

DOWNPOUR

FRAMES, FEELINGS AND FILE TYPES

BARNABY TAYLOR

For Iris, as always and no surprise ...

Many thanks also to Claire for the film and her help with this project.

The Form of the Work

The ontological fact that actions move within a dark and shifting circle of intention and consequences, that their limits are our own, that the individual significance of an act (like that of a word) arises in its being this one rather than every other that might have been said or done here and now, that their fate (like the fate of words) is to be taken out of our control - this is the natural vision of film.

*Stanley Cavell*¹

Many critics have been attracted to states - suspension, uncertainty, poise, paradox, ambiguity, ambivalence - that prevent a straightforward reception of the work. These states are admired because they honestly reveal or reflect complication; because interest is sustained if the work does not settle; because they often entail elements mutually informing, or interrogating, each other; because unusual connections can be forged especially when the elements are apparently contradictory; and because it is an achievement to hold alternative elements advantageously in play, and make them cohere rather than clash.

*Andrew Klevan*²

The green of the leaves. The wet of the green. The white of the dress. The red of her hair.

Freckles and roses. The grain of her skin. Lashes and lustre.

Night time. Orange pavement. Yellow lights and dark shadows.

And the boy waiting. Umbrellas and hoods and coins on the wet ground.

The yellow line of the sign. It keeps them apart. It brings them together.

¹ Stanley Cavell, *The World Viewed*, (Harvard University Press, 1971, 1974, 1979), p. 153

² Andrew Klevan, *Aesthetic Evaluation and Film* (Manchester University Press, 2018), p. 168

*I cannot look. I cannot stop looking. I look away. I look back. I simply look.
And the starfish.*

*I came to fatherhood later in my life and so my thoughts and feelings on what it is to be a father are firmly founded on both the fears of my earlier years – the fears that I would never be a father – and also my fears for the future – will I be around for long enough to be present at my daughter's future significant events? That my thoughts and feelings, and fears, on and about fatherhood are always at the forefront of my mind is both the reason for my desire to examine Claire Dlx's 2011 film *Downpour* in more detail and my motivation for trying to understand how it is exactly that Dix's film also speaks to me so eloquently about feelings and file types, not least but also in main part due to the fact that Dix's film portrays a woman on the verge of marriage. And just as the fears I enjoy from being a father are both past, present and future simultaneously, so it is that I also see a blending and blurring of tenses in *Downpour*. This blending and blurring speaks to me; it tells me about the blending and blurring of my own experiences. This is both part of the film's splendour and also a principle object of my fascination with its frames and feelings. And at the simple heart of all this is love, simply love; for my daughter; for film; for feelings; for writing; for caring; for life; for simply being bothered; ultimately, for the exploring of all these and seeing how they might merge and diverge, blend and blur.*

Love for the love of love.

Last year, and dulled by the desperate details of disappointment and distance, I very seriously wondered how it would feel to not feel anymore ever again. This was a very serious thought, and though I am not ashamed of how far I had fallen to even conceive that feeling this desperate was something I thought I could ever feel, the simple act of feeling this dark and desperate (something which I readily acknowledge, is not actually simple at all) caused me to once again confront my thoughts and feelings on what it is to be a father. The thoughts of the past and the future, their blending and blurring,

came once again to the time of this particular present and reminded me of the fact at that moment that my fears were the very things that I needed to confront and not succumb to.

So where to begin?

Writing in *The New Cinephilia*, critic and blogger Girish Shambu draws on the work of Catherine Fowler (herself drawing on the ideas of the artist Pierre Huyghe) to account for two kinds of (cinematic) experience. As Shambu writes:

*When we see cinematic images unfolding in front of our eyes, we experience the 'there' of cinema. The 'there' consists of actual, real images we encounter. But in addition to the 'there' of cinema we also encounter an 'elsewhere' of cinema. We carry memories of a film's images and sounds with us into the future, we have reactions and responses to films we watch and, we remember, in incomplete, non-linear fashion, the many films we have seen. All of these form the 'elsewhere' of cinema.'*³

Caught in this flow from here to there, from there to elsewhere, this circling of tenses, their blending and blurring, is the experience of my (cinematic) life. And as this flow revealed itself to me once more last year I realised that the 'there' of my desperation could be overcome by the 'elsewhere' of my life. In this way, this flow also caused me to return to this study, having despaired of it previously and bundled it up with all the other dulling details of my many disappointments.

That this confession is placed within the flow of this study (some might say jarringly) is simply to further demonstrate the fact that I am incapable of writing without writing from within myself and then outwards. This is as much the case for my fiction writing, which takes place in another dimension simultaneously and parallel to this one, as it is for the various forms of writing that have coloured my professional career. This

³ Girish Shambu, *The New Cinephilia*, (Kino-Agora, Caboose, 2014) p. 8

from-within-ness is also something that I seek to encourage from within the hearts of my students when we think about their writing.

While others may seek to prevent their personal expression through a rigid insistence on impersonal formats and approaches, both in writing styles and presentation - I'm thinking here primarily of the stultifying indignities that endless PowerPoint slides inflict upon people intent on learning about themselves and the things that interest them rather than the crass recitation of poorly formatted slides that say more about the limits of the reciter than they do about the limitless potential of the poor people having the recitation delivered at them like some infernal but strictly formal sermon - I try and counter this rigidity at every single opportunity by encouraging the people in my classrooms to simply try and feel what it is like not to hide behind anything; the impersonal, for example; or the suggested lack of detailed knowledge in a particular area, not my suggestion. It is their writing, after all; and their study, their degrees, their rights as customers (yes, as customers), as we must acknowledge, and, ultimately, their lives, so why should we force the people we encounter to blunt themselves and temper their own passion with someone else's [lack of] passion by never saying how it is that they actually feel about something or, indeed, anything. This is a step away from teaching and a move towards learning; about myself as such as anyone else I meet in the classroom.

So where should we begin with all this? Perhaps here?

For Andrew Klevan, an early influence and key encourager of the from-within-ness of my writing, it is the 'dedicated' attention to the formal detail of artworks that allows attentions of this kind to not be dismissed as irrelevant to some broader or wider 'concern.' Klevan continues by outlining a range of reasons why such 'dedicated' attention can be considered to be fundamental to how we approach the question of aesthetic value. As he writes:

*One reason is that such a concentration is stimulating, demanding, and rewarding in many respects: perceptually, cognitively, imaginatively, emotionally, and sensuously. Another reason is that it is responsive to the kind of object the work is: one that is made, constructed, formed out of many elements (for example, images, shots, sounds, performers, objects and environments). It therefore brings us closer to the actual work rather than to a resemblance because the form of the work is the work.*⁴

*Klevan's work explicitly continues to lengthen the specific lines of film inquiry which began with British critics in the 1960s writing in *Movie* and continues to this day. Indeed, *Aesthetic Evaluation and Film* is dedicated to one of the key proponents of a new form of film writing, the late Victor Perkins, author of 1972's *Film As Film*, arguably still the starting-point for anyone looking to trace these lines both backwards and forwards. Valuing and accounting for the value of 'images, shots, sounds, performers, objects and environments' was central to the *Movie* project and still holds sway today in various approaches to film writing. Indeed, as Ian Cameron wrote at the time:*

