Cinema Papers #26 April-May 1980

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“Film manages to get that extra 10%—the little bit of magic that makes all the difference.”

“There are two myths regarding film vs tape. Firstly, film is more expensive. Secondly, film is slower. It is my experience that the cost of a tape production falls somewhere between a 35 mm and a 16 mm film production. As for meeting those exceptional tight on-air deadlines, at The Film House, with good pre-planning and lab co-ordination we can turn a commercial around in less than a week.

“Certainly, tape has the advantage of instant replay but film manages to get that extra 10%—the little bit of magic that makes all the difference. Film people generally tend to be a little more creative than tape operators. Possibly due to the high technological aspects of tape. Also, without that instant replay you have to be sure you’ve got it, so you always tend to over-reach your ultimate creative standards.

“We always shoot with Eastman stock from Kodak and we generally finish on tape master. There are certain tricks you can perform on tape that can add to a production originated on film. I think, particularly in this area, there will always be a happy marriage of the two mediums.”

Robert Le Tet
Managing Director—The Film House Pty. Ltd.
Film Australians come from all over the industry.

An average year for us at Film Australia sees the production of around 100 films and audio-visuals.

As you can imagine, we couldn't handle that volume of work or maintain our high standards without drawing upon the wide range of filmmaking talent available in the Australian industry today.

Directors, cameramen, grips, writers, composers and artists — in fact everybody who gets into the act, both in front of the camera and behind.

With the help of freelance Film Australians, we've completed important films such as, Let the Balloon Go, Who's Handicapped?, War Without Weapons and award winners Hospitals Don't Burn Down and Leisure.

When you next view a Film Australia production, remember that it's also the production of Australians who work in film. Right across the industry.
Just how is United going?

Well, we recently mixed our 75th feature.

We celebrated with mineral water (we are in pre-season training).

We are now completing: The Earthling, Touch & Go, Manganinnie, Maybe This Time. Then comes the Sydney Jazz Festival feature, and Water Under The Bridge (nine one-hour episodes for television), and in September, The Survivor.

Can we make them sound as good as Picnic At Hanging Rock, Caddie, Devil's Playground, Newsfront, The Getting of Wisdom, Sunday Too Far Away, Summerfield, Eliza Frazer, My Brilliant Career, Storm Boy, and the other 65?

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The results of the recent Australian Film Institute elections were announced at the closing business meeting on March 19, 1979. The new board of directors is John Flaus, President; Ian Macrae, Vice-President; Scott Murray, David Roe and Abbie Thomes. All five standing nominees were re-elected, while the retiring Barry Jones MHR and Ina Bertrand were replaced by Senator Hames and Albo Rams. Senator Hames has been a senator for Victoria since July 1978. He is also a member of Parliament's National Education and the Arts Liaison Committee and a fellow of the Arts Council of Australia. Abbie Thomes is in independent filmmaker (Palm Beach and Marinetti, among others) and an author.

The 1979 election results provoked some controversy over an alleged Melbourne loading (six of the seven board members were Melbourne residents), the AFI has decided to release state voting breakdowns. Those eligible to vote in September 1979 were:

New South Wales: 285
Queensland: 21
South Australia: 27
Victoria: 382
Western Australia: 2
Overseas: 5.

For the March 1980 election were:

New South Wales: 386
Queensland: 34
South Australia: 18
Tasmania: 5
Victoria: 428
Western Australia: 2
Overseas: 1.

In the 1979 election, Victorian voters comprised only 48 per cent of the total electorate, yet 43 per cent of the board were Victorian. Clearly, the Mel­bourne candidates were popular on a national basis, not state. The same is true in the 1980 election. Victoria and New South Wales had nearly the same number of votes, but Victoria produced five, as opposed to two, board members.

EQUITY CONTROVERSY

Controversy erupted recently over a section of the AFI election results, the AFI Equity Award, 1979, resulting in an unsuccessful appeal to the Arbitration Commission by producer Antony Ginnane.

For his new production, Survivors, Ginnane wished to bring In four overseas actors: Robert Powell, Joseph Cotton, Keir Dullea and Anthony Hopkins. Ginnane Equity Association of Australia felt differently, however, and effectively blocked Eggar and George. To do so, they quoted section 31A(b) of the Award which states that "the producer or director of a feature film, within the meaning of the Award, who, together with or on the instructions of the producer or director, shall have received a notice of the withdrawal of any of the foregoing provisions, shall be entitled to receive any sum of money which shall have been paid to him or to any other person, in respect of that notice of withdrawal of any of the foregoing provisions, as may be agreed upon between such person and the producer or director of the film." Ginnane protested and filed an appeal.

Ginnane planned to show that George and Eggar failed to meet this requirement. Gin­name protested to the AFI that a blanket release may now have compromised the film's future distribution prospects.

FILM PROJECTIONS ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

The Film Projections Oral History Project is a joint venture between the Australian Film Commission (which funds the project), the Australian Film and Television School (which supplies production and laboratory resources), and the National Film Archive of the National Library of Australia (which houses the material collected). Film World Pty Ltd have supplied sound stock free of charge, and the AFI has provided free laboratory work, except for the cost of the soundtrack. The film will be shown to the Screen Industry Association on March 30 and 31.

First moves to launch this project were made in May 1978 by the AFI, and the project was eventually taken over by the Australian Film Commission. Funds have been raised through various means, including a donation by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation. The project will be completed in 1979.
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time as the private sector. Thus, as a deliberate policy, the high risk position in a high risk industry on most projects. The board of directors is currently reviewing this position. The board has already increased the investment in the film industry.

During 1978/79, income was $2,458,765 ($349,600 in 1977/78). The deficit of $462,809 ($67,100 in 1977/78) is accounted for by the writing down or amortisation of investments by $561,300.

The balance sheet of the NSWFC, as at June 30, 1979, shows total funds of $3,425,429, of which $2,370,662 is represented by investment in the film industry. Apart from all the NSWFC’s features, activities (including maintaining the Australian Film Office Inc. in Los Angeles, promoting the Australian Film Awards and launching several overseas exhibitions), there is the Government Documentary Division. During 1978/79 it managed and administered about 30 projects to a gross value of $212,000.

2. Tasmanian Film Corporation

A drawing of the Tasmanian Devil, which is captioned “Don’t let the size fool you”, is printed on the conical to the Tasmanian Film Corporation 1978/79 annual report:

“The first 22 months of the TFC’s operation have really been a period of shakedown and establishment. The TFC is extremely pleased with the progress made towards establishing a solid base for the film industry in Tasmania. Our studio complex is of an international standard and a real asset to the state. The quality of production is improving all the time, as is the expertise of our local filmmakers and actors.”

During 1978/79 the TFC recorded a loss of $59,355 (compared to $59,565 in the nine months of operation in 1977/78). Income was $1,110,175 (of which $830,502 came from motion film production and $164,910 from the filmmakers attachment scheme. Funded by the Australian Film Commission to the filmmakers attachment scheme, whereby codefied reasons for a decision would be given. Despite claims

Samuel, the “NFU*-rated

The Australian Film Institute

The Australian Film Institute 1978/79 annual report shows that income for the period was $786,796, of which $288,756 (36.6 per cent) was received as a grant from the AFC. Excess of expenditure over income after extraordinary items was $31,481. Actual grants, as of June 30, 1979, were $211,610.

Rentals received by the Vincent Library totalled $76,662 (44.4 per cent) was returned to the filmmakers and copyright holders. Print sales came to $32,000. Admittances at the Longford, the AFI Member’s club comprised $53,201, which compared to the $79,767 from the State (Robert) and $48,492 from the Opera House (Sydney).

CALIGULA OPENS

After years of delays, court actions and public squabbling, the $17 million Caligula has finally opened.

Due to its explicit sexual nature, no major distributor approached to handle the film in the U.S. and it was independently released in New York on February 1. Analysis of the film’s reviews, however, indicates that the U.S. release of My Brilliant Career, a film dealing with the realism of the country.

As a critic, the film’s name has been deleted from the title, as has his name from the credits. Adapted from An original screenplay by Gore Vidal.

Tinto Breccia, the producer (there is no director’s credit), but he is credited with producing this film. His name is followed by one stating “editing by the production”.

Director, publisher of Penthouse which financed the film, is listed as having directed and produced. Written by Giancarlo Lui. "additional scenes"

Gristone, who denounces the “hard-core pornography” tag several critics have lambasted the film is a second-class and a nightmare cinematic event that combines the film industry’s two extremes: the high-budget movie which is an all-star, all-staged production; and the low-budget one, and the more freewheeling ‘other side’. It is a triumph of both the "hard-tought liberties”. Anyway, he adds, “there is only about six minutes of actual graphic sex in the film.”

The act to authorize the Treasurer to guarantee the repayment by the TFC to tenders of principal moneys to a maximum of $2,000,000.”

Act to guarantee the repayment by the TFC to tenders of principal moneys to a maximum of $2,000,000.”

An interview with the director of the TFC, Malcolm Smith, appears on pp. 112-15 (policy) of the Department of Veterans’ Affairs.

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Frequency

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#### Purpose

- **Low**

- **Medium**

- **High**

- **Justified**

- **Gratuitous**

**CENSORSHIP**

In a recent interview, the Commonwealth Chief Censor, Mike Smith, detailed changes to the film censorship, whereby codified reasons for a decision would be given. Despite claims that these changes would clarify the censorship process, the reverse has happened. The system is inconsistent, confusing and ridiculous in purpose. At the top of the new listings is an “explanatory key” (see below).

After each film a “reason for decision” is printed, using the above symbols. Thus, if the “NFU*-rated” film receives S(-)j, the meaning film contains sex, is not entirely justified.

By scoring the listing (q. 118), one should be able to determine what motivates the Censorship Board to give a particular classification. For example, if the “NFU*-rated” film is found to have any gratuitous sex, bad language, etc., the film is classified “satisfactory”.

Another example: “The Mistress.” This gained an “R” and an $4(j). Apart from the Board to determine whether the sex was gratuitous or justified, the rating is different from the above-listed films. Now a similar code covers three classifications.

One could go on detailing the many inconsistent ratings, but there are more fundamental questions. Why does the Board consider sex, violence and language as the only indiscretions worth singling out in its explanation? What about films advocating repression of human rights, or presenting exploitation, on a personal or political level, as something desirable?

A second issue is the process whereby the Board decides what is justified and what is not. For example, it can be easily argued that a shot of people having intercourse is justified in a sex comedy, but not in a war drama. But does the Board consider a sex comedy justified in itself?

Thirdly, there is the breaking down of explicitness into “low”, “medium” and “high”. An application of these categories to every film would be given. Despite claims that these are inappropriate to real life, why should they be the exception, not the rule.

In the case of Les petites fugues, the director’s statement before proceeding. This, however, seems to be the exception, not the rule.

Lady Duckmantoon’s request to the Remuneration Tribunal for salary increases for the nine members of the Board, Lady Duckmancon, who criticized her own salary, is earning $28,678 a year.

Two films to meet with censorship problems are Yves Yerain’s Les petites fugues (The Little Escapes) and David Byrnes’ Angel Mine. Les petites fugues was classified “R” because of a brief, though not visually explicit, sex scene. Lady Duckmancon defended the decision by saying that it was not the visuals that were the problem, but that the girl has a gasping orgasm. Unable to afford the cost and lengthy delay of an appeal, the distributor, Les petites fugues, decided to cut the scene. The new version was then classified “M”.

Another example is the case of Angel Mine, a New Zealand short, was rated “R” after the deletion of a sequence. Blake claims, however, that the cut was made without his approval. This raises the difficult issue of whether a distributor should be allowed to make cuts in a film to satisfy the censorship rulings of individual countries. In many distribution contracts these rights are clearly spelt out; in others, they are not at all.

In the case of Les petites fugues, the director’s statement before proceeding. This, however, seems to be the exception, not the rule.

Scene from Frank Hurley’s documentary, Pears and Savages, which has been re-constructed by the National Library, Canberra.

OBITUARY

CASEY ROBINSON

On December 6, 1978, Casey Robinson died of cancer in a Sydney hospital. His name is less well known than that of the films he wrote and was entirely overlooked by the shamelessly inadequate Oxford Companion to Film.

It was not until the past few years that his contributions to a generation of Hollywood films have won the serious critical attention that they deserve. As a screenwriter, of course, he became accustomed to the fact of obscurity. And since he did not lay claim to anything beyond the status of a competent craftsman, the neglect did not hurt him.

His satisfaction could be found in the knowledge that his work has been shown in thousands of films, made from his screenplays: King’s Row, Now, Voyager, Dark Victory, The Old Maid, Les petites fugues.

While the City Sleeps, and many more.

While still living, and while alive, Casey Robinson was one of the great screenwriters in Australia. He was the last few years of Casey’s life. Occasionally, he received invitations to speak about his work, and this he did with charm, humour and concern. A real asset to his community, and to film society.

As a professional activity briefly associated with the disaster of Scobie Malone, which he produced, is quick to recall that he could get another project off the ground, and he pursued that goal with his customary enthusiasm.

His passing, at the age of 96, occurred without the fanfare and eulogies that have attended other prominent filmmaker’s deaths. He is not forgotten, however, by most of Casey’s friends. He was always aware of his obligations to his audience.

His passing, at the age of 76, occurred without the fanfare and eulogies that have accompanied the deaths of many of those with whom he worked in the prime of his creative years. It was the way he wanted to go. His memory deserves respect.

Tom Ryan.
PRODUCING
AN INTERVIEW WITH
CHARLES H.
Woody Allen is more than a cult figure; he is a very successful one. While much is being written and said about the man, and his films, little attention has been focused on Charles H. Joffe, his manager and producer. But Joffe’s role in Woody Allen’s success is considerable: he handles all his financial matters and negotiated the arrangement with United Artists giving his client total creative control.

Woody Allen is not Joffe’s only client, however. Rollins & Joffe, which he founded with Jack Rollins 25 years ago, handles 10 of the big names in comedy, including Dick Cavett, Robin Williams and Billy Crystal.

Joffe, who sees himself as a manager first and a producer by circumstance, believes in putting long-term career interests ahead of a quick profit. He speaks proudly of being able to follow creative, rather than business, considerations.

Joffe had just returned from the set of Woody Allen’s new, and untitled, film when he spoke to Cinema Papers’ Los Angeles correspondent, David Teitelbaum.

When did your association with Woody Allen begin?

It was about 20 years ago. He was a joke writer and someone suggested that he write something for Mike Nichols and Elaine May, whom we were handling. So, he came to see us and I found him a shy little kid. But he was as funny as hell, and we have been together ever since.

Did you realize then how big he would become?

The talent was always there, though when he started he was definitely a struggling performer.

How has your working relationship with him changed over the years?

He has matured, so the relationship has changed, in that what he wants from us now is not the same as he wanted before, and vice-versa. Woody has grown to a point where his own identity is so well established that he doesn’t have to rely on us anywhere near as much.

Is he the same person when he is directing a film as he is portrayed on screen?
No, he is not funny at all. It's a deadly serious set; there is no joke-making.

Away from the set, is he more like what he is on the screen?

Yes. He is shy, awkward in groups and generally uncomfortable. When he is with friends, however, he can be himself because he trusts that they will understand him. Rarely with strangers will he try to be funny.

After all this time, do you think you understand him?

I understand most of him. My God, after 20 years together I would have to.

Ours is a management firm that works on a very strong creative level. We only have 10 clients and we build up close relationships. Nobody has left our management for years and years, that is a pretty good record. Billy Crystal has been with us six years, Robert Klein 12, Martin Mull six, Dick Cavett about 18, Tom Posten 24 and "Mork" (Robin Williams) since the day he started.

Has being a manager helped you as a producer?

No question about it.

Is there ever a conflict between the two?

I am going through this with a client at the moment, and I have decided not to produce his work. Generally, we don't produce a client's work if we feel outside voices won't negatively affect their work. Take Mork, for example, who is in Malta at the moment doing Popeye.

Did you see Jules Feiffer's script for "Popeye"?

Yes, and I thought it was wonderful. Robert Altman (the director) has promised to stay close to the script; it is not an improvisational film. We have absolute high hopes for the film. Larry, who is one of my partners, called me from Malta yesterday and said all the footage was very high.

So, your heart is in the management side; you do the production side because it helps protect your clients . . .

Usually, yes. Occasionally I do a film that has nothing to do with any of my clients.

You have to deal with studio executives, directors, writers, agents — the whole gamut. Do you have different ways of dealing with these people?

No, I am who I am. After 25 years of dealing with all these people you have mentioned, one's persona is established and you stay who you are. I deal a little differently with each client, though, because they want you to be different.

We are very hard on our clients, and that is why the relationships last for so long. They know we are not going to tell them they are good when they're not, or that a script is good if it isn't.

Why did you go to United Artists when you started producing for Woody Allen?

A man named David Dicker was there and he gave Woody and me the opportunity to do films with the least of interference. It was an attitude of "Hey, we trust you, go do your film".

Is it true Woody Allen takes a cut in salary to maintain that freedom?

Yes. Money isn't important to Woody, but the film is. U.A. doesn't even have script approval, which is quite amazing. We just describe an idea to them. We might, as a courtesy, show the script to some of our friends there, but never for approval.

What was the first Woody Allen film you did at U.A.?

Bananas. The only condition they put on it was that we do the film for a number of dollars.

Have any other studios tried to tempt you away?

Every one of them. They would like a bidding war to go on to get Woody. Right now, his contract is up at U.A.

Is he going to renew it?
serious. I hope he does more.

How did the studio react when they heard he was making a serious film?

They thought it was time.

How accurately can you gauge the success of a film? Are you often surprised?

No, not at all. I know Woody and I can gauge if something is good. I also know whether it is going to expand Woody's audience. I am a little better in my guesses than the people at U.A. when they see a film for the first time.

Does Woody Allen make his films for an audience?

It is a little bit different.

Which film has been the biggest commercial success so far?

It will end up being Manhattan. Annie Hall is second to that, and it had the advantage of winning an Academy Award.

And the biggest failure?

There have been none that have lost money. The ones that made the least money are Interiors and Bananas.

It was reported that Woody Allen expected "Interiors" to be a commercial failure . . .

None of us would have been surprised. But we all thought it was right for him to do something that Woody didn't want, but he is interested in his work, and he hopes his work will reach a large audience.

Never. He doesn't give five seconds thought to an audience. He just hopes he is right.

There are people in this business whose goal is to have a big box-office success. But you don't think of them as making artistic films. They are just going for the biggest numbers they can get. That is not Woody's concern. He is not interested in money. He is interested in his work, and he hopes his work will reach a large audience.

If Woody really wanted to double his audience he would do a film with five beautiful naked girls. But he is not interested.

So, the appreciation of his work by the people doesn't affect him?

No, not at all. I know Woody — he is a realist. One doesn't want to write and put it in a desk drawer. But he hasn't sold out to build his audience.

We haven't made a decision.

What would be a typical Woody Allen budget?

Up until Manhattan, the most we have ever done a film for was $4,100,000, which was for Manhattan. But because the cost of living has gone up, and all the union negotiations, that $4 million would now be $6 million. The film we are doing at the moment is about $8 or $9 million. Two years ago, we could have done it for about $6 million.

Has it a similar theme to "Annie Hall" and "Manhattan"?

It is a little bit different.

Which film has been the biggest commercial success so far?

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Were you surprised when "Annie Hall" won the Academy Award?

Yes, because the competition was tremendous, from Star Wars to Turning Point. I just thought it was terrific we were nominated.

I hadn't prepared anything to say and I didn't even remember, as I walked off the stage, what I had said; I was so numb.

When I was a child I used to stare at the set, or listen to the radio, and think, "Gee, will I ever be able to accomplish that?". Now it's not so important. I understand a lot more about it, and I can understand why Woody didn't want to participate in it.

Woody doesn't believe films should compete. He feels there is no logical basis by which to compare Annie Hall and Star Wars.

Do you think the awards should be put in categories, like musical or science fiction?

Then it would get like the Grammys, where everything is so broken down that they lose their importance.

The Academy Awards are sensational hype for our business, but for the artist it is confusing. For instance, this year Norma Rae is nominated as the best picture of the year, and Sally Field for best performance by an actress. But Marty Ritt, who directed it and who got the performance out of the actress, isn't nominated. How is that explained?

Were you surprised "Manhattan" received so few nominations?

Yes. I expected the film would be nominated as best picture, and I thought Woody would be nominated as best director because he was the choice of the Directors' Guild of America. Also, the New York Film Critics named him best director of the year.

How much does an Academy Award mean in cash terms?

It varies with every film. I don't know how much The Deerhunter was helped by it.

What about "Annie Hall"?

I would guess it has added about $5 million in rentals in the U.S. That would have meant $10 to $12 million more in box-office.

Do you think an Academy Award has a bigger effect in the U.S. or in a foreign market?

Again, it depends on the film. I believe the award paved the way for
Did the Academy Award give you any added legitimacy?

Yes. It made it easier for me to approach people, because the agents could then say, "Well, you know he has won an Academy Award". Directors and stars, whom I might have had a hard time approaching, became accessible.

Do you think Woody Allen's films have had a social impact?

No, other than that Diane Keaton created a style after *Annie Hall*.

Do you believe any films have an impact on social values?

Absolutely. I think *The China Syndrome* made a lot of people aware in a "we better look at this" sense.

What happened with *Annie Hall* was that a lot of people probably came away with a better understanding of breaking up with loved ones. But I don't think it changed anything. It was a personal film, and people react to personal films in a personal way.

Is his new film personal?

All his films are. The style and content are a little different, but it still came out of Woody.

When is that due for release?

October or November.

Is Woody Allen involved with the marketing?

He is involved in every facet on his films. I don't make unilateral decisions on these things. We bring our plans to U.A. and work things out together.

We had long discussions with U.A. to get them to understand how we wanted our films advertised. You look at the posters of *Annie Hall* and *Manhattan*, they don't portend comedy, do they?

Why doesn't Woody Allen like his films being shown on television?

He doesn't like commercials interrupting the film and he doesn't like them being edited. And, for the most part, commercial television requires that. *Annie Hall* has been released on television, but we controlled that. There were no edits and few commercials. I wanted it shown because I wanted the masses to see Woody in a different form. I thought it would expose him to a lot of people who would remember the early Woody Allen films.
Do you see cable television as important to the film industry?

Television has always been a big source of income, and cable television is now becoming sizeable. Some films in the future are going to rely on television to recoup their money, and every film company has the right to sell them. We have made a deal with Woody Allen films where U.A. doesn’t have that right; I won’t allow it in his deal.

This, of course, takes away a big source of income, but I am dealing with an artist who is not concerned about dollars.

For how much was "Annie Hall" sold to television?

About $6 million. They ran it once a year for two or three years.

What other projects are you working on?

I have Steve Gordon, who I think is the best comedy writer next to Woody, and he wants a chance to direct. So, we are setting something up and Dudley Moore is going to be in it.

I recently tried an experimental film called House of God, with Tim Mathis, Charlie Habe and Beth Sonstrom. I don’t know how that is going to be.

Are you optimistic about the general direction of the film industry?

Over the next 10 or 15 years the market place will change. There will be less theatres but, if cable takes on the importance that it appears to be doing, the use of video discs and tapes increases, the market place will remain important.

Among the people you manage, are there perhaps five potential Johnny Carson replacements. Is there any conflict?

No, our clients don’t compete. The interests in their careers are different. I don’t think Marty Mull wants to sit in Johnny Carson’s chair. He is starring in a film for Paramount, and it is going to be a very big film, called The Serial. If that film is successful, he might have a pretty good film career.

But there is still room for a conflict ...

Sure, but that is talked out very carefully with every client, in terms of where they want to go and what their interests are.

Sometimes, two clients come up for the same part, but you can’t help that. Fortunately, we have built a relationship with our clients where there is no distrust. In the interest of all our clients, I wouldn’t sacrifice one for another. If NBC wanted David Letterman and not Martin Mull, or vice-versa, they know I wouldn’t sell one out for the other.

Do you ever feel you are overextending yourself with too many clients, or too many projects?

We never take on more than 10 clients; that is a rule for the four of us. Sometimes I feel I have taken on too many projects, but, when that period passes, I am okay.

Do you feel you need the pressure?

No. I don’t let business interfere with my lifestyle. I am home at night and I don’t give up my weekends unless it is an emergency. I keep a pretty good balance.

Do you have any unfulfilled aspirations in show business?

If I can get through day by day and enjoy each day, that is it.★
Feature film production during the 1970s was first the product of a piece of legislation, rather than an urgency or natural inclination by individuals to produce their films, come what may. Before the Australian Film Development Corporation Bill was introduced in 1970, there was a nascent underground film culture that has continued and grown in strength over this period. It produces personal films, and films that reveal little fear of the cinema superstructure. Feature films, on the other hand, tend to be regarded as the pinnacle of one's cinema career, and seem designed to be a part of the national identity, rather than as a vehicle for experiment or personal expression.

The feature film industry has, therefore, chosen to align itself to the causes of popular culture, to promote the possibilities of mass consciousness (and its obverse of social control). It is a directive cinema, consistently dogged by the notions of its ultimate prototype — the American film.

Against this, the industry's legislated cause — "significant Australian content" — has struggled towards definition. This criteria has brought with it all the connotations of classic Australian nationalism, ideas and images more applicable to the turn of the century than the era of nuclear reactors.

Nationalism, in its association with the concepts of progress or modernization through the vehicle of popular culture, can be seen to express three stages of growth: "tradition, transition and modernity". In the early years of our regenerated film industry, two basic trends emerged — the ocker comedy and the period film — and both can be related to the traditions of Australian culture and the beliefs of Australian nationalism.

A film such as Newsfront, in its ability for self-criticism and innovation, seemed to indicate that a period of transition in the Australian cinema was at hand. Many people expected that films would immediately go on to better things, but every period has an area of overlap. Some signs can be discerned of a continuation towards modernity; the films that reflect the real multi-ethnic and social minority make-up of Australian society (though still not entirely cognisant of the complexities of the people they might portray) have made a significant breakthrough in that themes have at last surfaced from the underground tradition of social awareness to reach a large audience.

The films that were produced during the first few years of the AFDC were predominantly set within a contemporary framework, yet the majority dealt in terms of comedy or fantasy, not in terms of polemic or issues, argument or beliefs. The few films that followed the stream of contemporary realism, initiated by the Commonwealth Film Unit's first feature, Three to Go, were patently unsuccessful in comparison with the popularity of the ocker formula and exploitation films.

The hypothesis is that the bureaucratic restrictions on feature production (commercial viability and significant Australian content) and the manifest contradictions within Australian society and politics (the influence of the U.S. coloring the manner and ability of Australians to define Australian) ended in filmmakers attempting to establish "safe" narrative formulas.

The Vietnam issue was not only a catalyst in the Labor victory of 1972, but was also a part of a new era of social awareness in Australia, with the Labor Party initiating many visionary "Public Sector" schemes. Yet the amount of controversy over the rate of social and political change that such policies represented meant that during these years the image of Australian society was in a constant state of flux. The stability of the consensus self-image of classic nationalism — white, mono-ethnic, rural, working-class and masculine (even if mythical or erroneous) — was particularly threatened by political attention at last being given to the numerous ethnic and social minorities that composed Australian society.

Equally then, with cinema, the criteria of "significant Australian content" (though justifiable in the sense of trying to establish a
national cinema and to stem the flow of cultural derivativeness) was just as hard as to construe. A new resolution of the dilemma of this criteria became period films, with a large element of nostalgia — that is, if unable to define what Australia is, it can be solved by restating the myths of what it has been (see Table 1).

Though this new emergence of nationalism was given impetus by the pride and dilemma engendered by the Labor years, it has been an almost continual ideological presence in literary and historic argument since its inception at the turn of the century. The difference lies in the sophistication of the argument and the intensity of its social pervasiveness. A scholarly debate in Meanjin will not affect the collective consciousness in the same way as social change or an ethic being espoused by popular culture. Conversely, the level of awareness, or intensity, of the majority of these period films represent a fairly primitive nationalism, operating mainly as an aesthetic, without a congruent fluency in the ideology from whence it comes.

This is much tempered by "commercial viability" or audience considerations as it is a signal about the intensity of the convictions of some of Australia's filmmakers. Yet the situation is complicated within the Australian cinema by the lack of any real film tradition and, therefore, no continuous or consistent representations of national identity. The resurrection of the Australian silent film era by archivists (and its national values) presents a somewhat perverted continuum. Hence it would be logical that feature films, in an effort to capture the popular imagination, would reflect the status quo more often than challenge it.

Significantly the first, and much underrated, period film, Between Wars (1974), was a financial failure. With an original script by Frank Moorhouse and directed by Michael Thornhill, it was probably the first Australian feature film since 1970 that not only involved a significant "level of argument", but also had a certain timely relevance. The film traces the career of an Australian doctor from World Wars 1 to 2, and is set against the background of Australian social and political change, employing an amount of analogous imagery between the two. The clarity of the film's arguments tend to be somewhat obscured by the not always successful attempts at an "alienation technique" or a coldly objective directing style.

In 1975 a new approach to the period film was seen in two financial and critical successes, Sunday Too Far Away and Picnic at Hanging Rock. These films initiated a style of "textual" films, in which the "level of argument", apparent in a film like Between Wars, is hotted away. The major emphasis, and successful appeal, is in the level of imagery (drawing heavily on nostalgia for classic national themes and images), with even the "level of incident" sometimes subverted.

