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THE RHETORIC OF MASS INTERCULTURAL IDENTIFICATION: A BURKEIAN STUDY OF THE NEW AUSTRALIAN FILM INDUSTRY

The Ohio State University Ph.D. 1985

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THE RHETORIC OF MASS INTERCULTURAL IDENTIFICATION:
A BURKEIAN STUDY OF THE NEW AUSTRALIAN FILM INDUSTRY

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By
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The Ohio State University
1985

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In memory of Carl Sean Traynor.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am grateful to my parents, Nicholas and Marion Scodari, for their love and support. I would also like to thank my adviser, John J. Makay, for his encouragement and assistance throughout my graduate career.
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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

Background and Justification

We come from the land Down Under
Where women glow, and men plunder.
Can you hear, can you hear us thunder?
Better run; better take cover.¹

So goes the refrain of the recent popular hit "Down Under" performed by a group of Australian rockers known as "Men At Work." While Aussie popular musicians have been "thundering" for some time now--witness stars such as Helen Reddy, The Bee Gees, and Olivia Newton John--the Australian film industry has just begun to make its mark beyond the borders of that nation-continent. Films such as Breaker Morant, My Brilliant Career, and Gallipoli have been critical, if not commercial successes outside of Australia and have garnered international exposure and acclaim for their directors, Bruce Beresford, Gillian Armstrong, and Peter Weir, respectively.

The worldwide emergence of Australian cinema since the mid-1970's appears to be no accident; government
The sponsorship of film ventures under the auspices of the Australian Film Commission and state commissions, along with the establishment of national film academies, have served to define Australian identity within Australia as well as to reinforce cultural autonomy through the communication of that identity to others—other cultures, that is. This latter goal is an example of what might be termed "mass intercultural identification." The events surrounding these efforts introduce intriguing questions and issues for consideration by the rhetorical critic of media.

In approaching an exploration of these phenomena, the investigator must first determine an appropriate theoretical framework from which to study the data, and having accomplished this, must devise methods suited to an analysis of the data as they have been conceptualized. This overall framework and the analytical tools selected become grist for the investigatory mill themselves; any thorough study would involve a critique of these elements as well. Background information which pertains specifically to the theoretical and methodological aspects of the study is, therefore, necessary here.

James Monaco, in *How to Read a Film*, states:
People who think about film are no longer content to simply describe an ideal system of aesthetics or social values, nor do they see their main aim as finding a language to describe the phenomenon of film. The job of film theory now is profoundly dialectical... between filmmaker and subject, film and observer...culture and society...a never-ending set of codes and subcodes that raises fundamental questions about the relationship of life and art, reality and language.3

What is being described in this passage is a conception of film as a complex communication system with meaning emanating from each of its components and from the connections between and among them—the overriding view which will be assumed in this study. The phenomena to be studied here constitute a rhetorical drama involving many aspects of film as a communication system.

The rhetorical theories and critical tools derived from the writings of Kenneth Burke present their own stimulating questions and are appropriate for understanding this drama. Burkeian concepts such as the representative anecdote,4 with its special relevance to the study of communication and culture, as well as the dramatistic framework for criticism from which it comes,5 are useful methods in this investigation and will be applied and extended.

Kenneth Burke's separation between the rhetoric of
conscious motive or persuasion, and the rhetoric of subconscious motive or identification, will become pivotal in the study to be undertaken. In analyzing Australia's efforts to identify with other cultures through its media, the sometimes tenuous Burkeian distinction will become clarified.

Against this backdrop, the analysis to follow is more than justified. The activities of the contemporary Australian cinema industry provide a unique opportunity for the communication scholar. These phenomena bring to the fore issues of intent, of cultural values, and of economic and political influence. Their coexistence in time allows for the test of theories and methods designed to understand these constituent factors and their kinship with the study of communicative behavior.

Further, the introduction of new technologies and mass delivery systems which may alter, diminish, or enhance the persuasive power of the media is a crucial element also inviting scrutiny in this analysis. At the crossroads at which variegated critical approaches are being compared and contrasted, and new perspectives on mass communication are being considered, an extension of our fundamental understanding of collectively conceived public communication and the motives it embodies will be
sought. From this basic background, a hint of many pertinent questions and issues may be appreciated.

Purpose of the Study

The rhetorical drama to be explored in this analysis may be defined in terms of the following statement: The intent of the Australian government to establish a particular image of "Australianness" is being given artistic expression in films for internal and external consumption. Encompassing this situation is the human desire to reconcile uniformity with diversity. This is a common urge that exists in many arenas. An episode of the PBS television series "Nova," for instance, explores the quest of physicists who search for a "single theory to explain all physical phenomena." This impulse is certainly present on the somewhat smaller scale of cultural identity-seeking.

This is the thread that ties together the various elements of the drama and becomes "the act" that is the nucleus of Burke's dramatic method of criticism.
Each of the other pentadic elements—agent, agency, purpose, and scene—are encompassed by the act as it represents a unifying ideal. It is a poetic encapsulation of each aspect of the situation to be considered.

Within this broad concept are several categories or levels of reconciliation which are evident in the situation and which will be connected to the other pentadic elements in terms of ratios. An interpretation of the act that is most significant in this drama is the human effort to reconcile the uniform identity construct of a single culture with the diverse identity myths extent in a world of cultures.

The concept of intercultural identification via mass media is one which will constitute the primary focus of the investigation. In this regard, the case of Australia is rather special. Isolated from the rest of the world by miles of ocean, and colonized by Whites in the comparatively recent past, the image of Australia to outsiders has been created largely by heresy and legend. Its coming-of-age at a time when new media technologies threaten to make more uncertain an already diffuse sense of cultural identity has made the need described in the act more pressing.
The most pervasive conceptualization of the act as it appears in this study involves the desire to reconcile a diversity of subcultures with a uniform appreciation of what it means to be Australian. Migrant nations are faced with this difficulty; Americans have tended to view their identity in terms of that very "melting pot" image. Again, new media make the possibility of intracultural fragmentation a real threat, but may be used, as turnabout, to combat that threat.

Other colorations of the act are present in this investigation, and will be described in the individual chapter analyses. The secondary issues are tied together in terms of the encompassing act, and each will be spelled out in the chapter or chapters which considers it specifically. The primary issues of this study relate to the act as seen from various perspectives. A discussion of these major research issues is next.

**Primary Research Issues.** The major findings of this analysis will address issues involving many of the assumptions of Burkeian rhetorical theory such as the concept of indentification and the derivation of motives,
as well as the applicability of various Burkeian critical methods such as dramatism and the representative anecdote. Ultimately, many factors contributing to an appreciation of intracultural and intercultural identification via mass communication will be assessed. The reasons why cultures come to seek and the means they use to establish a sense of "self" will be analyzed in the process.

Preliminary questions regarding Burkeian theory and method include the following: 1) Is dramatism as applied in this study a useful tool for understanding broadly based and multi-faceted rhetorical events involving many discursive acts? 2) How may motives be derived from the use of the representative anecdote as it is employed in this investigation, and how does the Burkeian concept of symbolic action as motive relate to the idea of "equipment for living" associated with the representative anecdote? 3) How is the Burkeian distinction between persuasion and identification clarified in terms of this analysis?

Preliminary issues respective to cultural identity-seeking and mass media are as follows: 1) In what way or ways has Australia sought to establish a cultural identity; what motives and coping strategies are
revealed in discourses surrounding this quest; and what generalizations can be made regarding the similar efforts of other nations? 2) How does the world media situation, with the influx of new and far-reaching modes of dissemination, involve the choice of film as an identity-seeking vehicle and enhance and/or alter the intent of Australia as revealed in the examined discourses?

The major research issue of this study follows from these preliminary questions and may be appreciated through the introduction of a somewhat novel concept--mass intercultural identification. Instead of individuals relating to each other in an intercultural context, here we are dealing with an entire culture attempting to relate to the rest of the world through the use of media. The concept involves Burkeian theory in the sense that Burke's notion of subconscious motive--identification--is a pivotal element. It involves the function of mass media and works disseminated by mass media as identity-seeking vehicles. The concept is also related to the use of the representative anecdote, insofar as the motives uncovered are intimately connected to the idea of "equipment for living" which, in this instance, refers to strategies
that address the need for cultural selfhood.

The analysis to follow will demonstrate that "mass intercultural identification" is a viable and useful context for rhetorical study, and one which is sorely needed at a time when media link world cultures together with immediate and pervasive effect. Further, the concept will be defined and its implications for other research efforts will be discussed. The secondary questions as well as the preliminary issues will be answered with the above as the ultimate focus.

Review of Pertinent Literature

Out of a voluminous body of source material covering elements ranging from film theory to critical methods in communication to the nature of Australian culture and identity-seeking to the cinematic products of the industry, the most relevant items have been gleaned and will here be reviewed. This exploration of pertinent research material will first explore sources specifically related to Australia, Australian film, and the films themselves. Secondly, theory and methodology sources will
be covered.

Australia and Australian Film. Because this investigation identifies its subject as a rhetorical drama, discourses providing commentary on the various aspects of the drama become rhetorical data along with the contents of the films. The drama takes shape through acts of symbol-using respective to the situation; it is out of this activity that motives are generated. Many of the works cited in this section have provided discursive data to be analyzed by the investigator.

Sources which discuss Australian films and the Australian film industry have been critical in this respect. A significant volume is John Tulloch's Australian Cinema: Industry, Narrative and Meaning. This scholarly work explores the validity of various types of film criticism—especially Marxist-style and narrative criticism—with regard to Australian films of older vintage than those to be examined here. Respective to the industry itself, Tulloch describes in detail the inner-workings of the industry prior to and during the advent of government sponsorship. He assesses the insidious adoption of an
American-style system of technical rationalism within the Australian industry. Discourses that are related to the events surrounding recent changes in the industry are also included.

In the same vein are *Australian Cinema: The First 80 Years*\(^{11}\) by Adams and Shirley, and *Australian Film: The Inside Story*\(^{12}\) by Ken G. Hall. These works stress the evolution from relative inactivity in Australian filmmaking to the national effort to support home-grown movie projects. *The New Australian Cinema*, edited by Scott Murray, contains several essays divided according to film genre.\(^{13}\) These essays address issues from technique, to theme, to the film's reflection of Australian culture.

Eric Reade's *History and Heartburn: The Saga of the Australian Film*, is an anecdotal, culturally reflective account of Australian filmmaking as it has proceeded independently and under various levels of government sponsorship.\(^{14}\) The volume also contains critical reviews, profit data, and lists of film awards. This is a more informal account of events involving structural alteration of the industry.

*The Last New Wave: The Australian Film Revival* by David Stratton specifically considers the effects of
government intervention, the activities of the Australian Film Commission, and the establishment of the national film school. Actual production histories and the discourses involved are included in this volume, as well as synopses and reviews. Production histories of the two anecdotal films to be the foci of the study—My Brilliant Career and Breaker Morant—and their component discourses will be highlighted.

Karl Schmude's sensitive, well-written article "The Rise of a Cinema Down Under," will help determine cultural imperatives as they are recognized by the Australian government. Schmude probes the post-war identity quest he feels is apparent in Australia and its influence upon recent filmmaking efforts. Similarly, Ina Bertrand's essay, "National Identity / National History / National Film," provides a scholarly overview of these endeavors and a way to synthesize the historical events and cultural myths extant in the new cinema.

Also contributive in terms of Australian identity-seeking is Richard White's Inventing Australia: Images and Identity 1688-1980. This volume attempts to trace the Australian urge to establish a unique identity throughout its colonial and national history. Positioning in the first instance that the very
idea of a unique national identity is myth, White goes on to survey how Australian identity myths have been created and propagated.

Analyses of the Australian government and political process include J.D.B. Miller's *Australian Government and Politics* and Don Aitkin's *Stability and Change in Australian Politics*. Miller's work is dated, but its consideration as discourse demonstrates how the political system was viewed at a critical point in Australian history. Both books discuss the ways in which diversity is subsumed and/or encompassed by the governmental system in Australia, and aid in an understanding of how the movement for national film came about.

Other sources providing perspectives on Australian cultural myths include photojournalist Robyn Davidson's account of her lone trek across the Australian outback. Tracks gives an illuminating portrait of the status of Australian women in modern Australia. John Carroll's anthology of essays about Australian identity myths entitled *Intruders in the Bush* contains analyses of many aspects of the Australian character, from bush life to mateship to Australian art. Russel Ward's study of *The Australian*
Legend is a pivotal work defining the original Australian identity myths. Additional magazine articles about the industry, as well as critical reviews of the films, round out this body of source material.