*For talking about one small section of a film in great detail, whether in an interview or in an article, we have been accused of fascination with technical *trouvailles* at the expense of meaning. The alternative which we find elsewhere is a *gestalt* approach which tries to present an overall picture of the film without going into 'unnecessary' detail, and usually results in giving almost no impression of what the film was actually like for the spectator.*⁵

*For 1962 read 2019. In this way, and in part, related to my earlier research interests, most notably 2006's *The British New Wave*, an early evocation of how it was that I thought I should write about films, a thought that still burns deep within me, even if this thought has now been tempered somewhat across the long time since its original*

⁴ Klevan, p. 7

⁵ Ian Cameron, 'Films, Directors and Critics', *Movie Reader* (November Books, 1972), p. 12

*inception, I am sufficiently enthused by Klevan's outlining to begin applying my 'dedicated' attention to Downpour. In particular, I will be accounting for the value of those 'images, shots, sounds, performers, objects and environments' I find so compelling about her film and, by doing so, will seek to account for the value of these values as they relate to the blending and blurring of my thoughts and feelings. To this end, and in keeping with my own feelings about (film) writing, I will be looking to focus on the 'imaginative,' the 'emotional,' and the 'sensuous.'*⁶

⁶ B.F. Taylor, *The British New Wave: A Certain Tendency* (Manchester University Press, 2006, 2014)

'Ireland, I Love You'

Downpour tells the story of an engaged woman recalling pivotal moments in her relationship. With a running time of three minutes and thirty-five seconds, the film is a wholly engrossing exploration of love, memory and, most interestingly, at least for me, time. That a film of this length can be this compelling is a testament to the Dix's eye for detail and it is this eye that warrants such a detailed exploration of the film.

Downpour began as an entry for the Irish Film Board's Short Shorts funding programme with the theme of 'Ireland, I Love You'. As Dix outlines in interview:

I wrote two other scripts for the scheme before hitting on the idea for Downpour, which was simply that if you really love something, you love it warts and all. The rain makes Ireland the country that it is and this film aims to celebrate our love/hate affair with it. Downpour has travelled well, winning several awards at festivals both in Ireland and abroad so the rain seems to have struck a chord. Fran Keaveney in the Film Board was extremely supportive during the development process. I have a habit of redrafting and rewriting up until the bitter end, mainly because the script is a living thing for me and I find it hard to stop ideas coming right up until the end of the whole filming process.⁷

'If you really love something, you love it warts and all.'

For the love of life.

For the love of my daughter.

For the love of cinema.

For the love of writing, as Dix continues:

⁷ Steven Galvin, 'Irish Playwrights & Screenwriters Guild: Claire Dix,' *Film Ireland*, July 25th, 2013

Downpour was an exception to how I usually start a script, as it was based more on the concept of seeing the rain in a new light, or learning to appreciate something that we usually complain about, rather than beginning with a character. I work a lot with improvisation in rehearsals. We usually start with figuring out the subtext of each scene and understanding what the character wants. Once that's determined the actor is free to change the dialogue and stage direction until we're all happy that the scene works. This is one of the most exciting parts of the process for me but also one of the most daunting because it doesn't always work the first time.⁸

For the love of rain.

⁸ Galvin, 2013

The Wet of the Green



*The briefness of *Downpour* facilitates against the sometime (or more often) sway that dialogue normally holds over fiction films. Dix does not eschew dialogue altogether but simply chooses not to always use it. Like this, for me, *Downpour's* form, its limits and boundaries, the limits and boundaries of short fiction filmmaking, limits also its use of language. But only in its spoken form. For each place in the film where language is conspicuous by its absence, an absence necessitated by the restrictions of duration, the limits of its limits, there is, instead, such an eloquence of image that any reading of Dix's film simply has to engage directly with the succession of these images as they unfold. For this is where the language can be found. Not only in the film but also outside and around it. Indeed, furthermore, as a result of this, there is far too much value in these images for any language we might choose to account for them to simply be description. We need to move way beyond that, way beyond.*

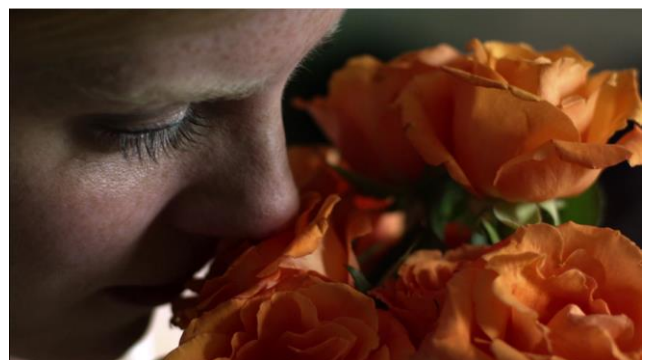
If there is a tendency to force people to hide behind the impersonal there is also a similar tendency to force these same people to limit any account of their experience of

a film to simple description. Whilst this may sometimes be advised for their early engagements with the discipline, in the end it will actually never really do for if we settle for this, or settle for ourselves telling others to settle for this, then we would perhaps be better served not engaging with films in the first place, or, indeed, most anything else. For it is the space beyond description, the sentence (after the sentence) after the sentence, this is the space and place for finding and outlining our thoughts and feelings, this is where language can be found. Admittedly, the sentence (after the sentence) after the sentence is a very hard place to reach but this shouldn't stop us trying. In fact, it should be the opposite and that is why, even in my weariest moments, those moments when the depressing, dulling details of my life described became my only view of the world, I remembered this space, this place where language can be found, and I tried to recall what it sounded like to be there. I knew I had been there before and if I knew this then I also knew that I could get there again. This writing now is part of that renewed effort to get there again. Or remain there.

One Face, Many Other Faces, A Succession

Some of cinema's most powerful moments have come from the faces of people, most notably women, standing and looking and thinking, remembering, recalling, regretting, hoping, fearing, dreading, and all those other ways in which the facts of our/their internal lives play out externally; but not through speaking.

At rest, reposed; and silent. Eloquent. Concerned. Defeated. Inspired. Loved. Unloved. Scorned. Rejected. Abandoned. Scorned. Triumphant.



As Stanley Cavell usefully notes:

*Early in its history the cinema discovered the possibility of calling attention to persons and parts of persons and objects; but it is equally a possibility of the medium not to call attention to them but, rather, to let the world happen, to let its parts draw attention to themselves according to their natural weight.*⁹

And Laura Mulvey adds to my sense of the usefulness of considering Dix's early presentation of Triona's stillness, her 'natural weight,' in this way when she outlines her thoughts on screen performance. As Mulvey writes:

*[Star] performance is, not inevitably but very often, the source of screen movement, concentrating the spectator's eye, localizing the development of the story and providing its latent energy. But the great achievement of [star] performance is an ability to maintain a fundamental contradiction in balance: the fusion of energy with a stillness of display. However energetic a star's movement might seem to be, behind it lies an intensely controlled stillness and an ability to pose for the camera. Reminiscent, figuratively, of the way that the illusion of movement is derived from still frames, so [star] performance depends on pose, moments of almost invisible stillness.*¹⁰

So when I watch *Downpour* and see Triona standing by the window, I am reminded of other moments from other films when their characters are still as well and these memories cause me no analytical concerns when I link images from *Downpour* with images from *Queen Christina* or *Vivre sa Vie*. I am making no claims for anything other than that the power of Dix's images is suitably sufficient to cause me to create my own