**TABLE 1: PERIOD FILMS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>FILM</th>
<th>DIRECTOR</th>
<th>SCREENPLAY</th>
<th>SOURCE</th>
<th>APPROXIMATE BUDGET</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>Between Wars</td>
<td>Michael Thornhill</td>
<td>Frank Moorhouse</td>
<td>Original</td>
<td>$320,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>Sunday Too Far Away</td>
<td>Ken Hannam</td>
<td>John Dingwell</td>
<td>Original</td>
<td>$300,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>Picnic at Hanging Rock</td>
<td>Peter Weir</td>
<td>Cliff Green</td>
<td>Novel by Joan Lindsay</td>
<td>$300,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>Mad Dog Morgan</td>
<td>Philippe Mora</td>
<td>Philippe Mora</td>
<td>Novel by Margaret Carnegie</td>
<td>$474,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>Caddie</td>
<td>Don Crombie</td>
<td>Joan Long</td>
<td>&quot;Caddie&quot; (pseudonym)</td>
<td>$500,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>The Devil's Playground</td>
<td>Fred Schepisi</td>
<td>Fred Schepisi</td>
<td>Original</td>
<td>$320,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>Break of Day</td>
<td>Ken Hannam</td>
<td>Bruce Beresford</td>
<td>Cliff Green</td>
<td>$417,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>The Getting of Wisdom</td>
<td>The Irishman</td>
<td>Bruce Beresford</td>
<td>Eleanor Witcombe</td>
<td>$505,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>The Mango Tree</td>
<td>Kevin Dobson</td>
<td>Michael Pate</td>
<td>Novel by Henry Handel Richardson</td>
<td>$650,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>The Picture Show Man</td>
<td>John Power</td>
<td>John Long</td>
<td>Novel by Ronald and L. Penn</td>
<td>$555,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>Tom Jeffrey</td>
<td>Don Crombie</td>
<td>Don Crombie</td>
<td>Novel by E. O'Connor</td>
<td>$700,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>Weekend of Shadows</td>
<td>Tom Jeffrey</td>
<td>Peter Yeldman</td>
<td>Novel by Peter Yeldman</td>
<td>$500,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>The Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith</td>
<td>Fred Schepisi</td>
<td>Fred Schepisi</td>
<td>Novel by $1,200,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>Newsfront</td>
<td>Phil Noyce</td>
<td>Phil Noyce</td>
<td>Thomas Keneally</td>
<td>$505,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>My Brilliant Career</td>
<td>Gillian Armstrong</td>
<td>Eleanor Witcombe</td>
<td>Novel by Miles Franklin</td>
<td>$830,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>Dawn!</td>
<td>Ken Hannam</td>
<td>Joy Cavill</td>
<td>Tom Jeffrey</td>
<td>$762,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>The Odd Angry Shot</td>
<td>Ken Hannam</td>
<td>Tom Jeffrey</td>
<td>Novel by William Nagle</td>
<td>$600,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FILMS NOT STRICTLY "PERIOD" — narrative tends to transcend its era**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>FILM</th>
<th>DIRECTOR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>Shirley Thompson Versus the Aliens</td>
<td>Jim Sharman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>Libido</td>
<td>John B. Murray, Tim Burstall, Fred Schepisi, David Baker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>The True Story of Eskimo Nell</td>
<td>Richard Franklin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>Inn of the Damned</td>
<td>Terry Bourke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>Eliza Fraser</td>
<td>Tim Burstall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>Journey Among Women</td>
<td>Tom Cowan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>The Night The Prowler</td>
<td>Jim Sharman</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The distinction drawn between period films and "costume dramas" is not necessarily a qualitative one. For example, Jim Sharman's films only use the boundaries of era to convey a framework and then transcends it to make a rather timeless film. Shirley Thompson becomes almost science fiction, its 1950s background becomes futuristic and The Night The Prowler (script by Patrick White) is only loosely connected to the 1960s setting, the sense of middle-class family repression and construction was something even White experienced as a youth. It tends to be very much a film of alienation and timelessness.

In a similar vein, Journey Among Women is a feminist statement and projection, even though it is set several hundred years in the past. The choice to make Eliza Fraser a light-hearted "sex-romp" and comedy tends to fulfill the real connotations of "costume drama", a period dressed piece with a contemporary approach.
The flirtatious pillow fight between Sybylla (Judy Davis) and Harry (Sam Neil) in Gillian Armstrong's *My Brilliant Career*.

The closing sequence (before the final caption) from *Sunday Too Far Away*.

### Table 2: Period Films and Their Relationship to Nationalist Themes

| Films with rural themes (suggested by James McCauley to represent a pantheist survival; the repetition of the bush motif as spiritual centre and sustenance) include: | Picnic at Hanging Rock, Sunday Too Far Away, Mad Dog Morgan, Break of Day, The Irishman, The Picture Show Man, The Mango Tree, The Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith, Weekend of Shadows, My Brilliant Career, Dawn, Between Wars. |
| Films with working-class themes or egalitarian-based class consciousness include: | Picnic at Hanging Rock, Sunday Too Far Away, Mad Dog Morgan, The Picture Show Man, The Irishman, The Getting of Wisdom, Weekend of Shadows, My Brilliant Career, Dawn, Between Wars. |
| Films which aren't male-dominated include: | Picnic at Hanging Rock, The Irishman, The Getting of Wisdom, My Brilliant Career, Dawn. |
| Films that are more than Anglo-Saxon or white dominated include: | Mad Dog Morgan (has an Aboriginal friend), Caddie (has a Greek lover), The Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith (has an Aboriginal protagonist). Only two of the films have made any comment on this state of affairs: the first and the last. Caddie has only one scene that reveals ethnic differences (at a Greek party) and Caddie finds out that Greeks know how to enjoy themselves. None of the barriers that are often found between the two communities are even hinted at. |
For instance, a major difference between literature and film is that the written word exists in time and film exists in space. Film cannot reveal thoughts, as they can be written in a book.

The director can give us external signs to imply the thoughts of the characters (or they can be completely transposed into dialogue) but one can never know them. This is the essential ambiguity of narrative film. In this case, with so many of the narratives concerned with the conflict between an individual and the institution (either social, moral or religious: e.g., *Mad Dog Morgan* and the law, or *Caddie* and marriage), the fundamental problem (with original scripts as well) is how to reveal those conflicts, which often exist only as private thoughts.

This posed no problem to Peter Weir in *Picnic at Hanging Rock*, because the main characters, as originally written by Joan Lindsay, were veiled in mystery and ambiguity. Lindsay's novel, though essentially a trivial work, provided a marvellous vehicle for film. Weir, in his overt reverence for Alfred Hitchcock, revels in the sensations of unease, and the supernatural quality of the novel suits an emotional and uncerebral style of filmmaking.

The opposite of this situation is *The Mango Tree*, Kevin Dobson's adaptation of Ronald McKenzie's overly ambitious epic about life in a Queensland country town in the years around World War 1. Set against the supposed maturity of the main character (a well-off, but mawkish youth) and his involvement in life, death, love, lust, etc., there are a few cameo-part gems, but the overall effects are very scattered. This was a particular problem in the scripting and casting of the youth (Christopher Pate) who was given inanities to utter and kept a fixed expression of amazement, no matter what he confronted. Hence, we could never know what he thought, or if he was maturing.

The question of World War 1, and Australia's call to arms, was mainly a vehicle for the "Australianization" of one character (played by Robert Helpmann), an outcast from his wealthy British family. He is made to declaim in a speech at a patriotic rally all the reasons why we should be proud of our country (there are a few exceptions), have a firm position in the world, and his private thoughts that made him reach his nationalistic conclusion.

Another example of the inevitable shift in emphasis between the change from novel to film can be found in *The Getting of Wisdom* and *My Brilliant Career*. Both have a woman as the protagonist and both stick closely to the major events of their original, but the films tend to minimize the central feminist themes (albeit in a passive form) of women rebelling against the role that society and their era demanded of them. Instead, both films emphasize the more recognizable Australian preoccupation with class, those democratic and egalitarian beliefs of nationalism.

Henry Handel Richardson's *Laura*, in the film version, is a poor girl at an expensive school made to feel shame for her humble origins. She is the ill-mannered country yokel, who "saves" herself socially by being a gifted pianist, which no amount of class barrier can deny; her talent transcends the class problem. Yet in the novel, she is also the girl who yearns to run and do "unfeminine" things, symbolized in the film by her final run through the park the day she leaves school. But this can only give a small indication of the depth of repression that had irked her all those years.

Franklin's *My Brilliant Career* was written in an adulatory imitation of Henry Lawson, with constant references to the greats — Paterson and Gordon — and with all the unconscious marks of her era (written at the age 16); e.g., references to the undesirable Chinese, and a burning desire to become one of the true Australians, the rural workers, the people who made Australia "great". All this is related in the form of society's desirable role — marriage against which is Sybylla's desire for something more than just marriage — a literary career. (The irony is that Richardson as well as Franklin had to write under male pseudonyms.) The film does not make its points as strongly as the novel; it is rather a cleaned-up love story with a twist: she says "No." It makes very strong use of the class theme instead, with beautiful contrasts in the art direction between the wealthy grazing land and the land of the real Australians (Lawson's heroes) — arid, rugged and menacing.

Interestingly, most of the films about women (except *Picnic* which was more or less a collective view of them) follow the Lawson tradition — that a woman can become the subject of a story if she takes on and copes with the male role. Obviously, then, this dictum also has affinities with the film *Caddie*.

*Caddie*, the story of a woman who leaves her husband (because he's having an affair), takes the children and goes to work as a maid to support her family during the Depression years, actually gives a stronger sense of the discrimination by society against the lone mother than either of the other two films. But *Caddie*, too, has a cleaned-up commercialism (though the source was hardly more inspiring), so while these films touch upon current feminist concerns they end up destroying them by introducing commercial palliatives.

Period films, then, have been concerned with, and harmonized by, their source material. The novel and film offer totally different modes of representation of conceptual consciousness. These films, dominated by the literary tradition of the narrative, can only register the external events of plot from point to point in space. The use of film techniques and certain styles can give indications of the internal world of the characters within a narrative; but period films, in their consistent use of naturalistic style (with few exceptions), have been devoid of the stamp of personal consciousness of the filmmaker.

The choices to create the microcosmic pasts that are illustrative of basic traditional Australian values, without a congruent...
"There is a two-way movement in philosophy, a movement towards the building of elaborate theories, and a move back again towards the consideration of simple and obvious facts. McTaggart says that time is unreal. Moore replies that he has just had his breakfast. Both these aspects of philosophy are necessary to it."

Iris Murdoch

"We are a little tree."

Richard Wagner

"My aesthetics have been my politics all along."

Andrew Sarris

Adrian Martin’s lucid statement of his personal response to the “Film and Politics” series organized by Sarris last year should be applauded. It throws into helpful relief a range of ideologies presented by the speakers and it raises some important questions about a new book, Politics and Cinema, by the well-attested Andrew Sarris. Even so, there are parts of Martin’s article where I think he is being just as polemical as Sarris is said to be, and if I seek to defend Sarris it is in order to try and recover a few ‘simple and obvious facts’ about the way we understand films.

To illustrate some points, I want to refer to the theme of “self against society” in the later work of Stanley Kubrick.

It must be emphasized that if “Sarris still has his old auteurist axe to grind”, he has been a most eloquent polemicist. So much so, that one might speculate whether Adrian Martin would have come to learn about such an approach as he did as his article endorses (Douglas Sirk, Vincenzo Minneci, Richard Fieschler) without Sarris’ confrontation of the American critical establishment, which began 15 years ago.

More to the point, Martin believes that Sarris’ "underlying critical method is extremely underdeveloped.” No mention is made of what Sarris himself calls his “relatively pluralistic aesthetic in which the very diversity of art is something of a vulgarity which immediately places him at cross purposes with his subject. Would anyone want to see, say, Jean Renoir’s under-developed (or over-developed) "artistic method"?”

Again, it is Sarris who quotes Renoir’s rueful remark that he had made La Grande Illusion (Grand Illusion) in 1936 as his statement against war, and in 1939 Europe went to war. It seems that writers who invoke “critical method” sometimes forget how small a place films occupy in most people’s lives, conscious or unconscious.

To claim, as Martin does, that “politics is inside every part of our experience of any film — our looking, hearing, enjoying, thinking”, is to propagate a serious distortion. For one thing, what we experience outside of cinema is far more than what we might call the experience in any film is more than balanced by what we experience outside of it. Let’s call this reality-testing. For another thing, to speak of the film experience as “political” is to say neither more nor less, so far as I can judge, than that an individual’s entire life history is "political". And even that is dubious. Just how, for example, are sleeping and dreaming political experiences?

Actually, Martin seems keen to deny what might be called an individual’s subjective self. He would define the self as “the sum of many and varied determinations that have nothing to do with the individual’s choice or action.” Does he realize what an extreme position he is adopting? Most psychologists would place the truth-of-the-matter somewhere between the polsials of B.F. Skinner’s behaviourism and Carl Rogers’ humanism. For my part, my sympathies lie with the humanist camp, but I acknowledge the powerful role of social forces. And here, in passing, I should point out that Martin rightly criticizes my contribution to the Film and Politics’ broad-casts where I apparently indicated the message of Luchino Visconti’s The Damned to be the humanist one “that the individual can transcend politics. (In this case, Nazism) and find himself!” Whatever my admiration for the religious faith of certain Nazi victims (especially Dietrich Bonhoeffer, author of Letters and Papers from Prison. I certainly would not wish to ascribe such a viewpoint to this sombre film. Indeed, I confess to finding it a particularly daunting work whose ‘found hell’ is even less accessible than the ‘lost paradise’ of its companion piece, the 20-page defence of Barry’s person.

Again, what I find most disturbing about the Myths and Morals waves aside such “universal facts” as birth and death (though omitting to mention joy and suffering), supposing that if one removes history from them, there is nothing more to be said about them. Whereas, despite Martin’s stricture to Sarris that “no artist can stand outside history in search of ‘beauty and truth’”, much responsible art moves precisely in that direction, towards a realized universality. To cite an extreme instance, there is the work of James Joyce in literature.

In film, I doubt that anyone has succeeded as brilliantly in coming close to the deliberately ‘timeless’ as Stanley Kubrick with his costume drama Barry Lyndon.

In a new book, A Cinema of Loneliness, Robert Koldor writes: “More profoundly than A Clockwork Orange, Barry Lyndon examines the easy clichés of ‘individual freedom’ and societal necessities. Barry, somewhat like Alex, suffers from an inner tension between his own inflections within a social structure too rigid to support an independent existence.”

I would suggest that such suffering constitutes a “universal truth” whose filmed content conceals a minimum of vested interests. In fact, perhaps the only one I can honestly acknowledge is Kubrick’s ego, and how splendidly he has showcased that. Beauty and truth, aesthetics and meaning as powerful signifiers of each other in a way which indicates Kubrick’s advanced self-institution, his ability to project his hopes of ever winning Nora for himself.1

Throughout the film, Kubrick’s control of lighting and sound is marvellously acute, but it also exactly matches the stages in Barry’s progress. And because the film is about human frailty in all its as yet unrecorded economic facts find their ultimate point of reference literally in Barry’s personal life.

I cite Kubrick’s film at length basically because of what I see as its scrupulous fidelity to the self as recorder and past instigator of experience, which suggests to me a legitimate possibility (True, Ryan O’Neal plays Barry with an exaggerated passivity, perhaps to register the character as more stunned against than sinister. Whereas Alex in A Clockwork Orange is given by Malcolm McDowell a special robotic sharpness, and somehow to highlight Kubrick’s anti-B. F. Skinner thesis.)

Of course, Adrian Martin favors the work of the whole. More to the point, I think, is his article endorses Douglas Sirk’s work, which seems to me not to have received a drubbing from the British as well as American press for what they call his “overstuffed cinematic clichés and phony history.” (It is set in a slave-owning plantation in Louisiana, circa 1840.)

Make no mistake, I side with Martin on this issue to the extent of considering Mandingo an excellent film. It strikes me as having much in common with Barry Lyndon which, come to think of it, wasn’t too well received by some sections of the press either. Notably, both films revolve around young men (Ryan O’Neal, Perry King) whose nobler motives are brutally negated by their respective patriarchal societies.

What I find most disturbing about the 20-page dossier on Mandingo in Movie is that it is given over to an exegesis of the film’s essentially Marxist dynamics with not one reference to all the superb visuals and only one brief acknowledgment of the engaging Maurice Jarre score. If this represents the measure of the magazine’s "critical method", then perhaps it is no wonder that they should turn a blind eye (and a deaf ear) to Kubrick. For, as I have tried to indicate, the authentic individuality of Barry Lyndon is its split personality and its aesthetics. There is no gap.2

3. Sarris, p. 54.

Ken Mogg replies to Adrian Martin’s “Film and Politics” (Cinema Papers, No. 25)


That reality which can be captured... Any activity of subverting common sense notions of reality requires a dismantling, breaking apart, of the homogenized discourse of patriarchal linguistic structures.

I think Iris Murdoch would see a fallacy here. Common sense isn’t so common and reality isn’t so unknowable. I am reminded of Barthes’ essay in Mythologies on the famous Dominici murder case in France where the “educateur judiciare” is taken to task for pressuring to converse without scruples with the accused, a 76-year old ‘illiterat’ peasant farmer. (“O wonderful self-assurance of classical education, in which shepherds, without embarrassment, converse with judges!”) Whatever Barthes’ point about the unfairness of institutionalized language, the fact is that Gaston Dominici was guilty of murder; he was found guilty by the majority vote of a French jury.

It is also Barthes who elsewhere in Mythologies waves aside such “universal facts” as birth and death (though omitting to mention joy and suffering), supposing that if one removes history from them, there is nothing more to be said about them. Whereas, despite Martin’s stricture to Sarris that “no artist can stand outside history in search of ‘beauty and truth’”, much responsible art moves precisely in that direction, towards a realized universality. To cite an extreme instance, there is the work of James Joyce in literature.

In film, I doubt that anyone has succeeded as brilliantly in coming close to the deliberately ‘timeless’ as Stanley Kubrick with his costume drama Barry Lyndon.

In a new book, A Cinema of Loneliness, Robert Koldor writes: “More profoundly than A Clockwork Orange, Barry Lyndon examines the easy clichés of ‘individual freedom’ and societal necessities. Barry, somewhat like Alex, suffers from an inner tension between his own inflections within a social structure too rigid to support an independent existence.”

I would suggest that such suffering constitutes a “universal truth” whose filmed content conceals a minimum of vested interests. In fact, perhaps the only one I can honestly acknowledge is Kubrick’s ego, and how splendidly he has showcased that. Beauty and truth, aesthetics and meaning as powerful signifiers of each other in a way which indicates Kubrick’s advanced self-institution, his ability to project his hopes of ever winning Nora for himself.

Throughout the film, Kubrick’s control of lighting and sound is marvellously acute, but it also exactly matches the stages in Barry’s progress. And because the film is about human frailty in all its as yet unrecorded economic facts find their ultimate point of reference literally in Barry’s personal life.

I cite Kubrick’s film at length basically because of what I see as its scrupulous fidelity to the self as recorder and past instigator of experience, which suggests to me a legitimate possibility (True, Ryan O’Neal plays Barry with an exaggerated passivity, perhaps to register the character as more stunned against than sinister. Whereas Alex in A Clockwork Orange is given by Malcolm McDowell a special robotic sharpness, and somehow to highlight Kubrick’s anti-B. F. Skinner thesis.)

Of course, Adrian Martin favors the work of the whole. More to the point, I think, is his article endorses Douglas Sirk’s work, which seems to me not to have received a drubbing from the British as well as American press for what they call his “overstuffed cinematic clichés and phony history.” (It is set in a slave-owning plantation in Louisiana, circa 1840.)

Make no mistake, I side with Martin on this issue to the extent of considering Mandingo an excellent film. It strikes me as having much in common with Barry Lyndon which, come to think of it, wasn’t too well received by some sections of the press either. Notably, both films revolve around young men (Ryan O’Neal, Perry King) whose nobler motives are brutally negated by their respective patriarchal societies.

What I find most disturbing about the 20-page dossier on Mandingo in Movie is that it is given over to an exegesis of the film’s essentially Marxist dynamics with not one reference to all the superb visuals and only one brief acknowledgment of the engaging Maurice Jarre score. If this represents the measure of the magazine’s "critical method", then perhaps it is no wonder that they should turn a blind eye (and a deaf ear) to Kubrick. For, as I have tried to indicate, the authentic individuality of Barry Lyndon is its split personality and its aesthetics. There is no gap.
Tom Ryan

The opening shot of Promises In The Dark looks down a highway in the mid-West of the U.S. and establishes a motif which is perhaps the most frequent of all in recent American cinema: the road. A subsequent series of shots introduces the film’s central character, Dr Alexandra Kendall (Marsha Mason), and to a sense of claustrophobia which persists throughout the film.

Enclosed in her car, flicking the radio from station to station, her face and her gestures speaking of frustration, the impression is of a woman trapped. The deliberate manner of her driving suggests a belief that she is under threat, the extended glance at a couple embracing in a passing car providing a clue to the nature of that threat. Her eye contact with the female of the couple forces her to look away, as if she has seen something that she shouldn’t.

The idea of the journey, introduced here, remains implicit throughout the film, as Dr Kendall finds herself forced into situations which will allow her no room to withdraw. Her battle with them takes her, from a self-imposed isolation, to the tentative beginnings of a new contact with the living.

From the enclosed safety of her car, to the protective armour of her professional status, and to the desperate clutteredness of her apartment — all of them signifying a retreat in the way she uses them — she is drawn into the world of the vulnerable by her contact with Buffy Koenig (Kathleen Beller), a 17 year-old girl stricken with a terminal cancer, with Buffy’s parents (Susan Clark and Ned Beatty) and with Dr Jim Sandman (Michael Brandon), the chief radiologist at the hospital where she works.

Her initial relinquishment of the sort of involvement that will impinge upon her sense of security is challenged by Buffy’s and Jim’s separate demands that she should become involved in their lives. Her attempt to pass Buffy’s case to her male superior at the hospital is subverted by Buffy’s trust in her, and her refusal of anything but a professional relationship with Jim is cast aside by his rejection of the terms of contact she has laid down.

In a familiar irony, she finds that the work she had thought would protect her from emotional danger it, in fact, carrying the seeds of that danger.

Inevitably, and unfortunately, discussion of Promises In The Dark has concentrated on the film’s closing moments, when Dr Kendall switches off the life-support system that has been keeping Buffy alive, an act which presents an ethical dilemma, for while it is consistent with Buffy’s request to her it contravenes the decision of Buffy’s parents.

The film, thankfully, and strategically, avoids centring on the debate, at least in any explicit fashion, for any attempt to pursue such broad issues would only be at the expense of the particular and personal terms of the drama it has depicted.

Its closure at the point of this act, and its presentation of it as a key moment in Dr Kendall’s moral journey, in my view, ought to refer one back to the film’s central narrative movement. And that has to do with the processes of her growth towards self-discovery, towards a recognition of her human frailty, and an acceptance of it and the danger that it entails for her.

The film is directed by Jerome Hellman, whose career as a producer spans 16 years: The World Of Henry Orient (1964), A Fine Madness (1966), Midnight Cowboy (1969), The Day Of The Locust (1975), Coming Home (1978) and Promises In The Dark. It is a most impressive debut as a director, to be admired for its emotional restraint, for its richly detailed characterizations, and for the splendid collection of performances from its cast.
everyone absolutely terrified.

What sort of rehearsal time were you allowed on a program like "Playhouse 90"?

The Playhouse 90s rehearsed for almost two weeks, while a normal one-hour show would rehearse for the better part of a week. The performance would then be aired on the last day of rehearsal.

Are there any productions you worked on which you recall with particular pleasure?

During most of that time, I was working as an agent and package. My function had much more to do with putting the elements together, selling them and observing the process I am describing, than it did with functioning creatively within it. I guess the closest I came to that was with The Kaiser Aluminum Hour, where I participated as the executive producer and worked on a rotating basis with three directors: George Roy Hill, Franklin Shaffner and Fiedler Cook.

So, forgetting any judgments about quality, The Kaiser Aluminum Hour shows were the ones I have the strongest feelings about. They were really the start of my producing career, as opposed to my role as an orchestrator and entrepreneur.

You have produced six films since 1964, directing one of them. While one might not ask this question of a playwright or a novelist, why so few projects?

I don't know. It seems to be an outgrowth of my process, in the sense that I don't have any ambition of duplicating my past experiences. My objectives, when I got out of packaging and gave up my business as an agent, were very personal, and what motivated me more than anything else was the desire to do things that on one level or another reflected my sensibility.

The simple truth is that it has taken me a very long time in each case to find things that I really care about, and which I can somehow push through the system.

All these films deal, in one way or another, with contemporary problems, particularly those facing individual characters who attempt to come to terms with their own space in the world. Has this been a conscious design on your part?

I think it is an unconscious design, in that I am governed by what interests me the most and what I feel most connected to. The director must work with, and not against, what I feel is true to life at the moment.

Is the creative process a system of osmosis, rather than you exercising some sort of paternal control?

Absolutely. I think that is a very legitimate form of collaboration. And I welcome its existence. I don't think the best results are achieved by pounding tables and shouting people down.

Some critics have claimed "Coming Home" goes soft on the Vietnam war and the opposition to it. What is your reaction to that sort of criticism?

It is hard criticism to deal with. The reality is that we chose to make a film about one specific aspect of the war: namely, to deal with it in terms of its effect on people. It was a choice that was made out of necessity. We were not attempting an Apocalypsis Now or The Deerhunter: i.e., a great examination of the events and violence and so on in direct terms.

The film was, in fact, an outgrowth of Jane Fonda's reaction to her exposure at a spinal cord hospital in Long Beach, California. Jane felt very strongly about those men, who were in wheelchairs and who were complaining bitterly about the conditions they found in the U.S.: their feelings were communicated to me when she approached me about taking on the film.

All of those involved in the film felt that it was legitimate to try to deal with that segment of the experience, and to do it as honestly as we were able. We felt under no obligation to try to take on everything. So in those terms, I am not stung by the criticism. I feel there is room for the dozen films about Vietnam, like one about the impact of the war on the Vietnamese people. I didn't see any of that in Apocalypse Now and I certainly didn't see it in The Deerhunter.

On a subject as large as Vietnam, there is room for any number of films which collectively will make up a mosaic, and which will present various perspectives on what the reality of those events was.

In dramatic terms, are you happy with the way things are resolved in the film? I am speaking in particular about the suicide of Bob (Bruce Dern)...

I have reservations about the end of the film, though not specifically about Bob's suicide. I think we reached a structural problem with the last third of the film and these began with the confrontation between Sally (Jane Fonda), Bob and Luke (Jon Voight). These problems were never quite solved, and that carries right through to the final sequence, where Bob commits suicide.

Objectively, that's how I feel about the film at this time. But it is certainly a film that I love, and I am very proud to have been involved in making it.

Why did you decide to direct "Promises in the Dark", rather than produce it for someone else?
A conjunction of reasons, really. By the time I did Coming Home, I felt myself starting to fret at the limitations of my involvement. It was my fifth film, and, while it was difficult and complicated in a lot of ways, it wasn’t a new experience. The problems, and larger collaborative problems that were familiar, were the solutions. I didn’t feel directly and personally challenged in the future. I just had to go out and do it myself. So, that was the beginning.

Was the idea brought to you, or did you work on it from the beginning?

The original concept was brought to me by Loring Mandel, a writer. He is one of my oldest friends and a reader. He had cancer — and I didn’t feel I had had the opportunity to deal with the subject again.

The concept belongs to what might be called a well-worn genre, going back to “Dark Victory”, if not earlier, and right through to “Love Story”. Did you feel you were getting it done. I was doing so many things for the first time, and I wasn’t attempting to deal with the film. The obvious questions about euthanasia are: “What for?”, “For whom?”. Under what circumstances? And by whom? That really wasn’t what the film was about. I was dealing with a specific set of circumstances through which I was trying to examine the responsibility of a doctor towards a patient. This is in a clearly defined medical situation, where the doctor’s responsibility to the patient’s wishes, and the patient’s desire for independent choice and autonomy, is in conflict with some abstract medical code which more and more in the U.S. prescribes that people who are terminally ill, even if it is from old age, are denied the opportunity to choose how they die. They are pushed into institutions and are hooked up to machinery and kept alive at tremendous cost and anguish, whether or not that is what they want. Now that’s what I was focusing on, not the broad issue of euthanasia. On the other hand, I also wanted to suggest that living and dying are part of a continual experience. I was trying to illustrate that Alexandra, who was cut off and protected, had her feelings buried at the outset, and that through this experience or journey with Buffy she was able to put her priorities back in focus.

One can imagine it working in much the same way as scenes from A Marriage*, when it was in its original six-part version for television. People sat around afterwards for hours and talked to each other about it.

I would love nothing more. I really don’t care how people see it, or where. I have an immense investment in having people see it, and while ideally I would like it seen the way I conceived it — and it

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*From the original six-part version for television.
Japanese Cinema is comparable with the best of European and American filmmaking, both in the range and significance of its films and the stature of its directors.

To investigate the film industry and culture at first-hand, director and writer Ian A. Stocks recently visited Japan (with assistance from the Australia Japan Foundation). Here is his report.

The first major response to Japanese film began in the 1950s with Akira Kurosawa's Rashomon (1950), followed by a whole-hearted acceptance of the work of Kurosawa, Kon Ichikawa, and a lesser rash of exotica. Unfortunately, interest in Japanese film tends to stop there, neither looking back at the glories of the 1930s, nor forward to the inheritors of that "Golden Age", to directors like Nagisa Oshima (in all his work), Shohei Imamura (almost unknown outside Japan), Masahiro Shinoda and others. It is rather like looking at a precious stone without having any regard to the setting.

This article, therefore, will attempt to show Japanese cinema in historical and aesthetic context, placing less than usual reliance on films already well-known in the West.

The Beginning

Japanese cinema inherited many assets, and quite a few limitations, from the culture from which it sprang. The assets were a rich, dramatic and theatrical tradition which made full use of expansive styles and sets, and used dramatic exposition based on character development. The novel was not a major force in 20th Century Japan, so film development was unhindered by a reliance on text and plot. Stories for the stage were very firmly based on performance and character.

Another asset was the print method of art work distribution, developed to its highest degree in the Edo period and which provided a public with highly-developed quailities, drawn from Kabuki theatre plots, and patronized by a public with highly-developed tastes. It shows its power in the depiction of everyday life — in its celebration of the forms and patterns of a burgeoning urban society. So, for the early filmmakers, it was natural for them to take daily life as a subject. Historical stories, expressed in the same effervescent colloquialisms, drawn from Kabuki theatre plots, also adapted well to film.

Early inhibitors inherited from the theatre included the resistance to female actors (early films were made with onnagata — female impersonators) and the power of the benishi (the on-stage narrator who explained every detail of the plot and psychology of the Kabuki play). It was quite some time before these limitations were decisively overcome.

At the time social realism started to grow in Japan, other, more sinister, forces were taking hold on the society. Expansionist militarism, the revival of the cult of bushido ("the way of the warrior") in a darker form, and an almost hysterical desire to prove Japanese equality, if not superiority, to a disinterested West, all drew the nation closer to war. Surprisingly, little of this mentality permeated the cinema. For some years, in fact, the war documentaries have a detached, almost lyrical quality, as if the makers were amazed by Japanese achievements in this area. Only in the chambara (sword theatre) or later samurai films did this cutting edge of the Japanese psyche, the highly-developed martial arts and the extreme and almost unthinking violence that is a product of conditioned responses and dedicated training, and only in the samurai film is the bushido ethic celebrated, re-assembled as an integral part of Japanese manhood.

Forgotten History

Directors like Yasujiro Ozu, Kenji Mizoguchi, Mikio Naruse, Shiro Toyoda and Heinosuke Gosho dominate the pre- and post-war history of Japanese cinema, but only a few representative films of these directors have been screened for Western audiences. Interestingly, some of these directors were still making films as recently as 1977; one was Toyoda, who began as an assistant in 1925 and made his directorial debut in 1929. Kokotsu no hito (Twilight Year), which he completed in 1977, is a funny and deeply moving black comedy about an old man who finds himself rejected by his son, as his health and control of his mind and body functions start to run amok. Only the devotion of his daughter-in-law saves him. Toyoda's style is sympathetic and coherent, with no sign of hardening arteries.

Similarly, Teinosuke Kinugasa, a much more uneven filmmaker, but director of Jigokumon (Gate of Hell, 1955), the color film which marked the entry of Japanese films into the West, started work in 1917 as a female impersonator in films and spent more than 50 years directing films.

Mizoguchi, the undisputed master of the Japanese film, known with great affection as "the woman's director" as a tribute to his gift of bringing believable women characters to the screen and dispensing with onnagata, made his debut in 1922. In 1932, four years before his death, he made what many consider his finest work, the profound Saikaku ichidai onna (Life of Oharu), which traces the life of a 50 year-old prostitute which ended with an unhappy love affair.

