) the same inner conflict is created through two characters who come from completely different walks of life. Stefan Brandt (a Wehrmacht Captain) and Mieke de Jong (a Jewish housemaid operating as a spy) meet at the deposed German Emperor Wilhelm II’s estate in the Netherlands and are brought together into an intimate

relationship. Brandt has been tasked to protect German Emperor Wilhelm from assassination, but Mieke is in fact the agent who has been given the job of killing him.

Brandt's inner conflict is experiencing his affection for Mieke while stopping her from committing the act of espionage. Consequently, it becomes clear that, like *The Logbook*, the relationship storyline is the focus of tension, as we are watching to see how the romantic connection will respond to the wider forces. As A.O. Scott put it, 'the relationship between Mieke and Brandt, which begins with a smouldering exchange of glances and moves quickly from there, is the centre of the film's intrigue. Is she entrapping him? Is he exploiting her?' (Scott, 2017, para 4). This tension is key to the central theme of *love to an enemy* versus *duty to a community*. Portraying the wider conflict of war and the competing interests at play through two characters who are supposed to be 'enemies' is a way of exploring that, underneath war, death and national divide, the very thing that makes us human can be found: love. The question remains, how can this love be reconciled in the face of the events that transpire on the relevant action line.

In *Brooklyn* the questions are resolved surrounding Eilis's choice of love for an "enemy" in the third act, when the question of whether the young Irish woman from Enniscorthy will choose Tony Fiorello, a poor Italian American from New York, or Jim Farrell, a well-off bachelor back home in Ireland; despite knowing that choosing Tony as a lower-class man of Italian descent is viewed as an act of betrayal to her mother, and community back home:

'Eilis sees him before he sees her, and the camera stays on him for a moment - we notice his openness, his good humour, his innocence'. (Hornby, 2015, p.108)

Eilis then states:

EILIS

'And you'll realise this is where your life is' (Ibid).

In *The Logbook*, Kathryn's acceptance of her commitment to Klaus is sealed through permitting Klaus to return to Germany in order to protect him. Letting Klaus go reveals that she trusts him despite his status as a German.

With regard to structure, the third act question on whether the protagonist's love will triumph in each text are answered in a way that meets the audience's expectations in accordance with genre signifiers and to ensure the relationship outmanoeuvres the key obstacles on the action line.

### **Element Two:** *Commonality of Attitude and Meaning*

Unique to a film is its tone (attitude) and in response, what the audience is expected to take away emotionally. Here I will discuss commonalities in the way the central theme is dramatized *tonally* in *The Logbook*, *Brooklyn* and *Captain Corelli's Mandolin*, which share a predominantly 'whimsical' attitude.

*The Logbook* is an historical romance, yet one might also look upon it as a social melodrama which extends the melodramatic crisis of the family to include 'larger historical, community and economic issues' (Corrigan & White, 2015, p.326).

Despite the revelation that Kathryn faces losing custody of her son and that a conman seeks money from her, the screenplay still draws upon a whimsical attitude to depict a uniqueness in New Zealand's people and social landscape. Whether it is a no-nonsense farmer named Connie Maguire who has assigned her farm girls different military ranks, or a well-intentioned but somewhat incompetent constable who takes with full seriousness the killing of a cow by ammunition, the screenplay combines the tragedy of war with the whimsicality of a peace-going nation at the bottom of the pacific. A country that surely no hardened enemy could help falling in love with.

*Brooklyn's* screenplay is similar in tone with its light-hearted portrayal of the Irish people's wit and distinctive cultural personality. Much of the characterisation gives the text's attitude a comedic underlay which cushions the social complexities faced in deciding which path the protagonist should take. The bulk of these whimsical moments take place at a dinner table in Manhattan where Eilis and a group of other Irish boarders quarrel with an old lady named Mrs Kehoe who runs the house:

‘MRS KEHOE

They’re both very good, and you girls are lucky to be working there.  
Eilis, from the look of you, you have greasy skin, is that right? What  
do you do about that?

EILIS

(embarrassed)

Just...well, I wash it, Mrs Kehoe. With soap.

MISS MCADAM

There’s nothing wrong with soap. Soap was good enough for Our  
Lord. I expect’ (Hornby, 2015, p. 18).