⁹ Cavell, p. 25

¹⁰ Laura Mulvey, *Death 24x a Second: Stillness and the Moving Image* (Reaktion Books, 2006), p. 162

relationships between the images in her film and others that I value, their blending and blurring in the way that I wouldn't do with other images from other films. It is here that my 'dedicated' attention begins.¹¹

¹¹ *Queen Christina* (Rouben Mamoulian, 1933), *Vivre sa Vie* (Jean-Luc Godard, 1962)

Moments, Their Passing, and a Reading



For Tom Gunning, a moment in a movie is generally one ‘recalled.’ As he continues:

*Movies are made up of moments, which both accumulate to an end and, in a sense, scatter across our memories. If we think of a movie as something which moves continuously, following the actions of characters and the trajectory of a story, then moments might seem to make the points along the way. But if we dwell on the sense of a moment in its singularity, it seems less to evoke the momentum of a plot than something that falls outside the story and its pace.*¹²

If a moment from a film falls ‘outside the story and its pace,’ then where does it land? In part, I have already tried to account for this by placing this moment from *Downpour* alongside other moments I have extracted from other films. Were I to

¹² Tom Gunning, ‘Shadow Play and Dripping Teat: *The Night of the Hunter* (1955), *Film Moments* (eds. Tom Brown & James Walters (Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 5-7, p. 5

continue this then I could spend the rest of this article and, indeed, my career, adding images to this list. I am not seeking to do that. Instead, I want to talk about the image and see what words I can find, not to describe but to account for, to understand, both the image and what the image means to me. Returning to Klevan, I find solace in his discussion of understanding. As he outlines:

*In order to evaluate soundly, aesthetic criticism endeavours to understand a work. What is its point and purpose? What does it all mean? What is at stake? How do its different elements come together to make sense? Why is it designed as it is? Sometimes global understanding about the whole is required, for example, disentangling, or grasping, a plot, discerning an overarching theme or a directorial vision, recognising a pattern of imagery or camera perspective, or making sense of a character; and sometimes local understanding about a part is required, for example, about a shot, a piece of continuity, or a character's gesture. Global and local understandings dynamically inform each other.*¹³

Like this, the attention I am paying to *Downpour* is wholly about vision, Dix's directorial vision. It is also about patterns of imagery, shots, and, of course, the gestures of the characters. If further discussion is required then I am delighted to return to the pioneering words of Robin Wood. As he notes, in a discussion of the various ways in which the 'the usefulness (and usability) of art, as affecting, influencing, developing, deepening, enriching,' can refine 'the human sensibility,' Wood comes to three conclusions. First, the 'instinctual and emotional elements' of a critic's response are at least as important as an 'intellectual' one. Secondly, Wood suggests that the apparent absence of any kind of 'personal' response needs to be regarded with distrust. Thirdly, as he outlines:

The true end of criticism is evaluation, the evaluation of the total experience the work is felt by the critic to offer; experience derived, that is, from what the work is rather than from what it says, structure, style, method all playing

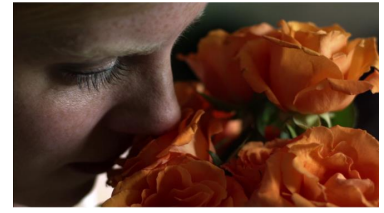
¹³ Klevan, pp. 61-62

*their roles. Such evaluation, because of the personal (hence ideological) bias involved, must always be tentative, relative and provisional.*¹⁴

So, how else can I read this moment? And, indeed, the film. However, tentative, relative and provisional, what is my experience of Downpour?

¹⁴ Robin Wood, *Personal Views: Explorations in Film Revised Edition* (Wayne State University Press, 2006), pp. 20-21

A Shared Remembering of the Remembered



*Downpour opens with its eponymous sound. Black. Then we see rain falling on green leaves. Next, a white dress. Then an orange rose. I adore the detail here. The embroidered gown that falls slowly down as the bride-to-be lifts herself up to meet it. The flow of three colours as the film calmly asserts its place of origin. There is an intimacy outlined here as well. A bride-to-be in her final moments before the ceremony. Does she make a secret wish as she smells the rose? Like whispering your hopes into a seashell found on the shore? Or blowing out candles on a birthday cake? The flicker of her eyes as they open. Like the blink from Marker's *La Jetée*, this tiny moment pulls me inwards, revealing, as it does, the film's inner life, the veins beneath the near surface of its leaves. This is where *Downpour's* vitality can be found, coursing wonderfully through these veins, there but just not there, in need of discovering, uncovering, or just revealing. Indeed, as Jean-Luc Godard outlines:*

*Anyone who yields to the temptation of montage yields also to the temptation of the brief shot. How? By making the look a key piece in [their] game. Cutting on a look is almost the definition of montage, its supreme ambition as well as its submission to *mise en scene*. It is, in effect, to bring out the soul under the spirit, the passion behind the intrigue, to make the heart prevail over the intelligence*



*by destroying the notion of space in favour of that of time.*¹⁵



I experience Downpour's vitality as a rush, a surge, a series of soaring sensations, almost as if I were coursing through those same veins. Much like the rain which the film celebrates so vividly, I am drenched with emotion. As I watch Triona remembering, I remember. As we see the key moments in her relationship with Ciaran, I think about key moments in my relationships. First meetings. Awkwardness. Intimacy. Love. I remember their significance. Their impact. Their arrival. Their duration. Their ending. It is a testament to Dix's realisation of her own script that the memories crafted specifically for Triona correspond so readily with my own. As I watch Triona waiting to get married I also think about what it is to be a father. The hopes I have for my daughter. The memories I want her to make. The happiness I want her to have. The moment when she might be waiting like Triona.

¹⁵ Jean-Luc Godard, 'Montage My Fine Care,' *Godard on Godard*, Translated & Edited by Tom Milne (Da Capo Press, 1972), p. 39



But there is more here. As Triona looks she raises her left hand and adjusts her earring. Behind her we see her mother organising the business of the day. We hear her mother asking that the chairs be brought inside. But this moment is still Triona's and like the flicker of her eyes before, the fiddle with her ears here, the smallest of gestures, almost unconscious, certainly not significant storywise, is still full and memorable. And real; one of the many micro-gestures that capture our presence in and relation to the world. The animation of our very existence is one founded on tiny physical adjustments; a hair, an earring, a waistband, a muscle, the twitch of an eye, a lip that purses, a smile, or not, simple posture, and or gentle position. This is the endless dance that is our lives. As it is Triona's.

The Camera's Handheldness

It is night time now. Dark pavements and the orange glow of the street lights. The rain still falls. It is a different rain. It is the same rain. It is Triona's rain. Dix's. Triona runs to a bus stop. Her white umbrella bobs in the dark. The camera's handheldness here brings us along with Triona. We run with her, accompanying. The previous moment of reflection in the hotel was Triona granting us the opportunity to go back in time with her. We, like her, like the director, the actor, are present at the moment when she first meets the man whose eventual proposal later in the film will bring about it's opening sequence.