The film forcefully exposes the subjugation of women in Japan, while preserving the shreds of human dignity left to Oharu — the right to refuse her son's offer of refuge. Precise and considered, the film moves with a dream-like reverie which serves as a complete encapsulation of life, which, after being lived, is only memories and dreams.

Mizoguchi's films, from the early Gion no shimasai (Sisters of the Gion, 1936) to the later color epics Yokkai (Princess Yang Kwai Fei, 1955) and Shin heike monogatari (New Tales of the Taira Clan, 1955), possess an epic sweep and grandeur equalled only by Kurosawa at his best. Long sweeping pans, with crowds moving on a fixed arc to the camera, are a Mizoguchi trademark which aptly catches his dynamic view of human history and endeavour.

Certainly, as Noel Burch points out in his excellent book To the Distant Observer, the 1920s and '30s saw the growth in Japan of a truly exceptional national cinema, which, although it absorbed and adapted influences of the West, went far in its analysis of these forms.

The names of Ozu and Mizoguchi are well known in Western film circles, and spoken of with some reverence, but little is appreciated of the other great masters: Naruse, Gosho, and Ishida. Many of their films have vanished, but others are gradually being re-discovered.

Inevitably, a study of Japanese cinema must bring one closer to a re-evaluation of Western filmmaking. In content alone, Japanese cinema throws up many challenges: its concentration on personality and morality, and its fixation on the problems of home and duty, obligation and honor expose many weaknesses in the Western film.

Until recently, few American films had managed an insightful depiction of the home environment. Indeed, it was hardly considered a fit subject for film. Instead, the American hero is usually a rebel, out on his own against the world. Even in the finer works of Italian and French cinema, although penetrating observations are often made, the concern is for the social context rather than the bonds of family.

It is interesting to compare a recent American film, Five Easy Pieces (1970), directed by Bob Rafelson, with Higanabana (Equinox Flower, 1945), a late Ozu work.

In Five Easy Pieces, Robert Dupea (Jack Nicholson) sets off for his family home with a girlfriend, Rayette (Karen Black), from an unacceptable background. Robert comes from a musical family and can play well, but has rebelled against his projected career and dropped out. Once Robert arrives, the film concentrates on the reactions of the family, which seems to have no common goal, fellow feelings or mutual obligations — only a mysterious need to be together for a short time. Acceptance is not practised, nor is it encouraged. Arguments break out, the girlfriend is humiliated, and Robert adds to the chaos by sleeping with his sister-in-law. Encounters are brief, inconclusive, and the film ends arbitrarily.

How different is Ozu's treatment of family relationships in Equinox Flower. The film shows a father's efforts to control a wayward daughter,
who has rejected an arranged marriage and runs away with a young engineer. The father enlists his friends, who try to temper his rage, but even they melt away, and he is left to face the crisis alone.

He then goes with his long-suffering wife to a seaside resort, but even there peace is impossible: graduating students hold a party until late in the night, and the old couple cannot sleep. Finally, his wife convinces him to make the lonely train trip to see his daughter. There, he accepts the situation, and, as the film ends, the father finds some solace singing old army songs with his buddies.

The observation in the film is impeccable, the pace slow and considered, and the story convincing. Added to this is Ozu's particular style: an absence of panning and zooming, a selectivity that keeps the camera at all times below the eye-level of the characters, and a fastidiousness in the matter of reaction and response. The result is the quality of great art. Against such commitment and formalization, most Western films seem overdramatized and chaotic.

**Post-war Era I: Impact on the West**

Probably the most popular Japanese filmmaker, and the only one to gain complete acceptance in the West, is Akira Kurosawa, who began his career in the 1940s, while the Pacific War was in progress. Since then, his career has found international acceptance, and he now occupies a similar position internationally as that of Sweden's Ingmar Bergman. At best, Kurosawa's films are dynamic, well wrought and visually superb evocations of era and place; at worst, they are mere spectacle, overblown and pretentious. His early films are probably the best, being more closely related to the truths of Japanese culture.

Sanshiro sugata (Judo Saga, 1943) is a study of Sugata, a young martial arts student in the Meiji era (that of the modernization of Japan under the Emperor Meiji), who finds himself attracted to the then new cult of judo, which was beginning to offer competition to jujitsu. Sugata joins an older teacher who is under attack, finds his own strength, and then has to struggle with his arrogance and desire of victory. Only through the love of a woman — the daughter of one of the opposing jujitsu masters whom he has to defeat in a fight — does Sugata find his own piece of mind and, therefore, excellence in judo.

Zen concepts and images abound. Sugata spends one night clinging to a pole in the teacher's garden pond to prove his dedication; he is 'enlightened' by the opening of a lotus flower in the morning.

Sugata — like many of Kurosawa's films — is studio bound, and only the mastery of black and white composition and texture saves it from claustrophobia.

Two years later, Kurosawa made Tora no o o fumo otokotachi (They Who Step on the Tiger's Tail, 1945), which reflects the restrictions of wartime Japan. But, like all his films, it shows the acceptance of failure as well as success, and for this reason was quite popular after the war when it was finally released by the American Occupation Censors.

As with many jidai-geki (period films), it has a clear relevance to the state of society at the time of production. In particular, it summons an episode in Japanese history: that of the escape of the Lord Yoshitune with his faithful servant Benkei, the fabled warrior. Benkei leads Yoshitune and his retainers, who are disguised as priests, as they try to escape patrols out for Yoshitune's blood.

Finally, to get through the last border outpost to freedom, Yoshitune is disguised as a porter. Even so, their deception is almost discovered, and when Benkei sees that the commanding officer is about to unmask his lord, he grabs a stick and beats Yoshitune. This is enough to allay the suspicions of the soldiers, if not the commanding officer, and Yoshitune is allowed to travel on.

This situation must have had many reverberations to the post-war scene in Japan, when the Emperor, formerly deified as a living God, was forced to demand his people's surrender and to pronounce his divinity. Whether this allegory was ever accepted by the Japanese of that generation is unknown, but the whole exercise was successful, in that the Japanese emperor system of government was allowed to continue. At least, the Emperor was never tried as a war criminal, as many Western leaders hoped.

In any case, Kurosawa's credentials were clearly established, and he continued with a great number of films. Rashomon, with its immense success overseas, and its supposed 'Japanese-ness,' firmly established him as one of the country's greatest talents. Yet, Rashomon is far from being a typical Japanese film. As
A vastly different proposition is the work of Kon Ichikawa, often regarded as a potential peer to Kurosawa, but to me his superior. Ichikawa's films have a depth of insight which is rare in cinema, whether from East or West. In most of his films, he mastered that essential of the true work of art: the intertwining and suggestion of human frailty and indecision before the survival; instinct takes over.

From his earliest days, Ichikawa tackled difficult subjects, like the endless pain and sadness of Biruma no tategoto (Harp of Burma, 1956) to the desperate, almost sub-human actions of Nobi (Fires on the Plain, 1959). In a wonder of perspective, and a mystery of mise en scene that is not dependent on camera tricks or fast editing, he shows cinematic genius. More importantly, his films breathe: they are of the outdoors, of the nuances of rain and mist, sweat and decay. His talent is highlighted in the neglected Yukin i no henge (An Actor's Revenge, 1963), where an onnagata manages to track down his parents' killers and avenge their deaths. The performance, by noted matinee star Kazuo Hasegama, is brilliant; he suggests the practised deceptions of the onnagata as well as bringing home the desire for blood, all the more shocking in its suppression.

In a way, the triumph of An Actor's Revenge is that it is a film without a subtext; one is just there as the drama continues. Opportunities present themselves and are let go until the shocking denouement, remarkable only because of the perseverance of this half-man, half-woman.

In this mastery, Ichikawa's films resemble the best of Ozu's work, reflecting the essential Japanese tradition of mono no aware of seeing the world for what it is, and living in that world. Whereas Kurosawa uses this ideal for what it is, Ichikawa pursues it through all the tiny avenues of a character's mind, exposing not a slogan, but a spiritual fact.

Like the work of Ozu, Ichikawa's camera retains a discreet reserve, which is not formalistic but rather like the stance of a detached, yet sympathetic observer. Consequently, he gives insight into characters, without artifice or editorializing.

Often working with his wife as scriptwriter, Ichikawa's output has been prolific and diverse. In 1959, for example, he made the prodigious Fires on the Plain, a bitter study of war and its dehumanizing aspects, based on the novel by Shoel Ooka, Kagi (The Key), a black comedy on the declining sexual capabilities of an old man; and two other films of less enduring merit. With the decline of the feature film industry, he was not a rare feat of television and directed 26 episodes of Genji monogatari (The Tale of Genji, 1966).

Ichikawa's most recent film to gain release in the West, Matatabi (The Wanderers, 1973), is a valiant attempt to reconstruct traditional Japan through the eyes of 'youth' characters. Some would-be samurai travel through Japan trying to make a living, but the lack of the style and the skill to carry it off. Along the way they are joined by a half-idiot girl who trusts them implicitly, but they are unable to support even themselves and the girl is sold off as a prostitute. The hero dies ingloriously when he falls and breaks his skull.

Despite the attempts to relate this film to modern Japanese youth (the hero is played by a leading pop star), and despite the richness of the visuals and its detailed characterization, The Wanderers seems like an echo from a lost era, a doomed initiative. Ichikawa said in an interview: "the reason why there are so many jidai-geki made is that the Japanese filmmakers seem somewhat unable to grasp contemporary issues".

Ichikawa is still making films, but of a particularly Japanese mould and in a style not calculated to win audiences in the West. I was lucky to see him at work when I visited the Toho Studio. What I saw was a tall, elderly but healthy-looking man in a white cap, standing with a cigarette between his teeth as his crew prepared for another set-up. The technicians worked with blinding speed, seemingly rehearsing, lighting and dressing the set at one time. Finally, the shot, a complex dolly through a doorway, was ready and Ichikawa had a look at it. He made a few suggestions, watched through the viewfinder as the actors did their lines, then stood back. It was somehow encouraging to see such a master approaching his work with calm and decision.

**Post-war Era II: Social Criticism**

One film to make a strong and immediate impression on its first airing in Australia was Masaki Kobayashi's three-part Ningen no joken (The Human Condition). Rather because of, the length, this film drew large audiences who watched with fascination the evolution of the Japanese anti-war film.

The hero, Kaji (Tatsuya Nakadai), finds himself working in a large plant in Manchuria which uses forced Chinese labor. He attempts to do something to alleviate their conditions, but is drafted into the army. Finally, after the Soviet declaration of war, the Japanese forces are wiped out and the hero flees into the snow, still seeking his lost wife.

Ningen no joken differs from the war films of Ichikawa, say, in that Kaji is of a more Western mould; he shows individualism and is refreshingly free of the accepted manerisms of the stiff bow and the grim suppression of feeling. Kaji is emotional, almost womanly in his concerns. He cringes at the slightest violence, and finds it hard to lash out at the many injustices he sees. But we never really find what holds him back, unless it is his own stunned incomprehension at what human behaviour becomes in large groups under stress.

Various scenes stand out, such as those of the kempei tai (the military police) terrorizing soldiers or executing some laborers. This latter scene shows the degradation of the bushido ethic: an executioner prepares his sword for lopping heads by wetting it ("so the fat doesn't stick to it") and then hands it over to the local policeman who makes a mess of it. The scene has a picnic quality, yet exposes a very seamy side of the Japanese character.

Kobayashi takes a big risk in exposing his country's war crimes so definitively, especially since this honesty has rarely been seen elsewhere in the West. The film which closely approaches Ningen no joken in its expose of passions in war is Gillo Pontecorvo's Battle of Algiers, an Italian epic of the Algerian war of independence. If one looks to American films for depiction of war crimes, one can only think of Little Big Man, which shows brutalities against Indians in historical period. Of course, this violence also relates to the Vietnam war, expressing in code the shock to the American psyche dealt by the My Lai massacres. But Ningen no joken is not in code, and it clearly states the various Japanese attitudes to a bitter war.

Kaji is not a coward, as it turns out, and in the final battle with Soviet tanks, he and his men fight with great bravery. Later, there is a wonderful scene when Kaji goes through a
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miniature war crimes trial as he tries to defend himself before the Soviet commission. But he is betrayed by a turncoat interpreter and Kaji, who has spent most of his time anticipating and discussing a socialist victory, is made out to be a war criminal.

Ningen no joken does have its flaws — there is a certain staginess about the production, maybe due to economies in production, maybe just an aspect of Kobayashi’s style — but, in the grasp of its narrative and the honesty of its statement, it surpasses most other war films.

Kobayashi has made many films, a few of which have made their way to the West. Kaidan (Kwaidan, 1964), a series of ghost stories based on the stories of Lafcadio Hearn, used color, the widescreen format and a most unusual soundtrack to evoke the recesses of superstition and fearful acceptance of the supernatural that is integral to Japanese traditional life.

Two other films, Jōi-uchi (Rebellion, 1967) and Seppuku (Harakiri, 1962), expose the mainstay of Japanese feudalism: the cult of obedience to superiors, and the nobility of self-inflicted death. Kobayashi is a true radical in style and content, and his films merit close attention.

Post-war Era III: New Wave

As in many initiatives, the Japanese are not averse to picking up overseas trends. So, by 1963, they had new wave films in production, most notably early Oshima films. Oshima is a study in himself, and has been covered widely as a result of sensational films like L’Empire des Sens (Empire of the Senses, 1976), but he has a long history as a filmmaker and his dynamic political concerns have always been to the forefront. Only recently has some of his more moody, considered work become available in Australia.

Most significant is Natsu no imoto (Dear Summer Sister, 1972), which was brought to Australia by the Australia Japan Foundation in 1978 and has had a limited number of screenings in 35mm version. On the surface a direct, roughly-made low-budget film, it is, in fact, a strongly unified work which stands to be ranked as one of the great films of the ’70s.

The film deals with the question of the status of Okinawa, long a Japanese possession, alienated after bitter battles with the Americans in the closing stages of the Pacific War, and returned to Japan in 1972. In fact, Okinawa was the only part of the Japanese homeland that was ever invaded, and the suicidal battles there, with companies fighting to the last man and Japanese civilians committing suicide en masse, by jumping off the cliffs into the sea, earned it a special place in Japanese history.

The exploration of this subject, which brings up the differences in cultural tradition between the two areas (Okinawa is a matriarchy, Japan, finally a patriarchy), is explored through the story of Sunaoko, a young Japanese girl who travels with her aunt to Okinawa to try and contact her lost half-brother. She meets him within minutes of arriving (he works as a tourist spruiker at the airport, offering lessons in Okinawan) but does not recognize him. Other characters make an appearance, such as Sakurada, an ex-soldier who travels to the island to relive the violence and excitement of the war, and who also hopes for a meeting with the man who will kill him.

Through a masterly use of the landscape of the island, Oshima weaves a story that is a political drama in the broadest sense, even down to his specific references to Japanese history and its expression through character. The deliberate use of harsh lighting, the murkiness and graininess of the 16mm original add to, rather than detract from, the film’s message.

Another filmmaker who has fought for national concerns as a fit subject for film is Shohei Imamura, who is in many ways Oshima’s alter ego. Imamura’s first film to gain attention in the West was Jinruigakun no mon (The Pornographer, 1966), a bitter-sweet study of some men who make 8mm porn films for a living. Shot in black and white, it broke with many of the formal elements of Japanese film, taking a much more meandering storyline and expressing the growing self-awareness of Japanese youth.

Imamura’s work has been steady and prolific up to the mid-’70s, but his master work, which has been almost unseen in the West, except for short seasons in Germany, is Kuragejima (Tales from a Southern Island, 1968). This massive, often turgid but visually and emotionally riveting film is Imamura’s high point as a director.

Kuragejima is ostensibly a study of mythicalBelow: A porno filmmaker in Shohei Imamura’s The Pornographer.

society, with a kinship system based on old principles and practices that date almost to prehistoric times, embracing madness, shamanism and unusual rituals. The reality is tenuously applied by the arrival of a ‘New Japanese’, Kanya, a water engineer concerned with development of the island. But in his contact with the islanders and their primitive culture he quickly degenerates into a near-animal state.

Imamura, although his film is set in the southern islands, makes a subtle allegorical point about Japan itself, pointing out how isolationist tradition creates a society dependent on ritual that is the enemy of culture and reason. Not that Imamura says that these new imports are good; in fact, the whole film has a wistful quality as the island is dragged towards “progress”. Rather, in the best tradition of mono no aware, Imamura states the problem and the outcome in broad and dramatic terms, and the whole process advances regardless.

Kuragejima is a massive film, in scope and production, but was not a financial success, and it is hardly surprising that the Nikkatsu studio (see box) was forced out of such art film production within a couple of years. Imamura has retired from active feature production, and now runs a private film school in Yokohama. His other work includes a number of documentaries for television, dealing with the search for lost soldiers in the Pacific.

Lastly, in what appears to be the enduring films of the Japanese New Wave, is the extraordinary work of Masahiro Shinoda, a young director who made his debut in 1960 with youth films for Shochiku. An arts graduate, his brilliant exploration of film is best seen in Shinju ten no amijima (Double Suicide, 1969), a film version of the classic Bunraku play, Double Suicides at Amajima. Instead of merely dramatizing the play and translating it into film terms, Shinoda has exploited the character of film and play, integrating elements of theatre and graphic design to create an experience of great wonder.

When watching Kabuki theatre the Westerner is often initially disconcerted by seeing the kuroko (state assistants dressed in black) appear during the action to help an actor with a change of costume on stage, or hand him an essential prop. Eventually, in the convention of Japanese theatre, these kuroko remain invisible. But in the film version of the play, Shinoda has retained the kuroko, so that at crucial moments the action is helped along, even created by, these
The plot of Double Suicide deals with the penalties of going against the social codes. Jihei, a paper merchant, falls in love with the geisha Koharu, but as his business suffers he is unable to buy her out. His brother tries to break the relationship by disguising himself as a lover of Koharu's, and they even get Jihei to sign an oath not to see her again; but, finally, Jihei's wife reveals that Koharu is not faithful to him, and insists that Jihei sell or pawn all they have, including her dowry, to free Koharu and therefore save his honor. But the wife's father arrives and drags her home.

Then, through a series of tricks, each humiliating to Jihei, the two lovers escape and cross a series of bridges, each step taking them closer to suicide. Helped by the hooded kuroko, Jihei stabs Koharu and then hangs himself. Their downfall is inevitable, the final confrontation with a sealed society from which escape was not possible.

The art direction succeeds brilliantly in 'modernizing' the settings, using huge blow-ups of prints and designs, so that it is clear from the art direction that the world they occupy is a mental one, not physical. Shindo's mastery of the pictorial elements, and his always precise angles and composition, are apt without appearing tricky.

Hanare goze orin (Melody in Grey, 1977), a more recent film by Shinoda entered for the 1978 Asian Film Festival, takes a more conventional approach to its story. But it is still exceptional for its clear progression and nuance of character. It tells of a blind woman singer who makes her living by playing in villages throughout pre-western Japan. Notable in the film is a very highly developed sense of place and time.

Sadly, the Japanese New Wave is in decline. Imamura has made only one film since the early 1970s; Shindo is directing, but on a reduced scale; and Oshima is reliant principally on European money for his productions. Like cinema in most countries, the economics of production can no longer be covered after the cost of distribution is deducted from ever diminishing returns.

Total film admissions in 1957 were 1,098,882,000 — i.e. 10 admissions per head of population — but had already dropped a drastic 20 per cent by 1961. The decline has been steady and irreversible as other pursuits drain the leisure spent by the population. As Japan has a figure of 228 television sets per 1000 people, the future continues to look bleak.

Unfortunately, as the audience shrinks, so does the number of discriminating cinemagoers, to a point where they can no longer be serviced. So, apart from a few local efforts at large-scale production, it is the international blockbusters which score the market, and local productions — yakusa films (gangster films) are left to pick up the leftovers. These are, sadly, just as disappointing as their foreign counterparts. Still, they do offer a chance for young actors and directors to enter the industry, and the occasional one does have some interest. Nikkatsu's "romantic porno" series, made to reasonable standards on budgets of $15000 and up, have shown some promise and justify the exorbitant results.

Company Structure

As in most Japanese business, the film production industry is dominated by a few larger companies, film zaibatsu, with a large gap down to the smaller independent production groups. In comparison with the U.S., however, there is one significant difference: there is no anti-trust legislation in Japan, so every element of production is contained under one umbrella - from the labs to the cinemas, from the talent agencies to the ticket printing machines.

Toho, for example, the largest company in Japanese films, operates 234 theatres throughout the country. In one area in Tokyo, Yurakcho, just across from the Imperial Palace, Toho operates 10 top-class film theatres and six stage theatres. It has a vast studio complex out of town, with many sound stages, its own labs and sound department, plus a huge special effects tank. It makes television programs, runs 92 restaurants, deals in property, runs entertainment centres, and also manufactures and releases records. In addition, it owns and operates golf courses, tennis courts, dance halls and sauna baths.

This is the company responsible for most of Kurosawa's output, for many of the films of Ozu, Naruse, Mizoguchi, and others. Other major Japanese companies include Faei (from 1941), Nikkatsu (since 1912, the oldest film company in Japan), Shochiku (1920), which was launched as an adjunct to theatre production and Toei (1951), as well as many breakaway and director- and actor-financed production houses.

Each major house was based on a particular style, aimed at a certain section of the vast cinema-going audience of the '50s and the '60s. For example, Nikkatsu specialized in dramas of lower-class life, Shochiku favored an 'American' style, with a slightly left bias, Toho the jidai-geki (period film) and serious drama, but even this recipe did not spare some from disaster. Toho was crippled by labor strikes just after World War II, and took a long time to recover. A breakaway studio, Shin Toho (New Toho), produced one of Ichikawa's early films. Nikkatsu got into serious financial trouble in the late '60s and had to cease production, and has only recently got back into limited production with its range of 'romantic pornography' films.

A visit to Toho Studios reminded me of one of the large British studios like Pinewood. A large, sprawling lot, with big sound stages built inside aircraft hangar-type structures. Outside was the debris of past productions: large props, disassembled sets and just plain garbage. It was raining, and the whole place was quiet, but work was going on in the large and drafty sound stages where Ichikawa was directing a specialized local film.

I found the studio less detailed than a British one, the security quite lax and the stages not quite soundproof. However, production seemed faster and the crews worked far more cooperatively than on British sets.

Elizabeth the stages were dark, used for storing goods or unwanted props. A cold wind swept across the damp studio lots, the huge special effects tank was empty and paint peeled off the matte projection wall behind it.

In the editing department, Kurosawa's room was just as he had left it, with the simple tools that he used to cut his great films: a board, studded with nails to hang film on, a bullseye viewer and a pair of scissors. It was hard to believe that such monumental works were produced with such minimal means. But nearly 30 years have passed, and so have the great days of cinema.
Malcolm Smith, director of the Tasmanian Film Corporation, talks to Peter Belby and Scott Murray about the TFC's establishment, and the role it is playing in film production in the state.

Why is it so harmful?

If you have a job and are totally secure in it, there is no reason for you to work harder or faster; there is no need to continually prove yourself. In the time I have worked within government services, I have met a lot of hard-working people. But, in general, there is no incentive. The structure has a cushioning and deadening effect.

Some corporations even claim to be hamstrung by regulations over salaries; i.e., that they cannot employ the best person because of salary restrictions . . .

I believe that has been the case with the Victorian Film Corporation, and I understand they are trying to change it.

Apart from staff levels, what problems did you have in getting the TFC off the ground?

We have always been in a different situation to that of the other corporations, in that we are not a merchant bank. Each year we have a guarantee of income to make government films, but we receive no money other than that. We have to borrow money to buy equipment or to invest in the high risk ventures of feature films, children's television series, or whatever.

In 1979/80, we borrowed $1 million; $300,000 worth of that has come from loan funds. The other $700,000 has come from traditional sources such as banks. So, we have to pay back interest and make capital repayments. That makes us look at our money very carefully.

The TFC has always tried to be profit-oriented. We have large overheads and have always said that it is going to be a long time before the TFC starts making profits. In fact, the only way at present that we can see ourselves making a profit is if we hit the jackpot with feature films.

Apart from staff, what were your other priorities?

My prime concern was to get the place running as an exciting film production house. That meant changing attitudes, making better films, improving people's skills and finding a good enough team to make those films. My second objective was to boost the TFC's facilities. It had been in terrible premises for years, which had a very bad effect on morale and output. Now we have an international standard studio containing four editing rooms, a sound stage, a video centre, two viewing theatres, a sound mixing suite, photographic darkrooms and a portrait studio.

To what extent were you bound to employ local people?

My philosophy has always been to employ local people wherever possible. But I have also recognized that not all the skills are available in Tasmania. In those cases I have tried to bring in people who not only have skills, but are very good at passing on those skills to others. In some cases we have also sent our people interstate to gain experience.

What skills was Tasmania lacking?

As far as the old Film Department goes, scriptwriting, producing and sound. The only area that we were really strong in was camerawork. All the other areas needed upgrading.

Was there much filmmaking activity in Tasmania besides that generated by the Department of Film Production?

Very little apart from the ABC and the two commercial television stations. Alistair Matheson, who ran Impala Films, a Hobart production company, made commercials and the occasional documentary.

Tasmania is a very small market, with only 400,000 people. Apart from the television stations, who also make their own commercials, using television crews, we were the only game in town. What has since happened is that several cameramen and producers have left the TFC and set up their own businesses, making documentaries and commercials, or acting as freelance cameramen. What we are starting to see is the emergence of peripheral supports for an industry. Someone last month, for example, set up the first casting agency in Tasmania.

Did you plan on this sort of expansion?
Yes, I believe very much in the growth of an industry in Tasmania, and I don't want the TFC to be a bureaucratic structure that controls everything. So, wherever we can, we use freelance people.

As the TFC is not given a set budget a year, how does it finance a film for a government department?

In Tasmania, as in South Australia, there is central funding. Each year, the state government, through the Premier’s Department, sets aside an amount for film and still photographic film (this year it is $686,000). In January every year, the government departments are asked what films they want made during that year. Then, once the 50 or whatever requests for films have come in, a government film committee decides which departments will have films made, or their still photographs taken. But they have to fund these projects out of their budgets.

Do you get any money from the state government to pay for rent or wages?

No. We don't get any subsidy to cover those things.

Which makes the TFC different from the other corporations...

Yes. The only thing we received was a grant of $58,000 to cover our first year's deficit. That was because we didn't receive any establishment grants, which was one of the things recommended in the Brealey Report.

The TFC has also made documentaries for commercial companies in Tasmania and interstate. How successful has this been?

Moderately, but I hope increasingly so. When I did the same sort of thing in South Australia, I found it took three years for the SAFC to draw in major sponsors like General Motors-Holden and Mayne Nickless. I am following the same pattern here and going to companies saying that we can make films effectively and economically in Tasmania, and that they should consider us as their production house. We also have a marketing organization and can distribute films to the markets they want to reach.

Why should a state film corporation want to move into the public sector and compete with private production companies?

There are many major industrial companies in Australia that do not make documentary films. If we can educate them to recognize the value of documentary films, then we are helping the industry, because we are bringing in more money and introducing new sponsors. And, say, if I get a film to make for Uncle Ben's Pet Care, that means a lot of local freelance technicians are employed. From an overall Australian standpoint, we are widening our market.

Do you budget these sorts of films as an independent production company would?

Yes, we have total costing. We budget for wages, equipment, raw stock, overhead and profit.

Is there any difference in the way you would estimate costs for a documentary to be produced for a government department and one for a commercial company?

Yes, we apply a larger overhead cost to government films. The philosophy behind that is that the Government has asked the TFC to be here, to retain a certain number of staff and to maintain certain facilities. We consider it right and proper, therefore, that they bear a greater overhead charge.

Is there sufficient profit in documentaries to make them a viable operation?

We will always be struggling. Our main hope is feature films. We are not going to move into a viable situation for quite some time, given our position in the state, its size and all the problems entailed with that. But we are trying to be profit-orientated in all we do. The one positive factor is that the money we earn is recyclable; it doesn't go back to the Treasury.

The TFC set up a special marketing office in Sydney to handle your documentaries; how successful has that been?

Very. I have always felt that the marketing and selling of short films in Australia is a neglected area. Few films ever reach the centres of filmmaking and there are a lot of major clients there. The marketing office enables the films we make, and the others we handle, to be aggressively sold. We are acting as the exclusive agent for the New South Wales Film Corporation, the Victorian Film Corporation, the Perth Institute of Film and Television, the Australia Council and several independent film producers, like Paul Winkler. The office also feeds back information to me as to what films need to be made.

You also represent the films of Film Australia...

Yes, but not exclusively. We handle only some of their product.

Apparently, the TFC has funded films made outside Tasmania, such as "Frontline" ...

When I saw the film, which stars an ex-Tasmanian cameraman, I felt it was one of the best Vietnam war films ever made. So the TFC gave Dave Bradbury a loan to help him meet certain shortages. Basically, we will look at anything if it is presented as an exciting and viable proposition.

One of the stated aims of the SAFC was to make the state redundant within five to 10 years. Is that something you hope to do with the TFC?

I would like to see the TFC self-destruct in 10 or 15 years, and the emergence of a private industry based in Tasmania. In practical
more than one feature film a year, two at most, and that the other areas should be the more stable growth areas.

Why do you think Tasmania can service the needs for children's programs? Is that an area in which you have special expertise?

We don't have special expertise but our pilot for Fatty and George is regarded by the Australian Broadcasting Tribunal's children's committee as the best local children's program they have seen. We entrepreneurs the idea, wrote the script, produced it and hope to go into production in early 1980.

What other children's areas are you looking into?

We have just completed another pilot for children's television based on puppets called The Joe Blake Show.

I think Tasmania can develop the puppet and animation areas, although they need specific skills. Given our weather problems, they would suit a studio-based, cottage industry type of production.

Is that why you are dealing with animator Yoram Gross?

Those were our reasons for dealing with Yoram Gross when the TFC was set up. Recently, however, we bought an option on a property developed by Yoram called Save the Lady, but I did that because I thought it was one of the best feature scripts I had read in the past two years. Yoram Gross was actually the first producer I approached over Manganinnie, because it looked as though the elements lent themselves to an animated film. It is quite interesting that Manganinnie has turned out to be live-action, and that we have overcome those elements.

Manganinnie

Manganinnie was initiated because I was very excited when I read the unpublished manuscript by Beth Roberts; it seemed to have the makings of a wonderful film. I believe, as the old Hollywood tradition has it, that filmmaking is about gut feelings; i.e., hoping that whatever pleases you will also please an audience.

When I showed the idea to the TFC board and a diverse group of people, everyone felt the same emotional strength in the property. That gave me the enthusiasm to push on and develop it.

What type of film did you see it as during those early stages?

I have always seen it as an exciting and positive film about the dignity of human relationships — very much the Storm Boy market. I have always hoped that the film would have the quality and values of Dersu Uzala.

How did you find the manuscript?