This depiction of the Irish as whimsical showcases what Eilis is at risk of losing if she becomes further entrenched into American society and culture. As Glenn Kenny puts it, ‘Eilis is also of course terribly vulnerable. In the film she has a beloved mam and older sister and once she’s ensconced in a quasi-boarding house in a nicely brownstone-and-tree-rich neighbourhood of the New York borough to which she’s sailed, she misses them terribly’ (Kenny, 2015, para 4). Despite the whimsical attitude, Hornby delves into the immigrant struggle for identity and homesickness in the pursuit of economic prosperity. Eilis encounters a crossroad and feels she must decide which world to root herself in. It is through this struggle that the dramatic tension and central theme plays out.

*Captain Corelli’s Mandolin* also fuses the whimsical and tragic. Set during WW2 on Greece’s Ionian Islands which become occupied by the Italian Army, Pelagia, the Greek daughter of a village doctor must navigate her relationship with a loosely committed and ego-centric boyfriend, and a Captain of the Italian 33rd Acqui Infantry Division named Antonio Corelli, who is positively contrasted through his jovial and romantic qualities, expressed specifically by his passion for playing the mandolin. Despite the war and obstruction of their freedom, Pelagia is offered a sense of liberation through the unwelcome invader.

### **Element Three:** *Commonality of Setting*

Setting can provide an understanding of a particular character’s psychology and way of thinking. Kenneth Helphand states that in film we ‘anthropomorphize landscapes and endow

them with human qualities and characteristics' (Helphand, 1984, p 4). In cinema, landscapes can be 'suffused with character traits of a personality and history that are complete with strengths and flaws that can undergo development and transformation with other characters' (Ibid).

In *The Logbook* Klaus encounters a landscape that is dissimilar to anything he has ever run against; not merely because he has been stuck in a metal tube for many months but because unique characteristics are imbued in the geographical formations.

'Klaus lies lifelessly on the forest floor next to the transceiver, a Luger pistol, a glass 3/4 filled bottle of milk and an open logbook lying on his chest. The pages inside contain dense foreign writing of a numerical deposition surrounded by freshly sketched drawings of native New Zealand flora' (p. 6).

The new landscape is moving to Klaus, while also acting as an escape from the war-torn landscapes that had come to characterise his life back home. In turn the landscape represents something beyond the physical reality. Film, as Helphand surmises, presents the viewer with a concrete setting for abstract images, ideas, and concepts (Helphand, 1984). The New Zealand landscape softens Klaus's heart as he comes to see his hostages as an extension of it. In *Allied* the rich and exotic landscape of Casablanca draws the two central protagonists together into a deep and intimate connection. In one such scene Max Vatan and Marianne Beasuejour travel through the desert in a car:

'Finally Max turns to her. Across the gear stick and handbrake, they grab each other and kiss with furious passion' (Knight, 2016, p.36).

...all while a sandstorm sweeps over, physically entrapping them into a confined inescapable space. The landscape both compels and enables the two agents to express their desire for each other and leave behind the fear of who they may really be beyond their covert facades.

In *Avatar*, James Cameron juxtaposes the destructive industrial world of Hell's Gate Base on Pandora with the captivating beauty of the natural forests and wildlife that surround it. The screenplay's main protagonist Jake Sully becomes mesmerised by its tranquillity when he is deployed on a mission to make contact with the Na'vi tribes.

'Neytiri seems shaken. She seizes his hand and pulls him after her.

## NEYTIRI

Come!

EXT. RAINFOREST - NIGHT

TRACKING WITH JAKE as he gazes about him in growing wonder. He touches leaves as he passes, watching the bioluminescence shiver through them...exploding rings of light where his feet touch down. Dream-like, surreal beauty...(Cameron, 2009, p.43)'.

The natural world of Pandora that surrounds Jake and Neytiri - who in theory are supposed to be enemies, responds to them in captivating splendour, fully romanticising their connection as characters. It is this nature that gives Neytiri the ability to trust Jake and be comfortable taking him to Home Tree.

'Below her Jake is totally unaware of the arrow aimed at his THROAT.

ON NEYTIRI as she follows him with the bow, muscles tensing for the shot – and SOMETHING drifts down in front of her, F.G. She hesitates.

