

The Mirror Shapes the Hand: Re-thinking the Representation of the Auteur in Campion's *Bright Star*

HELEN GORITSAS

Throughout human history the discomfort experienced from the fear of the unknown, an inability to embrace rather than choose between opposites, has been grappled with in storytelling. Ancient Greek tragedies pioneered the use of the 'Ἀπὸ Μηχανῆς θεός' plot device (also commonly referred to as *deus ex machina*, in Latin) for this precise reason. The solution to an unresolvable problem would be addressed by the introduction of a God figure ('θεός', in Greek) either from above the stage via a crane mechanism (the 'machine', 'Μηχανῆ' in Greek) or raised from below the stage via a stage floor opening.¹ Since the ancient Greek tragedies of Euripides, this unexpected plot resolution technique has been employed extensively not only in theatre but also in literature and in film, providing both a false sense of security and a resolution of the inexplicable.

Interestingly, in traversing this very dilemma in a letter to his brothers dated 22nd December 1817, following a discussion between friends, the Romantic poet John Keats committed to writing what he believed to be the origin and nature of artistic creativity:

At once it struck me what quality went to form a Man of Achievement, especially in Literature, and which Shakespeare possessed so enormously—I mean Negative Capability, that is, when a man is capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason.²

Art, Shakespeare tells us in *Hamlet*, holds a mirror up to nature—human nature—and somehow, through the mysterious alchemy of art, we

¹ Rush Rehm, *Greek Tragic Theatre* (London: Routledge, 1992).

² John Keats, *The Letters of John Keats*, ed. Maurice Buxton Forman, 3rd ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1947), p.72.

look at characters like Hamlet and see ourselves.³ Keats believed that it was precisely this ability to tolerate the burden of mystery which enabled a dialogue between life and art; that behind Shakespeare's genius lay an extraordinary fluidity of being, indistinguishable from the subject he was describing—an ability to somehow obliterate himself and meld empathetically into another form.

This can be further defined as a capacity to free oneself from one's own subjectivity, to suspend judgment and enter the abyss, to become a vessel, permitting of ambiguity, an openness for the paradoxical and incomprehensible depths, accepting of contradictory aspects without the need for certainty. Highlighting the transformative presence of receptivity in great works of art and attuned to changing sensations, Keats intuitively concurred with Heraclitus on the ontological precedence of temporality over permanence.

Developing this inquiry into the importance of passivity, receptivity and the deferment of certainty, in a letter dated October 27, 1818 to his friend Richard Woodhouse, Keats distinguished between what he termed 'poetic character' springing from a state of negative capability and the Wordsworthian or 'egotistical sublime'. He viewed the latter critically as a stand-alone categorical construct of an independent and unalterable private vision, a vision bounded within one's own thoughts, shielding the imagination from all that is. The 'poetic character', by contrast,

is not itself—it has no self—it is everything and nothing—it has no character—it enjoys light and shade... It has as much delight in conceiving an Iago as an Imogen. What shocks the virtuous philosopher, delights the chameleon Poet. It does no harm from its relish of the dark side of things any more than from its taste for the bright one; because they both end in speculation. A Poet is the most unpoetical of anything in existence; because he has no Identity—he is continually in[forming]—and filling some other Body—The Sun, the Moon, the Sea [;] and Men and Women who are creatures of impulse are poetical and have about them an unchangeable attribute—the poet has none; no identity—he is certainly the most unpoetical of all God's Creatures. If then he has no self,

³ Claudia Johnson, *Crafting Short Screenplays That Connect*, 2nd ed. (Burlington, Mass: Focal Press, 2005), p.14.

and if I am a Poet, where is the wonder that I should say I would write no more? ... It is a wretched thing to confess; but it is a very fact that not one word I ever utter can be taken for granted as an opinion growing out of my identical nature—how can it, when I have no nature? When I am in a room with people if I am ever free from speculating on creations of my own brain, then not myself goes home to myself: but the identity of everyone in the room begins to press upon me that, I am in a very little time annihilated—not only among men; it would be the same in a nursery of children.⁴