The author came to us. The Australia Council had given her a grant to develop the manuscript into a screenplay, and she had hired Ted Ogden to do it. As so much of the book is about the Aboriginal, Manganinnie, Ted decided to tell the story from many viewpoints — the bushranger's, the soldier's, of the family involved — and only now and again did the Aboriginal woman appear. But it seemed to me that the only way one could get the strength of that story across was to tell it from the viewpoint of the two leads, Manganinnie and Jo Jo. So we went back to the original and developed it from there.
Malcolm Smith

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As the Aboriginal woman speaks only a little English in the film, communication is largely through gesture. Is this something that worried you from a commercial viewpoint?

Initially. But the big risks were whether we would find the right Aboriginal and the right girl, and whether there would be enough plot to hold the film together. All I can say after seeing three-quarters of the rushes is that I am convinced we have a classical film which will excite audiences.

Were these problems an obstacle in the fund-raising?

I always felt it would be hard to raise finance for Manganinnie because it could not easily be identified as a commercial project. It would be like the SAFE going out to sell Storm Boy. They had many knock-backs, but they believed in the film, and eventually it was made and turned into an enormous success.

Where we were very lucky was that the first person we took Manganinnie to was David Williams of Greater Union. We had already been dealing with the AFC, and it was very much behind the project. But Williams was immediately sold on it, as was John Reid, and GUO came in with a major investment. I then found it relatively easy to get the local television stations, Channel 6 and Channel 9, and Tasmania Drive-In Theatres Holdings to invest in this first Tasmanian production.

We did that without any financial tricks, without leverage or anything, because people believed in the product. It was a question of the property selling itself.

How did the project develop?

I gave the project to John Honey, who is a staff producer, to see through and develop. We also employed Ken Keslo, who was in his third year at the Australian Film and Television School, to write the property. Gil Brealey was also involved in the original writing with Ken and John.

Was Honey always going to direct?

No; we hoped he would be the producer. But John proved himself to be such a fine director on the short films he made for us, that we decided to go with him. That’s when we brought in Gilda Baracchi as producer.

We knew of the reputation she had during her two years in the U.S., and also considered her to be intelligent and sympathetic.

Did you have any reaction from the investors over using so many first time out people, like Baracchi and Honey?

Yes. In fact, we originally wanted a Tasmanian cameraman, but the investors insisted that we get more people with feature experience. That’s why Brealey is acting as an executive producer and why Garry Hansen is director of photography.

"Manganinnie" has a low budget for a film primarily shot on location. Has it been costed as you would a documentary?

No, as a commercial venture. We had certain overheads counted in for the TFC, but that is normal commercial practice. When you have investors, your budget has to be absolutely kosher. It is a tight budget, but it has proved to be a fairly spot-on one.

Your above-the-line costs are probably a lot lower than they would be on most features. Did you entertain trying to get a few name actors?

We did try to get an international name to play Anna’s father, in the hope it would get us a sale in the U.S. The role would take a week to shoot, so we allowed $50,000. We were looking at Alan Bates, and that type of person, but we found we couldn’t afford him. And the sort of names we were getting for $50,000, I haven’t even heard of.

So, we decided to go with an Australian. This meant we didn’t have to pay all the equity loading and so on. As it is, we are delighted with Philip Hinton.

The title has undergone a few changes. Is there a reservation about the commercial appeal of “Manganinnie” as a title?

The investors had reservations on whether Manganinnie would be a strong marketing name outside Tasmania. What does it mean? Can people spell it? For that reason, we looked for a name that would describe the film better and draw in the male-adult audience. The title we came up with was Darkening Flame. But it was not well received, and the investors made the decision to go back to Manganinnie. It could be that Manganinnie does not work outside Australia, and we may have to look for a name change.

When will you have a release print?

In April or May; we are looking for a release in July.

Are you taking the film to the Cannes Film Festival?

We don’t know, but we are certainly not going to rush the film for Cannes. We will get it ready when it best suits the film. However, we could do what Tony Ginnane has done and take a 20-minute show reel there.

What other features does the TFC have in preparation?

There is Gland Time, which is a comedy set in a meatworks. I see it as a sort of sympathetic comedy of...
It seems Hollywood and scores of cities elsewhere in the U.S. know no bounds when it comes to snowballing film production. The 55 features shooting in the U.S. and 13 more produced abroad bring the total for the January to March period to 68. 45 features were shooting in the U.S. and another 13 U.S.-funded films were on foreign locations. The remaining 15 features is in excess of $230 million. (Last year's figures were $330 million.)

Obviously, an increase in tele-features is not the big threat to cinema product. It was five to 10 years ago. Up until March 25, 18 tele-features had gone into production since January. Last year in the same period 24 tele-features were under way.

Leading the up-tempo is the world's biggest and busiest producer, Ray Stark, who has 10 major films worth $90 million in 983 theatres during its first release. Part of this was the remake of An Affair to Remember for 1980 release ($60 million will be spent on advertising and promotion). Stark has 45 films in production. Being developed, television pilots to shoot in the next four months and five tele-features for spring through to now and September.

Stark's first 1980 release, The Electric Horseman (Richard Dreyfuss and Jane Fonda producer-directed by Sidney Pollack), has grossed $82 million in its initial 2594 screens during its first nine weeks. Yet to premiere are Neil Simon's Chapter Two (directed by Robert Moore), Harts of the Zones (Trini Alvarado with Love Islands-Arikonas), The Hunter (Buzz Kulkik), Smokey and the Bandit 10 (Mali Needham), Somewhere in Time (Jenkinie the Szwarz), The Perfect Circle (Claudia Weill), Neil Simon's See Like Old Times (Jay Schatzberg), The Competition (Joel Ollinsky) and Wrong is Right (Richard Brooks).

Randal Kleiser (who recently directed the remake of Blue Lagoon in Fiji with an Australian crew and Frank Simon as executive producer) will direct the screen version of Annie for Stark. Buck Harris has 17 more films in his 2 Fast Freddie and His Brother John and Long Gone; Frank Pierson (A Star Is Born) will do A Desperate Harry; Larry Cohen, Inc., Martin Ritt, Men of Bronze: Jean Claude Tramont, Colette.

Martin Scorsese is still editing Raging Bull (starring Robert de Niro), which will premiere in October. And 1980 has to have a massive across-the-nation release in early May.

Colin Higgins (Foul Play) has Jane Fonda and Lily Tomlin in Nine to Five, which he also co-wrote; Blake Edwards is directing S.O.B. with wife Julie Andrews and William Holden; Stanley Kramer has set April 26 as the start-date for the $60 million in 983 theatres during its first release. Part of this was the remake of An Affair to Remember for 1980 release ($60 million will be spent on advertising and promotion). Stark has 45 films in production. Being developed, television pilots to shoot in the next four months and five tele-features for spring through to now and September.

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ences were soon solved. Canadian Bob Clark is directing.

Zielinski is producing-directing locations for Max Fischer will use Canadian and Dutch selling thriller, and to be directed by SS-GB, Arkin in Summer, Piers Haggard will get director’s credit

David Perlmutter has signed Michael Arkin in Paris, based on

The Fiendish Plot of Dr Fu Manchu, will be finished in time for an early May release, and pin high hopes on a major box-office success.

Toho, the biggest studio and exhibitor in Japan, has announced plans for an animated feature, Dorasen, about the robot cat with a computerized mind. Already a big success in books and comic strips.

Kihito Urayama is to direct the screen version of the best-selling novel Children of the Sun, written by Kenjiro Hatai.

Japanese production has had a slow start until mid-March, but should pick up in May and June.

HONG KONG

Golden Harvest chief, Raymond Chow, has made good his threat to blitz mogul Run Run Shaw as Asia’s biggest producer and set up production to the tune of $90 million over the next 18 months.

Foremost in the Chow package is the $16 million epic Arctic Rampage, to be directed by Robert Aldrich, and starring Lee Marvin, Charles Bronson and Telly Savalas.

Production plans offer little hope of equaling last year’s domestic output of 68. In the first quarter of last year, 18 films were under way; this year only seven have gone before the cameras.

Several major producers have decided to seek co-partners in “outside deals”, where foreign locations can be utilised with some Italian cast and crew. One bright spot is that Dario Argento’s new suspense-thriller, Inferno, is likely to rocket into box-office calculations early May. Argento’s Supplie was one of Italy’s biggest successes in 1977/78.

Mario Vicario has started shooting The Astrakan Coat, Luigi Comencini, Everybody Loved Him Very Much; Mario Sciollano, Erotic Family; Luigi Carnese, Rather Him Than the Devil; Gia Retolini, Save the Man, Save the World.

In the atmospheres of exhibition problems, Italy’s Minister of Entertainment, Bernardo D’Azezzo, and top Italian producers have made strong pleas for quotas being set for American imported films. Industry chiefs claim the U.S. input negates chances for many Italian films to get into foreign film markets with the completion of its first cinema feature Marabe, produced and directed by Australian Alan Harkness.

Harkness, with the government’s information office, had three Australians on the crew, but the rest were locally-trained technicians, including director of photography Roger Ralai, one of the first three locals accredited to the Niugini Office of information.

Harkness, who worked with Tim Burstall and Roger Mirams earlier in his career, and was an editor of the 1968/67 series Rights to Geddy with Tyr handins, says Marabe proves features can be made in Niugini with the end result satisfying even overseas buyers.

“We don’t expect widespread acceptance in the more demanding markets, but we feel Marabe is likely to provide the breakthrough for local product,” he said when in Sydney supervising final soundtrack work on the two-hour action-drama.

Harkness was loud in praise for the cast and crew of Marabe, which included three Australians: sound recordist Lloyd Coleman, Lee Bennett (make-up) and Margo Mackenzie (script supervisor). Lead actors were Anton Si and Gunmdu Kagi, with Anita Toro the leading lady.

Not on the heels of Marabe is another film, the contemporary drama Fourth Child, directed by expatriate Jim Davis, starring David Harro, Bernadette Sansom and Neil Ham Albert Toro, from the National Theatre of Niugini, is writing an action-packed script set in the New Hebrides, Solomons and backed by the island’s copper mining conglomerates.

CHINA

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FRANCE

Domestic production is off to a good start in 1980 with seven features before the cameras and another 11 scheduled before mid-year, but most interest in France has centred on Chinese permission for pre-production to begin on Man’s Fate, with Costa-Gavras directing.

Originally a 1968 project for Fred Zinnemann and Carlo Ponti (MGM), the Andre Malraux classic concerns the Russian attack on Shanghai in the late ’20s.

Han Sunyi wrote the Zinnemann script, but American Lawrence Haubens has written the new version which will be a French-Sino co-production, with Jacques Bar, Sidney Cheekerman (Bloodline) and China’s Zhao Wei producing on a $14.8 million budget.

Final clearances followed two days of talk between President Valery Girard d’Estaing and Party Chairman Hua Kuofeng in Paris.

Casting will begin mid-May, and shooting is scheduled for 30 weeks commencing in late-August.

Zinnemann’s film was cancelled by the new MGM management just three days before studio shooting was to begin in London. Stars signed were Peter Finch, Max Von Sydow, Elii Okada, Lieu Livllmann and David Niven.

Claudio Guaranin is directing The Hostage Tower in Paris, based on Allistair McLean’s new novel as terrorists take over the Eiffel Tower. Peter Fonda stars.

Piers Haggard will get director’s credit of the much-troubled Peter Selers’ movie The Fiendish Plot of Dr Fu Manchu, being produced by Zev Braun.

Peter Miedak was the original director, then Sellers took over, and later called in Haggard. The long running crew have now left Paris and headed for final work in London.


Roger Coggio is to direct American Encore for French-American Films inc. Leoden, Malpighi Atreus Monique Silver in A Wicked Way; Georges Lupina, Mother’s Child; Luis Fuanolda, Destination of Love; Marette Tupil-Paulo, Dangerous Tides.

ITALY

With the $20 million Jon Cleary action-drama High Road to China, on which Brian G. Hutton (Where Eagles Dare) has replaced John Huston, Roger Moore and Bo Derek will star.

Chow, who recently signed American Ron Dendrea, of the American Bank motion picture finance bureau, still operates out of Hong Kong but is opening branch offices in London, Paris and Los Angeles.

When he left Shaw Brothers in 1967, after a decade as studio boss, he said he would build a major production company stretching across the globe.

Producer of Bruce Lee’s kung-fu hits, Chow graduated to U.S. co-productions with Enter the Dragon and The Boys in Company. Over the New Year Chow wrapped Blood Beach in Hollywood, his first film made entirely in the U.S. He also produced Roger Vadim’s Night Games in the Philippines.

After Arctic Rampage, Chow moves to the $150,000 Jon Cleary action-drama The Boys in Company, to be directed by Robert Aldrich, and starring Lee Marvin, Charles Bronson and Telly Savalas.

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Marabe has been shot over 14 weeks on a $150,000 budget with a small crew and in some of the country’s toughest locations.

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January 29

Films examined in terms of the Customs (Cinematograph Films) Regulations and States' film censorship legislation are listed below. An explanatory key to reasons for classifying non-"G" films appears hereunder:

**Frequency**
- Infrequent
- Frequent

**Explicitness/Intensities**
- Low
- Medium
- High
- Justified
- Gratuitous

**Purpose**
- S (Sex)
- V (Violence)
- L (Language)
- O (Other)

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**Films for General Exhibition (G)**

- **The Eighth Day**: Disney, U.S.A. (2620.03 m)
- **The Back of Beyond**: E. Grant-Khouri (16 mm) United Films, Egypt (1219.00 m)

**For Restricted Exhibition (R)**

- **The Legend of Paul & Paula**: C. Wen-Ho (2956.13 m)
- **The Jerk**: R. De Laurentiis, U.S.A. (2482.03 m)

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**Reasons for Decisions**

- **Infrequent**: S (Sex) .........................
- **Frequent**: V (Violence) .....................
- **Low**: S (Sex).................................
- **Medium**: V (Violence)......................
- **High**: L (Language)...........
- **Justified**: O (Other)..............
- **Gratuitous**: G (gratuitous)

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**Films Refused Registration**

- **An Ideal Couple**: F. Bauer (2539.82 m)
- **Kong (2573.70 m)**

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**Films Not Recommended for Children (NRC)**

- **An Ideal Couple**: F. Bauer (2539.82 m)
- **Kong (2573.70 m)**

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**Films Registered Without Eliminations**

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**Terms:**

- **G** (General Exhibition)
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**Australian Government Gazette**

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**FOR GENERAL EXHIBITION (G)**

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**FOR RESTRICTED EXHIBITION (R)**

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**FOR MATURE AUDIENCES **

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**Reasons for Decision**

- **S (Sex)**: S (Sex).................................
- **V (Violence)**: V (Violence).....................
- **L (Language)**: S (Sex).................................
- **O (Other)**: S (Sex).................................

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**Conclusion on p. 151**
In this first of an occasional series of monographs on Australian directors, Brian McFarlane explores the themes and preoccupations in

The films of PETER WEIR
"I am appalled by the threat and danger of life."
Ivy Compton-Burnett, *A Family and a Fortune*

"I think there are signs that strange things happen, though they do not always emerge."
Ivy Compton-Burnett, “A Conversation”

At first glance, there may seem little basis for comparison between the work of Peter Weir and that of Ivy Compton-Burnett; between that is, arguably the liveliest young filmmaker in 1970s Australia and the great English novelist who died at 85 in 1969, and who produced a grimly witty novel of family life biennially for more than 40 years. And whereas Dame Ivy set her tales of the vicious power struggle and horror that lie beneath the surfaces of everyday life in an almost unvarying English country house, Weir has ranged more widely in locating the alarming disturbances at work at the edges of the supposedly normal.

What these two artists, separated by two generations and working in different media, share is a sharp and witty perception of the disparity that so often exists between the way things seem and the way they are. They are both aware that the area of disparity is frequently maintained at the cost of suppressions and corruptions of the truth, and at the subduing of aspects of the self in the interests of preserving a manageable mundaneness. Further, they both respond alertly to “the threat and danger” that so often seem about to overturn the respectable, the acceptably corrupt; in a word, to the forces that are there in men and women, and which a shift in circumstances may bring to light in alarming ways.

Perhaps even more alarming is the apprehension they share that “strange things happen though they do not always emerge”. A criminal intention, or indeed act, may be at work in subterranean ways in a Compton-Burnett novel without being brought to public notice and without punishment. A party of schoolgirls disappears at Hanging Rock and the result is mystifying, rather than tragic; life and time and space simply close over them, offering no answers.

In an earlier article I wrote of Weir’s “belief

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Director Peter Weir and actor Richard Chamberlain during the shooting of *The Last Wave.*
that horrifying things exist from which there may be no easy escape". This is true of the vision of both these artists, and it is true partly because these “horrifying things” are rooted in the darkest possibilities of human nature. In Weir’s case — and this is where I shall leave the introductory comparison — he goes, as Ivy Compton-Burnett does not, beyond the possibilities of human nature to contemplation of the irrational and of the supernatural.

This may seem a roundabout way of introducing the director who, now that the most exciting decade of Australian filmmaking is nearly finished, has emerged as the nearest approach to a genuine auteur. He is an artist whose personal stamp is on all he does, and this makes him worth talking about in comparison with other distinguished artists. If none of his films to date is a wholly achieved work, they are all clearly the work of the same man, and that man is not merely a competent craftsman but an artist with a vision and a growing understanding of how this vision may be realized in terms of film.

Peter Weir has come into commercial filmmaking via a series of experimental short films (including some for the Commonwealth Film Unit), beginning in 1967 with Count Vim’s Last Exercise. Richard Brennan, in an article in Cinema Papers, recalls the reception received by Weir’s 1969 film Michael, part of a trilogy on the theme of youth, Three to Go. Weir’s Michael “was, like it or not, the embodiment in people’s minds of the series and of the great leap forward which the Unit was taking”. A decade later, Michael looks like a simplistic examination of youthful rebellion and an equally simplistic repudiation of its values, as the eponymous hero breaks in turn with his middle-class family and his new hippie friends. There are touches of wit in its treatment of the media’s role in the late ’60s scene (young people in the street are told to “look aggressive ... but above all be yourself” for the television cameras), but its technique, which must have looked lively and inventive then, now seems gratuitously flashy. One sees why Brennan, while acknowledging Weir’s “tremendous surface flair”, still “had nagging doubts on whether he could discipline and channel the prodigious talents”.

Weir’s major films of the ’70s — The Cars That Ate Paris (1974), Picnic at Hanging Rock (1975), The Last Wave (1977), and the tele-feature The Plumber (1979) — suggest that he could. “Prodigious” is an extravagant word perhaps, but there is still plenty of time for Weir to persuade us that it is justified and enough evidence for a hopeful prognostication.

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Before Cars, Weir’s first film to achieve major commercial release and his first feature, the film for which he is best known is Homesdale (1971), which has had intermittent screenings through the decade. It is interesting chiefly for the ways in which it foreshadows the achievements of the three films that followed. Like them, its view of life is dark, apprehensive, often ironic and shot through with the grim wit that gives a distinctive flavor to Cars and The Plumber particularly, but is still present in Picnic and The Last Wave. Like them, too, it is concerned with observing people in potentially dangerous situations that grow partly out of their own personalities and partly out of unpredictably and indefinably threatening milieux.

The mild Mr Malfrey pre-figures Arthur Waldo, the protagonist of Cars, in his being caught up in and by an oppressive environment, though Malfrey’s passivity in the end proves more complete than Arthur’s. In other ways, he also anticipates Michael Fitzhubert in Picnic, David Burton in The Last Wave and Jill Cowper in The Plumber: three people whose apparently bland observerness of life is called to account by matters beyond rational control. Homesdale, in common with all these later films — though it is much cruder in execution — establishes a firm sense of place, of settings enigmatic and incipiently menacing to the characters picking their way through them.

Homesdale Hunting Lodge, “a new experiment in togetherness”, appears to be an island retreat, with the outer appearance of a blandly white guest house, presided over by an unctuously toothy manager (James Dellit) and various white-coated attendants (wardens?). Following the jolly singing of We are the Boys of Homesdale on the soundtrack, the camera cuts to the impassive faces of the guests arriving by ferry, the timid newcomer Malfrey (Geoff Malone) dominated in close-up by Kevin (Grahame Bond), part-time butcher, part-time pop star. Homesdale offers its somewhat esoterically chosen guests an opportunity to indulge their private fantasies chiefly by means of a treasure hunt and a revue under the rigorous eye of the manager who frowns on relationships between guests (“I don’t like couples here”), presumably because they offer a threat to his authority.

Weir’s black comedy is there in the total concept (Malfrey turns murderer and is taken on as a staff member) though its execution falters, sometimes through slack pacing, sometimes through undue spelling out of intentions. Generally it works best in its parodying of...
therapeutic treatments: in the guests' costumes changes as they act out other aspects of themselves; in the manager's ways of keeping the guests in place ("more of a visual joke, I suppose"), he adds when someone's story falls flat; "very similar really, killing an animal and killing an audience", he reflects to Kevin); in the guests' placing of little personal touches in their dreary rooms; and best of all in the "service" before the treasure hunt begins.

The manager exhorts them to pray for "courage, strength and fortitude . . . and for those who have gone before", before sending them "off into the bush — the great bush of life, with individual maps leading to individual treasures." Having earlier promised them that "Homesdale will help you; help you to face the truth" and making this sound like a source of terror, the manager sends them off on the hunt in which nature is imbued with a sense of threat and danger.

Malfrey, caught in a trap and suspended over a river, is dealt with severely by the manager: "I don't want to have to cane you . . . but you're just not pulling your weight. You were smoking on the treasure hunt. What am I to write in your report? . . . Lack of teamwork? The odd one out?" Weir satirizes here, without making them less unsettling, the oppressive forces that are at work endemically in his films, and Malfrey's submission is reinforced in a clever overhead shot as he mounts the stairs to his room.

The revue sequence is less surely handled, in timing and parodic intention. Malfrey, taunted by the manager to "do your worst", tries to sing Nymphs and Shepherds, is then set upon by the other guests (angled cameras somewhat obviously creating chaos), and is upbraided by the manager for his subservience. There is a proper sense of shock at the revelation that Kevin has been decapitated, but it hardly lives up to the promise excited by the film's early homage to the Psycho shower scene.

At the time of making Homesdale, Weir still had a good deal to learn about creating a moment of horror, but he was already clearly interested in the imminence of "threat and danger" in human lives, whether timid like Malfrey's or brash like Kevin's.

To come to Homesdale, as I did, after seeing the three commercially-released films, is to feel oneself in the presence of a gifted amateur with more ideas and more dark jokes and insights than he can properly organize. But the talent is already indisputable. Weir is not concerned here with straightforward realism (though later films show he is able to achieve this), but with the cinema's capacity for teasing reality out of the play of fantastic notions. He already knows a good deal about how to use the camera to create a horrifying moment or a grim joke, and it is clear how his background in experimental filmmaking will make itself felt in the more formal demands of the full-length feature.

Homesdale was a sign of things to come, and those who admired its nerve — and verve — in 1971 must have felt vindicated by the imaginative confidence which Weir brought to his subsequent films.

The Cars That Ate Paris. Weir's darkest film, is a less ambitious project than Picnic or The Last Wave: it is essentially a single black joke, and it is not interested in the kinds of metaphysical territory ventured upon in the two later films. But if it is less ambitious, it is also more coherent and its narrative grasp is surer within the limits of Arthur Waldo's experience of Paris, the repulsive little town that lives off motor accidents; that is, on the leavings of a materialistic society. Nevertheless, its theme is still, at least in part, the central insecurity and unsafety of life.

Paris, seen from above, seems to nestle cosily and serenely among green hills; but it is, as Arthur learns, viciously corrupt at every level and virtually a death-trap for those who try to enter or leave it. It can be compared with Picnic's solidly Victorian upper-class girls' school which is much less decorous than it appears, and which disintegrates as the results of the ill-fated picnic become known, or with David Burton's apparently secure middle-class
home in suburban, professional Sydney in The Last Wave, a bulwark which proves quite inadequate to the strains placed on it.

In all these films, the ordinary grasp on life that seems to sustain the protagonists is thrown into psychic and emotional disorder. If this is least subtly done in the case of Waldo, it is also done in a way which is dramatically satisfying at the time, so that certain holes in the script are not apparent until later. Cars is satisfying because it integrates its elements — its narrative swiftness, its sharp observation of faces and places, its awareness that apparent ordinariness barely masks violence and terror — so as to make us privy to the horror which is at the heart of Weir’s vision.

When Arthur Waldo (Terry Camilleri) recovers from the accident that killed his brother and wrecked their car and caravan, just out of Paris, he is welcomed to the town by the Mayor (John Meillon) who takes him to his home. There is a nicely cryptic scene at dinner, intensifying the earlier suggestions at the hospital and in the street that all is not what it seems in Paris. Weir then cuts to a brilliantly-handled sequence where an accident victim is dealt with in the hospital while his car is being dismantled by oddly-uniformed workers and the local idiot leers over his trophy. The victim is stripped of his belongings; a drill is applied to his brain; the car is set fire to while faces, including the Mayor’s, watch from the window.

In the following sequence, Arthur decides to leave town, watched again by curious eyes. While waiting at the run-down bus station, he is asked to step down to the Council Chambers for a few words with the Mayor who tells him, “You’re basically normal . . . but you may not stay that way”, and draws his attention to the “veggies” in the Bellevue Ward of the hospital — other accident victims who don’t even know their names.

Arthur’s confidence is convincingly under-
mined by the knowledge of "two lives on his conscience" (his brother’s and that of an old man he accidentally killed a year before), by his inability to persuade anyone that he was dazzled by lights on the night of his accident, and by the sense of the whole town’s being terrifyingly caught up in the accident trade. In one unobtrusive shot, an old lady trades a shining hubcap for clothes. In church, the clergyman speaks of his two hobbies: the past "manifest in lovely old towns like Paris", and the future, which is with the young and the forthcoming car gymkhana.

When the Mayor pursues Arthur into the countryside on a sunny Sunday afternoon, one gets a quintessential Weir image: a deceptively sleepy little town surrounded by comfortable hills. Part of the film’s horror is in its claustrophobia: one longs to be reassured that there is wholesome life out there, but Weir, true to what seems his belief that there are some terrors from which there may be no easy escape, doesn’t allow the audience such comfort. When the Mayor catches up with Arthur he explains, with alarming blandness, that there is something missing in his family — a son — and that he wants Arthur to settle permanently and "become part of my family". (He has a twitchy wife called Beth and two adopted daughters who were orphaned when their parents were killed in an accident.) "One thing close families don’t do . . . they don’t talk to outsiders like Ted Mulray", the clergyman, whom Arthur had wanted to confide in and who is later brought in dead.

The film moves in a series of fluently-constructed sequences which show a flair for narrative rhythm and tonal variety that Weir has not surpassed in his later films. What is so exhilarating about the film is the way it spikes its mounting horror with black comedy. The wit is there in the odd line, like the clergyman’s words at the funeral, "Gosh, Lord, sometimes you work in ways that are incomprehensible", or in the callous talk of the "midnight chorus" of the hospital "veggies". But more importantly, it is worked into the texture of crucial sequences like that of the morning service at church during which beat-up cars circle the car wreck that acts as a monument to the town’s centre. The crash and bang of these cars compete with Immortal, Invisible, God only one in the church. The clergyman’s position is teasingly enigmatic; one doesn’t know where he stands until his body is brought in.

In the film’s final sequence — the mayoral fancy dress ball and the attack of the spiked monster-cars — comedy and horror jostle for our responses, the one heightening the other. The Mayor has warned a reluctant Arthur that "Nobody leaves Paris. No one. Now you get into those clothes. You’re going to the ball." The film then cuts to the galvanized iron Town Hall, where the "veggies" in masks are wheeled in and stage-managed by the appallingly genial doctor. The Mayor, in absurd beard as one of Paris’ founding fathers, makes a speech about the town’s future ("Have you the strength to travel the short distance?")), and ends by leading the Paris school war cry.

The authentic sound of the country town dance band floats outside to be drowned by the arrival of the cars, bent on reprisal for burning the car of one of the gang. The spikes on the leading car climb into the frame from the bottom right corner, in a brilliantly-angled shot, then fill the screen. The orgy of destruction which follows is directed with a fine eye for clarity and horror: the Mayor attacks the cars with a pole; someone else is caught on the spikes of a car while trying to spear it; and Arthur, forced to become part of the mayhem, regains his confidence by squashing a car and killing its "yobbo" driver. Arthur drives out as traps are being laid to stop exit from the ruined town; his face, half-obscured by the darkness, is smiling triumphantly as he heads for . . . what? It is a dark insight, indeed, that to cope with life it may be necessary to exercise one’s basest, most murderous instincts.

Like most Australian directors, Weir has not yet shown himself markedly an actor’s director, and there is some fairly rudimentary characterization here for which his own script must bear some responsibility. Nevertheless,
Meillon’s deceptively platitudinous family-man Mayor and Camilleri’s sensitive, suffering Arthur are substantial performances, and carry much of the film’s weight of meaning — that is, in their respective suggestions of the potential for violence and horror behind blandly ordinary facades. If the other actors have less scope to develop characters, they are effective in their contribution to the film’s suggestion of a rotten little town, of a mindless, dangerous cupidity at work, and John McLean’s camera uses the Panavision screen to reinforce one’s sense of a horrifyingly enclosed community.

Questions like Why is Arthur permitted to survive without being reduced to a “veggie”? and Why has there never been any investigation of the Paris road toll? are worrying as one thinks back on the film or sees it more than once. But on first viewing, at least, the grim fantasy set in the seedy realism of Paris (and this is very accurately rendered) takes a firm hold on one’s imaginative receptiveness. Cars is more than a promising first feature; in it, Weir reveals a thoroughly comprehensive grasp of his material, a tautness and coherence that have not been common in Australia’s recent films.

Certainly the most popular of Weir’s films to date with the public and the critics is Picnic at Hanging Rock. On re-viewing, the film still appears as visually stunning as one had remembered, but its ideas and their dramatic realization seem considerably less impressive. Before the credits begin there is a bold statement of the “facts” of the case, ending with the sentence: “During the afternoon, several members of the party disappeared without trace.” This foreword is almost like Weir’s thumbing his nose at anything as vulgar as narrative interest, as though his film will have more important things on its mind. In the event, I believe he muffs the chance of telling an absorbing story in favor of provocative suggestions of smothered sexuality and a determinedly metaphysical approach to matters like time and dreams.

If this sounds rather grudging, it should be

made clear that Weir’s films do have ideas, and often interesting ones. The critical question is whether he can integrate them convincingly into the texture of the film as a whole — in the behaviour and relationships of his characters in the situations in which he has placed them — or whether they are somewhat arbitrarily imposed on the film’s structure. In the tautly-made tele-feature, The Plumber, he comes closer to this kind of integration than in either Picnic or The Last Wave, in both of which there is too much nudging at and underlining of the “significance” of the action.

Picnic certainly has a most evocative opening. A bird call is heard over a pale wash of trees and mist from which the monolith of Hanging Rock emerges, at first distant and then close up, always ominous, in the way that John Ford makes great rock faces threatening and mysterious in The Searchers. A schoolgirl’s voice is then heard intoning “What we see, and what we seem, are but a dream. A dream within a dream...”, and, as the voice gives way to Gheorghe Zamfir’s haunting Flute de Pan, the brooding rock face is replaced by an exquisite girl’s face on a pillow. Suddenly girls are washing, dressing in white, reading their St Valentine’s Day cards, their suppressed sexual longings given romantic focus in the banal verses of the cards. One girl, fat Edith (Christine Schuller), is merely counting her cards as possessions; their romance is lost on her. And she will later resist the pull of the Rock and return screaming to the rest of the school party.