RACK FOCUS to the tip of the arrow – where a single WOODSPRITE floats down to land on the arrow-head...' (Cameron, 2009, p.35).

It is this response from the setting that stops Neytiri from inflicting a lethal blow to Jake. The landscape is endowed with the human qualities and characteristics that mould and shape the character transformations from enemies to lovers, setting up the main tension driving the rest of the screenplay's conflict. From this moment the viewer is forced to consider how Jake will reconcile his quest to fulfil a duty to his community back on Hell's Gate, despite that community wanting to destroy the life and nature Neytiri represents. As a result, Jake must choose where his loyalties lie, much like Klaus who comes to see New Zealand and its people as a country with a human face.

## Differences Between the Texts

### **Element One:** *Script Devices*

Script devices' can be broadly defined as any technique in a narrative used to move the plot forward. I will compare *The Logbook*, *Avatar* (Cameron, 2009) and *Brooklyn* (Hornby, 2015) for the range of plot devices that bring focus to the theme of *love for an enemy* versus *duty to a community*. In particular, my analysis of script devices will focus on how they showcase the development and completion of character arcs.

In *Avatar* one of the key devices that Cameron uses to communicate Jake's character arc and growing sympathy for the Na-vi people is voice over. This is prefaced in the very first opening shot when Jake speaks directly to the audience, breaking the fourth wall and allowing the viewer insight into his psyche:

‘JAKE

They can fix a spinal, if you've got the money. But not on  
vet benefits, not in this economy' (Cameron, 2009, p. 1).

While Jake's physical disabilities make him mentally stronger than the other characters within the script, the voiceover also makes it clear that the quest to get his legs back make him susceptible to the goals and exploitative behaviours of other characters, namely the antagonist Colonel Miles Quaritch who uses Jake in order to make capital out of the Na'vi people's resources. Cameron's use of voiceover is continued into the first act so that the viewer is given additional information on his psychological development in response to the new world and people he has encountered, such as his role as a mentee of Neytiri:

‘JAKE

It's hard to put in words the deep connection the People  
have to the forest...they see a network of energy that flows  
through all living things. They know that all energy is only  
borrowed...and one day you have to give it back'  
(Cameron, 2009, p.79).

Through verbally communicating this information, the viewer is able to see evidence of Jake's progress as a character and that his motivations are no longer as simple as we were led to believe in the beginning.

During the film's climax, intense fighting and resistance to the "sky people", Jake states through voiceover:

‘JAKE

I was a warrior who dreamed he could bring peace. Sooner or later though, you always have to wake up...’(Cameron, 2009, p. 110).

We are able to conceive the trajectory of his character as someone who has limited understanding of the Na'vi people and their problems with the sky people, becoming one who forms a passion for protecting them.

*Brooklyn* utilises a framing device to reveal the internal character change of Eilis's growth between the two boat rides she takes at the beginning and end of the film from Ireland and New York. On the first ride she is vulnerable, naive and innocent, shown through the first night in her small cabin vomiting from sea sickness. During this voyage she is helped by a fellow roommate and Irishwoman named Georgina who has taken the journey two times prior.

‘GEORGINA

Go on, you can use it. I'm going to get us some water. That's all you're allowed. You'll bring it all up again, but you won't feel so bad [...]’ and ‘Think like an American. You have to know where you're going’ (Hornby, 2015, p. 14).

This establishment of Eilis as a mentee is paralleled at the film's end when she takes the same trip back to Brooklyn to be reunited with Tony. Eilis stands on the deck of the passenger ship next to a young Irish teenage girl who turns to Eilis and asks a series of naive questions about Brooklyn. Eilis proceeds to fulfil the role of a mentor, telling her the exact advice she received on her first journey to New York.

‘EILIS

No, you can eat when you get there. But don’t eat on the boat. It’ll stop you getting so sick. Do you promise me? [...] You have to think like an American’ (Hornby, 2015, p. 106).

The screenplay ends with her advice delivered through V.O. over an image of Eilis reunited with Tony.

‘EILIS

And you’ll realise that this is where your life is’ (Hornby, 2015, p. 108).