Keats believed that the mark of all great poetry rested upon a welcome encounter between subjects, that working in opposites intensifies an experience and that an openness of mind involving the negation of one's ego and the cultivation of a state of flow without hindrance points to the mystery and ambiguity of existence. In this outpouring Keats makes the extraordinary confession that not only is knowledge of oneself linked to knowledge of others, but that there can be no such thing as a self without thoughts arising from interactions with others since the self, rather like a projected film, is a result of identification with these thoughts which have been manufactured by the mind. Thus we participate in the world, we are unable to stand outside at a distance, because in experiencing a phenomenon the distinction between subject and object is disrupted, pointing instead to a relationship between the two. In fully accepting the present and entering into relation with one's entire being, duality is extinguished. Such a meeting absorbs and transforms, changing the person in the process. The famous line 'I am Heathcliff'⁵—uttered by Emily Bronte's heroine Cathy in the novel and subsequent film adaptations of the work *Wuthering Heights*—exemplifies such an encounter, reminding the reader that in order to reinstate the dignity of a person we must shatter the illusionary construct of independence.

If negative capability calls for a devastating acknowledgement that one is not and yet at the same time one is, how then can the artist be the creator of a work? In this admission Keats recognises a paradox of creativity: that art is a manifestation of the disappearance of the self in the process of creation. In Keats' estimation a true artist acts as a passage without doing, mirroring reality from moment to moment. He was critical

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Emily Bronte, *Wuthering Heights* (Philadelphia: Courage Books, 1991), p.78.

of a sense of personal identity that was dependent on a preconceived certainty based on duality; rather he encouraged the strengthening of the intellect through a practice of absorbing incongruities and avoiding making up one's mind prematurely, opting instead to let the mind act as 'a thoroughfare for all thoughts and not a select party.'⁶ By letting go and emptying the mind of any expectations, agendas, desires and thoughts, being utterly absorbed and in harmony with nature's rhythm, creativity may then take place.

One of the most famous moments in the history of cinema is the camera zoom to freeze frame of the face of Antoine Doinel that ends the debut feature film *The 400 Blows* (1959), written and directed by Francois Truffaut. Truffaut was the filmmaker responsible for originating the *auteur* wedge within the French film industry and *The 400 Blows* is, as Annette Insdorf suggests, reminiscent of the association of opposites which pervades the romantic poetry of John Keats.⁷ As Antoine makes his escape, running beyond the confines of the barbed wire fence of his detention toward the wide expanse of the sea, the viewer is simultaneously invigorated and enlarged, revelling with Antoine in the unrestrained liberty of a simple human pleasure, the joy of movement and the rousing eagerness with which he embraces his first contact with the majesty of the sea.⁸



⁶ Forman, *The Letters of John Keats*, p.426.

⁷ Annette Insdorf, *François Truffaut*, Rev. and updated ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p.176.

⁸ John Conomos, 'Truffaut's *The 400 Blows*, or the Sea, Antoine, the Sea...', *Senses of Cinema* no. 62 (2000), <http://www.sensesofcinema.com/2000/6/francois-truffaut/blows>.

As he hastily turns around his expression is suddenly frozen in motion and he is struck dumb in consummation of this epiphany, activating a sense of self-awareness in the viewer.



The recognition of the strength of a work of art is perhaps its ability to instil such a manifestation in the mind of the spectator, for the work to open doors for us in the same way as Antoine experienced, and similar to Keats' imagining of the character of Cortez in 'On First Looking into Chapman's Homer':

Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
 When a new planet swims into his ken;
 Or like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes
 He stared at the Pacific and all his men
 Looked at each other with a wild surmise
 Silent, upon a peak in Darien.⁹

This unexpected collision in the juxtaposition of a swift zoom 'motion' and the turning toward action of a close-up of Antoine's face recorded by the camera and braced by the silence of a stilled image forces the viewer into a sudden comprehension. The play of this poetic dialectic sets in motion a catalytic effect, the meaning of which is petrified in something found in his eyes, suggestive of the last piece of the puzzle for Antoine, a turning point in his rite of passage from adolescence into adulthood.

In embracing Keats' principle of negative capability as a compass and charm embodied in the film *Bright Star* (2009), I would argue director Jane Campion moves beyond the constraints of the *auteur* paradigm familiar to much film theory and practice. An illustration of negation of the self, Campion's aesthetic choices point toward an intensified sensuous engagement without prescription, a relational lived experience, in which the notion of the director's signature becomes blurred. Keats' concept of negative capability as a pathway to the uncharted and unexplored was an important principle that was engaged by Campion and encouraged and communicated to the entire cast and crew employed in the film's production. 'What Keats wrote about negative capability was very helpful,' she notes,

it explained the way I work, staying in the mystery, not intellectualising. That's where I found the answer; he said he

