 **JUNE 2020 NEWSLETTER**

Hello to all our members.

Here is a quick message from Vivienne Bond, our President:

It's been fairly crazy here in Warburton over the last few weekends, and I imagine Healesville is also experiencing an infux of visitors.

What a shame it is that we have not been able to welcome them with our annual Warburton Film Festival. There was a touch of sadness among committee members at last week's online meeting at the fact that the Yarra Ranges would not be brimming with flm lovers next weekend, but we still look forward to welcoming them back next year.

We are still unsure as to when we will be able to resume monthly screenings, and we await news on that issue.

Please keep in mind that we always want flm suggestions from members so that we can provide a diverse and enjoyable screening program.

We would normally wait until later in the year to gather your ideas, but please send suggestions at **any time** to info@yarrarangesflmsociety.org.au. You can suggest a flm that you have seen that you think our members would like, or a flm you would like to see.

You are welcome to borrow from our DVD libraries.

Go to the flm library on our website ([https://www.yarrarangesflmsociety.org.au)](https://www.yarrarangesfilmsociety.org.au/) to see the extensive list, and email any borrowing requests to j.cluberton@bigpond.com for Warburton or lorrainesorrell@yahoo.com.au for Healesville. This method for the DVD library has already worked very well for Healesville members.

We'd love for you to submit your flm reviews. If you've seen anything, old or new, and feel like telling other members about it, please send any reviews to sethhyneswriter@australiaonline.net.au

I've been running into (fguratively) a few society members in town lately. It has been lovely to see familiar faces from such a great community group. I hope it's not too long before we all see each other in person again, enjoying the world of flm.

Vivienne Bond YRFS President.

Since our President is very keen for our members to share their flm-viewing opinions, I thought I'd get the ball rolling.

Common wisdom asserts that a source book will always be better than the flm adaptation, but this is a popular exaggeration.

I can offer three flm adaptations that I think are signifcantly better than their source books.

***Cloud Atlas***, directed by Tom Tykwer and the Wachowskis, is an adaptation of the novel by David Mitchell.

Both the flm and novel are enchanting multi-genre experiences exploring themes of freedom, hunger, exploitation, the universality of human experience, and how our creative legacy can reach and touch people far into the future.

The flm and novel have six narratives, each taking place in different genres and time-periods, from a maritime drama in 1849 to an adventure story in the post-apocalypse.

The novel initially presents half of each successive narrative, then resumes each narrative in backwards order; the chronologically fnal postapocalypse narrative is the only uninterrupted narrative, and it plays out right in the middle of the book.

Think of it like this: **A B C D E F E D C B A**

This structure has the effect of guiding the reader forward and then backward in time, but the reader is moving toward a culmination of the book's themes even as they travel back in time.

The flm uses a mosaic structure, transitioning freely between narratives to underline common themes and events. This isn't a better approach; I simply fnd it more interesting.

The *Cloud Atlas* flm makes astonishing use of practical effects, with each member of its large cast taking on multiple roles in different ages, races and even genders. This multilevel casting highlights the novel's theme of reincarnation.

The *Cloud* Atlas flm uses the visual artifce of cinema to build upon Mitchell's novel, but I think the flm is also signifcantly better-paced.

The future Neo-Seoul narrative in the flm is a shallower action piece, but the NeoSeoul narrative in the book somehow feels both uneventful and too short. The flm also wisely omits an extremely trite mistaken romance sub-plot from the 1936 composer narrative.

***The Road***, directed by John Hillcoat, is based on the postapocalyptic drama novel by Cormac McCarthy.

Both works are minimalist but incredibly atmospheric, and maintain a thin layer of hope and tenderness between the father and son main characters. Within the bleak setting, the pacing balances long, quiet stretches of weariness with bursts of terror and barbarism.

I think the flm is superior because it doesn't have the annoying emotional ambiguity of McCarthy's writing style.

One of McCarthy's infuriating trademarks is his near-complete omission of punctuation from his prose.

McCarthy's no-punctuation style makes some sense in the frstperson narration of the *Road* novel, as a starving man wouldn't have the

time or energy for pauses, but the extremely long running sentences can get exhausting, and the unclear transition between description and dialogue dulls the emotional impact of some passages.

By virtue of the medium itself, *The Road*'s flm adaptation has no such issue.

***V for Vendetta***, directed by James McTeigue, is one of my favourite flms, and it's based on the graphic novel by Alan Moore.

The flm is a tense, nuanced thriller with powerful performances and a fantastic score by Dario Marianelli. The plot has a staggeringly solid arc: the depth of the fascist future UK's oppression and their shocking rise to power are steadily revealed as seeds of rebellion rise to boiling point. The flm also updates the political themes of the graphic novel, shifting from Thatcher-era politics and fears of nuclear war to Bush-era politics and terrorism.

I fnally read Moore's graphic novel this year, and I found it kinda tedious.

The flm feels much more focused and the characters are betterdeveloped.

Almost every character in *V for Vendetta* is better-realised in the flm.

The flm's plot draws a direct connection between morally-grey freedom fghter V and the virus that brought the fascist Norsefre party to power, thus making V's campaign more personal (and Hugo Weaving effortlessly combines gentlemanly charisma and harsh pragmatism in the role).

Evey, a young woman who becomes V's protege, is older and has far more agency in the flm.

Chancellor Sutler (played perfectly by John Hurt) is much scarier in the flm, as he feels more articulate and forceful. The flm also ignores the Fate supercomputer sub-plot from the graphic novel, which feels extraneous to the plot.

Stephen Fry plays famous TV host Gordon Dietrich in the flm, and the flm characterises Dietrich (like Fry himself) as gay, thereby subtly addressing Norsefre's homophobia. In the graphic novel, Dietrich is a straight man who starts a romantic and sexual relationship with the much younger Evey, which is creepy.

The graphic novel's version of Chief Inspector Finch reaches an epiphany and renounces Norsefre after taking LSD and wandering through the ruins of Larkhill, the internment camp run by Norsefre's founders. Finch has a much more convincing arc in the flm; he starts from a position of professionalism and frustration at Norsefre's more violent excesses, and he slowly and soberly (pun intended) comes to question the regime he serves.

I lost track of some of the characters in the graphic novel, or mistook one for another, and the ending is more open-ended than in the flm. The flm has a triumphant conclusion, while the graphic novel's conclusion is more chaotic and ambiguous; this chaos and uncertainty may be more realistic, but it's not as gratifying.

*Cloud Atlas*, *The Road* and *V for Vendetta* are three flm adaptations that I think are much better than their source books. Can you suggest any others?

Cheers. Seth