The use of a framing device - starting and ending at the same place - emphasises the completion of Eilis’s character arc, accompanied with the verbal confirmation that Tony, despite being viewed as an adversary to her community back home, is where she needs to be.

In *The Logbook* dialogue motifs are used to show character arc progression toward a moment in the screenplay where the ‘other’ is no longer viewed as an ‘enemy’. In the screenplay’s beginning Klaus repetitively refers to Kathryn as “Frau”, a rather bland and nondescript reference of someone he views as just a number or ‘woman’ who will assist in his goal of escaping New Zealand before capture. Klaus’s next term for Kathryn in the second act is her alias name “Jane”. However, after Mr Frost’s first visit, it is revealed that her real name is actually “Kathryn”.

From this moment (the second act) onwards Klaus becomes the one person in her life that seeks to remind her that she is Kathryn; someone beyond the elegant exterior she feels she must maintain in order to present an identity. The evolution of how Klaus addresses Kathryn therefore helps dramatize their bond developing from enemies to lovers.

## **Element Two: *Antagonist Forces***

Another element I wish to compare are the types of antagonists and the varied ways these antagonists force the protagonist to change. Here I will compare the antagonists from *The Logbook*, *Allied*, and *Brooklyn*.

Linda Aronson writes that an antagonist ‘need not be the protagonist’s enemy (indeed, they can be friends or lovers, antagonists always cause trouble or change for the protagonist’ (Aronson, 2010, p. 86).

In *The Logbook*, there are a range of antagonistic forces which feature more prominently at different stages of the script. The antagonistic force in the beginning that threatens the stability in Kathryn’s life is Klaus. In turn, the antagonistic force for Klaus is the isolation of the new land he finds himself in. However, as exposition is unravelled, new forces present themselves which consequently forces a shift in Klaus’s influence and role in Kathryn’s life. At the first act turning point Raymond Frost (a failed businessman and ex-convict) turns up demanding that Kathryn give him the money he is allegedly owed. Klaus, seeing how this man negatively impacts his hostages, feels compelled to protect them. This alters the course of the plot and sets up the central theme of *love for an enemy* versus *duty to a community*.

The forces in *Allied* aren't nearly as visible. For the screenplay’s entirety the antagonistic force comes from within the relationship of Max and Marianne. Right up to the third act climax, Steven Knight keeps the audience questioning whether Marianne truly loves Max or if her allegiance as a Nazi spy will force her to destroy him.

Marianne is the antagonist of the relationship line. She has been trained as part of her intelligence gathering operations to separate herself emotionally from her colleagues and missions. Relationship line antagonists permit the protagonist’s thoughts to be transmitted to the audience by way of dialogue (Aronson, 2010). As a result of this specific cause and effect, Max’s internal suspicion is conveyed to the high officials and everyone around him, except to the woman he thought he was closest to, his wife Marianne:

‘MAX

(interrupting in an even flow)

The rules of espionage in time of war. If you have a  
relationship with someone who turns out to be a spy...

Bridget reacts to his words...

MAX (CONT'D):

...you have to execute them yourself. With your own hand. To prove you are clean' (Knight, 2016, p. 85).

The audience is led to believe at this moment that Marianne is a *femme fatale* character who threatens all of the stability and peace that Max has gained through his marriage to her. However, the truth as to whether she will continue to be Max's antagonistic force is ultimately revealed at the very end of the third act:

'As she speaks she snatches Max's revolver from his inside pocket and engages it. The military police all raise their weapons...

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

Take my beautiful Anna to Medicine Hat. Take good care of her. I love you. That is real. Goodbye Quebecoise.

Marianne shoots herself in the temple and falls dead' (Knight, 2016, p. 142).

Marianne kills herself to avoid her husband getting in trouble and so her internal battle over whether to continue feeding information to the Nazis comes to an end.

---

---

## **Part Two**

---

## **Introduction**

Part two of this exegesis reflects on my creative practice as research with specific focus on my intentions, experiments and conclusions, and the decisions I have made in constructing the dramatic narrative in my thesis (screenplay). I will begin by providing a brief synopsis which will deal with the WHO, WHAT and HOW. Then I will discuss my intentions, the world of the story, my protagonist(s), the antagonistic forces, and how I have built the narrative's dramatic tension with reference to the specific turning points that comprise the action and relationship lines.