⁹ John Keats, *Bright Star, The Complete Poems & Selected Letters of John Keats* (London: Vintage Books, 2009), p.43.

wanted a life of sensations, not thoughts, and I understood that I was trying to photograph sensations.¹⁰

The process enables the director to move back and forth balancing certainty and uncertainty open and responsive to change as Campion muses, 'daunting but if you can stand in new and uncharted waters long enough a door will open.'¹¹ By allowing for the emergence of new and different perceptions without being overwhelmed by the anxiety to merely react, Campion nourished an environment amenable to the toleration of doubt,¹² standing as Martin Buber described on 'the narrow ridge' outside of one's comfort zone in order to encounter that which remains undisclosed.¹³

In the direction of this film Campion refuses to raise formalistic concerns above the subject matter of the work. Instead of imposing a distinct and overarching style upon the film she opens herself up to others and engages in a dialogue with her characters, the spectator and members of the cast and crew involved in the film's production. Campion's availability and receptivity to others in the direction of this film clearly reveals a limitation of the *auteur* concept to adequately articulate the role of the director in the art of filmmaking. In the direction of the screen performances during the rehearsal period, in particular, and in the spirit of experimentation, a dialogue was entered into between the director and actors with negative capability acting as a guide and philosophical foundation which helped to unite all the cast in a relaxed and synchronised manner. Campion strove for a 'humanness', an authenticity and presence, in the nature of the performances, mindfully discouraging any interpretation that would act to plaster a veneer over the 'being' of the actor to achieve a preconceived generalisation of a period type. Negative capability was also employed in an attempt to subdue any form of insecurity and over-compensating nervous reaction from the actors.¹⁴ Of this Campion claimed:

¹⁰ Andrew Fenton, 'Campion Champions Case for Poetry,' *The Advertiser*, December 16, 2009, <http://www.adelaidenow.com.au/news/campion-champions-case-for-poetry/story-e6frec8c-1225810682526>, accessed April 17, 2016.

¹¹ Scott Tobias, 'Interview with Jane Campion,' *A.V. Club*, September 22, 2009, <http://www.avclub.com/articles/jane-campion,33148>, accessed April 17, 2016.

¹² Kenneth Eisold, 'The Rediscovery of the Unknown: An Inquiry into Psychoanalytic Praxis,' *Contemporary Psychoanalysis* 36, no. 1 (2000), 65.

¹³ Maurice Friedman, *Encounter on the Narrow Ridge: A Life of Martin Buber*, 1st ed. (New York: Paragon House, 1993), p.10.

¹⁴ Tobias, 'Interview with Jane Campion'.

I really wanted to find a way for the actors to reach a different level of intimacy with their characters, with themselves, with each other. I wanted to have a sense of their 'being'—the hallmark seemed to be that they had to feel unmotivated, just true—you weren't pushing anything, there was no apparent effort. All I knew was that when people made efforts to make scenes work it felt repellent.¹⁵

When in doubt the actors were encouraged to follow and trust in their own instincts and to feel comfortable in their own character and in what they felt was true for them in any given situation, with a liberty not confined to rigid continuity or the repetition of a specific performance for each take. To simply be, receptive and open to the experience unfolding, in contrast to their behaviour being controlled in an attempt to achieve an outcome.¹⁶

In this, Campion's directional approach in the filming of *Bright Star* was very much entwined with that of Keats' own sensibilities in the creative process and suggests an alertness and responsiveness that is harmonious with the moment, representing a capacity of the director to surpass the self. 'For me, being a director is about watching, not about telling people what to do,' she explained. 'Or maybe it's like being a mirror; if they didn't have me to look at they wouldn't be able to put the make-up on.'¹⁷ In this way Campion permitted a loss of self, a non-defensive engagement with the continuum of change, thereby demonstrating a flexibility of disposition with a preference for passive witnessing and indicative of a conscious empathy, alert to the sense that the moment something becomes forced or unnatural the thing is changed. It is a process that is receptive, like a mirror reflecting rather than an act of pushing for something to happen, of being, in the words of Keats, a 'through fare'—a passage allowing the whole to flow through the part.¹⁸

¹⁵ Paola Morabito, *Working with Jane (Documentary, DVD)*, *Bright Star* directed by Jane Campion (2010; Culver City, California: Sony Pictures Home Entertainment).