The above are generative of rhetorical data to be examined in the dramatistic format, but pertain to the primary discourse in question—the films themselves. Many Australian films have been screened in preparation for this analysis, but two representative varieties, both of which embody a representative anecdote of identity-seeking, will be the foci of the study. Films dealing with personal or intracultural identity-seeking are best exemplified by Gillian Armstrong’s portrait of an aspiring woman writer in Victorian Australia titled *My Brilliant Career,* but also include films such as *The Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith,* *Picnic at Hanging Rock,* and *Caddie.*

Films which involve intercultural identity seeking are best represented by by Bruce Beresford’s *Breaker Morant,* a true story about two Australians made “scapegoats for the empire” during the Boer War. Peter Weir’s *Gallipoli,* a story about two young, Australian, World War I soldiers from different backgrounds who wonder why and for whom they are
fighting, is also reflective of this genre.30

Theory and Methodology. The anthropological perspective on communication is provided by Edward T. Hall's Beyond Culture.31 Sources producing data for an appraisal of film as medium include works in film theory that attempt to assess the unique qualities of the cinematic form, as well as works dealing with new technological delivery systems that may in some way alter the rhetorical potential of the medium. First and foremost is Mast and Cohen's Film Theory and Criticism.32 The thoughts of celebrated filmmakers, theorists, and critics such as Kracauer, Bazin, and Eisenstein are included in this volume, and speak to the fundamental nature of film—its relationship to reality and its status as art.

In addition to Mast and Cohen, Film and Literature: Contrasts in Media, edited by F.H. Marcus, investigates the differences between film and literary form,33 while Movies as Mass Communication, by Jowett and Linton, places film into a systemic mass communication context and discusses its unique rhetorical attributes.34 McLuhan's Understanding Media
provides needed insight into the multifaceted nature of the film medium and the ways in which film is perceived and understood by audiences.35

Sources offering commentary on media delivery systems, their hegemonic influences, and their effect upon appreciation of the film medium are abundant. Foremost among these are Williams’ Television, Technology, and Cultural Form,36 and Hamelink’s Cultural Autonomy in Global Communication.37 These volumes deal with the potential for cultural impact of new communication technologies. In addition, Jeremy Tunstall’s The Media are American38 and Boyd-Barrett’s “Media Imperialism: Towards an International Framework for the Analysis of Media Systems,”39 address the influence of American media upon other Western societies.

Theories and critical methods derived from the writings of Kenneth Burke are gleaned from a variety of sources. Dramatism, the pentad, and the representative anecdote are found in the classic work A Grammar of Motives.40 The notion of identification as a form of rhetoric, and the distinction between conscious and unconscious motive, are included in A Rhetoric of Motives.41 The concept of language as motive is
highlighted in *Permanence and Change* while *Language as Symbolic Action* stresses this fundamental Burkeian theory. Marie Nichols' seminal article, "Kenneth Burke and the New Rhetoric," which summarizes Burke's theories and relates them to rhetorical criticism, is also a useful reference, along with critical studies which have applied the pentad and other elements of dramatism.

Three articles by Barry Brummett define the use of Burke's representative anecdote for rhetorical and media criticism. In "The Representative Anecdote as a Burkeian Method Applied to Evangelical Rhetoric," Brummett discusses the representative anecdote in terms of motive and applies it to seemingly disparate rhetorics of evangelical preachers.

In "Burke's Representative Anecdote as a Method in Media Criticism," Brummett highlights Burke's notion of anecdotes providing "equipment for living," and applies the method in terms of the story essence of the film, *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*.

In "Electric Literature as Equipment for Living: Haunted House Films," Brummett focuses on the motives embodied in filmic discourse which may be seen as coping strategies to help audiences deal with disorientation in
space and time. These three theory/applications, the latter in particular, serve as guidelines for the use of the representative anecdote in this investigation. All of these analytical tools will be discussed in detail in the section dealing specifically with critical method.

Many scholarly critiques of films have been performed, but this study will highlight only those which have analyzed Australian films specifically, along with those that have proceeded with the notion of film as rhetoric. Once again, Tulloch's work is contributive. Australian Cinema, as mentioned earlier, includes critical examinations of films using narrative analysis and an exploration into meanings produced by the industry itself. The films reviewed are older than those to be considered here and, for the most part, they precede the all-out national effort to employ film as a way to reinforce Australian identity.

Brumett's application of the representative anecdote to films of the fifties whose essences are captured in the movie Invasion of the Body Snatchers and his discussion of horror films are, as previously discussed, examples of how to apply this Burkeian method to media commodities.

Recent film essays published in The Quarterly
Journal of Speech as examples of rhetorical criticism include Frentz's and Hale's "Inferential Model Criticism of The Empire Strikes Back," and Martin Medhurst's iconographic/narrative analysis "Hiroshima Mon Amour: From Iconography to Rhetoric." Both of these studies extend beyond the types of analysis--such as semiotic analysis--frequently performed in film schools, to present these films as forms of rhetoric and the methods used as consistent with the goals of communication criticism occurring under the auspices of the disciplines of speech and rhetoric.

Research Procedures and Methodology

Research and Data Collection. Research for this endeavor began with an informal viewing of recent Australian films and was followed by speculation concerning the connecting themes that seemed to bind these works together. An examination of possible methods for analysis resulted in the selection of Burkeian dramatism as a preliminary search model. Since dramatism fits with the systems perspective as well as
being suited to analyses of dramatic art forms, it proved to be an appropriate selection. The pentad and the representative anecdote, each derived from and/or akin to dramatism and serving as a way to embody dramatism as method, stood out as the primary tools for investigation. These methods and models will be explained in more detail later in this section.

On the basis of these initial procedures, research was conducted into the historical background of the Australian film industry as well as into the cultural history of Australia itself. Recent commentaries about contemporary filmmaking efforts were also examined. Visits to the Library of Congress permitted the examination of recently published documents, while the use of the library of the Australian Embassy in Washington allowed perusal of hard-to-find Australian books, journals, newspapers, and popular magazines.

After these screenings, two strains of identity-seeking films were identified. The intracultural identity-seeking films were determined to be best represented by My Brilliant Career, while Breaker Morant seemed to anecdotalize intercultural identity-seeking. These choices were made based not only on the films' contents, but on industry commentary
surrounding their production, and critical reviews. It was decided that the content portion of the study would focus upon these two films, and where possible, the analyses of the other components would be coordinated in terms of these two productions.

Burkeian Theory and Method. A communication perspective, which views human symbol-using as the instigator of cultural change, is necessary for this study. Other methods of film criticism commonly used by film and literary scholars have included Marxist criticism, which sees society as the determining factor in the production of art, as well as semiotic analysis, which interprets the shot-by-shot film "language" as a literary critic would examine the use of words, phrases and sentences. Burke's dramatic theory is, however, best-suited to this investigation, which looks at an entire dramatic event that involves communication in many realms—in commentaries on the film industry and on Australian culture and government, in the particular attributes of the film medium, as well as in the filmic messages themselves.
Burkeian theory promotes the idea that the human use of symbols constitutes action rather than the motion often assumed by behaviorists, and that such symbolic action embodies human motivation. It acknowledges that all of the facets of an event or group of events within a complex system may be understood by studying the rhetorical data emanating from the system in terms of the pentad, and by determining the interrelationships between the motives uncovered. For Burke, motives do not necessarily exist prior to the production of the rhetorical data, but arise through the very action of symbol-making and symbol-using.

Motives, while embodied in rhetoric, may be either conscious or subconscious according to Burke’s philosophy. Conscious motive is considered outright persuasion, while intent that exists below the level of consciousness Burke calls “identification”—the “establishing of rapport” with others. This is virtually synonymous with the notion of identity-seeking as it is discussed in this study. When persons act together in a spirit of identification they are, according to Burke, exhibiting “consubstantiality.”

The pentad is the key analytical tool used by rhetorical critics who endeavor to interpret the “drama”
of human events. Dramatistic analysis ensues with pentadic elements—act, scene, agent, agency, and purpose—employed to explicate the data in question. The act encompasses the event and relates to the other four elements of the pentad. The agent(s) or primary actors in the drama employ means which are the agency, and act within an environment or scene, in pursuit of a goal or purpose. The act is typically the core element, and ratios pairing it with each of the other elements may be devised during the course of analysis to highlight particular interrelationships producing answers the analyst seeks. By explaining rhetorical phenomena using the pentad and its constituent ratios, the motives which come to be through symbolic action may be determined.

Another dramatistic element which has been recently recommended for use in rhetorical and media criticism is the representative anecdote. Barry Brummett, who is responsible for this recommendation, states that the anecdote reflects "the essence of a culture's values, concerns, and interests in regard to real-life issues and problems." Like all Burkeian methods, its special purpose is to determine motive. In applying the representative anecdote to media commodities produced
within a culture, the scholar attempts to synthesize the meanings drawn from a body of works and to determine a single work which embodies the essence of this meaning. The anecdote is then related to other cultural events, and is seen as providing "equipment for living" or coping strategies to audience members who are dealing with the very problems and issues the anecdote represents.65

All of these methods have been used by critics in a variety of fashions. Scholars have used the pentad to understand a singular discourse, or to understand an entire system of events with a single pentadic application. This study will employ an individual pentad to explicate the communication event in its entirety. The representative anecdote will be used to synthesize the data examined in the chapter highlighting film contents as agency. The findings of each chapter will then be considered in terms of the integrated drama and the primary issues this study will address.
Organization of the Study

As stated earlier, the body of this investigation will be divided in terms of the four remaining aspects of the Burkeian pentad—scene, agent, purpose and agency. The encompassing conceptualization of the act has been introduced in this chapter, but will be defined in each of the following five chapters as it is used in that specific instance.

Following this introductory chapter, the analysis of the Australian scene and the world media scene will ensue. Chapter Three will highlight the Australian government as the primary agent in the drama. Chapter Four will explicate the purpose in terms of Australian identity-seeking efforts throughout history, and in terms of national film specifically. Chapter Five looks at the medium as agency, and will determine what qualities of the cinematic medium as a form of mass communication make it especially appropriate for disseminating cultural identity messages. Chapter Six will explore agency in terms of those content messages as they may be appreciated in the new Australian Cinema. Finally, Chapter Seven
will provide closure by addressing the primary issues of the study and by demonstrating its contribution to knowledge in the field of communication.
NOTES


10. Tulloch, pp. 11-16.


29. Bruce Beresford, dir., *Breaker Morant* (South Australian Film Corp., et. al., 1980).


40. Burke, A Grammar of Motives.


31

(1952), pp. 133-144.

45. Burke's suggested application was to literary criticism and drama, in particular. See A Grammar of Motives.


49. Tuolloch, Australian Cinema.

50. Brummett, "Burke's Representative Anecdote as a Method in Media Criticism."


54. see Christian Metz, "On the Notion of Cinematographic Language," in Nichols, ed., p. 582.

55. see Burke, A Rhetoric of Motives.

56. Burke, Permanence and Change, pp. 5-36.

57. Ibid.

58. see Burke, A Rhetoric of Motives and Language as Symbolic Action.


64. Brummett, "Burke's Representative Anecdote as a Method in Media Criticism," p. 164.

CHAPTER TWO

THE SCENE: AUSTRALIA AND THE WORLD

The Australian government's efforts to establish a unique identity through the subsidizing of film projects is relevant to the world film/media scene as well as to the immediate Australian environment. To understand the act's connection to the scene, the following questions will be addressed: 1) How does an historical perspective on the Australian scene establish the need for an acknowledgment of the uniformity and diversity of Australian culture? 2) How does the new technological age create a situation in which an establishment of a unique Australian identity with other national cultures is more desireable and more attainable? 3) How do the major aspects of Australian identity as determined by White, Bertrand and others emanate from Australian history, especially as they have conflicted to produce uncertainty about such an identity? 4) What motives may be uncovered by studying the act's relationship to the scene--Australia and the World?

The claims of this chapter analysis are: 1) Australia must embrace its diverse elements in order to
establish for public consumption a uniform vision of its identity that is consistent with popularly accepted historical facts and lore. 2) New media seem to threaten the effort to promote an image of Australian identity, but may be used to the advantage of that effort, especially in terms of an attempt to identify with other cultures through media commodities. 3) Conflicts among identity images produced out of historical lore characterize the prevailing identity myths of the contemporary Australian scene. 4) Australians are seeking to identify in order to strengthen their own sense of cultural character as well as to relate and affirm that culture with the rest of the world. To appreciate the present-day Australian scene, an overview of this culture's history is contributive.

Australian History

Early Exploration and Settlement. Europeans first knew of the existence of this island continent in the 16th century. Maps of that era show the approximate location of Terra Australis, as it was known. In the
early 1600's, Dutch explorers surveyed the Northern coastline along what was named the Gulf of Carpentaria, as well as the smaller island to the Southeast, which came to be called Tasmania.

The part of Australia best suited for development, the eastern coast, was claimed by the British. The great explorer Captain James Cook is credited with first sailing into Botany Bay in 1770. He landed in the area which was soon called New South Wales. After this, Cook chartered the entire eastern coastal region.