## **Synopsis**

**Definition:** 'A movie synopsis is a short write-up that summarises what a screenplay is all about. It includes a snapshot of what the overall plot structure and story for the film will be' (Aldredge, 2020, para 3).

**Synopsis for *The Logbook*:** In the isolated waters of the South Pacific a German U-boat scouting New Zealand's coastline has embarked on the longest distance mission of World War Two. When one officer KLAUS VON WOLFF (26) is sent ashore to collect milk for his crew he finds himself stranded with a damaged radio transceiver that renders him unable to make contact. His quest for survival leads him into the path of KATHRYN GUTHRIE (27), a war-widow who goes by the pseudonym 'Jane' and lives on an isolated cape with her son.

Determined to maintain her recent commitment to the New Zealand Land Army and alert the unsuspecting nation of an invader, Kathryn tries to overthrow her captor but fails. Under the false pretence that a cousin from Auckland, KLAUS, is visiting, she drives them both into a town to find the parts needed to fix the transceiver.

Unable to find what they need, they return to the cape where they encounter RAYMOND FROST (55) a failed businessman and arms-dealer, who is employed by Kathryn's estranged

father-in-law to get custody of her son. Compelled to protect his captives, Klaus wards off the unwelcome visitor and in the process learns of Kathryn's true identity.

Kathryn, having caught the passionate interest of a wealthy town paragon known as WALTER BARCLAY (30), wonders if he is the solution she needs to secure the old life she once had. However, a swim off a nearby island one day turns into an intimate encounter with Klaus. Their growing affection faces opposition when Mr Frost discovers Klaus's logbook and learns of his identity as a German officer, putting Klaus in the position of deciding whether to succumb to a bribe that will ensure his safe passage home or protecting the woman he has come to desire.

When Percy vanishes from school one afternoon Kathryn knows it can only be the work of one person. Venturing into Russell with Klaus, they attempt to stop Mr Frost before it's too late. An altercation leads them to an isolated country road where Percy is retrieved and Kathryn shoots Mr Frost to save Klaus from death.

The transceiver is finally fixed, and Klaus contacts his crew. He returns to New Zealand in 1948 where they live as one family on the cape operating the lighthouse.

### **Intentions**

My intent in writing *The Logbook* is rooted deeply in the aspiration to explore New Zealand's connection to World War Two in a way that hasn't been told before.

Enemies-to-lovers narrative structures set in the context of wars are commonplace throughout the romance genre. When I think of these stories, images of the golden-sanded deserts of Casablanca and the sparkling lakes of Italy come to mind. Because New Zealand has a unique character and beauty to its landscape that is romantic, I wanted to write a historical romance that could enable a film to rival these other geographies.

When I came across a tiny excerpt of historical documentation that a U-boat had passed Cape Brett and was rumoured to have sent officers ashore for the collection of milk, my imagination ran wild. This prompted me to ask the question: what would happen if someone

encountered one of these officers from the U-boat in question (U 862)? And subsequently, what if that individual was the only New Zealander to live under enemy occupation on New Zealand soil during World War Two? This line of thought produced the romance line.

Kathryn is a mother and war-widow loathed by her estranged and wealthy father-in-law who wants custody of his grandson; Klaus is the son of a German prince killed for protecting his disabled son. They no longer have the security of social class or affluence, and in due course come to discover that they're both sufficient for each other. In a country at the bottom of the world and against the backdrop of a wider war, I want to present a paradigm of love and emotional stability as within the realm of possibility. The distinctive New Zealand landscape, people and culture, provide one point of difference in this genre.

The *key takeaway* intended for the reader is that beneath the destruction and death that war brings, there are people who all share the same human emotions of love, sadness and loss. I want Kathryn and Klaus's slow but eventual connection to be a reminder that in all the contemporary wars spanning across the world – Ukraine, Syria, Yemen, to name a few – that there might be enemies-as-lovers, and that it's our responsibility to recognise people as unique individuals in contrast to the totalitarian regimes that are commonly used to represent these countries.

