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# 'Fringe Dwellers' appears at Sheldon

By Kevin Cowan  
Senior Reporter

**"The Fringe Dwellers," Sheldon Film Theater. Screening Thursday through Sunday. Matinee on Saturday at 3 p.m. Australia; 98 minutes.**

Bruce Beresford's "The Fringe Dwellers" depicts racism and cultural oppression through aboriginal eyes. Though the film is plagued with a bit of narrative mislogic — rough transition in a few places — it manages to produce helpless, rhetorical energy.

## Movie Review

Enter the world of Trilby, the daughter of an aboriginal family on the outskirts of an obscure, white-dominated city in Australia. The tribe exists in what the average white person would consider dire poverty. Actually, technically, the tribe lives in poverty from a financial standpoint. But a steady cash flow is not in the top priorities of the aborigine. The aborigine, as portrayed by Beresford, operates on a communal system of survival and unconditional positive regard; or, simply, work when you have to, share what you have and concern yourself with tribal cohesion. Trilby, played by Kristina Nehm, at times holds mixed, late adolescent emotions, pulling her between the earthen world of her parents and the superficial materialist world of the white supremacist.

Trilby, in essence, wishes she was white, in one instance, then suddenly flashes with intense cultural pride. But what manifests as pride on the surface is only deep-rooted embarrassment and latent inferiority. She wants to have both sides.

Mollie, Trilby's mother (Justine Saunders), rises from next to her snoring mate, she reaches for the talcum powder, gives herself a quick dusting and heads through torn drapery into the kitchen. There she opens one of the cabinets, exposing a half-open one-

serving box of corn flakes, alongside other foodstuffs that will not render breakfast for her family. The problem is easily solved by "borrowing" milk, bacon and eggs from the next-door

neighbor. Joe, the father (Bob Maza), was going to look for work today, but the pillow monsters won in the end. No one is upset with him because working, according to the male aborigines, is always a last-ditch effort. Enjoyment, relaxation, life in the tribal unit rank top notch.

Beresford represents the plight of the aborigine with contemporary realism. In only a couple of instances does he make the jump to aboriginal mysticism — a path of knowledge only slightly more dramatic than the Native American's representation of a higher reality. So much of the ancient mysticism represented in Australian cinema is presented with such surrealist notions that it tends to come off as mere science fiction. Beresford's use of aboriginal wisdom — knowledge through unification with the elements and all that — is more subtle, implying only a sheer sense of verstehen — knowledge through intuition. The problem with the film's religious connotations is the matter of substance and placement. Beresford, in attempting to give the aboriginal proper representation, seems to simply toss in the archaic wisdom and surreal experiences merely as a sidebar in the narrative progression. Thus an addition of substance with nothing to tie it to. What is the purpose of including mysterious acts, other than dramatic construction, without also providing a springboard from which the ideology can draw meaning. It's an open-minded attempt, but it doesn't really move the film along. "The Fringe Dwellers" sports a simple, easy-to-follow narrative.

If you're not a big foreign film fan, "The Fringe Dwellers" is an ideal film to begin with. Its structure is simple, its content straightforward, and its implications applicable and timely, to be sure.

# 'The Brothers Karamazov': anarchy of another kind

BROS from Page 10

see five guys who make you wish you could take up a career as a fool.

For those who need further evidence of the comic legitimacy of the Karamazov Brothers, they were the juggling Arabs in the film "Jewel of the Nile" with Kathleen Turner and Michael Douglas.

The Karamazovs — Alyosha, Fyodor, Dmitri, Ivan and the Champ — swear by spontaneity, saying, "We guarantee spectacular spontaneity — we've been rehearsing all day." Despite this, it is clear the Karamazovs are dazzlingly talented. Their skills, from

strange intellectual ramblings to the all-important juggling, are seemingly impossible. But there they are. Before your eyes.

It's not as if the Karamazovs don't give the audience a chance to prove that they are not infallible, though. At each performance Karamazov fans are invited to toss any three items onto the stage they want to see Champ juggle. Typewriters, food, kitchen appliances, bottles . . . anything. Well, anything but "live animals or anything that would prevent the Champ himself from continuing as a live animal," as they put it.

There are limits to everything, even anarchy.



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