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Peter Conrad, 'Jane Campion: "I Make Films so I Can Have Fun With the Characters"', *The Guardian*, October 18, 2009), <http://www.guardian.co.uk/film/2009/oct/18/jane-campion-interview-peter-conrad>, accessed April 17, 2016.

¹⁸ Osho, *Creativity : Unleashing the Forces Within*, volume 1, *Insights for a New Way of Living* (New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 1999), p.152.

Acutely aware of the inherent power of the raw image and trusting in the material prior to its contextualisation, Campion artistically reveals the importance of sensation in the unadorned image¹⁹ in her directional choices. This is evident on numerous occasions in the film, such as the Brawne family cat evocatively nuzzling, turning the page of Keats' book of poetry while Fanny is reading it, Keats climbing barefoot to soak up the warmth of the sun's morning rays aloft a tree in spring flower,



¹⁹ Andrew Dudley, *The Major Film Theories : An Introduction* (London: Oxford University Press, 1976), p.169.

or Fanny dropping to her knees completely absorbed in a letter from Keats in a field abloom with purple wild flowers.²⁰

In a moving scene brimming with a playful youthful innocence and animated with magnetic affection which wins the viewer's heart and contagiously spills over like the spring flowers in Campion's mural, following the blossoming of first love, after having shared their first kiss Fanny and Keats are playing freeze tag with Fanny's little sister. The landscape is a composition in deep focus, a countryside in spring pulsating with life and heightened by a transition—the transformative juxtaposition of the figures moving, then becoming frozen, then moving again, the camera capturing within the spontaneity of play the revelation of a human's being. These brief moments convey the purity and simplicity of the characters' tender attachment and the exhilaration of being in the world beyond the mere appearance of representation.²¹



The scene serves as a reminder of the lovers in 'Ode on a Grecian Urn', frozen in time and poised forever on the exhilarating brink of romantic union—

Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss,
 Though winning near the goal yet, do not grieve;
 She cannot fade, though has not thy bliss,
 For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!

²¹ Didier Maleuvre, 'Art and the Teaching of Love,' *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 39, no. 1 (2005), 85.

The brevity and holiness of such moments of joyful connection in the continual flow of life evoke an eternal present when cinema becomes art. 'I was thinking of Monet's haystacks,' said *Campion*. 'They're just lumps, but they have the sun inside them, they vibrate. Images like that can't help but be moving; they're pictures of life and you can feel it palpitating!'²²

A significant piece of music on the original soundtrack to *Bright Star* pertains to a meeting without preconception and premature closure that is indicative of a capacity to resign oneself to incongruity and accept ambiguity and paradox. This is track four of the soundtrack, titled *Human Orchestra*, an adaptation of Mozart's wind serenade, arranged for human voices and listed in the film credits as *Mozart's Serenade No 10 in B Flat Major K 361 III Adagio*. What is particularly interesting about this piece is the creative materialisation of the principle of negative capability in which there is a willingness on the part of the director in collaboration with the film's composer to take a risk in the unexpected use of the male voice in a way that is exposed, open and vulnerable.

A combination of polarities, the composition brings together tenor and countertenor voices, the latter being a male singing voice equivalent to a contralto or mezzo-soprano in which falsetto is generally used to achieve pitch. A true tenor is capable of singing in an even higher range, with or without falsetto, and a light tenor is capable of producing a very high register. Both ranges offer a style in which the male singer is permitted to demonstrate their sensitivity. Although associated with an early music repertoire, it is a growing modern phenomenon, most visible in the 20th century in the countertenor revival by English singer Alfred Deller, who was well-versed in authentic early Renaissance and Baroque music,²³ and in the hugely popular music of vocalists such as the Bee Gees and Freddie Mercury. It is a vocal category that exemplifies a delicate, tender-hearted and soft human expression that defies convenient categorisation and is perhaps more readily exposed to prejudice and social stigma due to its perception as a quality of femininity rather than masculinity.²⁴

Track one of the film's score, composed by Mark Bradshaw, is titled *Negative Capability*. This is a musical piece underpinned by an exchange of dialogue between Fanny Brawne and John Keats in a scene in which

²² Fenton, 'Campion Champions Case for Poetry'.

²³ Peter Giles and David Mallinder, *The Counter Tenor* (London: Muller, 1982).

²⁴ *Working with Jane*.