### **World of the Story**

McKee (1998) relates a story's setting to its characters this way:

‘A story setting is four-dimensional - period, duration, location, level of conflict...PERIOD is a story's place and time...DURATION is a story's length through time...LOCATION is a story's place in space...LEVEL OF CONFLICT is the story's position on the hierarchy of human struggle’  
(McKee, 1998, p. 68-69).

*The Logbook* is set in rural New Zealand during WW2 (1945). More accurately, the two primary locations where most of the narrative takes place are Cape Brett and the town of Russell in the upper-North Island. By 1945 it was becoming clear that the war was in its twilight stages. The Axis powers were receiving push backs on many key fronts spanning Europe and the Pacific. New Zealand throughout the war up until 1945 was in a privileged position in that it had not experienced the day-to-day destruction of its buildings, towns and citizens. In this regard the war felt very far away. Real-life logs in an officer's diary on board U 862 from 1945 echo this sentiment after he observes NZ's towns and ports through a periscope. '*You can see the cars with their headlights driving along the streets...the houses are brightly illuminated, it looks to us like Christmas...Yes, the people here are all so wonderfully unsuspecting...*' (Stevens, 1997, p. 181).

Despite this lack of environmental change, women were living under new rules while fighting the war from home. Demand for female labour outside the home increased, coinciding with the intensified social importance of maintaining families and homes (Montgomerie, 2001). The demand for labour was regulated through the industrial conscription of women through the Manpower Office, known as 'manpowering'. Life was arduous in the face of high expectations. 'Clothing and footwear factories, hospitals, schools, government departments and canneries were all declared essential undertakings, bringing thousands of women under the authority of the regulations independently of the age-based orders' (Montgomerie, 2001, p.86).

In the town of Russell, there was (and is in my script) a strong rural middle-class of men and women who spent the entirety of the war working hard and contributing to the war effort. An outsider like Kathryn, who on face value appears to represent a class of wealth and war benefactors, would have been viewed with condescension.

### **Protagonist(s)**

My story uses a dual-protagonist structure. As Aronson writes,

‘In multiple protagonist form, the group story, the macro - the quest, siege, or reunion adventure...depends on a threat to the group survival. Once the survival threat is decided, the steps in the group’s action line can be devised’ (Aronson, 2010, p.222).

### **Motivation**

In *The Logbook* each of the two protagonists, Kathryn Guthrie and Klaus Von Wolff, is motivated by different goals at various points within the narrative. After becoming stranded on the foreign shores of New Zealand, Klaus’s ambition is to have his damaged radio transceiver fixed in order to contact his crew and secure a safe passage home. Nonetheless, at the first act turning point his motivations become more complicated when he finds himself compelled to protect the family, he has been holding hostage. There is a patent change in Klaus’s focus from exploiting Kathryn to willingly sacrificing himself for her.

Kathryn’s quintessential goal is to protect Percy from her father-in-law. She embarks on this by removing herself from Auckland and retreating to a small hut on an isolated cape. When she is held hostage by Klaus this secretive life in the wilderness is threatened, which draws her to Walter; a man who can secure her place into wealth and prestige. As the narrative progresses, Kathryn realises that Klaus will enable her to be the person who she finally realises herself to be. As a result, her goal becomes a game of continuing to protect Percy whilst maintaining Klaus’s presence in her life.

### **Stakes**

At stake for Klaus is the prospect of being caught by the New Zealand Army and placed into a camp, endangering his crew. On an emotional level this risks isolating him further from his country and leaving him in fear of being executed. For Kathryn, losing her son represents what is most at stake. Added to this imminent fear are the potential consequences that come with hiding an enemy of the state.

Each of these situations force the characters to take more risks. When Kathryn comes to realise that overthrowing Klaus won't work, she is forced to create a false identity for him as a cousin from Auckland. From this moment forth he is drawn into the town's community. This makes it difficult for Kathryn to live the discreet life in the wilderness that she had at first envisaged. Concurrently, as Klaus's motivation undergoes a gradual shift after intervening with Mr Frost, he completely risks exposing his true identity. Additionally, it becomes more difficult for Kathryn and Klaus to achieve their goals of security and escape as a mutual attraction develops. Klaus thus becomes torn over catching his U-boat back to Germany, and Kathryn risks stealing a device from a military truck while remaining puzzled over whether to grant him access to it for fear of betraying her nation.