It was not until 1779 that the British government decided to establish penal colonies in New South Wales. The initial voyage did not occur until 1788, when the first group of convicts established the port city of Sydney. The New South Wales Corps, a force of prison guards led by John MacArthur, were allotted plots of land in the region and contingents of prisoners to work it. By 1793 there was an influx of free settlers and the introduction of livestock, especially sheep, further validated a growing economy.

Later, the British government appointed a governor—William Bligh of *Bounty* fame—as superintendent of New South Wales. The monopoly market of the Corps conflicted with the methods of Bligh, and
the military replaced his rule for two years. He was later removed completely and Colonel Lachlan Macquarie became governor. Macquarie dissolved the Corps and established civil courts. Also, further exploration of the continent was initiated.

Conflicts with the native Aboriginals ensued as a result of this early nineteenth century expansion. Thousands were killed in the hinterland as well as on the island of Tasmania. New cities, such as Brisbane on the Northeastern coast, sprang up during this period of expansion. Perth, on the Western coast, was also settled. The southern region came to be known as Victoria, and the city of Melbourne was founded by refugees from Tasmania. Geographically, what was called Australia was expanding and its population increasing.

A major force precipitating a boom in population was the Australian Gold Rush, which occurred between 1850 and 1860. Gold fields were discovered in the central Victoria region. Immigration became an issue, as Chinese and other nonwhites sought entry. The New South Wales government introduced the "White Australia" laws, which systematically limited the number of nonwhites who were permitted entry. The gold rush was also responsible for diversifying Australia's economy. The push toward
federation was also evident, with new colonies and varied interests encompassed within Australia's borders.

Federation and Commonwealth. By the late 1800's, federation became imminent. The British Parliament authorized a Federal Council in 1885, but it was not until 1891 that a federal constitution was drafted. In 1897, a constitutional forum was convened and the resulting document was approved by the British Parliament in 1900. The Commonwealth of Australia was born on January 1, 1901. The Federation included New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, Tasmania, Western Australia, and South Australia. The colony of New Zealand was destined to become a separately governing entity.2

Labor parties which developed during the period just before commonwealth formed a national party that under Andrew Fisher, dominated the first Federal parliament. Subsequent parliaments in the early history of the nation were also dominated by labor interests. "White Australia" laws, women's suffrage, and protective tariffs were among the early significant legislation. The conservative Fusion Party took power in 1913, only to be dissolved
just before the outbreak of World War I.

At this juncture the Labor Party was again victorious, and under Edward Hughes Australia did its bit to aid the Mother Country in the war effort. There were 60,000 Australian casualties. The issue of conscription was controversial in 1916, with Hughes heading the pro-draft forces. Anti-conscription Laborites eventually ousted Hughes, who formed a pro-conscription party. In two referendum efforts, conscription was not approved.3

Hughes' Nationalist Party was victorious in 1919, and a new party, the agricultural Country Party, was introduced. Industrialization aided a booming economy in the 1920s. A new Prime Minister, Stanley Bruce, was supportive of free-enterprise and sought to discourage state ownership of industries. Disagreements between industry and labor resulted, and the Labor Party, headed by James Scullin, was reelected to power.

Scullin's administration came at a time of worldwide depression, and a new coalition party, the United Australia Party, gained influence with its conservative economic policies. Joseph Lyons was its leader, and the party was elected to power in 1932. An economic resurgence followed, with manufacturing industries, such
as the steel industry, on the upswing.

Australia followed the Mother Country into World War II in September, 1939. With the United Australia Party still in power a new leader, Robert Menzies, took the reigns of government. Australian troops were decisive in several campaigns against the Germans, including the North African Campaign and many battles occurring in the Near East. When Japan entered the war, the step-up in industrialization was aided by Lend-Lease supplies from the U.S.

Japan was in position to invade Australia after taking New Guinea and the Solomon Islands. The city of Darwin in Northern Australia was bombed by the Japanese in February, 1942. Other towns were also attacked, but Australian defenses were eventually strengthened through collaboration with the U.S. Allied troops recaptured New Guinea, and the danger of further Japanese attack was removed. Australia lost 29,000 in the war effort.

During the war, stability characterized the political scene. In 1941, John Curtin led the Labor Party to victory and soon proved to be one of Australia's most influential leaders. Curtin continued Menzies' anti-isolationist policies. After the war, Curtin sought to transfer certain state powers to the federal
government so that temporary rehabilitation could be facilitated. His proposals were, by and large, rejected. After Curtin's death in 1945, Joseph Chifley took the reigns of government. Post-war strikes were the major issue during Chifley's administration, and proposals to boost Australian immigration were made and approved. Limitations on the immigration of nonwhites continued, however. Social reforms of the Chifley government included a standardization of the 40 hour work week and a shift of government pension systems to federal control.

In 1949, a coalition Country-Liberal Party government took power from the Laborites, and Robert Menzies was again in charge. Strike movements flourished despite the rigid anti-Labor stance of Menzies. Involvement in the Korean War dominated foreign relations during the early fifties. A mutual defense pact--ANZUS--was signed with New Zealand and the United States in 1951, and the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization, which was established in 1954, also included Australia.

The Menzies government continued to preside until 1966. During this period, the Australian economy was generally healthy despite repeated bouts with inflation. Tax increases, full employment policies, wage minimums,
and other issues characterized Menzies' economic program. Full civil rights for Northern Territory Aborigines were guaranteed in 1964.4

In foreign affairs, Menzies headed the delegation which attempted to negotiate a settlement of the Suez Canal Crisis in 1957. Australia, along with Britain and Canada, participated in atomic testing that same year. In 1965, the government proposed sending a small battalion to aid the South Vietnamese war effort.

Harold Holt succeeded Menzies, and promptly increased assistance to South Vietnam. That year, closer affiliations with the U.S. than with Britain were evident in terms of Australian foreign policy. Late in 1967, Holt died in an accident. John Gorton led the Liberal Party to power in 1971. His government promptly fell, and he was succeeded by William McMahon.

Labor re-emerged in 1972 under the left-wing government of Gough Whitlam. Whitlam ended the draft, established relations with China, and instituted economic policies highly favorable to the Australian worker. The movement for national film gained strong support from his government. The Whitlam government was plagued, however, with steady economic decline. In 1975, Whitlam was abruptly dismissed when he refused to call for elections
to address the worsening economic situation. Malcolm Fraser, leading a Liberal/Country coalition government, came to power.

In 1983, Labor gained ascendency under the popular Robert Hawke. Hawke's government suffered because of spy scandals and other complications, and his leadership has invited strong criticism from the left. Despite a decline in popularity, his government was re-elected in December, 1984.

This chronological overview of Australian history is helpful in order to uncover sequences of events and to discern how, when, and why certain myths have been engendered. A thematic analysis of Australian history in terms of the development of the contemporary Australian scene may prove to be even more revealing respective to cultural identity. Discourses commenting on Australian identity quests provide rhetorical data in this regard.

A Thematic Analysis of the Australian Scene

Chronicler of Australian identity-seeking Richard White has bemoaned the tendency to highlight the
distinctive characteristics of a culture while ignoring the many ways it may imitate other cultures.\textsuperscript{6} It has been these very unique features which have tended to define the Australian identity as it has been mythically captured by national film. Dialectics between these elements, especially between urban myths and bush legends, are especially evident in these works.

Ina Bertrand, with the aid of White's findings, has delineated four aspects of "Australianness" which seem to define the unique identity captured by the sponsored film projects.\textsuperscript{7} These constructs will be reviewed from a slightly different perspective in the chapter discussing the aspect of purpose. The first construct emanates from the geographical location and physical environment of Australia. That Australia is remote, that it contains plants, animals, and indigenous peoples unknown anywhere else, that it has unique climate and terrain, are all facts which contribute to this element. As a result, Australians viewed their country as a young, untamed and bountiful colony maturing under a British heritage.\textsuperscript{8}

In reaction to this first strain came a sense of kinship with the Australian environment.\textsuperscript{9} Although loyalty to Britain remained, there grew a need to be seen as separate. In reaction to the authoritarianism of the
British came a tendency toward egalitarianism and non-conformity exemplified in the Australian bush ethic and "mateship"—the male bonding rituals of drinking, sporting, etc. Such egalitarianism neglected to include female and Native Australians, as well as non-white immigrants.

The consumer oriented society that sprung from the urbanization of Australian culture was a reaction to the bush ethic. Technological progress and the love of athleticism defined the "Australian way of life" and proved to be the preferred image. The post-war era saw a boom in conservatism associated with Anti-Communist sympathies.

Most recently, the construct of multiculturalism has defined the Australian scene. The influx of immigrants, fervor over civil rights for Aborigines and non-white immigrants, and the birth pangs of feminist awakening have characterized this element. Each of these major strains has a history which bears analyzing in this chapter.

*Australian Geographical Identity.* Kangaroos, koalas, platypuses, emus and other species found nowhere else on
earth, along with a conspicuous absence of mammalia, awaited European settlers on the island continent. Acacia gum trees were the most common flora, and the desert outback, with a minimum of rainfall, must have presented a foreboding frontier. Climatic zones range from tropical to temperate, and the wet seasons affect mainly the coastline areas. There is a dearth of flowing rivers and streams.  

Scientists speculate that the Australian continent broke away from what is now South America during the continental shift, causing an unusual distribution of species. But the continents did separate, and the remoteness of Australia has played a huge part in supporting the mythic image of the strange, fairy-tale land Down Under.

Bush legends and myths grew out of this construct of Australianness. The quintessential work on this subject is Russel Ward's *The Australian Legend*, in which the origins of Australia's most recognizable myths are traced. John Carroll has described the white settlers as "Intruders in the Bush," and used this name for his collection of essays on the search for Australian identity. Eleanor Hodges' contribution to this volume includes an acknowledgment of the convict
Because the aristocracy did not emigrate to the continent until a considerable period of time after the arrival of the first convict settlers, early class divisions became evident. Soon, however, a collectivist image was created out of the hardships and necessities of life on the outback. This was in contrast to the spirit of individualism which characterized settlers in the American West. Hodges writes:

The hazards, hardships, and extreme loneliness of bush life made the practice of 'mateship' not only essential for survival but, in the absence of white women and organized religion, virtually the only vehicle for emotional release, altruism, and commitment.

Not surprisingly, bush life was a primary focus of Australian film in the early days of the industry. Still enamored by the mystery and stark beauty of their land, Australians saw this aspect of Australian identity as the main element by which a uniform image could be realized.

The country's remoteness was a clear impetus for perpetuating bush legends. Karl Schmaude writes: "Australia feels the enervating influence of isolation, of being once removed from the cultural source."
This sense of isolation, then, is a force behind as well as a focus of identity themes in Australian art and literature—including film.

These legends prospered for a short time under an umbrella of British colonialism. No suggestion was made that they implied a break with the principles and standards of the Mother Country. However, the geographical and physical characteristics of Australia may have led to the development of the next significant construct, which involves this sense of egalitarianism and mateship as identity elements which opposed British authoritarianism.

Bush Values and Egalitarianism. The collectivist outlook spawned by the bush legends, and the mateship ethic, soon became the foci of Australian nationalism. Ward's conception of the bushman and his "mateship" behavior is representative:

a practical man, rough and ready in his manners.... He is a great improvisor.... He swears hard and consistently, gambles heavily and often, and drinks deeply on occasion.... He is usually...skeptical about the value of religion, and intellectual and cultural pursuits generally.... He is a fiercely independent person who hates
officiousness and authority.... Yet he is very hospitable and above all, will stick to his mates through thick and thin.27

The golddiggers and bushranger outlaws enhanced this aspect of Australian identity, although racism precipitated by the influx of Chinese diluted it. Hodges insists, however, that the egalitarian ethos was still strong, and dominated the latter decades of the 19th century.28

Hodges and White have stressed the role of the intellectuals and urban-dwellers in precipitating this myth, thus establishing the thrust of Australian nationalism as contrasted with British authoritarianism.29 White terms this "The Professionals' Revolt."30 Hodges writes:

The myth-making process was greatly accelerated by two events in particular: the rapid growth of the trade union movement, and the discovery of the bush by literary men. Trade unionism was shaped and colored by the pre-existent bush ethos..., but although the movement helped spread the ethos widely through the whole community, it was probably literature, being less class bound and operating at a deeper level of consciousness, which was the more important force in the osmotic process.31

Thus, politics affected the identity quest, insofar as
the national economic situation was concerned. Legends of the bushmen, the pioneers, the spectre of racism and sexism, etc., were all part of the aura of Australianness embraced by the nationalist.

