CAT’S CRADLE
Written and directed by Liz Hughes (Australia, 1991), 12 min., b/w, 16 mm

Synopsis: Dad is laid out on the dining room table. He is dead and his family cannot afford to bury him. In a surreal funeral procession, they set out with their father's corpse to find a final resting place for him.

Abstracts

Sounds for a strange funeral
Birger Langkjær, University of Copenhagen
Cat’s Cradle metaphorically stages the image schema ‘death as a path’. It is argued that the strangeness of the fiction, its ritualistic surrealism, is enhanced by its soundtrack, which downplays the natural link between human action and environment. Instead, the sound seems to emphasize more abstract and thematic aspects.

The bliss of an eternal deferral: The temporality of cinema in Cat’s Cradle
Juan Meneses, Purdue University
Both despite and because of its numerous references to the act of passage, Cat’s Cradle by Liz Hughes presents a narrative that joyfully erases the cruelty of death. This article examines the metanarrative devices deployed by the film to create, through contrast, a sense of endless anticipation to a loss eternally deferred.

Cat’s Cradle: Unintended resonances?
Bevin Yeatman, University of Waikato
A literal interpretation of Cat’s Cradle cannot be taken seriously. The travelling through time and space of a family carrying a dead body to deposit it in a cinema suggests a metaphoric intention. This article speculates on resonances generated by the title and a critic’s proposal of a dead audience.

The hold of interpretive doubt: When response overpowers narrative
Astrid Van den Bossche, Independent researcher
Initial responses to a moving image, even when subsequently revised, can anchor the viewer’s experience in a framework that tints, and potentially overpowers, the narrative drama. In Cat’s Cradle, questioning the father’s deadness results in enriching layers of semiotic exploration and reflection.