It begins with an accident that is not an accident. In these situations it almost always



*begins with an accident. Otherwise, how else is it possible for random strangers to speak to each other? Of course, this is all simply conceit. These are not random strangers. These are not even who they say they are; they are characters after all. And the facts of this can often be exactly where fiction films, especially short fiction films, become obvious and overly-contrived. It is the nature of fiction that everything is contrivance so I imagine that the key struggle for any film is how to make coincidence not look like itself. For Dix, in *Downpour*, and, therefore, for me, the contrivance of Ciaran and Triona meeting is successfully realised; mainly, I would argue, by means of the obvious heart with which Dix imbues the succession of images in this sequence.*



*He is standing there. The yellow line of the bus stop sign divides the frame. They take their places on either side. The skill is in how they will be brought together. Triona drops some coins and Ciaran helps her pick them up. They both bend down and that is that. The bond is formed, the meeting met, the contrivance contrived and the heart of the film begins beating for this is the moment at which *Downpour's* pulse is properly charged and the film's blood really begins to course through its veins.*

A look. Another look. A look away. Then back again. 'Did they cancel all the buses?' Triona laughs and the sound is light beneath the heavy rain. The yellow post is used to great effect. It sometimes divides the frame. It sometimes stands as the boundary that Triona and Ciaran need to cross. Also, interestingly, for a film that does not depend upon dialogue for its forward movement, Ciaran's joke about the buses transforms the line of the post, changing it from a dividing line to an axis around which the world of this couple now revolves. As before, the handheldness here ensures that we are central to the spinning of this particular planet.

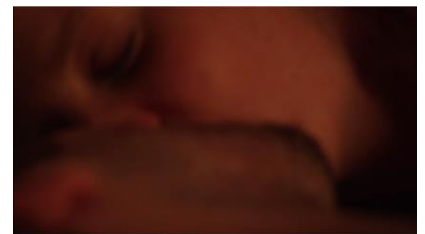
Animalia Asteroidea

Jump cut to Triona on the beach. She is waiting to go into the sea. To take the plunge. Ciaran is already in. He shouts. She laughs. It is going to happen. It is simply a question of when. Not that there is any tension here. There is nothing riding on Triona's decision. It is not vital to anything. Or is it vital to everything? To act physically at this stage, to take the first step, to stop hesitating, to move forward, is to move into the sea and join Ciaran. But Triona's movement here is also prelude to the smaller, closer, intimate movements that follow in the tent. So when I see her deciding to take the plunge, so to speak, to take the chance of joining Ciaran in the water, she is actually taking the chance of joining together with Ciaran. We fall in love with other people, after all, with the notion implying, if we like, an immersion in the emotion for the length of its duration. All the while the act itself requires a movement, however huge or tiny.



But what of the starfish here? Is there anything to be gained from considering its position in the sequence and its subsequent removal from the frame by the small wave? Is it dead? If so, does this stand as a portent? A thought for later? The future? Forever? In part, the answer to these questions is that it doesn't really matter. The starfish is simply in the frame because Dix chose to put it there. Downpour is not dependent upon editing schemes from other times and places, where objects are only revealed in order for their importance to also be revealed, then or later. For me, I am drawn closer to Yasujiro Ozu's intentions when he filled his frames with lamps and pots and trains and washing lines and clocks and all those general, ordinary things that seemingly furnish our general, ordinary lives. Like this, the starfish is because the starfish was. It was simply there. Something not untoward but ordinary. Expected. Unsurprising. Unremarkable. Like most things in our lives.

The Heart, Not The Eye

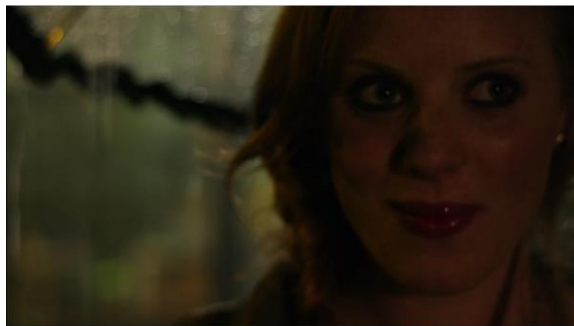


It is such a beautiful moment when Triona's small movement in the tight framing brings her to kiss Ciaran and continue the movement she initiated earlier when she is waiting to join Ciaran in the sea. There is a joyous blurring as proximity meets promise and bathed in the orange glow, similar to the one that first brought them together at the bus stop, the couple are completed. Dix's direction here is deft. We return once more to the face that brought about the film in the first place. We remain focussed on the axis upon which the film revolves. Dix directs us to consider, once again, just how

significant the framing of a human face can be. In this way I am reminded of Béla Balázs's oft-repeated but always useful discussion of the close-up. As Balázs perfectly outlines:

*The close-up may sometimes give the impression of a mere naturalist preoccupation with detail. But good close-ups radiate a tender human attitude in the contemplation of hidden things, a delicate solicitude, a gentle bending over the intimacies of life-in-the-miniature, a warm sensibility. Good close-ups are lyrical; it is the heart, not the eye, that has perceived them.*¹⁶

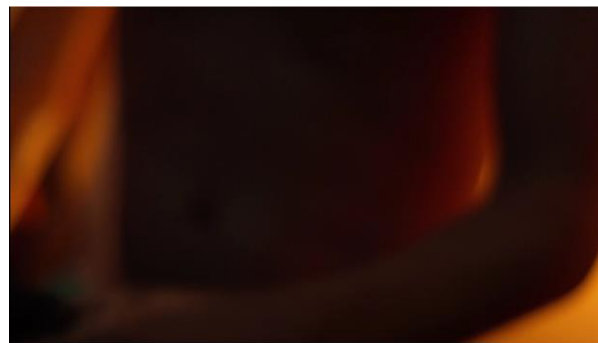
As the intimacy develops here, *Downpour* blurs into a devoted distraction and the impression of their coming together is enough here. We don't need to be shown everything. A kiss. Ciaran's beard. The stroke of a leg. There is no sense of reticence here. No misplaced sense of right and wrong. Rather, and just like our memories of our moments of intimacy, it is simply the case that our memories allow the moments of these moments to fuse somewhat, creating an impression most of the time rather than a simple cold unfolding one part at a time - the absolute contemplation of hidden things. Their hidden things, and ours. And then the couple play. They laugh and tickle and wriggle and enjoy their proximity to each other. Ciaran speaks. 'Hang on a second.' *Downpour* blurs again and then there is the cut.



¹⁶ Béla Balázs, 'The Close-Up,' *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings, Fourth Edition* (Oxford University Press, 1992) p. 261 - originally published in *Theory of the Film* (Dover Publications, Inc., 1952)

*We are returned to Triona at the bus stop. She smiles as if she remembers. But she also smiles as if she is predicting the future. At this moment she cannot possibly know that the stranger at the bus stop will be the boy in the tent. How could she? Yet, the skill here is in creating an impossible moment, a return in time that is also a glimpse of the future. This is the moment in the film that sings the loudest for me. If the film was able to move forwards and backwards at the same time then this simple moment, the moment of Triona's smile, is the site at which this impossible motion occurs. We have shared Triona's memories of meeting Ciaran. We have also been privy to a future event that Triona could not have known would occur yet *Downpour* allows this seeming impossibility to sit securely within its unfolding. How is this possible? In part, simply due to the fact that this is where a close study of the film's images leads me. I am accounting for moments within the film, most notably moments where Triona's face is full in the frame. And when these moments occur, I am driven to try and evaluate the ways in which my experience of *Downpour* is simply that, my experience; however tentative.*

More Belson than Nolan?