Rebels, such as the notorious outlaw Ned Kelly, gave flesh and blood reality to this vision of the irreverent, Irish, anti-establishment Australian.32 Angus McIntyre has studied this Aussie folk hero and has determined that Kelly gained popularity because, "the selectors of north-eastern Victoria, discerning a theme of social protest in his actions, viewed him more as a noble robber or Robin Hood than as a common criminal."33

Another thesis concerning bushranger mentality and the mateship ethic is offered by N.B. and C.B. Schedvin.34 The psychological makeup of early Australians, who were outcasts and prisoners, has involved a narcissistic personality element which has, to a certain degree, been passed down through generations and become one of the foci for Australian nationalism.35

The conflict between these primitive impulses and the requirements and attributes of what may be called "civilization" led to the next identity element, which is
the conservative, authoritarian, consumer-oriented society. Establishing the commonwealth did not end this conflict, but rather, gave focus to the identity quest which persists today. Hodges observes: "While it is true, therefore, that the Australian frontier has instigated the growth of nationalism, it is also true that nationalism has promoted the romanticization of the frontier."36 This very romanticization characterizes this aspect of the identity quest in terms of national film.

**Consumerism and Conservatism.** Urbanization eventually led to a consumer society, hungry for status, and intensely supportive of the principles of free enterprise. Countering the nationalist trend was a fierce anti-communism and the racism and sexism it engenders. The "White Australia Laws" were prominent, and the exclusion of women from the mateship ethic continued as a dominant element.37 The new "national type" became the athlete—the lifesaver at the Australian beach.38

The "Australian Way of Life" became the phrase defining the new conservatism in the post-war era and provided the force behind the exclusion of minority
groups. White observes:

...the non-British immigrant was a problem to be dealt with within Australia, and the 'Australian Way of Life' provided the basis for government policy. Assimilation, required of both migrants and Aborigines throughout the 1950's, assumed a common, homogeneous Australian way of life which would be threatened unless outsiders conformed to it. Successive ministers for immigration made the same point.39

This aspect of the Australian way of life bore more resemblance to the British way of life than was, perhaps, intended. The ways of egalitarianism had been lost in the shuffle. Instead, Australia began to identify itself in terms of the American consumer-oriented society, and thus, the need to seek a unique identity, now as distinctive from the United States, remained.40 The city of Sydney was identified with Australianness, despite the fact (or precisely because) it was the most American of Australian metropolises.41 This brought the identity quest into the sixties and seventies, and generated new identity conflicts.

The New Multiculturalism. Support of civil rights, labor advances, and a budding women's movement
characterized the re-emergence of Australian egalitarianism as a unique identity trait.\textsuperscript{42} National conscience over the treatment of Australian Aborigines became evident in art as in law, and nonwhites were welcomed to the island continent in greater numbers than ever before.\textsuperscript{43}

The status of women in Australia is an issue of identity critical to the development of the concept of national film. Today, 40% of the Australian workforce is female and two-thirds of these are married.\textsuperscript{44} Before 1966, a woman employed in any type of public service position was required to resign once married.\textsuperscript{45} Although the situation has certainly improved, the historical image of women being shipped Down Under along with livestock still remains in the national psyche.

The conflict between traditional views of womanhood and the emerging spirit of feminism is a theme which pervades national film. \textit{My Brilliant Career}, the story of a rebellious young woman in Victorian Australia, is an example. The film’s director, Gillian Armstrong, along with Patricia Lovell of the Australian Film Commission are evidence of women’s participation in national film.\textsuperscript{46}

The real plight of the Australian woman is still
seen in terms of the dichotomy between urban and rural lifestyles—between the cities and the bush communities. Photojournalist Robyn Davidson, who chronicled her lone trek across the outback, describes the effect of history on Australian women:

One does not have to delve too deeply to discover why some of the world’s angriest feminists breathed crisp blue Australian air during their formative years before packing their kangaroo-skin bags and scurrying over to London or New York.... To really come to grips with the Australian cult of myosogyny, one as to plod back through all two hundred years of white Australia’s history, and land on the shore of the ‘wide brown land’ with a bunch of hard-done-by whingeing convicts....

This image is still in existence, as Davidson adds:

Such a traumatic racial memory is hard to blot out in a mere century, and the cult is sustained and revitalized in every pub in the country, especially in the outback where the stereotyped image of the Aussie male is still so sentimentally clung to.... One night in the pub one of the kinder regulars whispered to me, ‘You ought to be more careful, girl, you know you’ve been nominated by some of these blokes as the next town rape case. You shouldn’t be so friendly.’

This characterizes the conflict between the persistent
mateship ethic and the spirit of modern-day feminism.

In his study of mateship in rural villages, Kenneth Dempsey highlights this very conflict.49 Women in these areas are segregated at many public functions, and men are labeled sissies if seen in the company of their wives at certain events—such as football games.50 These mateship rituals do result in closer relationships among small-town women, but only the younger women have shown nerve enough to attempt change. Dempsey writes:

The segregating and ridiculing of women, and the stereotyping of them as an inferior group builds the bonds of mateship.... Men, however, pay a heavy price for these gains.... ...it seems to render them incapable of entering into equal and mutually rewarding relationships with women.51

Thus, the cycle of chauvinism continues, with children lacking positive role models of male/female interaction.

So while the Australian woman from the city frequently avoids following in the oppressed footsteps of her female elders, her activities are still not accepted by much of the population—especially, the rural male population. This is the situation characterizing the Australian scene today, not only for women, but for Aboriginals and other minority groups.
The remnants of "White Australia" immigration policies still exist—although not in law. Racial and ethnic prejudice, especially outside the cities, is pervasive. Pure Aborigines are only a small minority of the Australian population, and only those living in tiny enclaves in the Northern Territory and other remote areas still cling to native ways.

In this economic, social and political environment, the movement for national film arose, and it is this current environment, acknowledging of past conflicts, that influences its content. The drive for identity, then, is to point up what seems to be uniquely Australian today. But determining what constitutes a uniquely Australian characteristic is difficult, and often, the attributes identified are not positive ones. This is the dilemma facing the purveyors of national film, and characterizing the nature of the scene/act ratio. This dilemma is particularly controversial in light of Australia's concurrent attempt to establish its identity with the rest of the world through its media.
The Scene/Act Ratio--Australia

In terms of the Australian scene, the act may be identified as the reconciliation of many diverse subcultures into a uniform national culture, and as the reconciliation between identity elements which conflict within the larger culture. Like the United States, Australia could be described as a "melting pot." Instead of this idealistic image, however, those who write about Australian history and the current Australian scene, especially those whose discourses are discussed in this chapter, have stressed the separation of the various subcultures. The segregation of the sexes and its place in historical lore is another example of this tendency. The question of whether this separation is merely reflected in or whether it is promoted by this discourse is problematic, but it is safe to conclude that the myth of separation has been a commonly accepted one.

Ironically, under the umbrella of "egalitarianism" as propagated by the bushman and later by the urban industrial worker, the seeds of prejudice and sexism are subsumed. Today, this prejudice has ameliorated, and the
diverse subcultural characteristics of the many ethnic groups of Australia have been generally acknowledged as a positive force within the larger society. This, however, tends to increase fragmentation and the need for a uniform appreciation of a national culture.

As will be demonstrated in the analysis of film contents as agency, national film has attempted to respond to this need. Recent discourses communicating the nature of the current Australian scene appear mindful of cultural diversity, even while including that very diversity as an integral element of a uniform construct of national/cultural identity.

The act also relates to the Australian scene in terms of the reconciliation of identity constructs that conflict within the contemporary culture Down Under. This is closely related to what will be discussed respective to the purpose/act ratio, but deals more specifically with today's situation. Currently, the primary conflict is between the urban and rural subcultures--between the spirit of consumerism and the allure of the simple bush life. On the one hand, the urge is to compete with other societies in the Western world--particularly the United States. On the other hand, that competition must concurrently communicate the
special cultural nature of Australia that distinguishes it from those other societies.

Journalists have, whether consciously or subconsciously, tended toward this impulse in many of their editorial efforts. A recent example involves an incident in which Prime Minister Robert Hawke was moved to tears during a press conference when asked about his daughter’s drug addiction. This event is reminiscent of the Edmund Muskie crying incident that occurred during the 1972 New Hampshire primary campaign. The reaction of editorials and commentaries in the U.S. was immediately critical of Muskie’s behavior; prospective leaders should not reveal their weaknesses. The Australian journalists’ response to the Hawke incident was quite the opposite, and reflected the views of the typical Australian; Australians openly accept the sentimental and unpredictable in their leaders. A crying Prime Minister seems to be in direct conflict with the mateship ethic, but both images may exist as typically Australian within a uniform construct acknowledging and subsuming such diversity.
Australian Film in a World of New Technologies

Since the effort to generate indigenous media fare has come largely in response to a media environment dominated by U.S. commodities, it is wise to consider Australian media dissemination and content as opposed to that of the United States, but within an international context. The entire picture involves new technological modes of information exchange—their contents viewed largely as trade commodities by both nations.

In the past, trade between the United States and Australia has been carried out with resource commodities—U.S. corn and Australian wool, for example—in mind. These commodities reflect each nation's cultural identity and individuality. The image of stark fields of roaming sheep, of the Australians' awareness of their history (the import of sheep, not indigenous to Australia, created what is still a primary economic stimulus), have permitted the Aussies to visualize and hold on to their special identity.

Information exchange has changed this picture, while
capitalizing upon it. Forged by new technologies, the domestic environment, especially in Australia, has been rapidly altered. A felt need to assert national principles and to maintain cultural connectedness and autonomy has met head to head the need for cooperation and an overriding commitment to the "free flow of information" that is characteristic of modern, democratic societies.59

In Australia, the control of the economy is in the cities but has been based, to a large degree, on the agricultural and mining interests of rural communities.60 The emergence of government sponsored media organizations such as the Australian Film Commission, geared toward the preservation of a unique Australian identity while being economically dedicated to the cultural export of filmic entertainment, is an indication of changing domestic character. The increase in already plentiful media fare from the U.S. makes the necessity of holding on to an Australian identity more vital.61 While in the U.S. and elsewhere, the recognition of the quality of Australian media may result in a more balanced view of Australianness to outsiders.

A related issue concerns the influence of socio-cultural, technical, and political aspects of the
international media environment upon the content of Australian media--specifically, film. Today, film reaches more persons throughout the Western world on the home television screen via delivery systems such as cable, satellite, and videotape. Included are filmed and videotaped works produced specifically for the home screen, as well as those intended for initial theatrical release.

Technical elements which impinge upon the culture-carrying power of films in Australia and other industrialized nations are many and varied. Movie theaters, which barely survived the emergence of broadcast television, may not survive the new media no matter how much theater owners are able to raise the price of popcorn. Cable and videotape have already had an effect. Direct Broadcast Satellite (DBS), and quality enhancements such as High Definition Television (HDTV) will certainly add to the impact. DBS will permit consumers to choose from many more varieties of filmic entertainment than broadcast and cable currently offer. HDTV along with large screens and stereo will combine to close the quality gap between film and video. This will be a boom to the international film industry, while sounding the death knell for movie theaters.
Some have suggested that all of this will increase fragmentation in already fragmented societies, such as that of Australia.65 But pluralism may have a positive effect; for the expression of diversity may be culturally cohesive. The response of the Australian government represents an effort to take part in this windfall.

The Scene/Act Ratio--the World

In terms of Australia's relationship to other cultures, and her identity as it is appreciated by other cultures, the act may be seen as an effort to reconcile a uniform Australian identity within a diversity of world cultures. Distinctions between Australia and Britain, and between Australia and the United States, are especially critical. Australia does not desire to wrest itself from the ranks of capitalist industrial nations, even though the socialist political element is somewhat stronger Down Under than it is in the United States. Instead,
Australians wish to relate and identify with those other democratic cultures just as a well-adjusted person would want to relate as a unique individual to other unique individuals.

New technologies have complicated this effort. On the cover of the paperback version of John Tulloch’s *Australia Cinema* is a picture of “Father Australia” presenting a publicity poster of an Australian film to Uncle Sam. Sam’s hand is raised in refusal. The need to change the reality symbolized in this illustration has been pervasive. Australians have attempted to solve the problem not by imitating American film fare, but by promoting artistically excellent efforts that are distinctively Australian.

The fear that cable, video, satellites, and other new media will only make American fare more accessible to Australian audiences has become diluted. U.S. cable and satellite companies have consistently purchased many Australian films. It seems apparent that audiences throughout the free world will continue to view films produced in Australia. Thus, the ultimate effect of the influx of new media technologies is to aid in the effort to identify with other cultures through media commodities.
Conclusion

As a result of this analysis of Australian history, of the thematic account revealing a conceptualization of the contemporary Australian cultural scene, and of a consideration of Australia's place in a world of diverse cultures tied together by new media, the following contentions have been supported: 1) Australia, as a democratic society comprised of many races and ethnic subgroups, is compelled to acknowledge its diversity and embrace it in its attempt to promote a uniform appreciation of its culture. The history of the nation, with the conflict between rural and urban lifestyles preeminent, with the influx of migrants and engrained images concerning the role of women, and with unpredictability and change seen as expected and admired traits, demonstrates this impulse.