### Arc

Both the characters of Klaus and Kathryn have a character arc built on personal development and change. Kathryn begins as a broken mother intimidated by her new existence in the wilderness. She creates a fake alias for herself while continuing to foster the false perception that she is still the inheritor of great wealth. She also has a disdain for the German Army and Hitler's war which has had a devastating impact on her own life after losing her husband in Italy. By the third act of the script, she has become both capable of embracing the messiness of life in a rural town and ready to confront the higher forces that seek her undoing. Beyond this she forges a closer bond with Klaus through trust. This trust and devotion to him is ultimately confirmed when she shoots Mr Frost, protecting Klaus from death and acknowledging fully that Klaus is no longer her enemy.

Klaus begins as a character with one single goal: to get back to his U-boat. His initial interactions with Kathryn and Percy are uncompromising, but it is unknown to them that on an emotional level he is grappling with a sense of feeling purposeless and on a quest to find belonging outside of the totalitarian identity that has consumed his nation. The only family he has is the German Army. By the end of the third act, he is outwardly focused, realising that Kathryn is also an outsider in her own community just like him.

In the final scene of act three, as Kathryn and Klaus stand on Cape Brett's lighthouse overlooking the pacific waters, there is a sense that both characters have accepted that they may never taste the fruits of luxury again, but their belonging as a family unit will be found in the life that the cape has to offer. It is in essence their new castle, manor and place of prosperity, but a different kind of prosperity. Just not how they once knew it to be.

### **Antagonist**

In classical narrative there is typically a force which seeks to get in the way of the protagonist's goal. An antagonist is the 'combatant' force working against the protagonist's or leading characters' goals and objectives, and it is through this that the main conflict is created (Masterclass, 2022).

In *The Logbook* Mr Frost's arrival at the cape forces Kathryn to gravitate towards Klaus as an allegiance. Mr Frost, upon finding out that Klaus is a German officer, attempts to test this allegiance by sneaking into the hut, encountering the logbook and discovering who he really is. This knowledge and the power to send Klaus into internment is what allows Mr Frost the ability to use Klaus as a pawn. If the money is retrieved Mr Frost will organise Klaus an escape back to Germany. It is an exhibition of the true power the antagonist has to force Klaus into questioning whether his loyalty to Kathryn is worth it. When Klaus fails to comply with the demands, it compels Mr Frost to act more compulsively. Accordingly, this eventuates in him using Percy's life as a means of desperate bribery, bringing the narrative to its eventual climax.

### **Dramatic tension**

Here I will discuss how dramatic tension is generated in my screenplay through turning points.

Field (1979) emphasises how dramatic tension is generated through the question of whether the protagonist(s) will get what they want and need:

‘First, define the need of your character. What does your character want? What is his head? What drives them to the resolution of your story?...All drama is conflict. If you know the need of your character, you can create obstacles to fulfil that need...Without conflict there is no drama. Without need, there is no character’ (Field, 1979, p. 73).

Weston (2003) places the ‘emotional event’ at the heart of the story:

‘How are the characters different - or what has changed in their relationship - from the beginning...? *Events* are not just the incidents of the plot. An *event* is truer than the text. It looks beneath the surface, as a shift in the emotional lives of the characters. It is the ultimate subject choice...It’s *what happens* in the story’ (Weston, 2003, p. 107).

In my screenplay, the ‘emotional event’ of romance is at the heart of the story so that tension is generated by the relationship-line question of whether Klaus and Kathryn will end up developing a love for each other and if they will stay together beyond the war. Meanwhile, the central conflict on the action line is generated by the question of how Kathryn will navigate being held hostage by a German while simultaneously protecting her son from being taken away.

For each protagonist there is both an external and internal tension. For example, tension comes from whether Kathryn, as a war-widow and a New Zealander, can reconcile or justify her romantic involvement with the enemy. This is further complicated by a love triangle. Kathryn must decide between a German soldier who is the son of a fallen prince and Walter who is wealthy and belongs to a politically ambitious family. Walter offers Kathryn an easy way out of her struggles but is a reminder of the superficial and hollow world she once inhabited. Klaus has lost everything to a totalitarian state but reminds Kathryn she is more than her status. This dynamic produces the central dramatic tension underpinning the relationship line.