*In the galaxies of other films, ruptures in unfolding of this kind, when past, present and future combine in the same frame, might require some kind of generic explanation; scientific, for example, as is the wont of those films that normally deal with time travel. Here, however, Dix's move towards a form of abstraction, the blurring of images and the concomitant condensing of time and space, aids the existence of moments like this and moves *Downpour* closer to more experimental forms of filmmaking, more Belson than Nolan, but not really like either entirely.*

The great abstract filmmaker Jordan Belson sought to create what Gene Youngblood has christened 'cosmic cinema.' As Youngblood continues:

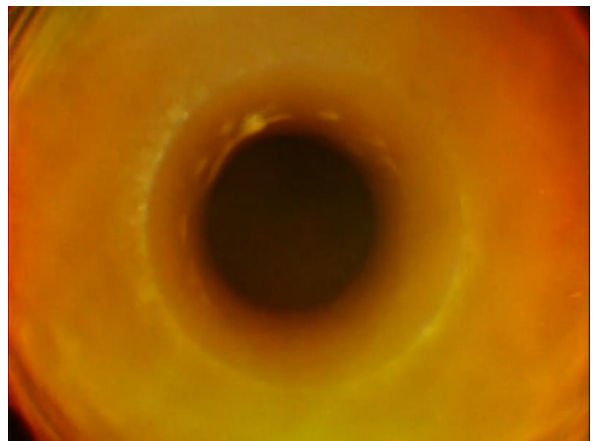
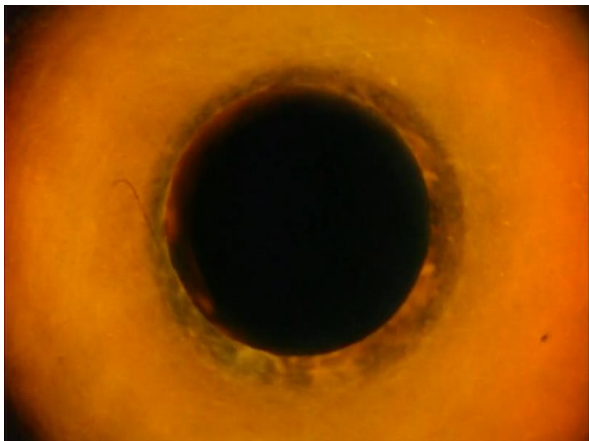
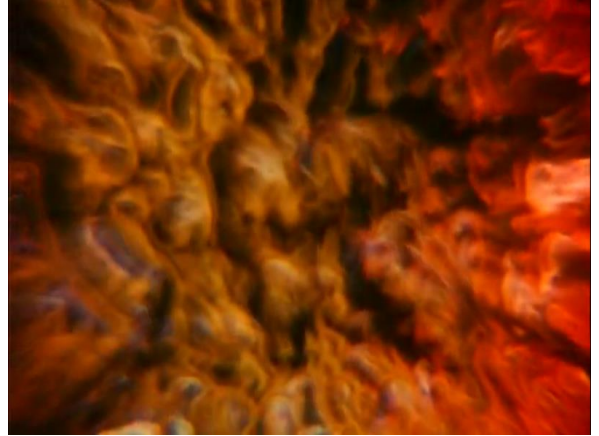
*Certain phenomena manage to touch a realm of our consciousness so seldom reached that when it is awakened we are shocked and profoundly moved. It's an experience of self-realization as much as an encounter with the external world. The cosmic films of Jordan Belson possess this rare and enigmatic power. Basic to this enigma is the disconcerting fact that Belson's work seems to reside equally in the physical and metaphysical. Any discussion of his cinema becomes immediately subjective and symbolic ... Yet the undeniable fact of their concrete nature cannot be stressed too frequently.*¹⁷

For Youngblood, films like *Allures* (1961), *Re-Entry* (1964), *Phenomena* (1965), *Samadhi* (1967), and *Momentum* (1969) need to be considered to be concrete rather than abstract. As he continues:

*Although a wide variety of meaning inevitably is abstracted from them, and although they do hold quite specific implications for Belson personally, the films remain concrete, objective experiences of kinaesthetic and optical dynamism. [...] In their amorphous, gaseous, cloudlike imagery it is color, not line, which defines that ebb and flow across the frame with uncanny impact. It is this stunning emotional force that lifts the films far beyond and realm of 'purity' into the most evocative and metaphysical dimensions of sight and sound.*¹⁸

¹⁷ Gene Youngblood, 'The Cosmic Cinema of Jordan Belson,' *Expanded Cinema* (London, Studio Vista, 1970), p. 157

¹⁸ Youngblood, pp. 157-158



*It is clear that a short film supported by a small national award and a cinema inspired by Buddhism and what Youngblood calls 'galactic astrophysics' seemingly exist in entirely separate dimensions but it is the strength of the small succession of *Downpour's* abstracted images, their 'color' and 'emotional force,' that they accumulate a significance that allows them to be read as much more than two people enjoying an intimate moment in a small tent somewhere in the Irish countryside. As the four plates from Belson's *Samadhi* sit alongside the four plates from Dix's *Downpour*, I am both comfortable with and encouraged by the fact that close readings of films can allow for hitherto unexpected associations to emerge from a dedicated concentration upon their detail and then use this concentration to broaden the conversation. For it is here that colour defines emotional force, in Belson and in Dix. Indeed, as David Bordwell writes:*

Film style matters because what people call content comes to us in and through the patterned use of the medium's techniques. Without performance and framing, lens length and lighting, composition and cutting, dialogue and music, we could not grasp the world of the story. Style is the tangible texture of the film, the perceptual surface we encounter as we watch and listen, and that surface is our point of departure in moving to plot, theme, feeling - everything else that matters to us.¹⁹

¹⁹ David Bordwell, *Figures Traced in Light: On Cinematic Staging* (University of California Press, 2005), p. 32



Furthermore, as Thomas Elsaesser and Malte Hagener write, articulating some of the ways in which films and spectators can be considered to be related. As they outline:

*[B]odies, settings and objects within the film communicate with each other (and with the spectator) through size, texture, shape, density, and surface appeal, as much as they play on scale, distance, proximity, colour, or other primarily optical but also bodily markers.*²⁰

²⁰ *Film Theory: An Introduction Through the Senses*, Thomas Elsaesser and Malte Hagener, (Routledge, 2015), p. 5

Now They Come Together

*Reflect. Remember. Recall. But reflecting, remembering, recalling the future is normally a skill only reserved for people pretending to be people. Imagine meeting for the first time the person you will marry and at the moment of that meeting already having memories of your future together. One could imagine a future, project your hopes and dreams on the moment of that moment but here *Downpour* offers another possibility, of travelling forward through time to a future event that is also concurrently past. A blending and blurring of tense here, like the blending and blurring of my past and future thoughts at the height of my dark despair, is a powerful tool for resurgence and celebration. *Downpour* is not concerned with my past and my future but such is the strength of Dix's storytelling that I am able to see Triona's past and future as somehow my own. In this way, her looks, her imaginings, her seeing the future and*



recalling the past become my looks, my imaginings, my seeing the future and my recalling the past. Here I am prompted, once again, by Stanley Cavell. As he writes:

Significant films are those which give significance to the conditions of the medium of film. These conditions cannot be known a priori but must be worked out in acts of criticism which undertake to derive the significance of particular automatisms, undertake even to say that a particular set of events constitutes a significant automatism. But deriving significance is a matter of seeing how just this automatism is invited by just this subject, given significance by its place in this film - for the subject is not defined before the way of discovering it is

defined. To get these matters together for a particular film is to give a reading of it.²¹

To get these matters together for *Downpour* is to give a reading of it. My reading of it. Its images and their impact. Its tenses and their impact. Its stillness. Faces. Colours. The succession of images. The language. The film's blending and blending. Its returning to the future and projecting the past. The movement from then to now and then to yet-to-be. The emotion it generates. The thoughts that begin and remind and then return to my fears, my hopes, my loves, my cinema, and my daughter. And so Dix's succession of images match and echo and repeat and reorder my own succession of images; my memories, not just of films, or moments from films, but also my life and moments from that as well.