Fanny, during her poetry classes with Keats, states that she still doesn't know how to derive meaning from poetry. Keats' response is not at all what one would customarily expect from teacher to pupil in a poetry lesson. There is no mention of poetic terminology, such as metre, rhyme, or personification, and this forms a stark contrast with a heated scene triggered by jealousy in which Charles Browne attempts to discredit Fanny in Keats' eyes by scoffing at the idea that she had read any of Milton's poetry, as she would have recognised that there is no rhyming in his work. Unlike an arithmetic equation with parameters and a known solution, poetry is a subjective experience, and the character of Keats speaks of poetry as an effortless and consummate receptivity to experience:

A poem needs understanding through the senses. The point of diving in a lake is not immediately to swim to the shore, but to be in the lake, to luxuriate in the sensation of the water. You do not work the lake out. It is an experience beyond thought. Poetry soothes and emboldens the soul to accept mystery.

Keats points to the simplicity of unmotivated participation in the delight and celebration that may be garnered in the sheer fullness of the living moment, of an appreciation of poetry with an intrinsic value all its own, and of a dignity of experience without goal to smother the sensation of pure being. Rejecting the singularity and confinement of a theoretical construct produced by reason alone, Keats cultivated a non-insular and immediate understanding encountered in the fullness and inclusivity of the five corporeal senses—touch, hearing, taste, smell and sight. As Campion insightfully commented: 'I don't look in terms of things being good or bad, I say that is what I see.'²⁵

Keats worked in terms of an acknowledgement of the coexistence of two contraries, the ambiguity of which need not be resolved but which can be better understood through negative capability. This is exemplified in his sonnet 'Bright Star', in which he wishes for the impossibility of the eternal 'steadfast' and 'unchangeable' characteristics of the far-off bright star which can only be preserved in 'lone splendour', and yet also to be close to his beloved, 'pillowed' on her ripening breast and condemned to a tireless but 'sweet unrest.'²⁶ The source and inspiration of this poem is the true story of a love encountered and echoed in the musings of Keats' letters to

²⁵ Virginia Wright Wexman, ed., *Jane Campion: Interviews*, Conversations with Filmmakers series. (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1999), p.12.

²⁶ Andrew Motion, *Keats* (London: Faber & Faber, 1997), p.475.

his betrothed,²⁷ and represented here in the final scene of the film which is critical to the integrity of the entire work, the importance of which is indicated by Campion's decision to shoot this scene first and to bring to life on-screen the intensity of the union of the lovers' souls embodied in this sonnet. It is a scene of loving remembrance in which Fanny, on hearing of Keats' death and therefore in mourning, a widow by any other name, paces the heath at dawn reciting 'Bright Star', the poem written for her with such reverent devotion. It recalls their shared intimacy and eternalises the memory of their touch, forever confirming the truth of Keats claim in *Endymion* that:

A thing of beauty is a joy for ever:
It's loveliness increases; it will never pass into nothingness.²⁸

During a period of time away from filmmaking and before writing the screenplay for *Bright Star*, Campion began exploring and enjoying earlier cinematic works. She discovered the works of French film director Robert Bresson, such as *Diary of a Country Priest* (1951), *A Condemned Man Escapes* (1956) and *Mouchette* (1967), films which she adored. Campion fell in love with Bresson's sense of classicism to the extent that she recreated herself as a modern classicist, welcoming the formal elegance, symmetry and restraint of the ideas of classicism and allowing these to inform and shape the aesthetic choices within her own work.²⁹ She was attracted to the dignity of proportion in the body of Bresson's work and to the classical simplicity and poised sublimity embodied in the life, love and poetry of Keats.³⁰ Refraining from the temptation to indulge in manufacturing sensation artificially by manipulating the viewer, Campion shot simply using depth of field and a locked frame which, rather than directing the spectator's eye, allows the viewer to receive the image as one would a mural, thus enabling them to engage more actively with the film and trust in their own emotional response. Open to the possibility of the incomprehensible, the incomplete and contradictory, Campion permits the work to discover its own harmon—a practice greatly influenced by Bresson's rigorous simplicity and stylistic trust in the content, and

²⁷ Ibid, p.472.

²⁸ Keats, *Bright Star, The Complete Poems and Selected Letters of John Keats*, p.63.

²⁹ Livia Bloom, 'Jane Campion's *Bright Star*,' *Filmmaker Magazine*, September 11, 2009, <http://www.filmmakermagazine.com/news/2009/09/jane-campions-bright-star-by-livia-bloom>, accessed April 17, 2016.