2) Although U.S. domination of media industries, especially those involving new mass communication technologies, threatens extensive and continuing
saturation of Australia with American media fare, Australians have seized the opportunity to exploit the new media environment to their advantage. By subsidizing and improving the quality of their own media commodities, and by seeing that this fare is reflective of Australianness, they have endeavored to identify among themselves in terms of uniform identity constructs as well as to identify with the rest of the world.

3) Certainly, the conflict between bush life and the urban, consumer lifestyle, as well as the conflict between authoritarianism and egalitarianism, are integral elements in the contemporary Australian scene. They are derived from a logical progression of identity myths—Man and nature, Man and community, Man and ideology, and Man and social/economic advancement. These conflicts, although not entirely resolved, are reconciled by the Aussies as part of the general sense of Australianness reflected in national film.

4) Australia's intent, especially regarding the world scene, is clear: discovering an identity and identifying with others go hand in hand. Australians must appreciate a unique cultural self, and must identify and discover their place among a world of cultures.

The agent in this drama is the Australian
government, which has intervened upon the contemporary Australian scene to foster this sense of identity. An analysis of the agent is next.
NOTES


2. New Zealand became a separate nation in 1952, although still under British domain.

3. White, p. 130.

4. For all intents and purposes, Aborigines were still economically disenfranchised. see White, p. 169.


7. Bertrand, pp. 179-188.


15. Miller, pp. 11-12.

16. Miller, p. 11.

17. Bertrand, p. 179.

18. see Ward, *The Australian Legend*.


23. Tulloch, p. 11.

24. Schmude, p. 159.

25. White, p. 85.


28. Hodges, p. 11.


30. White, p. 88.

31. Hodges, p. 12.


33. McIntyre, p. 38.


35. Schedvin and Schedvin, p. 105.


38. White, p. 77.

40. White, p. 162.

41. White, p. 51.

42. Bertrand, p. 180.


44. "A New Wave of Tradeswomen," Australia Now (July 1, 1982), p. 15.


47. Davidson, p. 33.

48. Davidson, p. 34.

49. Dempsey, pp. 131-142.

50. Dempsey, p. 139.

51. Dempsey, p. 139.

52. White, p. 169.

53. White, p.

54. Griffiths, p. 597.

55. This incident occurred on March 4, 1972.

56. see for example, "Campaign Teardrops," Time (3-13-72), p. 20.

57. Griffiths, p. 597.


59. White, p. 150.

60. White, p. 130.


62. Melvin Defleur and Everette Dennis, Under-

63. DeFleur and Dennis, p. 85.

64. DeFleur and Dennis, p. 92.

65. Hamelink, p. 53.

66. See Tulloch, Australian Cinema.

67. A perusal of any week’s TV Guide magazine cable film listings will reveal a good number of Australian films.
CHAPTER THREE

THE AGENT: THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT

The primary agent involved in this drama is the Australian government along with the various institutions it subsumes, as well as the actors who have participated in it. With respect to the agent, several questions are paramount: 1) What characteristics of the structure of the Australian government and the various ideologies which comprise it have led to the institutionalized sponsorship of film? 2) How is the act as established in this study related to the agent in terms of government structure and ideology? 3) What motives may be uncovered by analyzing the agent in terms of the encompassing act?

The following contentions are made as a result of the analysis: 1) The propensity of the Australian political structure is to proceed from diversity to consensus through deliberation, as the three major parties represent separate ideologies which are all still cognizant of the need to foster indigenous art and culture. 2) The above-mentioned political diversity
results in various concepts of Australianness which, when combined in a body of filmic works, ultimately results in a uniform vision acknowledging that diversity. 3) The intent of the Australian government is to form consensus out of division; that intent may be seen in the decision to subsidize indigenous films which thematically and mythically create an impression of unique identity. In order to support these claims, an overview of the Australian government, and an analysis of pertinent commentary are contributive.

Australian Government:
Political Parties and Parliamentary Structure

Political Parties. In a nation with a Parliamentary system of government, political parties are the foundation. In Australia, three parties have survived and thrived since 1910: Labor, Country, and Liberal.¹ The Communist Party has also been active outside the Parliamentary framework. Unlike those in Britain, these parties are organized at the state rather than at the Federal level.² The dominant concerns of Australian parties involve domestic economic issues,
rather than international or defense issues, and the union and farm syndicates or business firms that control the parties dictate positions with regard to such matters. A final characteristic shared by the three main parties is that none can exist out of power merely as a party of opposition; all three maintain responsibility in the government at all times.

The Liberal Party in Australia combines the many political groups which have traditionally opposed Labor policies, with the exception of the agricultural interests which seceded to establish the Country Party. After many name changes reflecting growth and evolution, the Liberal Party has come to stand for British-style Parliamentary Democracy.

In Australian Government and Politics, J.D.B. Miller associates Liberals with anti-Socialism, low taxes, free enterprise, "order, loyalty, respectability, property and refinement." Its members include the upper classes, white collar workers, businesspersons, and the like. In actuality, it is the conservative party of Australia. Don Aitkin's extensive study reveals that many Australians believe the Liberal Party has "tied Australia too closely to the United States."

The Country Party came into being after the First
World War as an amalgamate of various farm organizations. It is a minority party which associates itself with the Liberal Party. According to Aitkin, many Aussies actually consider the Country Party to exist merely as a Liberal Party front. It attempts, however, to promote the interests of farmers against manufacturers, maintaining that farmers are "the backbone of the country." It wins seats in country towns and rural areas, whose inhabitants see the Labor Party as their primary enemy. In some districts, the Liberal and Country Parties form coalitions to fend off the Labor candidates. In the past, the Country Party has inveighed against big business, but having won many additional rights to guaranteed rates, etc., the party is now interested primarily in reducing labor costs. Thus, attacks on the unions are its mainstay.

The oldest Australian party, the Labor Party (A.L.P.), is the most complex and intriguing of the three. Miller writes:

...many writers have felt that it [the A.L.P.] held the initiative in Australian politics and that the other parties were "parties of resistance,"...Sometimes this has simply involved the concept of the A.L.P. as the 'party of progress' the 'left'
in Australian politics; sometimes it has been extended further to suggest that the A.L.P. is closer to the Australian ethos, more in line with specifically Australian aims and habits, the custodian of Australian nationalism. 

Research undertaken by Aitkin indicates a break in this image, however. He writes:

Because the Labor Party has promoted itself from the beginning as the party of change, of policies, of ideas— as 'the party of initiative,' to use a widely used phrase coined by W.K. Hancock— it might be expected that ideas and policies should form a prominent part of the favourable image of the party. In fact, such references were more frequently used of the Liberal Party.

Like Aitkin, Miller feels that Labor is viewed as caretaker of the Aussie worker. The Labor Party is the party of Aussie trade unionism. Union syndicates control its pursestrings and its ideology. Essentially, it has been considered a socialist entity; its goals have been to place under government control the means of production and distribution. Still, there are diverse ways of appreciating the nation's largest political party.

Beyond these issues, the Labor Party has sought to stand up for uniquely Australian ideals and for the
"little man," while condemning militarism. These positions also aid the party in gaining support in the cities, mining areas, and rail and port communities. Traditionally, it has been the party of Roman Catholics.19

Political parties in Australia are different from those in Britain in a number of significant ways. Coalitions do not exist to a great degree in England as they do in Australia, and Australian parties, as mentioned earlier, are organized at the state rather than at the Federal level.20 Another distinction is noteworthy. Miller observes:

The final difference between the parties in Britain and Australia is that which usually strikes the British visitor first when he sees the Australian parties in operation: the lack of policy discussion policy pamphlets, party committees on major questions, party "education" machinery for the discussion of party history and policy.... Politics in Australia lack the "intellectual" approach which is characteristic of the top strata of British politics.21

This characteristic of political parties in Australia is particularly telling; consensual agreement occurs more often than does obligatory infighting. It is also important to note that voters in the Parliamentary system
associate policy with party rather than with individual leaders, enabling those leaders to relate to one another with minimal antagonism. Still, the personality and style of each leader does come through, and is reflected in public opinion. Once again, diversity must be reconciled with uniformity.

Parliamentary Institutions and Elections. The Australian Parliaments are organized according to their specific constitutions, and are divided in terms of the Upper and Lower Houses. The Ministers of Parliament (M.P.'s) are elected and are obliged to proceed according to the will of their constituents, the methods adopted in the Houses, and the affairs of the Cabinet. There are altogether seven Parliaments—the Federal and six state Parliaments. This discussion will focus on the Federal Parliament.

The Upper House of the Federal Parliament, or the Senate, reflects the equal representation principle of the United States Senate, but does not have similar powers regarding the making of treaties and high level appointments. The Lower House—the House of Representatives—is reflective of state populations, and
is more powerful than the Senate. Although the Senate may block the passage of bills and force both Houses to face election, it has no power to write or amend important bills, such as those involving budget.26

Compulsory voting for Federal elections began in 1924, with small fines for disobedience. The supporters of compulsory voting suggest that greater political involvement among the citizenry results, while detractors deny such an effect. Miller writes: "The main effect is to relieve the political parties of the need to 'get out the vote.'"27

The Australian Parliament uses essentially the same procedure as the British Parliament. The high level participants include a Speaker, a Chairman, a House Leader, and an Opposition Leader. Bills follow the same route to passage as in Britain, going through several committees before being sent to the other House.28

There are some differences, however. Parliamentary votes are held every three years. The smaller size of the Australian House is responsible for many distinctions; others are a result of a greater emphasis upon administration.29 The Speaker remains involved with party politics in Australia, unlike the Speaker of the House of Commons. Committees, because of their
smaller size, run more smoothly and are more cognizant of
details. Miller observes: "The criticism has been made
that, concerned so much with the valleys of detail in
legislation, they do not often enough lift their eyes to
the hills of principle." 30

Each Australian minister is also a part of the
Australian cabinet. Ministers are assigned by the Prime
Minister to policy or administration tasks. Problems
arise due to party conflicts and involvements. But for
the most part, the cabinet operates to write legislation
and to bring programs before caucuses. 31

Miller attempts to define that unique Australian
Parliamentary style. He writes:

I think its elements are to be found
in strict party solidarity; in close
relationships between parties in par­
liament and syndicates outside; in a
concentration upon detail, both in
parliamentary discussion and cabinet
cabinet decision; in a lack of magnani­
mity in parliamentary relationships,
and a determination on all sides, in
Australian terms, 'to make every
post a winner'....32

This style becomes evident when one observes the
activities of the Australian party leader, who must
reconcile his/her governing of the nation with
obligations to party syndicates. The line between public
support and party loyalty must be held, and the style of
government proceeds out of this necessity.33

Syndicates depend on three types of boards or organs
in wielding their power to settle industry/labor
disputes. The most powerful is the Federal Arbitration
Court, whose decisions cannot be overturned by the
Federal Government. Next are the marketing boards, which
are government supervised. Finally, there is the Tariff
Board, which has little clout. Although these organs are
not recognized by the Australian constitution, they exist
as an integral part of the day-to-day workings of the
Australian government.34

The Australian constitution, which was adopted by
the Imperial Parliament in 1900, includes a preamble and
eight sections. It sets up the connection between federal
and state government entities, and outlines the functions
of these entities. Three provisions of this document have
undergone significant scrutiny over the years.35

The High Court of Australia has interpreted the
defense provisions mainly in terms of limiting or
extending federal activities. The section which gives
the Federal Parliament law-making power over industrial
disputes has also been an issue. Finally, free interstate
commerce and trade between states and territories has
been controversial. Miller summarizes this activity:

Judicial review has expanded Federal activities, if not Federal powers. Defence has been given a wide meaning in time of war. Arbitration has grown to a point where it can dominate the field of economic policy. But it is in the field of finance that Federal activities...have increased the most; and the Court has played an important part in this process.37

Again, this reflects the government's concern with economic issues--its emphasis upon the wholeness and integrity of the domestic state rather than with piecemeal concerns derived from a broad, international perspective.

The expansion of Federal powers is only one indication of the capacity of the Australian government to grow and adapt; this is additional evidence of Australia's constant shifting toward what Miller terms an "equalitarian" society.38 From politics, to dress, to education, to the Australian "accent," such movement and accommodation of diversity is reflected.39

Uniformity and diversity may also be appreciated respective to the "stability and change" in Australian political history. Don Aitkin's exhaustive study entitled Stability and Change in Australian Politics,
considers political parties, elections, and constituencies within the two contexts indicated by the title. Aitkin argues that there has been more stability than change, and that stability is the rule where party affiliation in terms of class, religion, and urban vs. rural demographics are concerned. Change has occurred with the influx of new issues, variable party and leader popularity, and in terms of specific candidates and their campaigns. Stability has been reconciled with change in the sense that it has subsumed change. At this juncture, a tracing of the agent in terms of the adoption of the national film policy is warranted.