Were further thought required here on notions of 'style' and my attention to them then I would return to the words of David Bordwell. As he writes:

For many film scholars and students, movies exist less as parts of an artistic tradition than as cultural products whose extractable ideas about race, class, gender, ethnicity, modernity, postmodernity, and so forth can be applauded or deplored. [...] In these circumstances, to ask questions centered on film style is at best to miss the point (which is to propose general interpretations) and at worst to engage in a dangerous aestheticism ('blind,' as the saying goes, to the cultural construction of everything that matters.²²

²¹ Stanley Cavell, *Themes Out of School: Effects and Causes* (University of Chicago Press, 1984), p. 132

²² David Bordwell, *Figures Traced in Light*, p. 266

Then as Now and Then as Tomorrow Again

When I first started writing about films it was normal for me to write and then print the paper with the words that were written because I always felt at the time that I could only truly get a real sense of my words if I printed them out and then read them like I would a book, turning the sheets, holding the paper in my hand, feeling the weight, stapling, bending the corners, marking, noting, annotating, ripping, tearing, rewriting, reprinting, re-reading; a simple circle of doing and undoing and then doing again, all as part of what made writing a manual, physical, hands-on activity. That was before you even thought to share your writing with other people.

*Now is not like then. For a variety of useful, appropriate, necessary reasons I no longer print my words to read them. Do I miss the printing? No, because it makes no sense to do so. I still write with a view to review but the physical nature of my writing today is less about the weight of the paper and more about the move of the mouse and the press of the key, the menu I choose, the cursor, the font and the point size; the format of the formatting. The words are still the words, but their status is now wholly digital, never physical. Furthermore, one real advantage of never printing is the many ways in which I am now able to use a wide variety of file types to support my paeon to *Downpour**

*It is standard practice to use .jpg and .png files to support film writing, especially for something to be published online but it is the fact of this book's soon-to-be onlineness that encourages me to experiment further with some of the ways in which images can be used to support discussions of images. Like this, and part of my wider research interests in classroom collaboration and the use of file types to create academic content - see, for example, *Lumière Word Cloud* (voicesonfilm, 2017): Creativity, Curation,*

Projection in Film Education - I have also taken this opportunity to develop some of these earlier ideas, in particular the use of .gif files. ²³

Graphical Interface Files allow short loops of movement to be created, loops that are then normally shared on social media timelines for comic and/or other effect. As I outlined elsewhere, the .gif file itself is a useful teaching tool when it comes to introducing early film history to contemporary film students. The familiarity of these contemporary short loops of movement, derived from their ubiquity, is the perfect way to encourage people to develop an intellectual relationship with those historical short loops of movement that defined the medium's earliest impulses - trains and workers, platforms and gates. Like this, and returning to Shambu, another 'elsewhere' becomes another 'there.' ²⁴

*And moving closer to the heart of Shambu's *The New Cinephilia*, it is the use of .gif files, a use that wholly celebrates their essence and the ways in which this essence can enhance our relationship with the films we are writing about, that reminds us of the wholly digital relationship that we (tend to) have with films nowadays. Like film itself, we rarely, if ever, handle our words in the ways I described previously, nor do we, with exceptions, cut celluloid anymore when editing. Instead, we copy whole paragraphs or single phrases with the blue of the cursor, or the combination of keys - CMD X or CTRL C and then CMD V - just like we rearrange digital fragments of time in a timeline with the same combinations. I consider these actions as no less mechanical, or repetitive, than my previous manual handling of my words; they are simply a basic expression of the inescapable digital facts that now define our relationship with films and the words we produce in response to them. For me, the move of the mouse is now the same as seeing Lotte Reiniger's hands in the frames of her films, it is simply the expression of our engagement and response with the task physically at hand.*

²³ Barnaby Taylor, 'Lumière Word Cloud (voicesonfilm, 2017): Creativity, Curation, Projection in Film Education,'

SAH Journal, Vol. 3, No. 1 (2017)

²⁴ Shambu, *Ibid.*

For a further sense of the power of the .gif file try typing 'silent cinema' into the .gif aggregator and creator www.giphy.com.



*For example, as I worked on *Lumière Word Cloud*, it was necessary to capture .gif files in motion using QuickTime. As the files played I was able to record the screen of my laptop and thereby record the movement of each file. This was vital because the .gif files on their own were/are not compatible with editing software. In part due to my experimenting with the process, I later discovered that many of the .gif files I had converted to video files came complete with occasional cursor movements captured as part of the recording. Initially, I feared that these occasional movements had somehow contaminated the movie files, rendering them less than useful for the project. Nevertheless, I reasoned that they might not be noticed and submitted them as they were to the collaborative film. It was only on viewing the completed film for the first time, and for many times after, that I came to realise that far from blemishing the images and files I had chosen, the occasional movements of the cursor told a different story, one of creation and engagement, of active participation in the act of creating something, a declaration of the very active processes that helped bring the project to life. In this way, my role as creator and collaborator, as well as reader and writer as I look back on the creative experience today, became and become fused and fascinating to me. And to me, it is this declaration of creation, collaboration, reading, and writing that I now see as something of a responsibility that I have to further the thoughts I have on film criticism, itself now a digitally enhanced and enabled critical act.*



This is useful because it also allows us, as Shambu notes, to consider, once again, our relationship with the use of description when it comes to writing about films. This is because, as Shambu argues, the Internet has so encouraged, supported, and allowed the development of film writing, of a contemporary cinephilia, that the description of a film is not as needful as it might previously it have been. As Shambu continues:

A fulsome description of a work sometimes becomes less necessary because the Internet cinephile community can be relied upon to bring a certain familiarity with films and film-critical writing to online movie discourse. This allows writers to direct their energies and narrow their focus of examination. They can now perform pinpointed analyses that concentrate upon specific elements or fragments of films without having to abundantly surround them each time with narrative, aesthetic and film-historical context.²⁵

*To this end, this book is my response to the chance to concentrate on the specific elements and fragments of Dix's *Downpour* now afforded by the ubiquity of online film writing. Like this, and like Shambu, I can concentrate on elements and fragments because I can enhance my relationship with them through their digital manipulation. To*

²⁵ Shambu, p. 14

my mind, this is a shift similar to the one from printing pages to read and review them to reading and reviewing them online.