These two motifs — the Rock, with its sense of ageless knowledge, and adolescent sexual yearning — are there from the start, and the film makes the audience keep them in mind together. Whatever happens to the girls and the teacher, who disappear on the Rock, the film insists on an obscure sexual connection. The three girls who disappear, leaving Edith behind, seem almost to float through the trees, as if to the embrace of a lover. The young English aristocrat, Michael Fitzhubert (Dominic Guard), and the Australian groom, Albert (John Jarrett), who observe them, respond — the one with quivering sensitivity, the other with crude realism — to the sexual challenge of the fleeting image. When the police sergeant, Bumph (Wyn Roberts), questions Michael about why he followed the girls, he asks, “As the girls were jumping the creek, what were you thinking of?” It is clear what he has in mind.

Later, Edith prudishly recalls that as she was
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rushing down from the Rock she passed the missing teacher, Miss McCraw (Vivean Gray), running up without her dress. Miss McCraw had been the most thoroughly dressed of the party in severe brown costume and hat, unlike the rest in filmy white. It is as though the experience of the Rock has released her from the inhibitions of respectability.

When one of the girls, Irma (Karen Rob­son), is found by Michael, Mrs Appleyard (Rachel Roberts), the headmistress, asks the doctor whether she had been “molested”, but the doctor assures her that “She is quite intact”, and mutters the comment twice again — to the sergeant and to the Fitzhubert’s housekeeper. The maid at Colonel Fitzhubert’s home, where Irma is convalescing, confides to the housekeeper that Irma was wearing no corset when found, and the housekeeper tells her she was quite right to suppress this information.

The climax to this persistent connection of sexuality and the experience of the Rock comes in the scene in which the recovered Irma visits the school gym to say goodbye to her fellow pupils. She is clad in long crimson cloak and crimson hat, a striking figure as she appears in the doorway, flanked in the frame by the two rows of girls doing posture exercises. Whatever has happened to Irma — and she has refused to tell Michael what happened on the Rock — it has changed her from romantic schoolgirl to assured woman. The girls sense a new knowledge about her and crowd around hysterically, demanding explanations. Miss Lumley (Kristy Child), the gym mistress, watches slyly; she wants to know too, but Irma, alarmed at the onslaught, can tell nothing.

But once all these connections have been noted one is left asking, Why? Is it Weir’s intention to use Joan Lindsay’s novel merely as the basis for a study of certain aspects of adolescent sexuality? Certainly this element is pervasive in the film as it is not in the novel. The Rock, viewed in this way, may perhaps be seen as a symbol of ancient knowingness as compared with the superficial learning and accomplishments the school offers. Again, the Rock, by being so wholly itself, organic and primitive, unlike the recently-erected stone pile of the school, excites a loosening of the moral corsets: it is alluring and terrifying, tempting the girls to behave instinctively, rather than respectably, and exacting an
awesome price for their succumbing to such a temptation.

Russell Boyd’s camera again and again catches the threat and massive inscrutability of the Rock’s faces, contrasting these with the lushness of the surrounding foliage and the soft billowing whiteness of the girls’ dresses. (He does equally well in capturing — no doubt Weir’s intention — the oppressive Victorian facade and interiors of the other monolith set down in the bush, Appleyard College, whose incongruity in the scene is established at first by the oddly exotic palm trees that flank it.) Striking overhead shots of the girls climbing through narrow passes on the rocks reinforce the threat and enticement it offers, and the piercing flute notes of the soundtrack conspire with the camera’s articulation of some nameless dread.

If there is too much lingering over the beauty of Miranda (Anne Lambert) turning her head in the sun or of Irma gracefully waving her arms, there are also genuinely erotic touches — for instance, in the removal of stockings and boots as the girls begin their exploration of the Rock. Mrs Appleyard has told them, “You may remove your gloves once you have passed through Woodend”, inadvertently hinting at the loss of inhibition that will follow at the Rock itself. Her warning about the dangers of the Rock passes unheeded; so does Edith’s later complaint that “It’s nasty here.”

The film works best as a somewhat lushly poetic study of suppressed and burgeoning sexuality. The stealthy giggles of the girls at the college; the orphaned Sara’s (Margaret Nelson) crush on that “Botticelli Angel”, Miranda; the pretty French mistress (Helen Morse) who uses powder because she finds it “becoming”; Michael’s obsession with the girls he has seen on the Rock; even Mrs Appleyard’s yearning for her “utterly dependable husband”: all these point to the film’s
intelligent interest in the sexual instinct and its manifestations in a generally oppressive environment. Only among the servants (a simplistic but possibly accurate touch) is there an openly acknowledged interest in sex: Albert imagines the girls’ legs in terms Michael finds crude; Minnie, the school maid (Jacki Weaver), is seen in bed with her boyfriend, Tom the gardener (Anthony Llewellyn-Jones), and tells him, “I feel sorry for them kids.” This, incidentally, is one of the few moments when the film shows a genuine compassion for any of its characters.

But if the sexual motif represents the film’s most coherently pursued interest, give or take the enigmatic role of the Rock in all this, the audience is left with a number of other dissatisfaction elements. What, for instance, are we to make of the situation of the orphan Sara? Because her guardian has not paid her fees, Mrs Appleyard decides she must “make other arrangements” for her. Not surprising in ordinary circumstances, but surely it is odd that she should pursue this matter when the school is crumbling around her as the aftermath of the picnic. Again, the suggestion that Sara is the sister of Albert (both talk of a sibling they lost touch with after leaving the orphanage) is a curiously undeveloped tangent to the film’s main action, and Sara’s death seems merely gratuitous.

What significance does one attach to the film’s adumbrations of class-consciousness: in the town’s attitude to the school (little boys run shouting after the drag as it takes the school party through Woodend); in Tom’s class-based resistance to Minnie’s sympathy for “them kids”; in the fossilized Fitzhuberts whose picnic scene is critically placed as a still life by contrast with the school’s noisy party; and, especially, in the exchanges between Michael and Albert? These latter fairly obviously point up different approaches to the matter of sex and to the whole episode of the Rock, but it is not clear where the film stands in relation to either of them.

Mrs Appleyard’s collapse under the strain of the girls’ disappearance and the loss of the teacher she had relied on might have provided the means for pulling together interest in the film’s main events. Rachel Roberts plays her with a grim gentility that is very oppressive — her background of Bournemouth holidays is clearly socially inferior to that of most of the girls and she maintains her control by an iron exercise of the will that is compelling to observe.

The camera frequently stresses her heavily repressive dominance as when, on the top of the school steps, she warns the girls of the dangers of the Rock, or when she hovers threateningly over Sara who has not learnt the prescribed poem (by “Mrs Felicia Heymans ... one of the finest of our English poets”), but has written one herself. The film’s treatment of Mrs Appleyard, often locally very telling, is in the end too scrappy for the final announcement of her death, at the foot of Hanging Rock, to have the impact it might have had.

Then there is the question of the film’s metaphysical preoccupations which it wears on its exquisite sleeve, rather than locating them more centrally. “What we see, and what we
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seem, are but a dream. A dream within a dream”. This is the opening sentence on the soundtrack; it sets up expectations that the rest of the film does little to gratify. Perhaps we assume that the episode of the Rock (strange things happening, if not emerging) is merely a dream within the larger dream of life itself, but the notion is too romantically vague to engage the mind.

The same might be said for Miranda’s gnomic utterance that “Everything begins — and ends — at exactly the right time and place.” This bit of aphoristic tosh precedes the much more sharply cinematic insight caught by Miss McCraw’s worried looking up from the ascertainable truths of the geometry text she is reading to the Rock which yields no answers. Irma, much later pondering the end of the summer, quotes Miranda’s words about the right time and place as though they meant something. If they do, the film does not make us privy to that meaning.

Cliff Green’s screenplay is often shrewdly right, especially in its dealings with Mrs Appleyard, but, in the end, it is undiscriminating. It does not focus sharply enough on the facts of the disappearance; it does not compel attention firmly on what exactly happened at Hanging Rock. Not that the audience requires him to offer an answer to the riddle, but that the nature of riddle and after-effects should be kept more clearly before it.

The film’s grasp of narrative, as distinct from its intimations of dread among the summer lushness and stillness, is very uncertain. When Sergeant Bumpher appears and the investigation begins, the film takes a new narrative turn and tone, the effect of which is not dramatic contrast but incongruity in relation to what has gone before. The details of the search are perfunctorily handled and this can’t be justified by drawing a parallel with Michelangelo Antonioni’s L’avventura. Picnic at this stage needs the interest that the search might provide and the screenplay allows this to be dissipated by peripheral matters, not offering an equivalent to Antonioni’s growing preoccupation with the relationship between the searchers.

The film builds up an impressive — even tantalizing — atmosphere, but does so at the cost of pursuing a little more ruthlessly what is certainly a very fascinating story. David Ansen, reviewing the film in Newsweek, is right to
In a dream sequence, Chris Lee (Gulpilil) appears holding the sacred stone. **The Last Wave.**

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claim, after praising Weir’s “languid, sun-dappled images”, that “there’s something hollow at the core, an unearned sense of importance, a reliance on mere word to suggest mystical depths”.4

Nevertheless, despite his failure to integrate all the elements of his film, Weir still shows in **Picnic** a heartening capacity to go beyond the literal-minded realism of most Australian cinema of the ’70s. He already knows how to realize imagistically such fundamental dichotomies as nature vs civilization, the real vs the ideal, the instinct vs the will. He is not afraid to dangle ideas even if he is not yet rigorous enough in pursuing them. In retrospect, it may seem the excitement that greeted **Picnic** in 1975 had less to do with actual achievement than with its revelation of an imaginative potential rare to the point of uniqueness in the Australian film industry.

Whatever its lapses, **Picnic** is not parochial; it is the work of a man with a vision of life, a vision in which dangerous forces are always menacing life’s orderly surfaces, surfaces that can be made to reflect frightening depths.

The first third of **The Last Wave** is as fine as anything Weir has done. It is cryptic, allusive and demanding in the resonances it sets up. Behind the credits an Aboriginal is painting on the roof of a cave which opens like a large mouth: a black hand, protruding from a Western coat sleeve, completes a curious sign—three concentric circles with four dots in the centre—which will be a central motif throughout the rest of the film.

The camera then cuts to a parched scene in a central Australian township where, under a cloudless sky, a group of Aboriginals sits surrounded by a squalid heap of possessions and some children play cricket in the heat. A child drinks avidly from a hose. Suddenly, without warning, rain, then hail, bursts from the empty sky. The excited children huddle in the school house and, as huge hailstones shatter the windows and children are cut, the teacher tells them prosily: “We are witnessing nature at work.”

The next cut (and the film’s “punctuation” at this stage is as arbitrary and mystifying as I mean to suggest) is to Sydney, where the camera closes in on an Aboriginal drinking at a fountain. As David Burton (Richard Chamberlain), a company lawyer, leaves the carpark attached to his office building, the attendant gives him a yellow pepper for his wife and he comments on the oddity of its color.

Out in the streets, the scene is a noisy muddle of cars, umbrellas, people shouting in a chaos testifying to man’s incapacity to deal with a freak of nature. On the car radio, David hears that “an unusually widespread low-pressure trough moving up from the southern polar ice” is the cause of the downpour, and the audience registers this as a scientific attempt to explain and demystify the unusual. As the film goes on, David’s dilemma is increasingly a matter of the rational man’s failure to find satisfying answers to the bizarre. Weir has established early what the film’s central pre-

Billy (Athol Compton) at the pub, aware that his pursuers have come for him. The Last Wave.

occupation will be: the breakdown of man’s resources in areas where rationality cannot serve him. Or as Richard Schickel in reviewing Picnic has written: “There is something else Weir wants to say — that in society, a sense of order is a very fragile thing. If people do not allow for the inexplicable, then they will collapse of shock when chance makes its inevitable appearance.”

As David returns to the seeming safety and sanity of his suburban home, with his pleasant wife Annie (Olivia Hamnett) and two children, he — and the audience — seems to have gained a refuge from the unpredictabilities of nature. The family sits to eat and all is cozy until a sound of running water inside the house is heard. In this black little joke of Weir’s (recalling the tone of Cars) the rivulet on the stairs proves to be only the result of the bath’s having overflowed, both children naturally denying responsibility for the accident. David is, however, oddly drawn by the rain and dreams he sees through the window a black figure standing in the rain.

The scene jumps to a barbecue at the home of David’s clergymen step-father (Frederick Parslow). The camera records the church serenely set against sea and clear sky, then pans across a wide lawn to the barbecue where everyone is relaxed except David, worried at the telephone. When he tells his step-father about the bad dreams that have lately cost him sleep, his step-father recalls to him his childhood dreams about people “who come and steal your body while you sleep”. Annie, meanwhile, plays with their daughter in the spray of the lawn sprinkler. The spray, against the clear sky, dissolves into dark storm clouds, lightning and driving rain, ushering in the final episode of this opening movement of the film.

The camera lights briefly on a Danger sign and tracks after an Aboriginal youth, Billy (Athol Compton), stealing sacred stones from tribal grounds beneath the city sewers. This ironic juxtaposition — the ‘benefits’ of civilization imposed on sacred grounds — is unobtrusively and exactly made. The camera cuts to Billy drunk in a pub, suddenly aware that his pursuers have come for him. From here, the film moves swiftly through the hunting down of Billy to a dark street where an old Aboriginal, in a car, points the bone of death at him.

It is worth describing these sequences in some detail because everything in them is done so sharply, with such a sophisticated eye for detail and such rigorous concern for relevance. The abrupt changes of scene nevertheless create a powerfully sustained narrative rhythm and a texture of meshing allusiveness. That the film is so completely absorbing to this point is partly due to Weir’s finely discriminating sense of what he needs from each episode and of his very controlled pacing within and between episodes. As well, the screenplay (Weir is co-author with Tony Morphett and Petru Popescu) to this point is literate and quietly witty, and strikes a balance between specific, individualizing touches and suggestions of some wider dislocation, and cameraman Boyd lights all this so as to emphasize the hints and threats inherent in the script.

Compared with this splendid first third, the rest of the film is only intermittently holding. The screen play credit, “Based on an idea by Peter Weir”, is perhaps the clue to why. The “idea”, I take it, is David Burton’s growing belief that he has a special affinity with the tribal Aboriginals who killed Billy, and whose defence he undertakes. As he learns of the Aboriginals’ approach to cycles of time, he begins to believe that he is a descendant of an ancient race which, according to Aboriginal tradition, inhabited Australia in pre-historic times. His increasing sense of alienation from his middle-class life is intensified by his step-father telling him that, as a child, he had predicted his mother’s death.

In the film’s last episode, Chris (Gulpilil) takes him to the sacred tribal grounds where David sees his own likeness in a stone face and interprets the wall painting to mean that the
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present cycle of time will end with a giant wave.
In an outline like this I am aware that the idea sounds faintly silly. In fact it has persuasive inner logic of good fantasy and if Weir had addressed himself more singlemindedly to working out its details, the film might have maintained the promise of its opening sequence. In ways sometimes reminiscent of Nicolas Roeg’s *Don’t Look Now*, the film’s most moving and daring element is the breakdown of the rational man’s belief in and hold on the certainties and guidelines of his life. Chamberlain’s essentially Anglo-Saxon blandness is convincingly modified by his growing fears and by his fascination with the non-rational forces that bear on men’s lives — even on the lives of supposedly civilized man.

However, the film does not move in quite this clear-cut way, and loses some of its impetus as a result. The trial of the Aboriginals and the cross-examinations leading up to it pass for comparatively little. It might have been expected that Weir would use the trial to focus much more sharply than he does the attempt to measure, by one set of laws, behaviour that derives from an utterly different code. There are good individual moments, of course: David’s questioning of the Aboriginal youths about how Billy died, with the camera panning around their faces which clearly conceal a truth they cannot/will not articulate; the meaninglessness of Chris’ courtroom oath, “So help me God”; and his refusal at the crucial moment to co-operate with David as this would mean revealing their tribal customs.

But such accurately achieved moments are offset by the film’s vague liberalism in its treatment of the Aboriginals. The colleague (Peter Carroll) from Legal Aid who involves David in the case (and it’s not clear why David should have struck him as the man for the job) talks of dispelling a “few romantic notions” about Aboriginals, claiming that there are no tribal Aboriginals in the city: “We’ve killed their songs, dances and laws.” Later he accuses

White, middle-class David Burton (Richard Chamberlain) with his client Chris Lee. *The Last Wave.*
David of a “middle-class patronizing attitude” towards the blacks when he, Michael, decides to pull out of the case because he doesn’t believe the “tribal people” stuff. The film needs to sharpen the point I assume it is making here: that is, that well-meaning humanitarianism is as likely as cool rationalism to be unsusceptible to the profoundest truths about those it aims to help.

This would have given a more ironic value to the subsequent scene with the anthropologist (the excellent Vivean Gray, again) who explains to David the connection of the sacred stone with the Dreamtime, “more real than reality itself”. This scientist’s factual account resonates with an understanding that eludes the Legal Aid man. She knows that some people (Mulkrul, “a race of spirits from the rising sun”) have more contact with the Dreamtime than others and ends by saying, “Frankly I think none of us [i.e., whites] has the spiritual power.” This is acknowledgment of the superior perception of which the Aboriginal mind is capable, and unwittingly ironic because she is unaware of David’s growing sense of his own affinity with the Dreamtime. This scene, placed between that of David’s quarrel with his Legal Aid friend and that of the mounting fear of David’s wife who has seen a black man in the garden, has a thematic centrality in the film that is belied by its too low-key treatment. One feels that more should be made of the contrast between Dr Whitburn’s calm but emotionally-toned approach and the two kinds of incomprehension that flank it.

The film’s central section unmistakably sags. It suffers from undue explicitness on the one hand and irritating obliqueness on the other. The explicitness jars in comments like Annie’s when she is waiting for Chris to come to dinner: “I’m a fourth generation Australian and I’ve never met an Aboriginal before”, underlining the cultural chasm that her husband must bridge; in the cliched writing that announces her growing fear and estrangement from David (“I can’t talk to you any more. I don’t know you any more”); and especially in David’s visit to his step-father, a clergyman. “I’ve lost the world that meant anything”, David laments, and attacks his step-father’s faith because it “explains away mysteries”.

One of Weir’s strengths is his capacity for accepting mysteries but, if he does not try to explain them, or to rob them of their essential strangeness, he certainly does seem interested in illuminating them.

In this he is a good deal less successful.

Dr Whitburn (Vivean Gray) explains to David the meaning of the sacred stone. The Last Wave.
linked now with menacing underwater effects on the soundtrack. David's own suburban house is wrecked by the storm as an owl (Charlie) watches. Chris suddenly appears at his door with the sacred stone (marked like the cave-painting in the opening scene) and he takes David to the eerily beautiful tribal grounds — underground caves reached through the sewers. In mounting excitement David examines the wall-paintings which, with the prophetic gift he now accepts, he interprets as foretelling the end of another time cycle by means of a tidal wave.

There is real terror and tension in this sequence, an awareness indeed of "strange things" emerging, and the dark spots on the wall-painting recall the "black rain" which windscreen wipers had earlier striven ineffectually to deal with. Chris has vanished and Charlie, who has feared where David's search is leading him, appears and grapples with David. Presumably (and the film is not clear about this) Charlie is killed and David, after losing his torch, gropes his way out above ground.

The film ends, enigmatically, with David on a beach as a huge wave approaches. He has fought his way back from subterranean regions (psychic as well as physical) to face the apocalyptic vision of destruction that his Mulkuril affinities have enabled him to predict. It is a striking finale, if not emotionally or intellectually wholly satisfying, and it does carry a persuasive sense, not of denouement, but of horror still to come.

There is a more powerful cinematic intelligence at work in The Last Wave than in Picnic. Having sacrificed the fluent, rigorous narrative lines of Cars for something at once more adventurous and less controlled in Picnic and fallen victim to Creeping Beauty and Higher Thought, Weir has certainly gained ground in The Last Wave. His capacity to create an unsettling atmosphere is, in the best sections of The Last Wave, at the service of an economical and highly charged narrative.

I have compared him with Roeg (Weir shares, too, his fascination with the eloquent Aboriginal actor Gulpilil, first seen in Walkabout); at his best — that is, at his most unnerving — he can withstand comparison with the Hitchcock of The Birds. The intellectual framework of the film is more interesting than it is in Picnic, and, despite the urge to explicitness which he shares with Australian novelists, Weir shows an increasing capacity to render his ideas in dramatic action and telling imagistic patterns.

In The Plumber, Weir pursues further his interest in the way the educated mind, detached by its education from the springs of its instinctive life, responds when exposed to more primitive threats. Max, the plumber of the title, offers some of the same kinds of challenge to the educated mind that the Rock and the secrets of Dreamtime lore do in the two preceding films.

The Plumber is a much less ambitious work than Picnic or The Last Wave, and is in some ways more satisfactory. It is terse, tightly-scripted (by Weir), intelligent in its examination of the academic middle class confronted by crude, teasing ambivalence, and resorting to

David watches his torch float away as he makes his way out of the sewers. The Last Wave.

Jill Cowper (Judy Morris), right, confesses to Meg (Candy Raymond) her fears about the plumber. The Plumber.
methods it would ordinarily despise to maintain its control. Unlike the two earlier films, *The Plumber* resists large abstractions, except insofar as they are firmly embodied in its central dramatic situation, and is in consequence a much tidier, more coherent work, its ideas under more rigorous discipline.

It raises, therefore, the critical question of whether to value more the artistic enterprise that knows exactly where it is headed and arrives there, or the more adventurous work that is inevitably flawed, a bit unwieldy, but also richer in texture. I don’t wish to answer this question, but to draw attention to the diversity of Weir’s interests and methods, to his readiness to work on larger and smaller canvases. If it is easier for him to be successful with *Cars* and *The Plumber*, the kinds of failures that are part of *Picnic* and *The Last Wave* may ultimately prove more rewarding. The very sense of their incompletely realized intentions perhaps tantalizes critical speculation more than the trimnesses of the other two films.

Not that *The Plumber* is without blemishes; it suffers some of the same kinds of basic credibility problems that are worrying in *Cars*. Why, for instance, does the nice young academic wife, getting on with her MA thesis in anthropology, simply not refuse to admit the plumber without some token of his *bona fides* or, having let him turn the bathroom into a scaffolding jungle, get the university maintenance department to inspect what he is up to?

However, granted that Max (Ivar Kants) does talk his way into the flat (one in a huge impersonal block), the film goes very convincingly about its business of unsettling the poised Jill Cowper (Judy Morris) by the kind of threat Max’s appallingly genial/dangerous presence represents. The centrally teasing concept is in the ironic juxtaposition of Jill’s coolly detached study of primitive Niugini highlanders and her rapid emotional disintegration in the face of Max’s potentially threatening primitivism. The concept would be more clear-cut, and consequently less teasing, if the audience could be sure that Max was really a threat to Jill’s scholarly composure, or even that he was really a plumber. A parallel complicating element in Jill is that one can’t be sure how far her composure is a matter of immersion in her academic pursuits; how far a matter of her husband’s work-obsessed neglect of her.
"Your pipes — if you’ll pardon the expression — are buggered" Max tells Jill, after a brief inspection, with a leer that may or may not be sexual knowingness. And later, after observing a jar of Nettle Hair Tonic in the bathroom, he asks, "Is your husband losing his hair? It’s all to do with hormones. Intellectual types often lose their hair." Max seems to be implying that he sees the Cowpers' marriage is in a bad way.

He further denigrates the academic lifestyle by drawing attention to the Niugini artifacts strewn around the flat — "This boong stuff brings a good bit of coin these days" — and by a leering reference to a fertility symbol. Whatever Max is, whether he is a bully who might have rape in mind, or whether he is just a harmless freak, he is inadvertently right about the Cowpers.

Brian Cowper (Robert Coleby) is too concerned with impressing some visiting World Health Organization scientists, in Adelaide to inspect his research and possibly to recommend him for a post in Geneva, to take seriously Jill’s anxieties about Max. The audience is prepared for Brian’s self-absorption in the opening scene. As Jill recalls an experience in Niugini with a frightening native ("I knew I must keep perfectly still" — an ironic foreshadowing of her attitude to Max), Brian takes no more than perfunctory interest and facetiously suggests she should use the anecdote in her MA and turn it into a best-seller. She is unused to the direct appraisal she gets from Max: "You’re real decent. Mind you, you’re a bit on the neurotic side if you don’t mind me saying so."

Max’s raucous, blatant approach is neatly contrasted with Brian’s scientific talk with his colleagues about contraception and fertility rites among the natives. He is too busy with work and his visitors even to find time to check out Max’s credentials with the maintenance department. Meanwhile, Max is belting on the window as Jill tries to immerse herself in primitive music; when she doesn’t let him in, he simply climbs through the bathroom ceiling. On his third visit he brings his guitar (he is a folk singer who admires Bob Dylan’s uncompromising lyrics, he says) and Jill’s primitive music is now in competition with his.

Is he really setting out to undermine her confidence in the cool exercise of the intellect? Is it in response to her perception of the threat he offers that she puts him down, in front of her friend Meg (Candy Raymond), by correcting his grammar? Does he leave the bathroom in a hideous mess to humiliate her — and her husband — on the evening when Brian is bringing the overseas visitors home to dinner? Weir maintains a lively ambivalence about Max and, indeed, Jill, until one is not sure whether he is cunning or she is neurotic. By the end of the film he has reduced her to screaming at him, and she confesses to Brian, while they dine out to celebrate his Geneva job, that she was losing control.

Weir is interested in pushing rational control to the very edge, to explore just how much stress it can stand before breaking. When the shoddily-repaired bathroom floods on the fourth morning, Max reappears, and there is a suggestion that Jill may never again be fully restored to her early composure. Perhaps, without being conscious of it, she has wanted to respond to Max’s sexual challenge. Perhaps part of her really agrees with Meg who says, "You’ve got to admit, if you get a really spunky guy round the house all day it can be a bit of a turn-on."

The film is finally a criticism of the blandly sterile academic life, though the latter is not set up as a target for simplistic satire. One does believe in the work Brian and Jill are doing; their absorption in it is convincing. The basis of the criticism is two-fold: first, such absorption has tended to cut them off from the life of their academic middle class. The Plumber.
The Cowpers entertain visiting WHO scientists, while their bathroom lies under siege. The Plumber.

instincts which have been educated into non-disturbing dormancy; and, second, it leads Jill to debase her intellect into cunning to destroy Max.

In an unusual overhead shot (and David Sanderson’s camerawork is essentially discreet throughout) the police are seen closing in on the plumber as he arrives in the car park on the fifth day. The audience is, in fact, observing the scene from Jill’s superior position on the top-storey balcony of her block of flats, as the police recover her watch from where she has planted it in Max’s van. He can only scream at her, “You bloody bitch”, while she looks on with what is left of her control, for the moment aloofly secure.

This last scene has the effect of confusing audience sympathies. Max’s outburst seems the result of open instinctive life being put down by the cunning of the educated. Jill seems to have over-reacted to his blundering challenge and certainly the planting of the watch is a genuinely nasty-minded way of getting rid of him. (The business of the missing watch is the least convincing thing in the film, in Jill’s cryptic attitude to it and as well as in Brian’s anger at how much it has cost him.) But two things work against this shift of sympathy to Max: first, the recollection of his observing Jill and Brian, unseen, through the window on the balcony on the second evening; and, second, the composition of a shot on the fourth morning when Max’s leather-gloved hand appears at the open window of his van, at the bottom left of the screen, as if, again unseen, he is waiting for Brian’s departure.

The film leaves the audience with this teasing ambivalence unresolved, and it is part of its purpose that it should not be resolved. Whatever Max is up to, Jill’s response to him has shown the inadequacy of the intellectual middle-class approach when it comes to dealing, at first-hand, with much rawer material than it is used to. Max may or may not be a thug, but Brian and Jill’s life — its preoccupations and their relationship — is exposed as jejune for all their intellectual striving and casually Gracious Living.

What else is certain is that, in his study of Jill, Weir has again found middle-class defences inadequate in the face of more basic urges and fears. Equally, it could be argued that, through Max, the film explores the inadequacy of the working classes in failing to understand and cope with a more sophisticated set of signals.

To those expecting Weir to move further in the direction of apocalyptic vision, The Plumber may seem a disappointment; I prefer to see it as heartening evidence of his capacity to work in a much tighter framework. His control over the details of mise-en-scene and his actors (all three leads give excellent performances) enables him to make his theoretical points in terms of firmly realized dramatic situation. He shows that he can disturb by focusing attention on the facts of everyday life and by showing that this “everyday life” is always susceptible to the “threat and danger” of unexpected forces. These may be the forces within the audience which it suppresses or they may be objectified in an intruding Max.

As the euphoria surrounding the burgeoning Australian cinema of the ’70s recedes, and the films are subjected to a tougher scrutiny than has so far been the case, I suspect that not many of them will reveal much staying power. Fred Schepisi’s The Devil’s Playground (1976) and The Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith (1978), both responsible, intelligent films, Phillip Noyce’s likeable Newsfront (1978), and Gillian Armstrong’s My Brilliant Career (1979), locating contemporary relevance in an exquisite evocation of the past, should hold up. Above them all though, I believe Peter Weir’s œuvre will be the chief claim of the ’70s to a place in film history. He may continue to make mistakes, but they will be the mistakes of a director with ideas to spare, and a relish for the medium in which he has chosen to express and explore them.
Filmography

Shorts
1967 Count Vim’s Last Exercise, 16mm, black and white, 5 mins.
1968 The Life and Flight of the Reverend Buckshotte, 16mm, black and white, 33 mins.
1969 Three to Go (Michael episode only)
1970 Stirring the Pool, 16mm, Eastmancolor, 10 mins.
1971 Homesdale, 16mm, black and white, 50 mins.
1972 Three Directions in Australian Pop Music, 16mm, Eastmancolor, 10 mins.
1972 Incredible Floridas, 35mm, Eastmancolor, 12 mins.
1973 Whatever Happened to Green Valley?, 16mm, Eastmancolor, 50 mins.

Television

Features
1974

1975

1977
Australian Directors

(Cedrick Lalara), Jacko (Morris Lalara), Michael Zeadler (Peter Carroll), Billy Corman (Athol Compton), Judge (Hedley Cullen), Andrew Potter (Michael Duffield), Morgue doctor (Wallas Eaton), Babysitter (Jo England), Policeman (John Frawley), Zeadler's secretary (Jennifer de Greenlaw), Prosecutor (Richard Henderson), Schoolteacher (Penny Leach), Morgue clerk (Merv Lilley), Guido (John Meagher), Don Fishburn (Malcolm Robertson), Carl (Greg Rowe), Sophie Burton (Katrina Sedgwick), Grace Burton (Ingrid Weir).

SCORING “THE EARTHLING”

Recording film music in Australia has for many years been a fairly hit and miss affair, the features of the early 1970s having music virtually laid on top of the image. Other than fading up and down during the mix to include sound effects, there was little attempt at dramatic orchestration.