The Government’s Journey Toward National Film

The Australian media environment in the immediate post-war era, like the years preceding the war, was characterized by the importation of British and American media commodities. With the advent of television,
the Americanization of Australian media became increasingly apparent. One of the first government documents to acknowledge the effect of American media was the 1963 Report from the Select Committee on the Encouragement of Australian Film Production for Television, otherwise known as The Vincent Report.44 The report openly commented on the influx of foreign—particularly U.S.—media:

Perhaps the greatest danger lies on its effect on the rising generation (the adult population having grown up without television), who day after day are not only receiving anything but the most inadequate picture of Australia; her national traditions, culture, and way of life, but in its place are recipients of a highly coloured and exaggerated picture of the way of life and morale of other countries (mainly the U.S.A.).45

The report received scant attention in the press, however, perhaps because of Australian corporate links with the American media industry.46

Later, in 1969, a UNESCO sponsored report by Lord Willis suggested a new start for Australian filmmaking.47 Recommendations included the initiation of co-production treaties with Britain and the U.S., tax concessions for Australian filmmakers, and the
institution of plans to bring film profits back into Australia. Finally, it suggested that filmmaking efforts be coordinated with government agencies. This was the first hint that government involvement might be forthcoming.

The late 1960's saw the establishment of the Interim Film Committee, under the Labor Party government of Prime Minister Gorton. Committee members were dispatched to survey government sponsored industries around the globe. The trip produced a report which recommended a small-scale government sponsored film industry, a film school, and an experimental film fund.

A change of government brought with it a less than supportive Minister of Media in 1971. Much of the support for national film came from the Labor Party, and it was not until 1972, when the very liberal Labor Party Government under Prime Minister Whitlam came to power, that the film school was finally established. The film fund launched its first project at about the same time, and the Australian Film Development Corporation (AFDC) was born in 1971.

In 1972, the Tariff Board held hearings to determine what qualified as truly indigenous film, and how such films might involve Australian culture. The
question of commerciality arose, as some sought to ensure that sponsored films were indeed marketable internationally. Most filmmakers came to agree that truly indigenous films were not easy to produce under the workings of the AFDC.53

Crisis ensued shortly thereafter, as the AFDC sought to require that distributors connected with the Motion Picture Producers Association of America (MPPAA) reinvest earnings into local ventures. Although reassurances that this would be done were given, enforcement was lax.54

Next, there was furor in the ranks of the Australian film community when the AFDC allocated monies to a British production--Burke and Willis.55 As a result of this controversy, the goal of supporting only indigenous films was reasserted.

In 1975, an official act established the Australian Film Commission (AFC) out of what had been the AFDC. The Act provided that the films produced be Australian in terms of content, that such films be made in Australia and return their monies locally, and that the films use only Australian artists and craftspeople.56 The commission initially was composed of three full-time members, although no specific number was required by the act. Three part-time commissioners directly involved in
the industry were also appointed.57

Even though the commission was assured complete autonomy in terms of its decision-making, a political challenge soon arose. A Minister of the Fraser government objected to the funding of an "art-house" style film entitled *The Unknown Industrial Prisoner*, which dealt with the labor unions. Production was halted on the grounds that the film would not be commercial enough.58 This reason was given despite the fact that many AFC projects, such as *The Last Wave*, had become popular overseas precisely because of their "art-house" flavor.59 A cry of political censorship was heard in the film community over this issue, making the public more mindful of AFC activities.

The funding of film projects by state governments began in the late seventies, and the state entities were organized along the same lines as the AFC. Many state projects were to some degree supported and controlled by the AFC. In the beginning, such control was automatic, but when the New South Wales Film Corporation funded the highly touted film *My Brilliant Career*, an attempt was made to see that full credit for the project's success be given to the state organization.60

By this point, national film was in full swing.
Many projects became critical successes outside of Australia, generating more enthusiasm and support for further efforts. The AFC and state organizations have thus far resisted the temptation to support projects specifically intended to have a purely international appeal, and have instead continued to fund efforts that are uniquely Australian.61

It is important to note that for many Australians, the film "renaissance" of the seventies is not consciously linked to government efforts. The indigenous films that have been recently produced are appreciated with an "it's about time" attitude. Indeed, Jack Clancy's article on the new films does not even mention the AFC, but instead, concentrates on the films' reflection of bush values and other traditional identity elements.62 The film effort has seemed a natural and totally integrated phenomenon, despite the diversity of input.

The Agent/Act Ratio

In terms of the Australian government, the
encompassing act may be seen as the human desire to realize a uniform vision out of a plethora of ideologies. The uniform vision is the decision to sponsor indigenous film projects reflecting Australianness, while at the same time, the diversity of social and political views represented in the government are indicative of various conceptions of Australianness.

The organization and functioning of the Australian Parliament, the relationships between the federal and state parliaments, the unity of national goals sought under a Prime Minister who is beholding to party, are all representative of the consensual nature of Australian political decision-making. This involves a potpourri of political operations and styles tempered by a tendency toward consensus and the establishment of coalitions.

Political parties in Australia reflect the diversity of Australian views, and also contain a variety of opinions within. The supporting syndicates and firms provide focus to various party factions, and some kind of convergence frequently results.

The Liberal Party, with its emphasis upon traditional, conservative, British roots, has still been partly responsible for the idea of national film. But it was under the liberal ideology of Labor Party Prime
Minister Whitlam, that the AFDC was born. Laborites have continued to be instrumental in this effort; their focus on Australian nationalism is well-known. The Country Party, which reflects the feelings of Australia’s hinterland, sees national film as manifesting the soul of Australia--the Land. The perspectives of each of the major parties combines to become a uniform vision acknowledging a national identity spawned out of British roots, with the Australian environment as backdrop. This is the representative vision reflected in sponsored films.

Conclusion

As a result of the analysis performed in this chapter, and of an examination of the commentary describing the Australian way of government, the following claims may be made respective to the agent’s role in this communication event: 1) The structure and
style of the Australian government enables it to establish agreement out of division without dismissing the variety of opinion that the division represents. 2) The views of the three major political parties, as well as of the individual leaders within those parties, are reflective of the Australian public's diversity of opinion about what it means to be Australian. That diversity becomes part of the consensual image of Australianness. 3) The Australian government is motivated by a need to support artistic efforts that mold and fortify a uniform construct of the Australian cultural character which provides a feeling of cultural selfhood. This relates directly to the aspect of purpose, which is the next issue warranting examination in this study.
NOTES


2. Miller, p. 53.

3. Miller, p. 54.

4. Miller, p. 56.

5. Miller, pp. 57-58.


10. Aitkin, p. 66

11. Miller, p. 63.

12. Miller, pp. 64-65.


15. Aitkin, p. 63.


17. Miller, pp. 71-72.

18. Miller, p. 73.

19. Miller, p. 75.

20. Miller, p. 53.

22. Aitkin, p. 250.
24. Miller, p. 81.
25. Miller, p. 82.
26. Miller, p. 82.
27. Miller, p. 87.
28. Miller, p. 90.
29. Miller, p. 90.
30. Miller, p. 91.
31. Miller, pp. 94-95.
32. Miller, p. 98.
33. Miller, p. 99.
34. Miller, pp. 110-111.
35. Miller, pp. 119-126.
36. Miller, pp. 126-128.
37. Miller, p. 129.
38. Miller, p. 22.
40. Aitkin, pp. 1-16.
42. Aitkin, pp. 209-268.
44. *Vincent Report: Report from the Select Committee on the Encouragement of Australian Film Pro-*

45. Vincent Report, p. 16.
47. Lord Willis, Film and Television Production in Australia (UNESCO, 1969), p. 31.
48. Willis, p. 33.
49. Willis, p. 33.
52. Adams and Shirley, p. 251.
55. Stratton, p. 15.
56. Stratton, p. 15.
57. Stratton, p. 16.
58. Stratton, p. 16.
59. Stratton, p. 16.
60. Stratton, p. 18.
61. Hall, Australian Film: The Inside Story, p. 176.
PURPOSE: A UNIQUE AUSTRALIAN IDENTITY

In the face of reports which bemoaned the preponderance of American media in Australia, and studies which registered its influence, the Australian government established a means by which a domestic film industry might be supported. The assumption that the commodities generated would be different than the typical American fare was not total; concern that the films might not be commercial enough, both inside and outside of Australia, was also evident. Certain issues arise that are specifically related to this quandary: 1) How has the idea of a unique national identity for Australia manifested itself in the past and in the present, affecting the way the purpose may be defined in this rhetorical drama? 2) How is the act as established in this study related to the purpose? 3) What motives may be uncovered through an analysis of the purpose in terms of the encompassing act?

The following claims are made regarding these questions: 1) Identity myths have been formed by the wealthier classes and by the Australian intelligentsia
in terms of unique Australian "types," as a result of the need to distinguish the Australian character from those of Britain and the United States, and as representative of several strains of "Australianness" which developed over the history of Australia. 2) The purpose relates to the act in that a uniform identity, manifested in historical mythic images, is acknowledging of many views of Australianness as well as of the diversity of audience tastes. 3) The intentions further revealed through an analysis of purpose include the need to establish a uniform identity outside of Australia, as well as to establish and preserve an appreciation of separateness within. To validate these claims, an overview of the Australian identity quest through the examination of relevant commentary is helpful.

The Australian Identity: An Overview

In *Inventing Australia: Images and Identity* 1688-1980, Richard White traces the continuing effort of Australians to see themselves as separate from their
Mother Country as well as from their cousins--the Americans. The identity elements uncovered by White have already guided the thematic history discussed in the chapter on the scene. It is the quest for identity that will be highlighted here in order to isolate the rhetorical purpose. White observes:

Most new nations go through the formality of inventing a national identity, but Australia has long supported a whole industry of image-makers to tell us what we are. Throughout its white history, there have been countless attempts to get Australia down on paper and to catch its essence. Their aim is not merely to describe the continent, but to give it an individuality, a personality. This they call Australian, but it is more likely to reflect the hopes, fears, or needs of its inventor.

White goes on to say that a national identity is essentially a myth which is contrived in order to unify, and points out that those who wish to communicate a cultural identity often concentrate on what is distinctive while minimizing similarities. This has, in the past, created a uniformity of identity-awareness that does not ring true, or at least, does not appear to be mindful of the diversity within the culture.
White sees three main influences bearing on the creation of an Australian national identity. The first influence is the body of Western views and values about matters ranging from science, to race, to religion, to nationality which inculcate the Australian psyche. The second major influence is the community of writers and artists, the "intelligentsia" of the Aussie society. The third great influence involves the economically well-off who wield power through this very establishment of a particular national identity.

These influences, claims White, have been in the forefront of Australian identity-making throughout this nation's short history.

The need that Australians have traditionally felt to distinguish themselves from the British became blurred after the war, when Americanization of the entirety of Western culture began in earnest. White interprets this Americanization, at least in the case of Australia, in terms of already existing similarities between the two nations; both have British roots, are comparatively new societies, have democratic philosophies of government, and are "culturally materialistic."

Prior to this time, however, distinctive Australian identity was embodied in the valuing of maleness or
"mateship."\textsuperscript{11} Women were not considered part of the identity, just as their inclusion as residents of Australia—being shipped in along with the livestock—almost seemed to be an afterthought.\textsuperscript{12} Later in the 19th century and early in the 20th, the effort to categorize male Australians was apparent. There was the emergence of Australian "types" such as the convict, the digger, and the bushman.\textsuperscript{13} This was the period during which bohemian and bush values, and a concern for preserving the Australian environment, also became predominant in the Australian identity quest.

Later, the beach-boy lifesavers at Bondi Beach, Sydney, and on the Goldcoast of Queensland, emerged as the quintessential Australians.\textsuperscript{14} At this point, post-war consumerism seemed to overtake bush values. In the 1930's, Australian athleticism was considered to be symbolic of a classless society. This was a "coming-of-age" of sorts.\textsuperscript{15}

With the fifties, however, came an animal known as "The Australian Way of Life." White writes:

Although the stated definitions were vague and contrived...it did not matter because it was not the meaning of the term but the way in which it was used. It provided a mental bulwark against communism, against change, against
cultural diversity; it called forth a common emotional response to the Cold War and to immigration, in defence of stability and homogeneity.

The traditional British view of Australian identity strengthened a bit along with this myth, and the spirit of equality suffered.