Back to the Future and then Back Again

*I came to fatherhood later in my life and so my thoughts and feelings on what it is to be a father are firmly founded on both the fears of my earlier years - the fears that I would never be a father - and also my fears for the future - will I be around for long enough to ensure that I am present at my daughter's future significant events? That my thoughts and feelings on fatherhood are always at the forefront of my mind has been both the reason for my desire to examine *Downpour* in more detail and my motivation for trying to understand how it is exactly that Dix's film also speaks to me so eloquently of feelings and file types. This is an ongoing conversation. And just as the fears I enjoy from being a father are both past, present and future simultaneously, so it is that I also see a blending and blurring of tenses in *Downpour**

This blending and blurring has spoken to me. It has told me about the blending and blurring of my own experiences. It has also allowed me to consider the ways in which my writing has become a digital experience through the blending and blurring of old lessons and new discoveries. All of this is both part of the film's splendour and also a principle object of my fascination with its frames and feelings. And at the simple heart of all this is love, simply love; for my daughter; for film; for feelings; for writing; for caring; for life; for simply being bothered; for the fight; for the digital, the past, the future; and ultimately, for the exploring of all these and seeing how they merge and diverge, blend and blur.

Last year, and dulled by the desperate details of disappointment and distance, I truly felt the damning weight of a desperate darkness. I look back today and see myself. In flashback. Crushed and cowed. My face in tortured close shot. Staring off-frame like Triona. But not with hope. Not with thoughts of the future. Still, not moving. Paused. It was a pose, of sorts. As per Mulvey but somewhat different, a paraphrase, [the illusion of] my movement stilled. Weighed by a weight that was slow in its accumulation but nearly fatal in its burden. Like Triona, I saw the past and future together. They blended and blurred. The tenses of my life coming together but forming

nothing as dramatic as the presentation of a human captured before a camera and then projected onto a screen. Just aloneness. And stillness. Waiting and wondering. Like characters in fiction wait and wonder but less dramatic again.

In the stillness of my close shot today, the same set up as the one before but different due to time passing and things remembered and loves regained or never lost, I see myself full of an unexpected fear, one that I could not have imagined I would ever imagine. Tried and tested. Pushed and pulled. Blended and blurred. An unexpected glimpse of a future that has no future. Of a past that would only be everything else forever. Filling the future always with its (eventually) baleful presence. But it is now there all the same, a part of my recent past as well as a piece of my ongoing future. And as the thoughts of the past and the future, their blending and blurring, came once again to the time of that particular present and now come to me once again in this particular present, I am reminded, as before, and as again sometime in the future, that my fears were the very things that I needed to confront and not succumb to, then, as now, and then again tomorrow.

*This is the act and the action required. That this film has caused me to consider these acts and the actions required is a testament to its strength, its eloquence, its beauty and its wonder. It is an increasingly rare event for me to still feel moved by a film the way that *Downpour* has moved me. There is now just too much for me to watch or, more likely with the ever-swelling of digital content on every screen in my life, to start to watch, to pause and then think about returning to but never actually doing so, for me to remain attached to most of what I see on a daily basis. And this is the stopstarteness that makes me enact a similar movement by constantly falling in and out of love with film after devoting twenty years of my life to studying it.*

*Despite this I am still drawn to focus on certain moments in the history of my cinema and this is why *Downpour* encourages and supports me; it validates my reasons for liking it and then wanting to write about it; for deserting it and then coming back to it again. For this I am grateful. Like *Wood* previously, I am also mindful; aware that*

thoughts and feelings and words and ideas about things like films are contingent and that our dependence upon them is also contingent and so where I am now and how I feel today will not necessarily be where I am tomorrow and how I will feel then.

Only my love for my daughter is constant.

Claire Dix - An Interview with the Director

BT I'm fascinated by the film's texture - its raindrops, leaves, flowers, wedding dress, human skin, wet hair, umbrellas, tents, sand and the sea.



At what stage did these things become essential to the film's creation? For example, did you start with a single image and work outwards from there? Or do you collect images or ideas of images and then look to incorporate and develop them as the process unfolds?

CD It started on the page, most of the images are in the script. I wanted the close up textures to come through and it's great that they seem to have resonated. The sound design was as important - the close up sounds especially. It was a carefully planned film. Maybe more so than most of my other films. Usually I like moments to emerge more organically, so I mightn't always know exactly how every shot is going to look until we're in the thick of it shooting but with *Downpour* it was all there in advance, except for the starfish! Of course the actors are always going to give you surprising moments that I couldn't have anticipated. Muireann and Cian were so lovely to work with and also Piers who shot this film was amazing so I was very lucky. The objects and items in the film that you mention though were important to get right because each one was symbolic in and they had to have meaning because there was so

little screen time. This film was made with funding from Screen Ireland (then IFB) through a scheme called Short Shorts. They themed the scheme and that year the theme was "Ireland I Love You." So a bit strange in the sense that we were aware of this theme and the film fitting into it but once it was made and screened afterwards that theme has no bearing on it anymore. But because of the theme I wanted green, white and orange colours throughout the film. The opening three images are supposed to be the Irish flag.

BT. I am always alive to those small moments of a film that can often go unnoticed, or under-noticed. In *Downpour* I adore the small tug of the ear ring; the sniff of the bouquet; the small smile at the bus stop, the half-drunk glass by the window and countless others.



How important are these details to you? Do you see them as a central aid to storytelling, for example, or are they more like the many threads of the whole tapestry that is the film?

CD. The details are everything. They give a film nuance and mystery sometimes and make it feel real. Lynn Ramsey is a filmmaker I love and admire. Her films have such attention to detail and her camera can linger on an object or a tiny gesture and give it meaning. A lot of those details you mentioned are things that were worked out with the actors in rehearsal, just simple gestures that came naturally to the actor in the scene.

*BT. One response I have to *Downpour* is as an exploration of or meditation on time travel, or experience and memory and emotion all blending and blurring across the past, present and future, beginning and then returning and then beginning again.*

How do you see the film dealing with the past, present and future?

CD. I like the time travel idea! But yes it is an exploration of memory and emotion across time. We always knew we would intercut the scenes, it was written like that and the idea was that as Triona remembers, one memory leads to another but not in sequence. The part I like best about the film is when Triona is at the bus stop at the end of these sequences of memories and it looks like she's remembering the future if you get me. We've already seen her future in these series of flashbacks but to the Triona at the bus-stop it's all ahead of her. That came out in the edit - that little moment - the look on Triona's face and how it relates to the whole story.

BT. For me, one of the film's great strengths is the movement from images of crystal clarity - raindrops on green leaves - to the blurred and abstract images in the tent.



Can you say something about these kind of artistic decisions? I read this movement as being a movement from personal emotion to something more abstract and universal – even though we are watching Triona remembering how it was that she fell in love we have all loved ourselves and so therefore have something in common with a fictional person as we start remembering how we fell in [and out] of love. Was anything like this what you had in mind? Could Triona be anyone? Everyone?