Implementation of the click-track system, which gives the conductor a precise timing while he is recording the music, was a major breakthrough. But composers still worked without a visual reference. Brian May rectified this to a degree when scoring *Patrick* by using a television set to monitor the image. While a significant improvement, the director could still only see how the music matched the image during a replay.

This limitation has now been overcome by the system recently installed at Allan Eaton Sound Recording Studios in Melbourne. For the first time in Australia, a film score can be recorded in sync to an image on a cinema-size screen. The first feature to use this facility is Peter Collinson’s *The Earthling*.

Top left: Composer Bruce Smeaton conducts his orchestra, made up of members of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, while a scene from *The Earthling* is projected on to the screen. Top right: Director Peter Collinson waits in the mixing booth during a break in recording. Left: Collinson (centre) suggests a change to Smeaton (right). Because the director sees the image and hears the recording simultaneously he can make changes on the spot. In the climax, for example, Collinson moved the music four bars forward to signal, rather than reinforce, the action. Bottom: Producer Elliot Schick watches the string section from behind the mixing console.
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"Water Under the Bridge" is a television adaptation, by Eleanor Witcombe and Michael Jenkins, of Sumner Locke Elliot's novel of the same name. Starring Robyn Nevin, David Cameron, Judy Davis, Jacki Weaver, Chris Milne, Rod Mulliner and Linda Wilkinson, this nine-part series, directed by Igor Auzins and produced by John McRae, will be released by the Ten Network later this year.
At what point did you become involved in “Water Under the Bridge”?

About four months before shooting started, the producer, John McRae, asked me if I was interested in directing the entire series. I said I was.

Was it ever intended to use more than one director?

Yes, but that was when the series had a different producer. John McRae never intended to use more than one.

Do you think one director is preferable?

Yes, because you can attempt to develop a style throughout the series and take more risks with characterization.

Using only one director on an indefinite series is clearly impossible, but on a short-run series it is essential.

What are the problems in using more than one director on a long-run series?

The major problem is that everybody involved - the directors, the cast and the crew - plays it safe. They do only what has to be done, which is quite unsatisfactory.

How advanced were the scripts when you joined the production?

The first drafts hadn't been completed. I was involved in editing those drafts right through to the finish.

Why has the novel been broken into nine episodes?

The money men looked at the budget and said that makes nine. I think it would have broken up better into 10.

How have the writing tasks been allocated?

Eleanor Witcombe has written five episodes and Michael Jenkins four. They tended to write in blocks: Eleanor wrote episodes one, two and three; Michael four, five, six and seven; and Eleanor eight and nine. They each took a section of the story and covered it.

Would there have been any advantage in having only one scriptwriter?

Yes, but I am not quite sure whom we should have chosen: they both have strengths and weaknesses. It is also doubtful whether one person could have delivered on time.

Has the whole novel been covered?

No. During production we deleted everything that happened after Shasta (Robyn Nevin) is put into the home. We found the scripted episodes were running overtime, and we chose to delete the contemporary segment.

How do you feel about it being dropped?

It will probably make the series more satisfactory to those who haven't read the novel. If we had been able to have 10 episodes and devote more than seven minutes or so to that section, I would not have wanted it dropped. But as it was only an epilogue tagged onto an episode I was quite glad.

You don't see it as a necessary conclusion to the novel?

To the novel, yes, but not necessarily to the series. This is because the emphasis of the series has shifted slightly from Neil (David Cameron) to Shasta. Once she is gone, I am quite sure the audience won't want to know what happened to Neil 15 years later.

Whose decision was it to concentrate on Shasta?

It was something that happened automatically. Neil and Shasta are the main characters in terms of the number of pages, or minutes of time in the series, but Robyn Nevin is so stunningly wonderful as Shasta that she rivets the audience every moment she is on screen. You even feel the lack of her when she is off screen. So, Shasta became the central character by the strength of Robyn's ability as an actress.

I am not suggesting, by the way, that David Cameron isn't terrific; I can't imagine anyone else playing Neil.

In some of the more successful Australian series, like “The Sullivans”, there are perhaps seven or eight characters who share the screen time. Was that an approach you considered?

Yes, but it was rejected because the writers quickly realized that the importance of the series was not the narrative but the sub-text material. The mother-son relationship is central to the novel, and they quite correctly saw and pursued that.

I hope the lasting memory of the series will be that of a fairly horrific examination of a mother-son relationship, over the years in which a son decides to leave home.

There is a tendency for long-running series to become bland after a time. Is that why more shorter-run series are now being conceived: “A Town Like Alice”, “The Last Outlaw”, etc....

The economic circumstances would tend to mitigate against short series. They are obviously much more expensive to set up and have the cost amortized over a reasonable length of time.

Long-running series do tend to become bland. I can’t think of one that has intended to examine any sort of human truths. They are all based on a narrative progression. They go from week to week giving a version of what happened, not why it happened or how it affected people.

David Stevens, who has directed episodes of “The Sullivans”, argues that moral imperatives are closely scrutinized in each episode.

That may be the intention, but it doesn’t telecast very well.
The novel of "Water Under the Bridge" makes various social comments: e.g., about the indifference of the civilians towards soldiers. Can you, in the series, develop many of these themes?

Yes, but not all the points the novel makes, clearly. You have to concentrate on a limited range of aspects of the novel. We have decided to concentrate on the reality of the human relationships, rather than the reality of a social context. I suppose that becomes necessary simply for budgetary reasons. To examine social contexts you have to show them, and to put social events on screen is a fairly expensive procedure.

Are there any sections of the book that are not being used, or characters that have been deleted?

Yes, Mary Coles and her letters have been deleted. Also, Archie's involvement finishes with the end of World War 2, so we don't see him do that nice scene with the 17-year-old maiden, which is a shame.

Really, all the major characters are used. The Flagg sisters are probably a little less pathetic than they are in the novel, and their predicament is probably a little less truthfully handled. Because of the concentration the audience will hopefully place on Shasta, the sisters tend to become a little bit of a relief.

Several elements of the novel are arguably melodramatic, like the poor boy/rich girl, or Don's death a day or so before the end of the war. Have you been wary of these things?

Yes, but not all the points the novel makes, clearly. You have to concentrate on a limited range of aspects of the novel. We have decided to concentrate on the reality of the human relationships, rather than the reality of a social context. I suppose that becomes necessary simply for budgetary reasons. To examine social contexts you have to show them, and to put social events on screen is a fairly expensive procedure.

What is the time span of the series?

1918 to 1950. The flashback material that explains Shasta's background becomes episode one and not a flashback.

Two areas one would have to be careful of for television are the sex scenes and some of the dialogue. Have you felt constrained?

The sex scenes, as always, are handled tastefully and with a maximum of clothing. I really can't recall dialogue in the novel which is potentially offensive.

There are a few "fucks" . . .

Well, they have obviously been deleted. But the intention is always explicitly stated. Carrie and Neil still go down to the beach to count the condoms, and they do that without using words that cannot be used on television in Australia or, hopefully, elsewhere.

How do you decide what is acceptable?

Showing naked bodies is, to a certain extent, acceptable. But we haven't shown any naked bodies because we haven't found it necessary. For us, the key has been that the intention and feeling of the scene should remain the same.

With how much vigor have you gone about being accurate with dialogue and costumes?

Considerable. We have probably made least concessions to dialogue.

People constantly tell me that certain words or expressions weren't in use in 1942 and were first used in May 1943. I never believe them. Those wisdoms have come out of programs like The Sullivans.

This time span would obviously have presented difficulties in terms of casting, make-up and wardrobe . . .

We avoided these difficulties to an extent by making sure that all the characters who are supposed to be of the same age are of the same age.

The bulk of the series is in the 1930s and Neil is in his late teens and early twenties. We chose an actor who is over 30, but the rest of the cast are the same age so they all look similar. We simply tell the audience that they are 20, which is a long-standing tradition. The mistake is to mix ages within a cast group.

Why would you cast someone who is over 30 for a 20-year-old role?

It is more credible to age a character of a middle or medium age than age a young person. I don't think Liddy Clark looked convincing as whatever she was supposed to be in Ride on Stranger. She was too young. Likewise, a 20-year-old actor playing Neil when he is 40 would have been laughable, whereas David Cameron can quite happily play Neil when he is 20.

What control did you have in the casting?

I cast the entire series. John very sensibly knows that it is the director who has to work with the cast.

What was the basis of your casting?

I tried to cast actors who worked in the same way, who held the same theories and approaches to acting, and could therefore work well together.

What is that approach?

Actors who can become emotionally involved in the characters. I can't categorize all the cast and say they all take a "method" approach. But a good number do. As to those who don't, they have learned other ways of doing things.

Which Australian series do you think has been the most successful in bringing together a homogeneous group of actors?

The first series of Prisoner.

George Miller said that when he cast "Mad Max" he consciously avoided easily recognizable actors.
because they brought with them a certain persona . . .

Yes, I think it is counter-productive to use people who have an identifiable personality.

Does that mean you were prepared to punt with unknowns?

Our actors may be television unknowns, but many are highly experienced stage actors. Robyn Nevin, for example, is little known on television, but she is considered one of the best actresses in Australia.

Can you afford to go with more unknown names in television than on a feature?

Actually, I think you have greater freedom with a feature because you are not responsible to a buyer. If it wants to, a network can exert a fair amount of pressure on a television producer. This didn't happen to us fortunate, and John McRae had total creative control. He was obliged, as a matter of nicety, to refer major casting decisions to the network, but they didn't make intrusive suggestions.

How much were you influenced by physical characteristics when casting characters?

If one had an infinite choice of actors, one would try to match the physical characteristics. But it's more important to match the emotional characteristics. If you happen to get both, then fine.

Australian features are often cast on a marketing basis. Is this also true of television?

The attempts to manipulate the market with name performers have failed largely. The current television market isn't particularly good. I don't think Tim Burstall's attempts to tailor for the foreign market worked, and I don't think Fred Schepisi's did either.

From my point of view, there is enough to occupy one's mind without thinking about a hypothetical foreign market: one hasn't researched, doesn't understand and probably hasn't even visited. One's task is to do one's best with the script, the performers and the crew. That is probably where it should end.

Do you believe Australians should only use Australian source material for a film or television program? For example, is there any reason why Australia shouldn't be adapting German or Greek novels?

Yes, because the Germans and Greeks would do German and Greek novels better. You only have to look at the BBC's attempts at Russian novels to find out why one shouldn't try.

Clearly there are problems recreating Greece in a BBC studio. But there are sensibilities and sensitivities in foreign novels that can be taken and adapted to an Australian situation. Australian literature has a fairly narrow emotional and intellectual range, and confining oneself to what is Australian could limit what will ever come out of this country . . .

If one feels confident that one can adapt a foreign story, and do so truthfully and realistically, then I have no objection whatever. But I think it's enormously difficult and these efforts generally have a false feel about them. The BBC versions of War and Peace and Anna Karenin were not truthful representations of the people or the novels.

Your continued use of the word "truthful" suggests you see cinema and television as having obligations to realism . . .

Fantasy isn't an area that appeals to me as a director. For me, it is important to try to represent human truth on the screen.

Also geographical and historical truth, if you feel British actors look ridiculous in Russian uniforms. But surely they can also create a human truth . . .

One would think you ought to be able to, but they didn't.

Is that the fault of them being British?

Yes. They didn't understand the situations and they postured and gestured throughout them. They never seemed to feel the situations were real.

I suppose it is for much the same reason that we can't make films for the Asian market — the Japanese in particular.

Yet "Mad Max" is on its way to making $6 million in Japan and "The Man From Hong Kong" holds the box-office record in Karachi . . .

Well, Mad Max is the only Australian film that has done any good in Japan, obviously. What I was actually referring to were co-productions, such as the proposed films on the Cowra prison break.

THE PRODUCTION

What is the shooting period on "Water Under the Bridge"?

Twenty weeks. Spread over nine episodes, this gives one a little more than two weeks an episode, which is quite generous. The shooting was preceded by 16 weeks of pre-production, which was generous but necessary.

Was there a rehearsal period?

Yes. Three weeks with all the major cast. We went through what we felt was important in the novel and what was important in the . . .
scripts. You could call it a group encounter session. We locked ourselves away in rooms with various combinations of people: sometimes the entire group, sometimes just one or two.

I didn't think there would be any purpose in attempting to rehearse the scenes as such, as it would be five months before they were shot. It was more important to define our intentions and approach.

How much re-writing came out of that period?

Only a little; lines here and there. We are also re-writing a little on the floor during the shooting. As we go along, we become more confident of ourselves and re-write even more.

Do you block out scenes on the set or the night before?

On the set. With the exception of one scene, we have never rushed through a shoot; we have always had enough time.

This is partly due to my approach, which tries to ensure that the actors' performances will end up on screen. I have tried to plot, clock and shoot scenes in a way that makes the actors' performances the most important element, and something the editing process can't or won't transform or disfigure too much. But I am continually surprised at how resourceful editors can be.

Do you think shooting a 60-minute program in 13 days is a reasonable speed?

It is with a studio shoot, but not on location.

What percentage of “Water Under the Bridge” is in the studio?

Probably 60 per cent, which is quite a lot. I don’t think I could maintain the same speed on location; the distractions are much greater and the usable time is much less.

How many of the exterior locations were done in Sydney?

All except the major exterior location of Rockwell Cres, which we shot in Parkville. That was a practical necessity because it is almost impossible to find unaltered, empty sections of Sydney, whereas it is a little easier in Melbourne.

What about lighting and sound?

The problem with sound is that you can hear recordings in Studio A downstairs. We constantly had to fight with Armstrong's personnel to have the Little River Band stopped, and that sort of thing. They claim they are going to re-work it and eliminate that problem.

Dan Burstall, who is shooting the series, tends to use very little light, so we were fortunate there. If he had wanted to use more lighting, it just wouldn't have been possible. The studio has a usable height of about 10 feet.

Is the series being shot on video and film?

No, all film.

Using video in a studio means a director can employ multi-camera set-ups. Is this an advantage?

It is vitally important in, say, Crawfords' preferred style of production, which is intercutting medium close-ups. We don't have an intercutting medium close-up type of series. We have tried to construct it with a little more flow.

Is there an Auzins visual style?

My view of the novel is that a recipient's reaction to given information is often more important than the narrative. So, I have undertaken, as far as possible, to show that reaction. This has meant that much of the shooting is not single shots; you tend to see more than one person in a frame.

So you detail a reaction by moving the camera in on someone and then back to a two-shot, rather than by cutting?

Yes.

Hence, it is difficult for the editor to make a cut ...

Absolutely.

Where did you gain your confidence in editors?

Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide.

What is about Australian editing that you dislike?

It is a feeling created between producers and editors. I have worked with too many producers who only give the director a token first cut, and too many editors who know that they may as well not do anything on the first cut because the
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producer will come in and 'save' the film later. But it wouldn't have happened on this series; the editor and the producer don't work like that.

But what is it about the editing technique that you think is weak?

I can only reference things to the way I like to work, obviously. I think they cut too much. They assume that the cutting is solely responsible for detailing an event or a mood. They aren't prepared to see it happen within the frame without a cut to heighten things.

One technique John Ford often employed was to choreograph a lot of action within the frame: for example, the classic scene in "The Searchers" where Ward Bond bursts in the door and interrupts the breakfast. Yet this technique is something one doesn't often find in Australian films or television. Is it because it is difficult to do?

No. In fact, a lot of Water Under the Bridge is done in single shots with movement within the frame.

Is it demanding of actors to choreograph their movements?

It is demanding on actors, but more in terms of making the emotional flow of a scene work. Their performance can't be saved later by cutting and the actors have to be confident, as does the director, that what is happening in front of cameras will work later. There is no alternative.

What is the post-production period?

Ten weeks. The editor (Edward McQueen-Mason) is almost up to date and is rough-cutting more or less the material we are now shooting day by day.

It is a large job for one editor...

It is much the same as having one director. It did take him a few days to understand what we were trying to do, but that was probably because I didn't speak to him a lot. In his early cutting, he found some fairly ingenious ways to do things that we were studiously avoiding, but he gave that up as we progressed.

One criticism often levelled at Australian films is that scenes are too short. Given that the novel is full of many quick scenes, did you see that as a possible danger area?

No, because the series isn't constructed in the same way as the novel. The novel intertwines periods and events more than we do.

So you have taken all the scenes of, say, the rise and fall of Neil and Carrie's relationship and made that one episode?

Yes. Maggie and Brandywine is another episode; Geraldine and Ben another. Other stories, of course, are followed through as well.

To what degree did you shoot out of sequence?

Completely. We treated the series as a nine-hour project, and shot by locations or sets. The first set was Shasta's Rockwell Cres. digs, which took two weeks.

Did this create problems in terms of ageing characters and sets?

Yes, but it is better for the director and the actors. The actor can remember exactly how he felt and what he did on the first day, which is maybe two years earlier than the second day. This way he can develop his ageing and his performance more subtly.

The directors, producer and several actors of "The Pallisers" suggested that the series failed primarily because it was shot out of sequence. Susan Hampshire, for example, would go from being 18 in the morning to 52 at lunch and back to 37 in the afternoon, just to maximize the use of the set.

We made some allowance for this problem in the scheduling. We tried to make sure that no more than three or four years were spanned on any one day, or by any one performer. The next day, though, might be 20 years later.

When is "Water Under the Bridge" being released?

August or September. The original plan was to run episodes one and two on the opening night, and then one a week after that. But it's a network decision and anything can happen.

Do you feel that a television series slips through your fingers more easily than a feature?

Yes, but that is a contractual fact of life. The network has bought the program and they have expertise in marketing. They don't really seek producer or director involvement.

Having made a feature and worked for television, do you see any advantages in doing television?

One of the greatest advantages is that one has more time to present the same idea. The dramatic development is slower and can be more careful and more interesting, probably.

Do you feel restricted by the small screen?

Yes, though more by the shape than the size. It is a big battle to make television anything other than a medium close-up visual presentation.

We have tried to compose variations to the medium close-up. There are situations where I have played various levels of activity between foreground and background. We have also abandoned the conventional wisdom that there is a safe area within the 16mm framework for television. We have used the entire frame, so some of the picture might not go to air.

What's next?

I have been working for some time on two feature scripts. One is a story loosely based on a draft resister named Michael Mattison. Keith Thompson is writing that and it is being funded by the Victorian Film Corporation.

The other is Mrs Gunn's novel, We of the Never Never, which Peter Schreck is writing for the New South Wales Film Corporation. Hopefully, I can arrange one of these for later this year.

What about more television?

If something comes up which interests me, I will consider it; otherwise, I will return to commercials. I find the discipline quite different, and though I am not entirely sure I am very good at them I get enough work. ★
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Guo Film Distributors
Peter Maxwell
Joyce de Cziko
Marianne dawn
Michaela Coughlin
Peter Maxwell
Production company:
Guo Film Distributors
468 Erina Road, Erina, NSW
Tel: 6672286

DIRECTOR: Norman Bridgen
Cinematographer: Max Bannah
Art Director: John Hill
Editor: Chris Laidler
Film Editor: David Johnson
Composer: Colin Thompson
Music: "Rock The Boat"

CAST:
Mark Goldblatt as Dean
Simon Libby as Movie Critic
Sarah Mostyn as Elizabeth
Richard McIlraith as John

SYNOPSIS: A thriller about a movie critic who is blackmailed by a movie star.

FINISH

Producers:
Guo Film Distributors
468 Erina Road, Erina, NSW
Tel: 6672286

DIRECTOR: Norman Bridgen
Cinematographer: Max Bannah
Art Director: John Hill
Editor: Chris Laidler
Film Editor: David Johnson
Composer: Colin Thompson
Music: "Rock The Boat"

CAST:
Mark Goldblatt as Dean
Simon Libby as Movie Critic
Sarah Mostyn as Elizabeth
Richard McIlraith as John

SYNOPSIS: A thriller about a movie critic who is blackmailed by a movie star.

IN RELEASE

HERALD

Producers:
F.G. Film Productions
12 Little Street, Paddington, NSW
Tel: 6611111

DIRECTOR: Anthony Buckley
Cinematographer: Peter Mather
Editor: John Hill
Film Editor: David Johnson
Composer: Colin Thompson
Music: "Rock The Boat"

CAST:
Mark Goldblatt as Dean
Simon Libby as Movie Critic
Sarah Mostyn as Elizabeth
Richard McIlraith as John

SYNOPSIS: A thriller about a movie critic who is blackmailed by a movie star.

SHORTS

BALKIN DADDY

Director: Sophy Tewkesbury
Writer: Sophy Tewkesbury

SYNOPSIS: A young woman faces up to her father's affair with her mother and tries to get through the emotional turmoil.

BUCKLEY'S CHANCE

Director: Anthony Buckley
Writer: Sophy Tewkesbury

SYNOPSIS: A young woman faces up to her father's affair with her mother and tries to get through the emotional turmoil.
PRODUCTION SURVEY

ANIMATION

The Little Conduit

See details in Features (under in Release) this issue.

SUBURBAN WINDOWS

Producer/director: Robert Wyatt
Based on the original idea by
Robert Wyatt
Photography: Robert Wyatt
Sound: Robert Wyatt
Lighting cameraman: Robert Wyatt
Camera assistant: Robert Wyatt
Special effects: Robert Wyatt

SHOTS

Budget: $730
Length: 7 mins.
Shooting stock: Eastmancolor
Post-production: Compliance release

Voices: Virginia Pearce, Sue Ford
Crew: Kerry Dwyer, Roger Goodall
Synopsis: Another day for a cleaning lady and the lady of the house is also a woman comes to a realization of her position within her working-class world.

THE WEDDING

Prod. company: Australian Film and Television Ranch
Director: Kerry Dwyer
Scriptwriter: Based on the original idea by
Kerry Dwyer
Photography: Geoff Burton
Sound recordist: Pat Fiske
Sound editor: Ken Ferguson
Art director: Sue Pearson
Assistant director: Julie Dovern
Production Manager: Lisa Wyka
1st assistant director: Erika Addis
2nd assistant director: Helen Little
Continuity: Gill Freeman
Camera operator: Marcus Redmond
Camera assistant: Lester Baker
Gaffer: Sam Banko
Stand-in: Peter Hamlin
Art directors: Michelle MacKenzie, Jackie Summerton
Music: arranged by Sarah de Jong
Budget: $1500
Length: 20 mins.
Shooting stock: Eastmancolor
Post-production: Compliance release

CAST

Robert McDermid (Kasper), Geoffrey Rusht (Mark), Cissie McKee (Mall), Louise Windsor (陔), Jude Lang (Peggy), Hazelhurst (The bride), Rod Drum (Jabber), Rob Noone (Mr. Blythe), Pam Pemberton (musician), Richard Wilson (musician).

WINTER

Prod. companies: Student Attachment Film Project, Tasmanian Film Corporation
Director: Michelle McCrae
Scriptwriter: Michelle McCrae
Based on the original idea by
Michelle McCrae
Production Manager: Michelle McCrae
Executive producer: Anna Whistler
Production designer: Michelle Wyra
Costume designer: Michelle McCrae
Art director: Gerald Thompson
Budget: $10,000
Length: 25 mins.
Shooting stock: Eastmancolor
Post-production: Compliance release

CAST

James Price (Clown), Ian Cowan (Brian), (Chy), Joel Patterson
Synopsis: A couple's attempts to escape lead her back to where she started.

For details of the following films see issue 19.
And Sometimes I See Like I'm Only 18
See Plat du Jour (A Trilogy)

Dirt

Dirty Business

Empowering Strategy

Extricating A Crooked Lizard

The Last Goodbye

Man of His Time

Beginning With Art

Tom Roberts

White Waves

DOCUMENTARIES

FEATURES

MICK

Prod company: Geoff Wild Productions
Director: Geoff Wild
Scriptwriter: Geoff Wild
Production Designer: Geoff Wild
Producer/director: Geoff Wild
Actor: Geoff Wild
Sound recordist: Geoff Wild
Sound mixer: Geoff Wild
Boom operator: Geoff Wild
Cameraman: Geoff Wild
Editor: Denise Haslem
Budget: $25,000
Length: 25 mins.
Production: Pre-production
Synopsis: A documentary drama on a working-class boy who finds the ground cutting out from under his feet.

THE ANGEL AND THE DOLPHINS

Prod company: Patience Films
Director: Steve McDonald
Scriptwriter: Richard Lawton
Producer: Steve McDonald
Special effects: Steve McDonald
Production Designer: Paul Scharnberg
Production Manager: Janice Keally
Costume designer: Robert Murray
Cameras assistant: Claire Jaeger
Boom operator: Black Cat Films
Laboratory: Cinema City
Length: 13 mins.
Budget: $20,000
Length: 3 mins.
Shooting stock: Eastmancolor
Post-production: Compliance release

First released: December, 1979

CAST

Kim McRae, David McKenzie, David Schuberg, Carol P.T., Dave Rob, Joelle, Matthew, Dave Stranger, Midnight Fontaine, Sue Purnes.

Synopsis: A documentary which examines the work, ideas and lifestyle of a Melbourne sculptor and the relationship between sculpture, dance and society.

AUSSIE SAYS

Prod. company: AVE Films Unit
Distributor: AVE Films Unit
Director: Barbara Boyd
Scriptwriter: Barbara Boyd
Photography: Barbara Boyd
Sound recordist: Barbara Boyd
Sound mixer: Barbara Boyd
Production Manager: Barbara Boyd

CAST

Nancy and John Jones and people of the Mattie

Synopsis: Nancy and John Jones live on the Mallete Turtle farm; he is a crop sprayer and she is mother of four young children. They are having problems with various sorts of animals and they are apprehensive of the film deals with their very busy lives as a farming family, parents and teachers and art consultants.

SHOTS

SHOTS

Budget: $46,000
Length: 50 mins.
Shooting stock: Eastmancolor
Post-production: Compliance release

Schedule released: late 1981

Main titles: Antal Mednyi, Roy Seibert
Short titles: The Bells Are Ringing

CAST

Robert Wyatt
Narda Karpas
Derek Dermon
Muriel Phillips
Cinematographer
Length: 18 mins.
Shooting stock: Eastmancolor
Post-production: Compliance release

Synopsis: An avant-garde animation and special effects film using cutout images and sound effects derived from the sub-urban environment in other older suburban suburbs.

DOUG HUNTER

Prod company: AVEC Film Unit
Director: Ian Milliss
Scriptwriter: Candy Baker
Actor: candy Baker
Sound recordist: Jane Scott
Sound mixer: Jane Scott
Camera assistant: Jamie Thomas
Sound mixer: Jamie Thomas
Boom operator: Dave Stranger
Production Manager: AVEC Film Unit

Length: 25 mins.
Production: Pre-production
Synopsis: A documentary about a community of Italian families who have made an interesting combination of southern Italian, provincial and Western consumer culture.

STAIRWAY TO HEAVEN

Prod. company: Ciro Coop Productions
Director: Graham Varney
Scriptwriter: Graham Varney
Production Designer: John O'Sullivan
Edit recordist: John O'Sullivan
Sound recordist: Tony Black
Prints: John O'Sullivan
Synopsis: A film about the lives of a prison's warder and the effect of the visit of a friend or a relative of the outside community.

SECRET VALLEY

Prod. company: Grundy Organization
Director: Virginia Westbury
Scriptwriter: Virginia Westbury
Actor: Virginia Westbury
Camera Assistant: Virginia Westbury
Composer: Virginia Westbury
Camera assistant: Virginia Westbury
Editor: Virginia Westbury
Director: Virginia Westbury
Producer/director: Virginia Westbury
Synopses: A film about the lives of a prison's warder and the effect of the visit of a friend or a relative of the outside community.

UNION MADE

Prod. company: Michael Greenery
Director: John Hughes
Script writer: John Hughes
Actor: John Hughes
Sound recordist: Jack Black
Prints: Jack Black
Synopsis: A film about the lives of a prison's warder and the effect of the visit of a friend or a relative of the outside community.

CAST

Jim Walpole

Music: performed by Chris Neal

Editing assistant: Inga Wille
Mixing: Australian Film Laboratory

Length: 30 mins.
Production: Pre-production
Synopsis: A compilation of film deals with their very busy lives as a farming family, parents and teachers and art consultants.

CAST

Nancy and John Jones and people of the Mattie

Synopsis: Nancy and John Jones live on the Mallete Turtle farm; he is a crop sprayer and she is mother of four young children. They are having problems with various sorts of animals and they are apprehensive of the film deals with their very busy lives as a farming family, parents and teachers and art consultants.

TELEVISION

PILOTS

PUNISHMENT

Prod. company: Grundy Organization
Director: Alan Coleman
Scriptwriter: Alan Coleman
Synopsis: A film about the lives of a prison's warder and the effect of the visit of a friend or a relative of the outside community.

CAST

John Hughes

Music: performed by Chris Neal

Editing assistant: Inga Wille
Mixing: Australian Film Laboratory

Length: 30 mins.
Production: Pre-production
Synopsis: A compilation of film deals with their very busy lives as a farming family, parents and teachers and art consultants.

CAST

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Editing assistant: Inga Wille
Mixing: Australian Film Laboratory

Length: 30 mins.
Production: Pre-production
Synopsis: A compilation of film deals with their very busy lives as a farming family, parents and teachers and art consultants.
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### A CYCLONE WARNING

**Prod. company** Film Australia
**Dist. company** Film Australia
**Scriptwriter** Brian McClure
**Sound recordist** Robin Hughes
**Camera assistant** Tim Ayres
**Gauge** 16 mm

**Synopsis:** A short film illustrating what to do when a cyclone is imminent.

### FIRE POWER

**Prod. company** Film Australia
**Dist. company** Film Australia
**Producer** Peter Johnson
**Director** Roy Bissell
**Gauge** 16 mm

**Synopsis:** A short film for small businessmen and women. Sponsored by the Department of Industry and Commerce, Australian Horticultural Society, and the Canberra Women's Association, and the pressures of "Three Communities" series, looks at the activities of the Land Commission in building homes and promoting home ownership.

### RUGBY

**Prod. company** Film Australia
**Dist. company** Film Australia
**Producer** Peter Johnson
**Director** Roy Bissell
**Gauge** 16 mm

**Synopsis:** A film on Rugby Union in Australia.

### SEAGULLS

**Prod. company** Film Australia
**Dist. company** Film Australia
**Producer** Peter Johnson
**Director** Roy Bissell
**Gauge** 16 mm

**Synopsis:** A short film designed to change society's unsympathetic and hostile attitude towards disabled people. Sponsored by the Australian Barley Board. Directed by Mike Green. Sponsored by the Land Commission of New South Wales.

### HOKEY

**Prod. company** Film Australia
**Dist. company** Film Australia
**Producer** Peter Johnson
**Director** Roy Bissell
**Gauge** 16 mm

**Synopsis:** A montages of Australia and its ethnic diversity using the words of Henry Lawson to examine their beliefs and attitudes to the audience to examine their beliefs and attitudes to discrimination, and give a short statement of the audience to examine their beliefs and attitudes to discrimination, and give a short statement of the effects of their "good move". Sponsored by Alcohol Services.

### THE NEVER ENDING LAND

**Prod. company** Film Australia
**Dist. company** Film Australia
**Producer** Peter Johnson
**Director** Roy Bissell
**Gauge** 16 mm

**Synopsis:** A short film for primary and secondary school students. Sponsored by the Department of Education, Department of Tourism, and the Australian Government.