### **The five major turning points for protagonist(s)**

For each of the two main protagonists there are major turning points which give rise to escalating tension and the shaping of the character arc. For Kathryn: (1) she proves her strength and skill as a contributing member of the Land Army, despite judgement. This is an important moment because it allows her to garner respect from her community so that more is at stake reputationally when she becomes intertwined with Klaus. (2) She returns home one evening to discover Klaus inside her hut, becoming his hostage. This turning point forces the viewer to consider how Klaus will use Kathryn as a means of returning to his U-boat and if Kathryn will aid his cause. Kathryn's life on Cape Brett will never be the same again. (3) Mr Frost discovers her whereabouts. This is a significant turning point because with the introduction of the plot's main antagonist it shifts Klaus from fulfilling that role and trigger the story's main relationship line. (4) Kathryn and Klaus experience a passionate encounter at Motukokako Island swimming together. It is of significance because they are both offered a glimpse of each other's human side. (5) Kathryn shoots Mr Frost dead to save Klaus. This turning point displays Kathryn fully committing herself to Klaus.

For Klaus the first major turning point occurs after he becomes stranded in New Zealand. This is (1) when he encounters Kathryn on Cape Brett. From this point the reader/viewer knows that his experience of the country will be significantly altered. (2) Kathryn gives Klaus the fake identity of 'Harry', a cousin from Auckland. This turning point thrusts Klaus into the community. (3) Klaus confronts Mr Frost at the Cape. Klaus's role as the antagonist in Kathryn's life is altered. (4) Klaus kisses Kathryn in Russell. It is the first physical manifestation of their affection. Their feelings can no longer be ignored. The question persists as to whether they will remain together in light of this moment. (5) After making a failed attempt to kill Mr Frost, Klaus spots his crew camped out in the bush. Klaus is just metres away from a trip home but he instead accepts the fact that there is still unfinished business in the pacific. From this turning point, the 'end section' of the film and climax begins: Klaus will not leave New Zealand until the safety of his hostages are guaranteed.

## **References**

- Aldredge, J. (2020). *A Movie Synopsis: What it Is and How to Write One*. The Beat.  
<https://www.premiumbeat.com/blog/movie-synopsis/>
- Aronson, L. (2010). *The 21st Century Screenplay*. NSW, Australia: Allen & Unwin.
- AUT University (2022). *Master of Creative Writing Programme Handbook*. Auckland, Australia: AUT Centre for Creative Writing.
- Cameron, J. (Writer). (2009). *Avatar* [Film]. 20th Century Fox; Lightstorm Entertainment; Dune Entertainment; Ingenious Film Partners.
- Corrigan, T., and White, P. (2015). *The Film Experience: An Introduction*. (4th edition) PALGRAVE MACMILLAN.
- Field, S. (1979). *Screenplay*. (New edition) United States: Dell Publishing.
- Hauge, M. (2011). *Writing Screenplays That Sell*. (New edition). London: Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Helphand, K. (1986). Landscape Films. *Landscape Journal*, 5(1), 1-8  
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/43322989>
- Hornby, N. (Writer). (2015). *Brooklyn* [Film]. New Edition. BBC Films.
- Kenny, G. (2015). Review: Brooklyn. Retrieved from:  
<https://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/brooklyn-2015>
- Knight, S. (2016). *Allied*. New Edition. London: Paramount Pictures.
- Masterclass. (2022). *Writing 101: Protagonist vs. Antagonist Characters*. Masterclass.  
<https://www.masterclass.com/articles/writing-101-protagonist-vs-antagonist-characters>
- McKee, R. (1998). *Story*. (First Edition) United States: Regan Books.
- Montgomerie, D. (2001). *The Women's War*. (First edition). New Zealand: Auckland University Press.

Scott, A.O. (2017). Review: 'The Exception' Is a Diverting Tale Set Before Nazi Horrors Fully Emerged. Retrieved from

[www.nytimes.com/2017/06/01/movies/the-exception-review.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/01/movies/the-exception-review.html)

Stevens, D. (1997). *U-Boat Far From Home*. Australia: Allen and Unwin Pty Ltd.

Weston, J. (2003). *The Film Director's Intuition*. United States: Michael Weise Productions.