The image of an egalitarian nation, distinct from the Mother Country, gained strength once again in the sixties. As in the U.S., racial and ethnic prejudice became an issue during this period. Concern for the plight and the rights of Aborigines and migrants became evident. Soon, Prime Minister Whitlam's "new nationalism" and the 1970's brought to bear the Australian image of multiculturalism.

In the sixties, Australian identity seemed to become connected to the arts in a new fashion. In general, the arts were critical of Australia--particularly Australian racism and materialism--but nevertheless, seemed to fuel nationalistic pride. Thus was the case with the film The Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith, which depicted the mistreatment of the Aborigines, but was critically acclaimed overseas.

John Carroll's ultimate conclusion about Australian
national identity is that it is not characterized by mateship, by bush values, by famous individuals, or by typical Aussie character traits. Although all of these myths exist, Carroll argues that the true essence of the Aussie national identity is represented by a single attribute--skepticism. This skepticism has a dual nature. One side of this nature is pessimistic, and the other is upbeat. Skepticism is evidenced by a subconscious acknowledgment of the failure of Australian culture. It is embodied in literature--especially in satire. Its roots are in a British proclivity toward irony, and in the uncertainty of modern life. It is nourished by American-style consumerism. Skepticism, therefore, tends to subsume and reconcile many of the identity elements already discussed under an umbrella of commonality.

Australians still feel the need, however, to separate themselves from an identity associated with Great Britain. Excerpts from a poem by Geoffrey Dutton, published in 1964 and titled "Thoughts Home From Abroad", illustrate this impulse:

All down the main street the Union Jacks are waving
Windy loyalty to the flag of another country....
The streets are Somerset and Kent, the airfield
Edinburgh.
(Is there a single street in all Australia
Called after an artist, a poet or a scientist?)
My country, my country, what can you call your
own?...

Around our indefensible coastline, under the rockets,
Still runs our brave mud wall of morality
Where our white guardians of printed literature
Defend the decent and the dirty-minded minority
From Lawrence, Nabokov and the Negro Baldwin.

What other country could give one such a welcome?
And what other country lifts one with such
sunlight,...
People no authoritarian has yet made cheerless,...
People who stand up for another country’s anthem,...
A people of grown-up babies dangling from their hairy
bellies
The shrivelled, sacred umbilical cord.24

Poems and other literary works are artistic attempts to
convey a need for a uniform identity. Paintings and
sculpture have captured identity themes as well.25
Films also convey that need, and are being used to answer
it.

Australian Identity and National Film

In the new technological media age, the search for a
unique Australian identity has been spurred on by the
need to be distinguished more from the United States than from Britain. The Vincent Report to Parliament stated this explicitly. In "National Identity/ National History/ National Film: The Australian Experience," Ina Bertrand surveys this identity quest in relation to the new Australian film industry. She sees this need as an attempt to "express the uniqueness and/or the typicality of the experience of being 'Australian'.”

Bertrand feels that this identity has been defined, throughout Australian history, in four ways: 1) in terms of the special physical environment of Australia—flora, fauna, climatic conditions, its remoteness, etc. 2) in terms of an acknowledgment of the Australians' relationship to that environment as it separated them from their British foreparents. 3) a desire to exhibit egalitarianism and opposition to absolute authority. 4) in terms of an urban backlash of the consumer society, and along with it, an acceptance of multiculturalism. Bertrand sees these four threads as having a cumulative effect and serving to make real the notion of a unique national identity, and views that identity as "working to accommodate its divergent or conflicting elements...as an aspect of the prevailing
liberal consensual ideology."  

Early Australian film, as might be expected, tended to reflect the Australian consciousness in terms of bush life and bush values. In Australian Cinema, John Tulloch argues that the Australian identity image is "carried by its myth of landscape." This myth is "conceptually comfortable" because it is "signifying a nature made manageable by pioneering...." This is the image depicted in pre-AFC films such as A Girl of the Bush and The Squatter's Daughter.

Because American films of the same era dealt with similar kinds of frontier images, the purpose of distinguishing Australia from the U.S. was not realized. However, modern day Australian films have continued in this vein but with much higher production values, while recent U.S. feature films are, by and large, thematically different. Witness, an American film directed by Australian Peter Weir, illustrates the current dichotomy. On the television program "At the Movies," reviewer Gene Siskel observed that Weir makes the Pennsylvania farmland into a character in this film, while an American director would have concentrated on fast-paced police action. This aspect of the Australian filmmakers' purpose, therefore, is borne out in director style.
The new Australian film industry, which builds a connection between film and history, has been supported by the government so that "Australian" films would be made. Defining what constituted an Australian film was the first issue. The Act which established the Australian Film Commission specifies that an Australian film is a film which is made in Australia, and has "significant Australian content." Content includes the story matter, the nationality of collaborators, and the financial base. There have been many and varied interpretations of this dictum, but Bertrand sees cultural rather than industrial reasons behind these provisions. The Film Act does acknowledge, however, that the films produced should be "successful overseas because their craft and standards are international and their content derived from the Australian view."

Bertrand goes on to illustrate why history has become the most popular subject of these government sponsored films, reflecting a certain uniformity of vision:

This looking backward, then, is more than mere nostalgia, it is the connection of communal memory. Memory is the locus of identity. Once constructed, forms function just as effectively through contemporary images and narratives. But history and its
constant reconstruction in the images of film and television have a vital role to play in its [identity's] initial formation. In this formative process, film and history constantly work to reinforce each other: a film's specific location in time and space provides validation of already existing popular national stereotypes, and the comfort of familiar icons and symbols in a film provides validation of the form in which historical events have been depicted.

The purpose of the government's film sponsorship involves an attempt to legitimize historical images of Australianness in terms of the contemporary environment that the medium of film seems to represent. As stated in the chapter on medium, the ability of film to capture realities is useful; images from the past appear to be as current in the camera's eye as images out of the present. Bertrand continues: "Truth is not at issue here. As a nation we can live without 'truth'...but we cannot continue to exist without a sense of self, identity, in this case 'Australianness.'"39

In the article "The Rise of a Cinema Down Under," Karl Schmude traces the reasons he perceives behind the identity quest and concludes that both government support and the "cultural climate into which government funding was introduced," have been behind the filmmaking
This comes about "at the precise moment in recent history when a sense of national identity has been rekindling."\(^{41}\)

The Australians' desire to make themselves distinctive, and to reach beyond a feeling of physical isolation, is at the base of the identity search, according to Schmude.\(^{42}\) Prime Minister Whitlam's directive to: "project Australia's image in other countries by means of the arts," has been, clearly, in mind.\(^{43}\) Schmude quotes director Charles Chauvel as saying: "The only way in which we can give an Australian picture international appeal is to make it Australian."\(^{44}\) Similarly, an article in *Newsweek* states: "Ironically, the films that have made it big overseas were the indigenous films not specifically designed for export."\(^{45}\) A piece from *New York Magazine* concludes: "...Australian films succeed by staying national in character instead of aping Hollywood."\(^{46}\)

Some are of the opinion, however, that the mere fact that a successful government sponsored film industry exists is more inciteful of nationalism than are the specific contents of the films. Scott Murray writes: "Nationalism, which in the past may have been embedded
throughout a film, is now more apparent in euphoric publicity for the industry...."47 Others, even some who have written specifically about the new cinema, do not stress the government's involvement.48 For them, perhaps, the quest for identity is so much a part of all Australian art and literature as to be automatically understood.

These attempts to define what is behind the identity quest, to determine what constitutes an Australian film and at the same time, to make such fare commercial outside Australia, are pivotal in terms of the purpose in this dramatic event. These issues must be ratioed in terms of the encompassing act.

Purpose/Act Ratio

With regard to purpose, the act may be seen as an effort to reconcile a uniform identity goal for the new Australian films with the acknowledgment of diverse opinions among Australians themselves about what it means to be Australian. This is related to Bertrand's insight
that Australianness as a construction is "working to accommodate its divergent or conflicting elements...as an aspect of the prevailing liberal consensual ideology...."49 However, the diversity of opinion accommodated by the uniform identity goal includes other than liberal views in its consensus.

Bertrand considers the tendency toward mythic historical themes as a manifestation of such uniformity, even while various subjects are chosen.50 Some films, such as Gallipoli and Breaker Morant recount actual events, while others, such as My Brilliant Career and The Man From Snowy River occur in a mythic historical setting that appears to capture the essence of the Australian portrait. Bertrand notes that these historical narratives, and films with recurring historical images come together as a uniform ideal in the minds of viewers, even though the styles and methods used in the films are diverse and their relationship to truth arbitrary or indefinite.51 The "familiar icons and symbols" are the unifying force.52

According to both White and Bertrand, the conflicting elements of the Australian construction include the egalitarian and multicultural mood of Australia which separate it from Britain, as opposed to certain other
aspects of the mateship ethic, such as its racist and sexist elements, which define its conservatism. They also mesh the concern for the environment with myths emanating from the urban, technical, consumer-oriented society which is exploitative of the environment. They seek to combine these elements, unlike Americans whose identity myths sometimes remain dialectically opposed. All of these are representative historical myths which, when taken together as a body of filmic works, seem to constitute a uniform ideal. Ironically, the need to create uniformity, in this sense, may be viewed as sprung from years of appreciating, either negatively or positively, the uniformity of British-style authoritarianism.

The effort to make these films uniquely Australian as well as commercial overseas, represents another way in which the act relates to the purpose. The incorporation of high production values which invest the films with a diversity of attractive elements, give uniquely Australian films a broad appeal. The Film Commission, in reconciling these two qualities, was acknowledging audience diversity in terms of taste and cultural differences; Americans prefer a "slick" production, while Europeans will accept more abstract and filmic
The films are marketed differently in different countries in order to ensure maximum appeal. For Australians, the film *Gallipoli* recounts a familiar historical event. This familiarity was used to advertise the film *Down Under*. In the U.S., however, the following promotion was used: "From a place you've never heard of comes a story you'll never forget." The "exotic" nature of the subject became the selling point in America. All in all, many methods and strategies have been employed to see that these films are marketable both inside and outside of Australia.

**Conclusion**

As a result of this investigation of rhetorical purpose as reflected in discourses about the Australian identity quest, several contentions have been validated:

1) Australians have built a construction of identity
over their short history out of a need to be separate from the Mother Country--Britain. This construction has been purveyed by the economically powerful and the intellectual elite; it has been spawned from a feeling of physical remoteness and out of an appreciation of special geographical and natural attributes. It has within it both conservative and egalitarian elements, with the multicultural nature of the nation eventually becoming predominant. It has grown up out of the mateship ethic with its racist and sexist overtones, but it has retained an admiration of the athletic ideal. It has emerged in order to promote a level of separateness from America as well as from Britain--a goal which became extant in the media age.

2) The act relates to the purpose of this rhetorical drama in terms of the attempt to establish a uniform vision of Australianness for Australians and for the world out of diverse opinions about how this identity should be characterized, and for an audience of varied and broad-ranging tastes. The uniform identity emerges in the form of historical myths which are, nevertheless, acknowledging of variety and diversity.

3) The overall intent of this effort is to relate artistically with other cultures and to see that
Australians appreciate the endeavor to affirm a unique identity. The requirement that sponsored films be commercial around the world is an indication that the intentions of the government in terms of purpose go beyond the borders of Down Under.

The choice of the film medium as the primary vehicle by which this identification should occur is noteworthy. An investigation of the attributes of film as a communication medium follows.
NOTES


2. Stratton, p. 16.


4. White, p. 47.

5. White, pp. viii-ix.


7. White, p. ix.

8. White, p. ix.


10. White, p. 62.


12. White, p. 35.

13. White, pp. 65, 102, 140.


15. White, p. 151.


17. White, p. 168.


22. Carroll, p. 211.


26. The Vincent Report, p. 16.


31. Tulloch, p. 11.

32. Tulloch, p. 12.

33. Tulloch, p. 12.

34. Gene Siskel, "At the Movies," (Feb. 9, 1985), broadcast by WTTE, Columbus, Ohio.


40. Schmude, p. 158.
41. Schmaude, p. 158.
42. Schmaude, p. 159.
44. Schmaude, p. 160.
48. see Clancy, "Film: The Renaissance of the Seventies."
52. Bertrand, p. 181.
55. see James Oliver Robertson, American Myth, American Reality (N.Y.: Hill and Wang, 1980).
57. Bertrand, p. 183.
58. Bertrand, p. 183.
CHAPTER FIVE

AGENCY: THE FILM MEDIUM

It is clear that film has become the focus of the Australian government as the primary medium by which cultural identity goals should be implemented. Beyond the contents of the government sponsored projects, which shall be explored in the next portion of this study, the medium itself contributes to the meanings of the messages disseminated. Several questions arise in this regard to be examined here: 1) What characteristics of the film medium make it appropriate as a cultural identity vehicle? 2) What effect do new modes of dissemination have on public appreciation of the film form and the messages it can communicate? 3) How is the act as established in this study related to film in terms of film theory, and what motives may be uncovered through the analysis of film as agency in terms of the encompassing act?