### PLAIN SAILING

**Prod. company** Film Australia
**Dist. company** Film Australia
**Producer** Peter Johnson
**Director** Roy Bissell
**Gauge** 16 mm

**Synopsis:** A short film about the Territorial Army and overseas audiences.

### STREETS ARE FOR SHARING

**Prod. company** Film Australia
**Dist. company** Film Australia
**Producer** Peter Johnson
**Director** Roy Bissell
**Gauge** 16 mm

**Synopsis:** A short film on the social and commercial aspects of the area, and the audience to examine their beliefs and attitudes to discrimination, and give a short statement of the effects of their "good move". Sponsored by Alcohol Services.

### PLANET EARTH: ONE EARTH

**Prod. company** Film Australia
**Dist. company** Film Australia
**Producer** Peter Johnson
**Director** Roy Bissell
**Gauge** 16 mm

**Synopsis:** A short film about the problems of transportation and the effects of their "good move". Sponsored by Alcohol Services.

### THE WORKING SERIES

**Prod. company** Film Australia
**Dist. company** Film Australia
**Producer** Peter Johnson
**Director** Roy Bissell
**Gauge** 16 mm

**Synopsis:** A series of short films to promote local and commercial aspects of the area, and the audience to examine their beliefs and attitudes to discrimination, and give a short statement of the effects of their "good move". Sponsored by Alcohol Services.

### GYMNASTICS

**Prod. company** Film Australia
**Dist. company** Film Australia
**Producer** Peter Johnson
**Director** Roy Bissell
**Gauge** 16 mm

**Synopsis:** A short film highlighting the adoption of a new role as a career in the R.A.N.

### BOAT SHIP

**Prod. company** Film Australia
**Dist. company** Film Australia
**Producer** Peter Johnson
**Director** Roy Bissell
**Gauge** 16 mm

**Synopsis:** A short film about the problems of transportation and the effects of their "good move". Sponsored by Alcohol Services.

### DEVELOPMENT OF ENERGY

**Prod. company** Film Australia
**Dist. company** Film Australia
**Producer** Peter Johnson
**Director** Roy Bissell
**Gauge** 16 mm

**Synopsis:** A short film about the problems of transportation and the effects of their "good move". Sponsored by Alcohol Services.

### FOREST DREAMS

**Prod. company** Film Australia
**Dist. company** Film Australia
**Producer** Peter Johnson
**Director** Roy Bissell
**Gauge** 16 mm

**Synopsis:** A short film about the problems of transportation and the effects of their "good move". Sponsored by Alcohol Services.

### JUNGLE

**Prod. company** Film Australia
**Dist. company** Film Australia
**Producer** Peter Johnson
**Director** Roy Bissell
**Gauge** 16 mm

**Synopsis:** A short film about the problems of transportation and the effects of their "good move". Sponsored by Alcohol Services.
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MUSIC FOR FILMS
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<th>Distributor</th>
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Australian Total             |             | 237,103    | 128,130  | 122,222   | 33,207    | 92,074    | 612,836 | 361,663 |

Foreign Total                |             | 3,619,512  | 2,685,281 | 1,820,781 | 958,080   | 821,072   | 9,904,726| 3,751,025| 2,713,092| 1,354,392| 729,674 | 693,676 | 8,866,859| 9,517,128| 3 |

Grand Total                  |             | 3,856,615  | 2,813,411 | 1,943,003 | 991,287   | 913,146   | 10,517,562| 3,737,688| 2,860,262| 1,439,184| 737,233 | 742,761 | 9,517,128| 9,517,128| 3 |

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* Figures exclude N/A figures.
* Box-office grosses of individual films have been supplied to Cinema Papers by the Australian Film Commission.
* This figure represents the total box-office gross of all foreign films shown during the period in the area specified.
* Continuiniing into next period.
** Figures in parentheses above the crosses represent weeks in release. If more than one figure appears, the film has been released in more than one cinema during the period.

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(1) Australian theatrical distributors only. BS = Roadshow; GUO = Greater Union Organization Film Distributors; HTS = Hoyts Theatres; FOX = 20th Century Fox; UA = United Artists; DIC = Cinema International Corporation; PI = Filmways Australasian Distributors; 7K = 7 Keys Film Distributors; COL = Columbia Pictures; REG = Regent Film Distributors; CCQ = Centre Group; AFC = Australian Film Commission; SAD = South Australian Film Corporation; MCA = Music Corporation of America; S = Sharmill Films; OTH = Other. (2) Figures are drawn from capital city and inner suburban first release hardtops only. (3) Split figures indicate a multiple cinema release.
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REVIEW OF THE
AUSTRALIAN
BROADCASTING
COMMISSION

The Commonwealth Government has appointed a Committee of Review to hold an independent inquiry which will, inter alia, consider and report to the Government on the services, policies and performance of the Australian Broadcasting Commission under its present statutory charter, and recommend appropriate future objectives, functions, statutory powers and policies of the Commission under the Broadcasting and Television Act 1942. The full terms of reference and further details on the establishment of the Committee may be obtained from the Secretary at the address below.

In accordance with the conditions of its establishment the Committee invites submissions from all sectors of the community and proposes to follow some of these up in public hearings which will be conducted when it visits the capital cities and different areas of Australia. It would be of assistance to the Committee if any written submissions were lodged with its Secretary as soon as possible. Confidential submissions will be accepted by the Committee and will not be published or communicated to third parties without the agreement of the author. The Committee wishes to thank those groups and individuals who prepared submissions in response to advertisements placed in December 1979.

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Frontline
Barbara Alysen

The fatal shooting of ABC journalist Tony Joyce in Zambia and an American reporter in Nicaragua, together with Australia's belated recognition of the murder of five of its newsmen by Indonesian forces invading East Timor, tell the grim story of the cost of the pictures on our television screen. Unprotected in combat zones, despite their supposed neutrality, and preyed upon by martial regimes, journalists are now at greater risk in most parts of the world than any other professional group, except soldiers. In Vietnam, the mortality rate among journalists was a discouraging one in five.

Neil Davis, a Tasmanian-born cameraman-reporter, survived frontline reporting in Vietnam for 11 years (1964-1975), a feat made more extraordinary by the additional risks he often took to get what he considered the best footage. For most of that period, Davis worked for a British-based television syndicate, Viznews.

In 1976, freelance journalist, David Bradbury, collected $4500 from the Australian War Memorial and set out to make a film about Vietnam war correspondents. Almost everyone consulted during early research directed him to Neil Davis. Bradbury, who had no filmmaking experience, talked the Australian Film Commission's Creative Development Branch into loaning him the maximum available from its production fund and flew to Thailand to interview Davis. Afterwards, he sifted through archival footage at Viznews in London, and NBC, CBS and the Department of Defence in the U.S., for examples of Davis' work, and for other shots that would illustrate his words. The result, Frontline, is a painstakingly thorough examination of U.S. and Allied involvement in Vietnam, as much a comment on any one man's reporting of that war.

Vietnam was the first war fully covered by the electronic media. Reporters were relatively free from government censorship though not, as Frontline makes clear, from network interference. Nonetheless, the constant barrage of carnage fed to western television viewers contributed to Allied ambivalence about the morality of intervention in Vietnam and fuelled the peace movement's cause.

Television coverage created a quandary: the same pictures that helped convince Americans that their involvement in Southeast Asia was fruitless at best, and immoral at worst, also conditioned viewers to the war's brutality. The realism of television news coverage led to the perpetration of lies in subsequent depictions of the war, with directors like Michael Cimino and Francis Coppola forced to reach beyond the truth for a visual overkill that could still shock gore-intoxicated viewers.

Davis touches on the morality of filming frontline footage. There were times, he says, when he wanted to step out from behind the camera and take a side; there were times when he did. He also talks with rare authority about the development of the Vietnam war and of television's contribution to its progress. Mostly, however, Davis concentrates on what he filmed and how, rather than why. He saw his charter as the presentation of "truth", and he let very little stand in the way of his presenting it. As a result, much of what happened to Davis in Vietnam ranks with the best-concocted adventure stories.

At one point Davis managed to get the Americans to hold off their B52 bombing raids of a Vietcong area for three days, so that he could cross the battle lines and report on life in a liberated zone. He was frequently shot at and once seriously wounded in action.

Later, as the fall of Saigon became inevitable, and most correspondents fled, Davis reasoned that the danger would be transient and that the liberation would make great footage. So he made his way to the presidential palace with a camera and an excuse: "Welcome comrades, I've come to film the liberation", in carefully-rehearsed Vietnamese.

On most of his more orthodox assignments, Davis chose to travel with the South Vietnamese rather than the American troops. He saw that the South Vietnamese had a reason to fight and were, most often, to be found in the thick of the action. He came to feel that the Americans were, by contrast, ill-motivated and shoddily directed. In this sense, Frontline is a much stronger anti-war statement than any of the feature films that use the war as their backdrop; it not only suggests that American involvement was immoral, it also paints it as poorly conceived and executed.

The strength of this film is the precision with which the archival footage is matched to Davis' recollection of events, and the fact that his exploits make a documentary which is pacy and compelling. The narration that ties the film together is clear and informative, avoiding the twin pitfalls of being either didactic or sensational.

Against this are two weaknesses: the first is that like most war films it gives the impression that the conflict was between soldiers, rather than between governments. An analysis of the diplomatic manoeuvres that shaped the course of the Vietnam war would undoubtedly have been outside the scope of the film — Davis was a combat, not a political, correspondent. But a reminder about the scope of the war and the American government's role and motivations could have been included.

The second weakness is that it is unclear just whose side Davis is on. After 11 years in combat zones he must have had some feelings about each side's cause, yet his ambivalence about who he supported looks less like journalistic ethics than it does
indifference. Bradbury says Davis sympathized with the Vietcong, but the film gives little indication of this.

But these are small quibbles with a film which is primarily biographical and which manages to go far beyond the individual to examine a greatly misrepresented part of our recent history.

**Frontline**


**HARLEQUIN**

Jack Clancy

A film which begins with a sequence in which a leading political figure goes skin-diving and fails to surface, while his security men stand around on the beach watching and then panicking, seems likely to be concerned with Australian politics and Australian life generally. But that opening reference to the drowning of former Australian Prime Minister Harold Holt is pretty well the last specific reference to Australia in Simon Wincer's *Harlequin*.

Although shot in Perth, by an Australian production company, it goes to some pains to avoid being seen as an Australian film. Politicians are senators or governors, and while local light is evident in the exteriors, local color is avoided. Overseas actors, Robert Powell, David Hemmings and Broderick Crawford, give the film an international look, and it probably only remains for the shots of motor cars to be reversed for *Harlequin* to be indistinguishable from an American product.

*Harlequin* seems designed principally for an international market, and interviews with the director, writer and associate producer leave no doubt that making money is the primary, if not the only, concern. Thus Everett de Roche's original treatment, based on the Rasputin story, has the leading character as a priest, but marketing considerations forced a change. De Roche's reaction was: "How I feel doesn't matter. The producer pays his money, which gives him the right to use the script for dunny paper if he wants." Encouraging. And director Simon Wincer, referring to "the film that Everett and I wanted to make", says, "... we were not financing the film and the financiers have a say."

Even permitting this, the unhappy fact remains that *Harlequin* is a silly film. Despite a gallant attempt by Robert Powell, who brings something of a presence to the Rasputin-like figure of Gregory Wolfe, the whole notion of translating the story of Rasputin and his influence on the family of Czar Nicholas II to a modern setting strikes me as dubious.

It is hard to see what might have been explored or analysed, or suggested; harder still to imagine the kind of "thriller" which could have been taken even half seriously. In the event, the film doesn't achieve much on either level, with its attempts at seriousness coming out as ludicrously pretentious and its thriller level as decidedly unthrilling.

The mysterious figure who suddenly appears, accompanied by equally mysterious portents, cures the child suffering from leukemia and remains to exert some sort of spell over the boy's family, can be, like Rasputin, the object of faith, veneration and awe, or suspicion and hostility. When he manages, with the aid of a very busy special effects man, to play tricks which defy rational explanation, when he carries on like a combination of showman, faith healer, popular philosopher, circus clown and magician, he should be, for the audience, an invading force of the extra-rational into the harshly pragmatic world of politics. Yet, he doesn't have that effect.

Despite so much of contemporary Western culture's flight into the irrational, from the nonsensical game-playing of astrologers, to cults, occultists and magical fantasies of all sorts, the presence of Gregory Wolfe (Robert Powell) tells Alex (Mark Spain) about the wonders of flight. An anxious Mr. Bergier (Gus Mercurio) looks on. *Harlequin*.

Gregory is never felt as more than an oddity. And despite attempts, in the script, to make connections between the illusions traded by the democratic political process and the magical tricks of Gregory — Nick (David Hemmings) being "groomed by magicians" and the professional politician asking "Whose magic are you going to believe?" — there is no real engaging of the issues, because...

Below: Senator Nick Rast (David Hemmings) sits disapprovingly as his wife Sandra (Carmen Duncan) returns with Gregory. *Harlequin*.
A live-action Rolf Harris looks on as Governor Lightfoot and Augustus have a domestic tiff. Yoram Gross' The Little Convict.

cartoon characters Tom and Jerry excitedly ape the virtuous steps of the live-action Gene Kelly. The effect of such an impossible, yet perfectly adroit, dancing trio is pure magic. The fusion of the two realities achieves something more than the sum of its parts.

With Yoram Gross' The Little Convict, this, unhappily, is not the case. Gross has restrained the possibilities of animation into a mundane narrative. For the most part, one cannot understand why he has used animation, as he hardly explores its possibilities; he may as well have used live-action to tell the story.

The story is of Toby, the child convict, and his friends; of their struggles in building the colony of New South Wales; of injustice, bravery, camaraderie; and finally a successful bid for freedom. It could be great stuff, but not when told by bellowing Old Grandpa, played in live-action by Rolf Harris. His interfering presence and feeble moralizing are often at odds with animated characters in the plot. The lively cartoon characters could have told their story very well without his help.

Perhaps Grandpa pops up with such regularity to ensure the international marketability of the film. But surely one can do better than a live-action Rolf Harris for export as Australia's answer to Mickey Mouse.

Yoram Gross can give us Disneyesque magic, however, as in the all too short sequence of YoYo, the dancing Koala. Shades of the Dance of the Hours sequence from Disney's Fantasia, here.

My young companion at the screening, after all, is towards hoping Ted will succeed. To this point, the film is cautiously uncommercial, director Paul McDonald having no intention to advertise in the work and parents. But this high-fiunction and begins to constript his son's life, repeating what he had done in Joana. This time, however, Ted senses his error, corrects it and moves on to form a deep-felt relationship with Billy.

The film opens with Ted learning of his promotion to a major contract ("You like your French toast crunchy, don't you?" he explains when Billy complains about the amount of egg-shell in the mixture). But while the parent/child bond develops, Ted's work situation declines.


The Little Convict

Antoinette Starkeivicz

Animation at its best can be seen as cinema at its purest. Anything is possible — the usual laws of realism, reason, gravity and relativity do not apply.

The score of the medium is limitless as the imagination itself, which is not necessarily the case with live-action. Live-action, though limited to what can be seen by the human eye, is nevertheless a familiar, and therefore understandable, language to us.

Perhaps for this reason, successful combinations of live-action and animation are rare. One fine example is George Sidney's Anchors Aweigh (1945). Here, left to sober interior decoration; imaginative animation requires a richer palette. The true color of the film is provided by the animated characters themselves. The personalities are finely drawn: Dipper, the old pickpocket; the effete officer; and the grandly English Dame. Then there is young Polly, the sad acquiescent convict girl. Tugging my sleeve, my female companion asked me: "Why does she cry all the time? And why doesn't she ride horses and things like the boys?" (Look out Mr Gross, it appears feminists are getting younger.) Polly would have had to have been a lot tougher to survive the harshness of convict life; she would have perished within the first few minutes of Journey Among Women.

If the Little Convict fails to excite all the way through, though, it is redeemed to an extent by its good intentions. Throughout there is a sustained, if rather didactic, humanitarian feeling.

Kramer vs Kramer

Scott Murray

Kramer vs Kramer is a film about a modern social problem: divorced parents fighting for custody of a child. By demonstrating a preference for people over issues, it is also a refreshing one.

Joanna Kramer (Meryl Streep) leaves her husband Ted (Dustin Hoffman) and son Billy (Justin Henry) after eight years of marriage. She has given up a career to be a mother, a sacrifice not acknowledged by Ted, who is increasingly absorbed in his work. Joanna's departure is a desperate attempt to find herself as a person.

Left with the responsibility of bringing up the child, Ted tries to divide his time between work and parenthood. He finds this highly frustrating and begins to constrit his son's life, repeating what he had done in Joana. This time, however, Ted senses his error, corrects it and moves on to form a deep-felt relationship with Billy.

The film opens with Ted learning of his promotion to a major contract ("You like your French toast crunchy, don't you?" he explains when Billy complains about the amount of egg-shell in the mixture). But while the parent/child bond develops, Ted's work situation declines.

The film opens with Ted learning of his promotion to a major contract ("You like your French toast crunchy, don't you?" he explains when Billy complains about the amount of egg-shell in the mixture). But while the parent/child bond develops, Ted's work situation declines. By, but by devoting so much time to his son, he begins to undermine his position and is ultimately "let go." He then secures a job at a rival firm, though at a consideredly lower salary. Instead of this being viewed as a downside, however, it is shown as a triumph of devotion for others over the work ethic. And when Ted spoils his case in court by admitting he neglected his career to care for Billy, one is firmly on his side.

One could claim here that Joanna is drawn a little unsympathetically at first, but one's sympathies do shift throughout the film. I, for one, align strongly alongside her at the film's close and are more to the point as both of them. Bonton shows that sympathizing with one doesn't necessarily mean siding against the other.

When Joanna tells Ted that she is not taking Billy, one is greatly relieved: the film's thrust, after all, is towards hoping Ted will keep the child. But in making her sacrifice, Joanna reveals a depth that has hardly been

KRAMER VS KRAMER and MANHATTAN.

Cinema Papers, April-May—141
Ted Kramer (Dustin Hoffman) and the son (Justin Henry) he fights so desperately to keep. Robert Benton's Kramer Vs Kramer.

Joanna, silly because one grows to care for both these people as they strive to make the most of their vulnerable and oft-threatened lives.

Individuals comprise the world. They are also a vital part of fine cinema.

Another recent "New York" film is Woody Allen's Manhattan. A marvellous combination of humour and seriousness, it stands, with Interiors, as one of the major American films of the 1970s.}

Isaac Davis (Woody Allen) is a television comedy writer who quits his job to write a novel about New York. He is a man who "romanticizes Manhattan out of all proportion" but also sees it as "a metaphor for the decay of Western Civilization". The dichotomy of man loving that which destroys him is nicely established.

Realizing the impact of his decision — he can no longer afford to keep his apartment or pick up checks at meals — Isaac feels unsettled. His friends, however, are unanimous in praising his decision. Isaac has done what they, and thousands of aspiring writers, would like to do, but don't because they "balk at the necessary sacrifices".

Yale (Michael Murphy) talks of writing a biography of O'Neill, starting up a magazine and moving to Connecticut — one knows he will not achieve any of these goals. Mary (Diane Keaton) leaves away her time scribbling literary reviews, doing novelizations of film scripts and endlessly verbalizing about art and film, instead of writing her novel.

Manhattan, in fact, is littered with unfilled literary ambition. This impression is reinforced by the locations Allen uses, from the art section of Rizzoli's bookshop to the book-lined studies of Mary and Yale. The characters live in a world of words, and are ultimately dwarfed by it.

Allen blames this on over-education. Instead of being open and responsive to emotions, his characters intellectualize and verbalize their feelings. Thus, Isaac says to Mary, "Your self-esteem is like a notch below Kafka's", or, when Yale and Mary break up, she tells him he is "authoritative like the Pope or the computer in 2001". Nothing is simple, unrequited.

In Ingmar Bergman's The Seventh Seal, it is the unquestioning peasant family that survives the plague. The intellects all perish, stricken by doubts about what it all means. Allen's recent films make a similar point. One thinks of the personal agonizing in Interiors where too much intellect has made happiness unattainable. There is the way the children despise Pearl (Maureen Stapleton), who is easily the happiest and warmest of the characters. Equally, there is the way Joey (Marybeth Hurt) is disgusted by her father's 'decline' from respectable lawyer, and supporter of his wife's artistic activities, to someone who would rather sunbake on a Greek island than visit the temples.

One reason Allen's characters are so enmeshed in intellectual pretensions is their fear of disapproval. In Interiors, Joey's troubled search for a creative outlet is an attempt to feel the equality of his wife's husband Mike (Sam Waterston), mother (Geraldine Page) and sister Renata (Diane Keaton). But there is no reason Joey should have to be their intellectual equal and, if only she could admit this to herself and realize that the person she is most like is Pearl, happiness may be attainable. Instead, she tortures herself and her emotions. (In one of Allen's most touching scenes, Joey leans over in bed to kiss Mike while he lies "safely" asleep.)

In Manhattan, this over-intellectualizing is equally detailed, from the smart conversation at gallery openings to chats over dinner. Allen is particularly explicit in the characterization of Mary who vacuously talks of such things as "negative capability" (when referring to a steel cube). But the character Allen is toughest on is Isaac. Mary and Yale at least become involved and, if they make a mess of things, it is because they have made an effort. Isaac brings on disaster by holding himself back.

After two unsuccessful marriages, Isaac becomes involved with 17-year-old Tracy (Marti Healy). But despite his efforts, his love for him, and his fondness for her, Isaac is unwilling to give a commitment. The excuse he uses is that she is too young, too immature.

The device Isaac uses to keep his distance, and not only from Tracy, is his constant joking. Allen finds this "gifted" funny, his lines are merely a way of pushing away that which he doesn't wish to confront. Mary's assault on all the things he values most (Bergman, etc) is therefore met by him, sending up her pronunciation of Van Gogh. Or, in reply to Tracy's imploring "What will become of us?", he carelessly replies, "We shall always have Paris."

The most telling example, however, is the disturbing scene in the drugstore where Isaac breaks off with Tracy. Crying, she turns to

h seed at before. In fact, one suspects she has done something Ted may not have the capacity to do. In an instant, Ted's 'victory' is put in perspective, and his position as the sole good guy is undermined.

It is a marvellously subtle scene, and beautifully rounded out with Ted's recognition of Joanna's courage when he trusts her to go up and visit Billy alone. Ted, over a close-up of a red-eyed and bedraggled Joanna, remarks that she looks terrific; he isn't being facetious.

One remarkable aspect of the film is that Ted and Joanna's scenes together are so rich. An earlier, and equally good, sequence is when they meet briefly in the cafe. Joanna says to be used; she has thoughtfully recalled a snippet of dialogue.

It is a marvellously subtle scene, and, one feels, almost perfectly matched by the remark to be used; she has thoughtfully recalled a snippet of dialogue.

Later, one learns that Joanna didn't mean the remark to be used; she has thoughtfully recalled a snippet of dialogue.

In the court scene, as in others, Benton is demonstrating their love for the child. One ex­

the hospital after the accident. Ushered out of the operating room, Ted is told by the doctor that there is no reason for him to remain. Ted is flown back to California, where he has found himself and a therapist (two Woody Allen-type jokes that are slightly out of place), and that she is concerned about her son. Ted replies by telling of how he felt responsible for Billy's accident when he fell from a climbing frame in a playground.

This embarrassed offer of affection is one that Ted may not have the hint of before. In fact, one suspects she has

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This embarrassed offer of affection is one that Ted may not have the hint of before. In fact, one suspects she has
look at him. Isaac embarrassedly mutters, "Don't stare at me with those big eyes; you look like a kid from Biafra."

Tracy's love for Isaac is the film's most uncomplicated emotion (uncomplicated because she lacks the education of the others). She feels no embarrassment over the age difference (Isaac is 42) and is refreshingly direct: "We have laughs together. Your concerns are my concerns. We have great sex." But even beneath the emotional honesty of Tracy is the fear of rejection.

During the same drugstore scene, Tracy says, "I can't believe that you met someone you like better than me." (This mirrors Isaac's remark to his ex-wife, when referring to her lover, that "I can't understand why you preferred her to me.")

It is perhaps worth mentioning here the reaction of several American feminist film critics who see Allen as preferring the 'innocent' Tracy to the older woman. Such a view, however, strikes me as misguided as Isaac's "You're only 17. You're still a kid." In many important ways, Tracy is more mature than the others. Sure, she has yet to face the unprotected world outside high school, and she may well end up as resigned and saddened as Emily (Anne Byrne), but as Tracy says, "Everyone gets corrupted. You should have a little faith in people."

One danger in writing about Manhattan is giving the impression that the film is unremittingly bleak. Much of what Allen is saying is disturbing, but the telling is always witty and amusing. After Interiors, which many people found too stark, Allen has hit on the right tone, a balance of seriousness and fun.

Allen has also realized that characters must breathe life and not be subservient to the issues. His people dazzle one in their changeability, their frailty, their strength. Mary and Yale may fret away their talents, Jill (Meryl Streep) may coldly expose the secrets of her marriage and Jeremiah (Wallace Shawn) may turn out to be nobody's stereotype of a sexual stud, but they are all lovable. And this is how it should be. As Yale rightly tells an outraged Isaac: "Don't turn this into one of your big moral issues. I'm not a saint . . . We're just people, human beings".


Above: Living in a world of words: Isaac (Woody Allen) and Yale (Michael Murphy) debate a point in the art section of Rizzoli's bookshop. Woody Allen's Manhattan. Below: The drugstore sequence, after Tracy (Mariel Hemingway) has given Isaac the harmonica and before Isaac tells her he has found someone else. Manhattan.
Hitchcock: British Films
Maurice Yacowar
Archon Press

Hitchcock: The First Forty-four Films
Eric Rohmer and Claude Chabrol
Translated by Stanley Hochman
Ungar Film Library

Hitchcock
Francois Truffaut
Updated edition
Paladin

Hitchcock's Films
Robin Wood
Third edition, revised and enlarged
Barnes/Tantivy

Ken Mogh

Scene from Alfred Hitchcock's Blackmail.

Book Reviews

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Ken Mogh

"It is to these 'damned' characters (particularly those of density) that Hitchcock's strongest interest gravitates, giving us some of the most vividly realized performances in his films, and an aim for any compensating intimation of Heaven."

Robin Wood, Hitchcock's Films

Robin Wood is referring specifically to Uncle Charlie in Shadow of a Doubt, Bruno in Strangers on a Train, and Norman Bates in Psycho. Had his book encompassed Hitchcock's British period, he might have added to his list the character Drew from The Lodger. For although that film seems finally to clear Drew of his grisly "Avenger" murders (when Joe, a detective, exclaims "My God! He is innocent!") its ending is distinctly ambiguous.

As newlyweds, Drew and Daisy embrace before a window, a neon sign flashes its message of "Tonight golden curls", which earlier heralded the successive deaths of the Avenger's blonde victims! An audience can scarcely be confident that the film is merely drawing a wittily parallel between murder and sex. And, in a Hitchcock film, a policeman's estimation doesn't carry much weight.

In Shadow of a Doubt, the police find an innocent man to his death and then conclude that he was guilty, while in Psycho (whose insane murderer Norman Bates seems to me in direct descent from Drew) Norman and Sheriff Chambers have got along "just fine" for years.

I'll indicate below a possible slitting by Wood of Hitchcock's "uncertainty principle" and how this accounts for his bivalent statement in Film Comment (January-February 1977) that "there can be no Heaven corresponding to Hitchcock's Hell."

Even so, Wood's classic book shows an overall inspiration lacking in Maurice Yacowar's account of the 1930s British films. For example, Yacowar calls the neon sign at the end of The Lodger a "peripheral detail", explaining that Drew and Daisy "have risen above the Avenger and his victims, his obsession and their trivialities and [that] the camera cuts the sign out altogether by moving in on the lovers."

Unfortunately, such a conventional reading of a film made the same year (1926) as G. W. Pabst's Secrets of a Soul and the staging in London of Cyril Campton's Freudian melodrama The Lash must overlook a key scene. This is the flashback to the coming-out ball of Drew's sister during which an unknown hand switches off the lights and the girl is killed. Yacowar fails to note:

(1) that brother and sister are dancing together, and
(2) that the brief period of darkness would not allow time for the person who throws the switch to reach the girl. It seems almost inscrutable that Drew killed his sister.

I suspect that Drew heads a long line of psychopaths for whom adult sexuality is a closed world. He kills his sister at her coming-out ball for the same complex reasons (jealousy being perhaps the least of them) that Uncle Charlie kills 'Merry Widows' and Norman Bates knifes Marion Crane in her shower.

Furthermore, when Drew promises his mother on her death-bed that he will avenge his sister's death, he is placed in a position as untenable as that of the later mother-identifying murderers. That is, these tormented young men kill in order to protect the sanctity of their mother-ideal. Their crime conforms to what Freud called the 'Holly Mans' complex, just as the basis of that complex in a broader Oedipal current explains Hitchcock's preoccupation with blonde heroines and his cherished ambition to film J. M. Barrie's Mary Rose. For an account of the latter the reader may refer to the interview with Hitchcock by Francois Truffaut, now published in Paladin (pp. 383-5).

Also, readers of Truffaut's pithy new introduction will note his remark about how "all the love scenes were filmed as murder scenes, and all the murder scenes were filmed as love scenes", which seems to imply in Hitchcock a combination of Freud and his favourite aheirsion from Oscar Wilde, "Each man kills the thing he loves."

Whose hand in The Lodger throws the switch at the coming-out ball? And who is the man whom the police arrest as the murderer? Perhaps the short answer is that both figures represent unknown or only guessed-at parts of the one psyche, dopple- gangers who multiply the split in the film's central consciousness. (In the 1956 The Wrong Man there are several such doubles and the accused hero clearly is legally innocent.) The thing is that the viewer feels himself a participant, marking the first major use of Hitchcock's 'subjective' technique and with it the formulation of a metaphysics of "the exchange" so ably traced by Eric Rohmer and Claude Chabrol.

Of Blackmail (1929), they notice how "victims and victimizers alternate from sequence to sequence: the victimizer becomes the victim, the victim the victimizer." Their sustained emphasis on Hitchcock's Catholic background is again a more suggestive approach than Yacowar's occasional adoration of comparison of the film with the original novels and shooting scripts.

As for Robin Wood, I could wish that he had attended more to the films' ambiguities and to Hitchcock's detachment from them. For if Hitchcock sees the director of a fiction film as God, the viewer occupies a dual position: he is another often-quoted metaphor he hunts with the hounds and runs with the hare.

In Under Capricorn (1949) the film sets up a rich antimony between the "lost paradise" of Ireland (Lady Henrietta used to "ride at a fence as if the Kingdom of Heaven were on the other side") and the penal colony of New South Wales, where a new society is struggling to emerge.

Though viewer and characters may appear to come away from the film with limited gains, this is not the whole matter. The film's experience may be the "intimation of Heaven" which Wood seeks. For a start, the built-in uncertainty can coax us to "attend" in a religious sense, as when Detective Graham observes outside the church in Shadow of a Doubt, "The World sometimes needs a lot of watching."