CD: I suppose there was a need to make the flashbacks look a little different to the present day scene in the house. The beach scene is similar to the house in its use of natural light, but in between those scenes are the bus-stop and the tent. These are darker scenes, the colours are more orangey and as you say there are more close ups. The tent is a very intimate scene and I like the blurring of the image in places to give the feeling of being there, being close up to, the close up sound of the tent and the fabric and skin also helps to give this feeling of intimacy. I think seeing two people in love or falling in love is going to be relatable to most people. This is such a short film that it's hard to create very nuanced characters but we tried to make them as

particular as possible. That was very much thanks to Muireann Bird and Cian Barry who played them. Once we cast them we put them in touch with each other and they spent some time hanging out together and getting to know each other which really helped with their on screen chemistry I think and in their ability to become these characters once we started filming, giving them personality.



BT. For me, the central image of the film is Triona standing in close shot. How important are close shots to you? In your eyes, what do they do, how do they work and what do you like about them?

CD. Close ups are one of my favourite things about filmmaking. Working with actors and earning a meaningful close up with them is magic to me. If I can get a moment with a close up of an actor without dialogue, when you know what the character is thinking and feeling (because of what you've shown the audience beforehand) that feels like a big achievement and is one of the reasons I love cinema. I think when used correctly they can help connect the audience to the inner world of the character. They're not the only shot that can do that obviously but they have such power that they are definitely

one of the most effective. Like the famous line in *Sunset Boulevard*: "We didn't need dialogue, we had faces."

BT. To my mind, ultimately, *Downpour* is about love and as the father of a daughter this is my principle preoccupation when viewing the film. I feel such a rush when I connect my emotions with what I see as the film's obvious love of emotion, of love. How important is emotion to your film, and your filmmaking? Is the act of making a film an act of love? Is *Downpour* an expression of your love for things like: Films and filmmaking? Images [you have a very imaginative Instagram presence]? Writing? Storytelling? Creativity? Ireland?

CD. Creating an emotional connection between the film and the audience is, for me, the most important aspect of filmmaking. I haven't always achieved it and when I don't, no amount of beautiful camera work will make up for it. I think evoking emotion in the viewer is what the screen arts do best, making people laugh, cry, cringe etc is what every filmmaker sets out to do with their stories and when you move someone it's a fantastic feeling.

Is the act of making a film an act of love? Yes I think so. You couldn't do it unless you loved the process or the medium. It's too hard otherwise there has to be a passion for it. And love for the people you work with. You go through a lot with your cast and crew in a short space of time.

Is *Downpour* an expression of love for things, yes it's about falling in love. I wrote it when I was just married and it's definitely a result of where I was in my life at that point. It's about a rush of love and falling in love - and the excitement and headiness of all that. And yes it is a love letter to Ireland, to the rain, to embracing the unpredictability of Ireland's weather, the imperfection and annoyance of it. It's about just going for it, taking the leap, heading out even when it's bucketing down and saying yes.

Downpour
by
Claire Dix

Shooting Script

April 2011

1.INSERT

Rain falls on GREEN garden leaves.

2.INSERT

The sound of rain falling outside. The top of TRIONA's hair and her arms held up above her head. A WHITE dress slipping down over her arms, filling the screen with white.

3.INSERT

The sounds of a bustling household in the background as a make-up brush dabs at a compact of dusty ORANGE blusher.

TITLE CARD - DOWNPOUR

4. INT. SITTINGROOM - DAY

The sound of rain outside. The house phone rings. TRIONA is silhouetted by the window. She stands with her back to us in her wedding dress, looking out at the rain.

MRS MAGUIRE (O.S)

Hi Mona. No it's pouring here, absolutely pouring. I'd say it's down for the day.

Bridesmaids chatter and breakfast behind Triona as she puts her earrings in, still studying the rain.

MRS MAGUIRE (O.S) (CONT'D)

There's no chance of us doing that now, not with that. Poor Triona.

5. INSERT. SITTING ROOM WINDOW - DAY

The view is skewed through the wet glass. The rain pelts down, hitting off the window pane.

6.INT. TENT - DUSK

The sound of rain pummeling the roof of the tent. In the half-light, Triona's hand runs up CIARÁN's side, tickling him. *

Triona's hair on Ciarán's face. Her lips on his. He laughs and pushes her hand away from his side. Triona traces her finger along the inside of the tent following the shadows of rain drops.

CIARÁN (O.S.)

Hang on a sec.

Triona turns to face him.

7.EXT. BEACH - DAY

Triona turns to face an expansive Irish beach. Ciarán wades out into the grey sea. His white legs in the gathering waves. He grins back at

Triona who jumps up and down on the damp sand, wrapped in a green towel as the rain falls.

CIARÁN
Come on!

Triona screams with laughter. She looks down at the shore. Rain falls on the shell-studded sand. She starts to run towards the water.

8.EXT. BUS STOP - NIGHT

Triona's shoes run down the rain soaked street. Wrapped in a winter coat and carrying an umbrella, she reaches an unsheltered bus stop. Ciarán stands hunched up under the stop in the rain. He notices Triona. She drops coins from her purse. They both go to pick them up.

TRIONA
Thanks.

9.EXT. FIELD - DUSK

A small orange tent is pitched in a field of tufty grass. Raindrops fall from the trees and chime into a collection of beer bottles. Half-cooked sausages hiss on a wet disposable barbecue.

TRIONA (O.S)
Ciarán what are you doing?

10.INT. TENT - DUSK

Flustered, Ciarán rifles through their bags.

CIARÁN
Why do you need so much stuff?

11.EXT. BEACH - DAY

* Triona's hand grips the green beach towel. The waves rush

up towards her bare feet.

CIARÁN (O.S) (CONT'D)
It's lovely once you're down.

Triona shivers and jumps up and down on the sand excitedly, watching the wild grey sea. Her feet run backwards from the waves.

TRIONA
You're not down yet!

12.EXT. BUS-STOP - NIGHT

Bright lights reflect up from the wet street. Triona pulls her coat tight around her. She glances back at Ciarán, then up the road for the bus.

CIARÁN
I think they've cancelled the buses.

Triona smiles. Rain drips from the umbrella.

TRIONA
Are you going to be late?

CIARÁN
Fashionably late. Can't you tell?

Triona smiles to herself. Ciarán winces at his own bad joke.

13.EXT. FIELD - DUSK

Tall trees whisper up high. Rain falls from their branches. A bag is flung out the tent door. Triona screams.

TRIONA (O.S.)
Ciarán it's pissing rain outside.

14.EXT. BEACH - DAY

Ciarán beckons Triona out into the sea. Rain falls on the grey water.

15.EXT. FIELD - DUSK

A ring box is visible in Ciarán's jeans pocket outside the tent door.

TRIONA (O.S.)
What are you looking for?

16.EXT. BUS-STOP - NIGHT

The rain is heavier now. Triona looks back at Ciarán getting soaked. She moves back towards him to offer him her umbrella. He goes to introduce himself. They awkwardly shake hands.

CIARÁN
I'm Ciarán.

TRIONA
Triona. Nice to meet you.

A bus races past and they laugh together.

17.EXT. BEACH - DAY

Triona wills herself to run into the water.

CIARÁN (O.S)
I want to ask you something.

Triona lets go of the beach towel and runs into the waves. The sound of the rain takes over.

18.INT. SITTING-ROOM - DAY

Triona opens her eyes and she is smiling. The rain still falls outside. We hear a buzz of activity, a dog is barking, children shrieking, car doors open and close. Triona turns and leaves the window as the rain falls and umbrellas open outside.

FADE OUT.

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