³⁰ Martin Aske, *Keats and Hellenism: An Essay* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

emanating all the stronger for the apparent absence of the director:³¹ 'The presence of the dancer will be a disturbance in the dance.'³²

Keats meditated on the practice of negative capability as a way of arriving at the truth, a truth that cannot be arrived at by actively pursuing it but rather is achieved by surrendering, by disappearing, in the belief that the less the artist is evident in the work the more beautiful and true the work will be as a reflection of truth in accordance with reality, a harmony synchronously experienced as beauty:

Beauty is Truth, Truth Beauty that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.³³

In the service of the work Campion correlated Keats' 'Beauty is truth, truth Beauty' with a balance of form and content in the art of filmmaking, mindful and vigilant that the style should not override the content, but that it should work hand in hand.³⁴

During a Festival screening in Toronto of *Bright Star* (2009), Campion discussed her dislike of an overbearing directing style which tampered with and dominated the material. She was strongly opposed to an unbalanced over-emphasis upon technique which overshadows the content of the work to the extent that it runs the risk of becoming identified as the content. Such interference distorts meaning from the subject and dehumanises the characters represented in the work, and by implication shows a lack of respect for the audience. As Campion reflected:

I also think I got pretty sick of director's signatures, fancy shots and the director leading the thinking or the ideas. For *Bright Star* I wanted to experiment; to forget any branded look and find another way of looking at things. This story is so gentle and simple that I didn't want you to feel any overreaching style. I wanted to disappear, really; that's what I tried to do. What I cared about was the presence of those

³¹ Bloom, 'Jane Campion's *Bright Star*.'

³² Osho, *Creativity : Unleashing the Forces Within*, p.74.

³³ Keats, *Bright Star, The Complete Poems and Selected Letters of John Keats*, p.240.

³⁴ Jane Campion, 'Directing Master Class' (Australian Film Television and Radio School, March 6, 2010).

people, and any signature look would have been threatening to the more serious endeavour.³⁵

Balancing the form with the sanctity of the content—the life, poetry, letters and in particular the surviving love letters and notes which John Keats had written to Fanny Brawne and which bear testament to the depth of their enraptured feelings and connection—Campion concentrated on refining and developing the interplay of conflicting elements which had fuelled the emotional intensity between them.



³⁵ Bloom, 'Jane Campion's *Bright Star*.'

The threads of an unconsummated love and the restrictions they encountered and which were placed around their hearts paradoxically heightened the ardour between them and consequently heightens the tension in the mind of the film viewer. The circumstances of the times—having to write letters and notes that they passed under the door to each other, the need for Fanny to be chaperoned by her younger brother Samuel and not being able to touch in public, the paradox of a nearness and an intervening space—all are broached exquisitely by Campion, particularly in a sensuous scene in which the lovers are touching the opposite sides of the wall that divides their sleeping quarters. Keats' lack of means with which to marry and ultimately his tragic illness drew so many lines around their feelings that those feelings became all the more erotically consecrated, tender, beautiful and pure. It is a true story in which Campion, by placing herself in the service of the content of the work, honoured the making of these two souls in the sense in which Keats himself conceived of souls in his 'Vale of Soul-Making', in which he explores the idea that a human heart is ripened by the hardships and sufferings encountered in this world, creating one's soul.³⁶

In conclusion, this essay confirms the value of expanding the auteur concept beyond the singularity of a director's personal vision to include what has been described as an acceptance of mystery by director Jane Campion in the film *Bright Star* (2009). Campion's aesthetic experimentation in this work indicates the creative possibilities open to directors who are receptive to a toleration of doubt in accord with the present moment and which can be better understood through the cultivation of Negative Capability. Receptive to that which is becoming and attuned to changing sensations through a paradoxical process of 'presence' and 'disappearance', Campion placed herself in the service of the work. Negative Capability in filmmaking invites an awareness of that which is becoming, without which the sensation of living itself will be forfeited in art and replaced by the construction of artifice, at best representing what was once alive with participation.

³⁶Keats, *Bright Star, The Complete Poems and Selected Letters of John Keats*, p.505.

Helen Goritsas is a Senior Lecturer of Screen Studies and Production and Course Coordinator of the Bachelor of Interactive Media at the Academy of Information Technology. She is a former Festival Director of the Greek Film Festival and President of Women in Film & Television (NSW). Last year Helen exhibited 'Lightwell', a collaborative installation for VIVID, Sydney, and Associate Produced the Australian feature film, *Alex & Eve* (2015).