But I am also reminded of The Birds (about which Wood now expresses doubts) and in this context the poem Among School Children by W. B. Yeats. After setting its scene of a modern schoolroom, the poem takes a decidedly pessimistic look at the Ancients, then ends on a deliberate note of artifice by asking, "How can we know the dancer from the dance?" It represents a magnificent squaring-up to despair and is its own clear reward.

In contrast, Wood is troubled by Hitchcock's "artificial" achievement in The Birds, citing "the pernicious treatment of the children" and "the reduction of the concepts of education and childhood — the human future — to the automatic reiteration of an immediate ---" What I find significant is that Wood comments neither on the film's alignment of this artless jiggle with a Freudian death instinct (for which the birds are certainly a symbol), nor on the surely important point that one of the children afterwards participates in the film's climax. For Hitchcock, art and value attend each other. I have to conclude that Wood's new introduction has the feel of a tired pedagogue about it.

Film Art: An Introduction
David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson
Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, Inc., 1979

Tom Ryan

The act of viewing a film would seem to require little apart from a minor salary and a quota of intelligence. About $5 will rent you the film and $10 will hire you (or disinterested) usher or usherette cannot refuse, regardless of one's disposition. And, for anything up to three hours, viewers are free to engage their hearts and minds with those sounds and images that constitute the film they have chosen to see.

As consumers, filmgoers may choose to use what they have bought, in whatever way they please — to capture some information about foreign lands and customs, to provide them with a stimulus for tears or laughter, to disturb or offend them, to enlighten them, and to fill in their time. An innocent enough activity, unlikely to cause them any serious harm, unless they choose to run with a chain-saw or decide to converse in the vicinity of anyone, like me, who has been trained to kill with a glare.

Yet, there is another way in which film-goers may choose to engage upon the activity of viewing a film. That is the subject of Film Art: An Introduction. It sets out to explore films as formal constructions, as cultural objects whose realities are systems of representation and not those of the world through which the public has moved to
involved here begins simply with a recognition of the fact of film form, and the attention given to this by Bordwell and Thompson, this book provides an essential foundation for the process.

Given this, it is unfortunate that the "sample analyses" (Chapter 9) are so dreary, using this important section of the book simply to underline the theoretical points to which it has, quite properly, been committed, rather than providing examples of the way in which an awareness of these can launch one into exciting critical analyses of particular films.

The reader must certainly do one get the sense that the authors are concerned with the films under scrutiny, their probing of the form and structure of these films being limited to the identification of their basic organizing principles and a placing of them in the various traditions to which they belong. The result is an avoidance of areas of controversy, and a useful sketching of the programs of the films, but it is quite without the excitement that accompanies a skillfully-written reading given by an alert critical mind to a work only completed in terms of its production.

One could effectively clarify the point by the highlighting the pedestrian reading given to Meet Me in St Louis with Andrew Britton's stimulating analysis, "Smith, or the Ambiguity of a Masterpiece," in The Australian Journal of Screen Theory, No. 3.

This reservation aside, it seems to me that this book is the most useful text available to provide the student of the casually interested reader with an introduction to the complexities of film analysis.

It raises key questions in a fashion unlikely to alienate even those hostile to the intrusion of a more specialized language into the study of film. It then offers, at the end of each chapter, more advanced reading in the various areas of its concern, simultaneously providing a broad chart of the movement of thought in these areas over the past few decades and occasionally beyond. Its readers will take from it an awareness that will only heighten their experience of viewing a film.

Recent Releases

This column lists books released in Australia between December 1979 and February 1980 which deal with the cinema or related topics. All titles are on sale in bookshops.

The publishers and the local distributors are listed below. The authorship in each entry of a nonexistent book is indicated, the book is imported (imp), the recommended retail prices are in hawks, unless otherwise indicated, and are subject to variations between bookshops and states.

This list was compiled by Mervyn R. Binns of the Space Age Bookstore, Melbourne.

Popular and General Interest

The Great Cowboy Stars of Movies and Television

Lee O. Miller

Arthaus/Imp., $17.95 (HC)

A tribute to 43 great cowboy stars, illustrated with 150 photographs.

The Women of the House

Thomas Burnett Swan

Hitchcock/Imprimatur, $20.95 (HC)

A photographic tribute to the leading ladies in Republic's films.

Hollywood Album 2

Alec Keay

Arno/Imp., $9.95 (HC)

Fascinating accounts of the lives of some of the smaller film stars, with more than 200 photographs and a filmography.

The Hollywood Greats

Harry Goldfine

Hodder and Stoughton, $3.25

A series of black-and-white biographies.

More Morley

Robert Morley

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A series of biographical sketches.

More Morley

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Hodder and Stoughton, $3.25

A series of biographical sketches.

The History of Film Industry and Associates

Documentary and Educational Films of the 1930s

Ruth Low

Allen and Unwin/Allen and Unwin, $24.50 (HC)

A detailed account of people involved in the documentary movement. Covers how documentary styles evolved, developed, changed and eventually split into two distinct schools of film making.

Image on the Art and Evolution of the Film

Daver/Tudor Distributors, $12.50

Photographs and articles from the magazine of the International Museum of Photography, including 263 illustrations.

Landmark Films: The Cinema of Our Century

William Wolf

H. P. Lovecraft/Imp., $17.95 (HC)

The book contains descriptions of some of the most popular films from VS through to the present day, and includes interviews with some of the most prominent people involved in film today.

The Rise and Fall of British Documentary

Cambridge University Press/Cambridge University Press, $23.95 (HC)

The story of the film movement founded by John Grierson. Covers all previous studies of documentary into a new perspective.

Reference

Film Studies

Nancy Allen

Unger/Ruth Wallis, $19.60 (HC)

An invaluable guide for students and using the voluminous film study material. Ideal for lecturers, scholars, journalists.

Hollywood's Film Guide

Leslie Halliwell

M. I. Halliwell Australia, $14.95


International Film Periodicals 1977: An Annotated Guide

Frances Thorpe

Macmillan/Macmillan Australia, $69 (HC)

An authoritative guide to two significant articles and essay published during in the world's 80 most important film magazines.

Moving Pictures

Andrew Sinclair

Barnes-Tindall/Imp., $6.20

An annotated guide to selected film literature with suggestions for the study of film.

Scriptwriting

The Adventures of Robin Hood

John G. Pirozzolo

Wheaton/Imp., $6.20

An annotated guide to selected film literature with suggestions for the study of film.

Television and Media

Television: A Play

Tino Baiio

Futura/Tudor Distributor. S4.50

Making a Television Play

Tino Baiio

Futura/Tudor Distributor. S4.50

The Treasure of the Sierra Madre

Michael Freedland

Wandwriter/Imp., $6.20

The true story of a radio station which gave freedom of speech to listeners, and the subsequent interrogations.

The Bible

Wandwriter/Imp., $6.20

A series of biographies of film directors with frame enlargements to illustrate points of interest. Consults the screenplay with the film.

FILMMAKING, TECHNIQUE AND MARKETING

Making Money: Making Movies

Sheil Tromvemen

T. V. & Radio Collector Society, $9.95

An independent filmmaker's handbook.

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Teaching Methods

Generally, the first year of the three-year diploma concentrates on television, the second on film, and the third on a combination of both. Students are required to attend a number of lectures and seminars, and to undertake a variety of practical assignments. These assignments are designed to develop the student's understanding of the principles of film and television production, and to prepare them for the second and third years of the course.

The second year of the course focuses on the development of the student's practical skills, with a particular emphasis on the use of television equipment. Students are required to undertake a number of practical assignments, including the production of short films, and to attend a number of workshops and seminars. These assignments are designed to develop the student's understanding of the principles of film and television production, and to prepare them for the final year of the course.

The final year of the course is designed to provide the student with a comprehensive understanding of the principles of film and television production, and to prepare them for a career in the industry. Students are required to undertake a number of practical assignments, including the production of a feature film, and to attend a number of workshops and seminars. These assignments are designed to develop the student's understanding of the principles of film and television production, and to prepare them for a career in the industry.
year on film, and the third year on the area where the student has shown the most aptitude and interest.

Practical work and lecture attendance take up three days in the week, and the other two are devoted to preparation: planning productions, writing scripts, researching for essays, and so on. Mondays and Tuesdays are presentation days, Wednesdays are for lecture attendance and film screenings, and Thursdays and Fridays are devoted to the assigned projects. This system prevails throughout the three-year course.

Full details of the assigned projects and lectures are provided in the annual Handbook of the College, and the following information is drawn from Handbook '79.

First-year assigned projects include still photography, video production, film production (editing exercises and projects); lectures in History of Arts (more correctly designated history of film); and scriptwriting in the areas of the various genres of television writing: news, current affairs, documentary, comedy, commercials and drama.

The studies and activities for the second year include film technology (directing, acting, lighting, camera operating, sound recording, sound mixing and track laying, negative matching); film production (short individual exercises); television technology (more advanced studies in television theory); television production (work in the experimental workshop, staging and videotaping short dramatic excerpts). History of Arts 2 and Scriptwriting 2 continue the work in these areas of the first year.

The dominant aspect of the third year is entitled Assigned Project 3. This requires 20 hours practical work a week for two semesters. The student is concerned with completing eight units from the following options: scripting; writing; lighting; editing; continuity; negative matching; producing; sound recording/mixing; art direction; graphics; stills.

Students are encouraged to function as a crew, but it is possible for individuals to begin to specialize with regard to the options offered. The more "theoretical" subjects are History of Arts 3, which requires a 5000-word essay on a "school" of filmmaking or a distinguished director, and Methods of Production 3, which is tested by a 2000-word essay on an aspect of contemporary film or television production, related to a program of lectures.

The Swinburne Diploma of Film and Television is wide-ranging and not as specialized a course of instruction as that available at the AFTS, where the students are "streamed" into a workshop of their choice: sound recording, cinematography, editing, or production.

Nevertheless, there can be advantages in the student with a breadth of knowledge and experience, especially when working in the areas of production or teaching. The majority of 1978's Swinburne graduates have found employment in the film or television industries — two are continuing their studies or work in the U.S., and one has been accepted by AFTS.

**The Graduate Diploma**

Since 1976 there has been an additional course in the Department of Film and Television at Swinburne, a one-year Graduate Diploma in Applied Film and Television. In the submission to the Victoria Institute of Colleges in March 1975, the proposed diploma had three stated aims and objectives:

1. to provide a practical production course in film and television, including animation, for applied commercial, industrial and educational purposes;
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The First semester studies on script development deal with the nature of the medium (film, television, or animation), critical and creative thinking, and the selection of a topic, an audience, and a purpose. After a series of short exercises, a script is written for production in the second semester. The first semester also includes lectures, demonstrations, and practical exercises in production techniques, leading to technical proficiency in the medium.

The second semester is devoted to production, with each student, assisted by a student crew if necessary, directing his or her script. This activity is spread over a 16-week period at 21 hours a week. The finished products are then presented to audiences and their effectiveness assessed.

To give an idea of the content of the production techniques segment of the film course, the following are some of the aspects dealt with in lectures, demonstrations, and practical exercises:

- Crew roles and responsibilities, lens characteristics, sound recording (wild and sync), sound mixing, transfer and post-synchronization, lighting and filters, make-up, camera operation, direction, dialogue, continuity, image assembly, sound and image editing (sync and non-sync), neg-matching, A & B roll assembly, titles and optical effects, laboratory services and charges, distribution, and copyright.

The Graduate Diploma is a crash-course in practical instruction and not all students find the pace comfortable. Yet, the success rate is high and employment opportunities are good, even if the jobs offered are sometimes on the periphery of the film and television industry. The value to tertiary and secondary teachers of film and video production or animation would be quite considerable.

**Student Unrest**

During the early years of the establishment of the three-year film and television diploma, and more recently with the introduction of the Graduate Diploma, there have been demonstrations of student unrest with the educational procedures and the vexed question of the ownership of the copyright of student-produced material which has proved to be commercially saleable.

Some of the criticism of the school has been committed to film. Zbigniew Friedrich (who was a student at the school for a short period, before dropping out to pursue full-time film production) has moments in the 1975 feature *Made in Australia* which are not flattering, but which perhaps illustrate the fact that, at first, the school's claims were hardly matched by economic realities.

One does not produce a Hitchcock with the technical resources of a Bolex and a Model 3 Nagra. A full and competent staff takes many years to acquire and acclimatize; this is well known to any innovator in government-financed institutions. Today, the school has well-equipped workshops, an excellent television studio, impressive animation equipment and a sound staff.

The question of copyright and ownership has been less easy to solve. At the program of 11 films produced by Diploma and Graduate Diploma students graduating in 1978, and presented at the State Film Theatre, Melbourne, in December, the visitors were handed a four-page roneoed document on leaving the cinema. The document was entitled "The Swinburne Story — An Open Letter by the Graduate Diploma Filmmakers of 1978". The gist of the text was that student filmmakers were unable to sell or hire copies of their films to which most had contributed in excess of $400 of their money. The attitude of the College to their predicament was described as a "sort of 19th Century parochialism" which was "detrimental to the growth and development of ideas".

The College replied in 1979 by requiring aspiring students to sign a nine-point document giving the school complete control of the exhibition, distribution, and sale of work produced by students as part of the curriculum (para. 2) as well as giving the institution the ownership of the copyright of all curriculum productions (para. 8), but permitting the students to get a copy of their program while still enrolled at the College (para. 6). The other paragraphs are of a similar tenor.

Similar problems occurred at the AFTS, and one can appreciate that the rights of performers, musicians and technicians, who may be generously providing their services at reduced rates (or even free) to help a beginner learn his or her trade, must be protected. So must the private companies involved with the production of shorts which might be regarded as being in competition with films produced largely from public funds.

Nevertheless, it can be most dispiriting for one's creative work to be assigned as a white elephant to a bureaucratic shelf, or allowed only limited circulation when, and if, a governmental agency, such as the National Library or one of the state film centres, decides to purchase a copy. Many of the films produced by the students of the AFTS and Swinburne College are most commendable, and the larger the public access to them the better.

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Jerome Hellman
Continued from p. 105

was really designed to be seen in a cinema — I will be grateful if people do watch it on television.

There is a certain ambiguity of motivation in many of the characters, for example, the wonderful scene where Buffy tells her boyfriend to go away. We are not told exactly why she does it, yet it is exquisitely moving. One presumes you must have spent a lot of time providing an explicit motivation for the actress . . .

That scene, which you rightly point out as just the tip of the iceberg, is pure reality. With the help of my associate producer, Gail Mutre, who was absolutely invaluable, I chose a lot of reading material for different moments of the film. I then exposed Kathy to a lot of information about the emotional experience connected to it: about the need to retain autonomy, to start to bring the parameters in closer around ourselves, the need to start to end relationships.

All these things appeared again and again in the literature I read, and in the conversations I had with doctors. It seemed to me that this girl, given the circumstances, would want to terminate the relationship at a time when she could still do it in a way she would feel good about. So, when the moment came when she realized she no longer had the energy to invest in pretending, she had to be the one to end the relationship.

Loring and I worked out the scene in that way, and then it was the reality that I exposed Kathy to. When we went to shoot the scene, Kathy had a really visceral understanding of what her character’s motivation was. She really understood it and I encouraged her to internalize and dig deep inside herself. And it worked splendidly.

There is a feeling of claustrophobia about the film, even in the outdoor sequences, a feeling which one is only released from in the final shot. Did you have a concept like that of the overall visual design?

Yes. When I started discussing the film with Adam Holland, one of the first things we talked about was the need to find a visual style which would really suit the material. In the roughest terms, the question was: do we go against the material, which by its very nature was claustrophobic, and jazz it up with visual pyrotechnics, or should we keep faith with it and let it do its work? We both felt the latter was the right way to go, and we really held ourselves in a tight rein visually.

It was also intended that that feeling of tension should mount, and only be relieved when the event was over. I had hoped that from the moment Alexandra puts her finger on the button, and that bloody sound finally stops, the people sitting in the cinema would feel the same release and experience a similar sort of catharsis.

Given that one can view the film as Alexandra’s movement towards rediscovering some sort of physical contact with the world, is there not perhaps a scene missing of her actual physical contact — sex, if you like — with Jim?

That is a tough question to answer honestly. It isn’t there because I felt it was somehow dangerous and extraneous. I had lived through the love scene in Coming Home, and that was a film where the love scene was absolutely essential to the film; it was the natural next step in the relationship and was critical in terms of presenting a person who is disabled as a whole person, with a complete repertoire of feelings, including sexual, and the ability to give pleasure where there is love. It was a very difficult scene to shoot and I think Hal did a superb job.

It seemed to me that every film I had seen in the past couple of years had a love scene, and, more often than not, they were gratuitous. You were left with panning cameras, 0.58 (child abuse)arios of bedrooms, and people gasping. Now it seemed to me that the scene where Jim took Alexandra in his arms, then backed away from her tentatively, and she came to him for the very first time and embraced him, said it all. It looked marvellous through the lens when we shot it, and I felt that was the consummation. I didn’t want to explicate it. I also felt that to go from an explicit scene of lovemaking to Buffy and death was too

Continued from p. 118

Censorship Listings

FILMS REGISTERED WITHOUT ELIMINATIONS

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<tr>
<th>Title</th>
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Nationalism in Australian Cinema

Continued from p. 100

awareness or indication of the political choices such values represent, seem to indicate a certain amount of collusion (or self-censorship) with the bureaucratic restrictions on Australian feature film production, as well as the coincidental thought that the commercialism of such choices might also be the world-views of the filmmakers.

Making the Best of a Given Situation

"The only way we can give a picture an international appeal is to make it Australian." — Charles Chauvel

In 1978, two films were released which represented a peak of achievement to those who followed the rise and hopes of an Australian film industry: 13 Fred Schepisi's The Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith and Phil Noyce's Newsfront. Both films indicated that the form of the period film was still viable and that film could still be involved in a significant level of argument.

Thomas Keneally's The Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith is based on the Jimmie Governor case in 1900-01, of two Aborigines who take murderous revenge upon the women of their white employer's household, in culmination of racial discrimination and frustration, and are pursued by the police for nine months. The cinematography is an emotional watch that devolved the complex focuses in the novel into an expurgative epic of guilt.

Newsfront, scripted and directed by Phil Noyce, and based upon an original idea by Bob Ellis, was by comparison pure cinema. It chronicles the events of eight years in Australian history (1948-1956) via the Australian newsreel company Cinetone. It uses documentary footage as well as recreated events, while also carefully weaving in a narrative plot about the lives and changes of the employees of the firm.

Newsfront and Jimmie Blacksmith are in a sense allegorical of the Australian condition. But Noyce's film is more of a social and political argument presented with an obvious affection for many of the national idiocies. Newsfront fulfils the criteria of significant Australian content, as well as being unconcerned with altering its style or content the preconceived notions of what might appeal internationally. On the other hand, Schepisi's film, though a dedicated attempt to film a novel that he obviously admired, did a number of things, some deliberate and some perhaps accidental, that had the ultimate effect of giving the film too little connection with its intensely Australian problem.

Schepisi's film, made on the very large budget (for an Australian film) of $1.2 million, like the only other large budget film that concerned Aboriginals, Weir's The Last Wave, tends to present the Australian Aboriginal in an anthropological mist and, above all, to lose the race's particular style of understatement. This was captured by Phil Noyce's small budget film, Backroads, which did more for the Aboriginal movement in its one hour than these two films combined. The need, especially in period films, to mythologize the Aboriginal has often meant a certain revisionism of history.

The choice of casting for Jimmie Blacksmith was contentious. Schepisi cast a young, fresh-faced Aboriginal, Jimmy Lewis, for the lead; this began the simplification of the ethical problems of Keneally's novel. The audience is led by Lewis' amenable personality to align all its sympathies with him, so that the act of murder becomes the central emphasis and yet perfectly gendered and simple behaviour. Keneally himself was concerned after viewing the film that it might be seen as an anti-white statement

This is compounded again by the problems of transposing literature into film; and in Jimmie Blacksmith's case it was essential to be able to follow his emotions and thoughts — but they were never fully realized in the film. One is led to infer a sense of rage and confusion only by the recreation of the events of continual discrimination. In the novel, Keneally constantly comments upon the conflicts and one comes to consider Jimmie's motivations.

The ultimate question of such a film poses to the search for a national identity is the question of usefulness of a narrative as it relates to the entire problem of Australian hegemonic attitudes towards its racial, ethnic and social history, a problem in an unfocused or simplified fashion. Minority groups. To make an audience perceive any business in which it has invested, then his actions become too simply justifiable.

Newsfront, by comparison with earlier period films, still worked upon the desire for nostalgia, but it also used the desire for its own ends and not as an end in itself. Newsfront exists as the most complete cinematic allegory of the Australian nationalist dilemma. It can be perceived on a number of levels, becoming the commercial film that might meet anybody's expectations. Yet it also relates to Noyce's earlier film, Backroads, as a continuous statement about Australian society. Yet where the black man is an open polemic in Backroads, and almost one of despair, Newsfront's argument exists in a structure of inference.

The years 1948-1956 are distinctive in Australian history, marking the end of a Labor government and the beginning of the longest period of conservatism. The film deals with actual political and historical events in the use of newsreel material (and excellent recreations) and the reactions of the Cinetone employees to the content of their newsreels becomes the comment upon these events. Each character has a symbolic reference to urban types without becoming itself and their actions have resulted in many of the problems already associated with the revelation of private thoughts within characterization by externalizing them in a clever use of dialogue.

The two main characters, the brothers Len and Frank McGuire, take one through the film. Len is symbolic of Australian integrity and conscience, staying with Cinetone (the firm that gave them both a job during the Depression). Frank goes from Cinetone to the opposition, Newsco, and then to the U.S. He embodies the Americaization of urban Australia, moving with the times, and when he returns to Australia, near the end of the film, he is more

Of course, the only way we can ever have a truly representative national cinema is for these minorities to make films from their vantage points.

In terms of ideology of nationalism, though, Jimmie Blacksmith did underscore (if somewhat heavy-handedly) a fundamental distortion of national belief — that we, the white, Anglo-Saxons "settled Australia", when in fact it was a quiet, but brutal conquest. This irony is constantly referred to in the paralleling of the images of the first Parliament of Federation with the narrative. 14

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16. Ibid. "My fears were that it was more likely to spark a direct Aboriginal reaction than to create prejudice. I felt from seeing the film that at least of my problems was whether his grievance was proved" (p. 27) A similar ethical problem can be found in Mad Dog Morgan, directed by Philippe Mora. In the effort to align our sympathies with the social outcast (Morgan, the bushranger, whom Mora presents in a psychological equation by his choice of anti-white companions), the morality of the issue of murder and revenge, and particularly racial prejudice, is oversimplified.

13. E.g., Perry Bourke, "The 79 Slowdown." The Australian. January 26, 1979, p. 9; and Bob Ellis, "Damn those Dooomadiners!" Nation Review, July 19, 1979, pp. 669-700. Bourke believes that the industry may be in a decline. While Ellis thinks "that any business in which Phil Noyce is involved will always have his touch" — the point being that after the astounding performance of Newsfront at the Australian Film Awards, gathering a total of eight awards, a year that does not come up to the 1978 standard is a sign of doom.

14. This is more strictly accurate of the film The Last Wave; it is harder to explain in Jimmie Blacksmith.


16. Ibid. "My fears were that it was more likely to spark a direct Aboriginal reaction than to create prejudice. I felt from seeing the film that at least of my problems was whether his grievance was proved" (p. 27) A similar ethical problem can be found in Mad Dog Morgan, directed by Philippe Mora. In the effort to align our sympathies with the social outcast (Morgan, the bushranger, whom Mora presents in a psychological equation by his choice of anti-white companions), the morality of the issue of murder and revenge, and particularly racial prejudice, is oversimplified.


18. Ironic in the sense that the whites were in total ignorance at the time of Federation of the real claims of the first Australians to the land, with whom no treaty or any of the decrees of most forms of conquest had been undertaken.

A newsreel cameraman captures the dramatic Maitland floods. Phil Noyce's Newsfront.

The amenable Jimmy Lewis, who plays Jimmie in Fred Schepisi's The Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith.
American than most Americans. Amy, who is an assistant producer at Cinetone, is a career woman in an era that found being single and ambitious offensive. Rather, the socially desirable female role is Len's Catholic, working-class wife.

Part of the measure of change in social attitudes is found in their marriage. Alienated by Catholic doctrine and Len's loyalty to the Labor Party stand against the Referendum to outlaw the Communist Party, they both are constrained by their principles. Yet, by the end of the film, they have both become involved in new relationships that mean that gradual denial of some of those old beliefs. The act of compromise is in itself a comment on the deflation of the Australian identity that was worn away with the changing times.

Perhaps the film's strongest critique lies in the decline of the Australian newsreel. When Cinetone and Newsco were rivals, but with Newsco receiving more overseas news, Cinetone made the decision to become even more "Australian" in its content. The head of the company tells his staff this will mean more emphasis on the rural life — "the real Australia" — yet qualifies his statement by saying they all know that it's not true, but it works. Thus Cinetone is forced to perpetuate the dying nationalist beliefs, and the images that are chosen to remind urban audiences of their national spiritual core are also a comment upon the contemporary dilemma of the film industry as "Australian" content to sell films. Cinetone uses images evocative of all the Australian myths — bushfires, floods and feasts of endurance — events with which the vast majority of Australians who live in the cities have no experience, except that it is "news".

This situation is central to all decisions to use nationalist ideology and motifs. Historically, all nationalisms are urban-based, and Noyce has made a strong point about the perpetuation of Australian nationalism: that the decision to produce a picture was made not because it was an economic and socio-political reaction to the encroachment of American values in urban Australia. Without making too much of a simplification, it is the result of urban conflicts that precipitate the images of the individual and nostalgia for the rural lifestyle and values.

The arrival of television spelt the demise of even the newsreel's reaction and resistance to a changing national identity.

The film ends on a note of hope for Australian society that not everyone was hoodwinked by the propaganda of the times (Len "still holds on to the illusion of democracy"). The clips that run on through the credits emphasise the hope and the changes to come during the 1960s, with finally a glimpse of the Labor leaders to be found at the end of a long Liberal tunnel.

Noyce, unlike most other feature filmmakers, has managed to combine an innovatory approach with his personal political statement, which leaves some hope for the future development of commercial film production.

The period films that have been released recently — My Brilliant Career, The Odd Angry Shot and The Last Ronin — have tried to emphasise that the naturalistic approach is essentially a moribund formula. Noyce's use of documentary clips and the technical expertise such integrations required were exciting, but Newsfront is almost its own critic by the end of its very short script. Noyce, as some film critics have noted, visualises that not only for classic nationalism's themes and images is just another form of escapism from the problems of the Australian identity. At the beginning of the film, news clips of the arrival of the first contingent of European migrants after World War 2, and that is a small indication of the rapidly changing face of the Australian people that must be seen more often.

The Odd Angry Shot is by no means a great film. But as an attempt to review the Australian experience of fighting in the Vietnam War it is a viable statement, one that does not endow the mission with the extra significance of the recent spate of American films dealing with the same event (e.g., Coming Home, The Deer Hunter and Apocalypse Now). Its feeling is that of the aimlessness of the exercise for all involved. To lighten its pessimism (another commercial palliative?) it tends to devolve into an attempt at an Akaki, with a lot of beer and mateship. Yet, for the first time, the historical origins of the "mateship" concept (though incidental to the film) had a poignancy that it rarely has in its urban setting.

If it seems that the period genre is in decline, then it may be interpreted as an indication of transition or growth within society. There have been two features released recently with themes that revolve around ethnic problems, Kostas and Cathy's Child. Neither film is a definitive statement; instead, they are presented in a manner of understatement that indicates the acceptance of these minorities as a fact of life. Though both films tend to follow the romanticism initiated by John Duigan in his 1978 film on youth unemployment, MOUTH TO MOUTH, the move toward an easing comprehension of the present composition of Australian society has begun to be translated onto film.

Australian nationalism, in the archaic and exclusivist forms that have been described in this decade, may only have been the easiest way of bridging the gap of years of being without presentations of national identity on film. If the rifts between "commerce" and "art" in film productions can be bridged, Australia may yet evolve a cinematic identity more appropriate to its age.

### Japanese Cinema

Continued from p. 111

find a ready market in filmgoing countries of the East, where television still has a slight hold. However, it is dubious whether such films will find a wide audience in the West.

### Conclusion

The Japanese are realistic, especially where economics are involved, as is seen in their quick adaptation to necessity in the manufacture of consumer goods. Cinema is no different. Despite a steady trickle of low-grade production, which can be seen as a heroic effort to honor responsibilities to employees, and the few hopeful efforts to catch the youth market, the activity in the in-2. Japanese firms are not allowed to sack employees just because they have no work for them.

3. Shochiku has just financed a young director who had only previously made a Super 8mm film.

2. Japanese firms are not allowed to sack employees just because they have no work for them.

Australian experience of fighting in the Vietnam War it is a viable statement, one that does not endow the mission with the extra significance of the recent spate of American films dealing with the same event (e.g., Coming Home, The Deer Hunter and Apocalypse Now). Its feeling is that of the aimlessness of the exercise for all involved. To lighten its pessimism (another commercial palliative?) it tends to devolve into an attempt at an Akaki, with a lot of beer and mateship. Yet, for the first time, the historical origins of the "mateship" concept (though incidental to the film) had a poignancy that it rarely has in its urban setting.

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### Acknowledgments

![Cinema Papers, April-May—153](Cinema%20Papers,%20April-May—153)
Production Survey

Continued from p. 135

Camera operator ... Geoffrey Simpson
Length ... 16 mins. 9 secs.

Synopsis: A training film to instruct coaches and potential coaches about the nature of injuries suffered by people who play sport, so that they will be more adept in recognizing signs which reduce the risk of injury. 

PRODUCTION SURVEY

Borodin in Suburbia

District: Tasmania
Producer: National Parks Corporation
Director: Bob Connolly
Screenwriter: Bob Connolly
Gauge: 35mm

Synopsis: A television documentary about the Borodin Peninsular in Victoria.

Flowing Freeway

District: Tasmania
Producer: Tommy Turner
Director: John Stringer
Scriptwriter: Margaret Pierce
Gauge: 16mm

Synopsis: An animated documentary about the history and contemporary significance of the Port Arthur, Tasmania.

Life In It

District: Tasmania
Producer: Tasmanian Film Corporation
Director: Peter Cass
Screenwriter: Andrew Butler
Gauge: 35mm

Synopsis: A two-part television series on the sport of hockey players.

NATIONAL PARKS

District: Tasmania
Producer: Tasmanian Film Corporation
Director: Darren Parer
Screenwriter: Chris Harvey
Gauge: 35mm

Synopsis: A short film about Tasmanian National Parks to promote the Tasmanian National Parks.

ROUND THE BEND

District: Tasmania
Producer: Tasmanian Film Corporation
Director: Andrew Whitehead
Screenwriter: Andrew Whitehead
Gauge: 35mm

Synopsis: A short film about Tasmanian National Parks to promote the Tasmanian National Parks.

Tasmanian Film Corporation

Be Nice To Your Body

District: Tasmanian Film Corporation
Producer: Darren Parer
Director: Peter Cass
Screenwriter: Chris Harvey
Gauge: 35mm

Synopsis: A short film about the environment and its importance.

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