In response to these queries, the following claims are offered: 1) Film is a diverse medium which may be used to express degrees of reality and abstraction, and therefore, may respond to a greater diversity of tastes,
levels of intellect, and sensibilities. 2) Film dissemination via new technological mass media permits appreciation by large numbers of persons in many locations, so that identity messages are not received only by the urban populations. 3) A subliminal motive of acknowledging Australian diversity within a uniform vision of Australianness manifests itself in film as a collaborative enterprise under the singular vision of the film author, and in terms of the multifaceted nature of films which are, at the same time, appreciated as singular works of art.

Film as Medium

In Understanding Media, Marshall McLuhan compares the effect of film upon industrial, Western cultures to the effect of the cubist trend in art. He observes that like cubism, film "sets up an interplay of planes and contradiction or dramatic conflict of patterns, lights, textures...."\(^1\) The film form produces: "...instant sensory awareness of the whole."\(^2\) In the multifaceted nature of a film as a
work of art diversity is inherently manifested. Still, people do not generally refer to each individual facet of a film as a singular artistic work but instead, perceive the integrated whole as such. Beyond the diversity contained within an individual film, diversity is also evident in terms of the vast spectrum of film styles.

The Diversity of Film as Art. Stanley Cavell writes: "The possibility of a medium can be made known only by successful works that define its media; in modernism, a medium is explored by discovering possibilities that declare its necessary conditions, its limits." From the time of its infancy, film has been considered by some filmmakers as well as by many laypeople as a medium best suited to representing reality. This occurred because film was initially seen as a natural extension of photography. The debate among film theorists has been whether to regard film, at its best, as it may faithfully represent actualities or to see it as an art form which seeks to capture abstract concepts through technique. Siegfried Kracauer, a film realist, writes of film as a photographic medium:
...if any medium has its legitimate place at the pole opposite that of painting, it is photography. The properties of photography are fairly specific; and they have lost nothing of their impact in the course of history. Thus, it seems all the more justifiable to apply the basic aesthetic principle to this particular medium [film]....

The realist view of Kracauer, Bazin and others is that film should endeavor to use its best talent—to faithfully reproduce what is—in creating its special art, and should not need to employ the gimmickry and manipulation upon which other art forms depend.

At the other pole are the expressionists such as Arnheim, Pudovkin and Eisenstein, who consider editing or film "montage" to be the foundation of film art. These theorists and directors suggest that the juxtaposition of shots creates an artful film language. This language may be used just as the painter uses juxtaposed colors, the writer words, and the composer musical notes. Eisenstein calls film montage a "collision" of ideas producing conflict.

Films have run the gamut, then, from the documentary realism of Robert Flaherty, to the neorealism of DeSica, to the expressionism of Eisenstein, to the French New Wave of Truffaut and Godard. The choices available
to creative filmmakers of every stripe are numerous; they may opt to use the camera precisely as it mimics the human eye, or to cleverly invent a totally new meaning out of pieces of filmed realities that will be interpreted by the audience with the intellect.

In Australia as elsewhere, this diversity is evident. Even films by a single director cover a spectrum from realism to surrealism. Peter Weir’s Gallipoli is a relatively straightforward depiction of an historical event, while his Picnic at Hanging Rock and The Last Wave attempt to test the audiences ability to discern what is real from what is not.9

Thematically, the range is also disparate. My Brilliant Career realistically portrays a fictional Victorian character, while the privately financed "Mad Max" series meshes science fiction and fantasy with the current and all too real spectre of nuclear holocaust.10

Some films, such as Breaker Morant, depend on dialogue to move the story forward, while more filmic methods are used in films such as Picnic at Hanging Rock. Both The Last Wave and The Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith present themes about the dignity of the Aborigine, but employ vastly differing techniques in the
process. These films will be discussed in detail in the next chapter. From realism to expressionism, filmmakers are utilizing diverse stylistic strategies to disseminate themes which are frequently compatible.

A unifying intent is tending to define the limits of the medium in terms of overall thematic content. Ina Bertrand has noted that it is film's ability to capture the past realities of history as if they are current, which has provided this uniformity of theme in national film. Whatever the intent or theme, however, mass exposure must result in order for the identity message to be adequately communicated, both inside and outside of Australia. The question of delivery is, therefore, significant.

New Technological Delivery Systems. As videotape, cable, satellite, large screen and high definition television, and other new technological forms of delivery have or will become prevalent and accepted in the Western world, the primacy of film and other visual media may be appreciated. Movie theaters, feeling the effects of these other modes may soon become, for all intents and purposes, obsolete.
But the misfortune of the theaters is the fortune of the film industry as a whole; an Australian citizen of the outback is able to view films via her video cassette recorder that she might never have seen otherwise. Satellite dishes collect beams that distribute a plethora of offerings, much of them American in origin, to the Australian continent. The push to produce home-grown offerings at a time when these technologies are taking hold is no accident. The hegemonic influence of foreign media has been acknowledged, and an attempt has been made to counteract it. New technologies may be a part of the problem; but they are also a part of the cure.

Karl Schmude considers the choice of film as an identity vehicle in terms of this very mass appeal. He writes:

A cultural void developed that cries out for the visionary penetration of the artist. In recent years it is the film-maker, catering to mass audiences, who has primarily met this need for interpretation as well as excitement, rather than the poet or the painter, whose appeal is more restricted.13

The mass nature of the film medium automatically acknowledges diversity within the audience, but respective to the encompassing act of this drama, it also
considers the element of artistic collaboration and the concept of film authorship. The emphasis on dissemination and distribution, then, is warranted. In the first years of government sponsorship this was a prime consideration. In the early seventies, Eric Reade observed:

...consideration must be given to keeping our directors and producers in continuous production; and distribution must be ensured, not only from a more rewarding and financial aspect, but films must not be treated as 'fill-ins' when some overseas film fails....14

Certainly, the preponderance of new forms of mass dissemination permits distribution to be widespread and divided among theater, cable, and satellite interests. Financial rewards are readily forthcoming and therefore, the overall quality of production tends to be enhanced.

Collaboration and Authorship

Film as a Collaborative Effort. The skills
involved in the making of a film are many. From director, to scriptwriter, to cinematographer, to editor, to sound technician, to actor, to scenic designer, to costumer, to special effects technician, to casting director, etc., it is clear that a film project is a massive one, bringing various talents and visions together. Each skilled craftsperson is bound to have his/her own special standards and ideas, but must, in the final analysis, conform to the overall concept of the director.

In addition to the director, the main collaborators are usually the writer, cinematographer, editor, and actor. The relative importance of these participants depends on the subject and style of the film, as well as upon the strength of the director in overseeing and imposing his/her own vision. The latter aspect will be discussed in the next section on film authorship.

At times considered to be a secondary "author" of the film, the writer generates dialogue, defines the action, and establishes the primary film message. The writer may contribute an original script, or may adapt other literature. He or she may sometimes be superfluous to the film, especially in the case of "New
Wave" directors who work from a few sketchy ideas rather than with a script. Multiple authorship of scripts is also common, and directors often contribute to the script. It must be remembered, however, that the writer deals only with overt action and words. Film language, and the mise en scène which encompasses the action, are the responsibility of the director.

The cinematographer is sometimes in complete control of shot selection, angles, and general shot composition, but in other instances, must photograph the action according to a director’s sequential frame drawings. It is often true that great directors and cinematographers stick together, however, and the style they establish becomes a signature.

The contribution of the cinematographer is frequently determined by the relative realism of the film. Realistic films are photographed straightforwardly, while expressionistic works require the cinematographer to exhibit more virtuosity.

Especially in expressionistic films, editing is crucial. The demands that montage places upon the film editor are great. Juxtaposing visual and sound shots, making shots into scenes and scenes into sequences can make or break the film. Montage, which is
frequently responsible for moving a story forward, is produced by the editor's efforts. No matter what the dialogue may be, if the shot by shot language of the film is not consistent with the story line, confusion and misunderstanding will result.23

The skill of the editor is, however, often overshadowed by the vision of the director who traditionally oversees the editing process. Many directors, such as Eisenstein and Griffith, are celebrated specifically for their editing styles. Realist film theorists, such as André Bazin, have criticized choppy editing and the lack of continuity that results, and realist directors have recommended that continuous camera motion be used whenever appropriate.24 So the degree and extent of editing is also determined by the director. As competent as editors may be, the credit for editing quality and effect is often given to the director.

The popular audience is prone to give undue credit to the actors for the success of a film. The director often has considerable influence upon an actor's performance, to the extent that some unskilled actors may seem competent and experienced in a given role.25 The importance of the actor depends on the type and
subject of the film; a film adaptation of a Shakespearean play will necessarily require highly-trained performers, while more conventional vehicles will make use of the star system. Some directors, such as Hitchcock, manipulate the audience’s admiration for the star by making him/her the villain. Although good acting enhances a film, it rarely carries an otherwise mediocre effort. In any case, the skill of the director is frequently a contributing factor.

All of these collaborators are individuals with their own sensibilities, skills, and visions. It would not be prudent to say that the diversity of their ideals does not in some way come through in the final product. Films made by directors not considered to be "auteurs" may indeed reflect collaboration to a greater degree. A discussion of the "auteur theory," which gets to the heart of this issue, is next.

The Auteur Theory. The "auteur theory" posits that the director’s characteristic flair and unifying vision is the significant quality of any film, and that the director is the author of the film much as Charles Dickens is the author of Great Expectations. This critical theory of film began in the 1950’s when it was
articulated by Francois Truffaut in the French film journal Cahiers du Cinéma. In the beginning, auteur theory was a reaction against the monied interests of film, and it preached that films should be evaluated according to how things are done with the characteristic technique of the director, and not according to the film as judged in its own right as a singular entity. Treatment becomes paramount, and directors are praised in terms of their ability to stamp a trademark, a characteristic unity of theme and style, upon each of their works.

André Bazin, who edited Cahiers du Cinéma, is a renowned critical theorist who warned of the theory's weakness and excess. Auteur critics tend to automatically recommend a film just because the director's vision comes through. Conversely, they ignore many good films in which a characteristic vision is not evident.

The controversy over auteur theory raged into the 1960's. By that time, the singular vision of a film's director was considered in all serious discussions of film. However, recent auteur critics have attempted to take into account the contributions of other collaborators--especially the cinematographer. The
effects of diversity are acknowledged to a much greater degree than they once were.

The director's preeminence in terms of many of the critical elements of a film—the mise-en-scène or shot composition, the use of time, space, and rhythm, the incorporation of figurative film language such as metaphor and metonymy, as well as his/her influence over the other collaborators, is certainly significant. The uniform vision the director wishes to create may be realized to various degrees, depending upon his/her skill and mastery of key aspects, and the relative competence and assertiveness of the collaborators.

The Agency/Act Ratio

With regard to the film medium as agency, the act may be considered first in terms of films as multifaceted, multisensory experiences appreciated as singular artworks, and second as the human effort to reconcile the uniform vision of film authors with the diversity of a collaborative art. Respective to theory
of the film medium, this second point may be analyzed through a discussion of film collaboration vs. the auteur theory of film.

In Australia, where the film medium has been highlighted as a vehicle by which cultural identity is communicated, the act of reconciling the uniform vision of a film author with the diversity of other collaborators is significant. The intentions of the Australian government have been communicated, in some fashion, to the filmmakers. And yet, the diversity of skilled film collaborators is encouraged in the national film school. Even if a uniform vision is not communicated by the directors of national film projects, the collaborative nature of these efforts may still represent a truer expression of Australianness.

An example of this is the film The Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith, which reflects the injustice of White Australians toward Australian Aboriginals. Although many Australians considered it insulting and not consistent with the goals of national film, the work was hailed by critics inside and outside of Australia. The diversity of ideals of the various contributors showed through in the main theme of the film, and ultimately, a picture of characteristic Australian self-examination was realized.
Although the film was a financial failure inside of Australia, its success overseas has become a source of national pride. Another example is Breaker Morant, which takes a well-known historical event and interprets it with a nationalist fervor meant for foreign as well as Australian audiences. The thematic vision of the director, Bruce Beresford, is resoundingly clear, even though the carefully worded script and the actors' interpretation communicate some ambivalence. Coming to terms with diversity, then, becomes a uniform theme to be expressed through national film. No Australian director has consistently been called an "auteur" in the classic sense, as even the offerings of a single director seem to be stylistically diverse.

The findings of this chapter with regard to film as medium and the intentions of the Australian Film Commission are indicative of the human need to reconcile uniformity with diversity. Film, a medium which is diverse in terms of its many characteristics and qualities, in terms of its ability to represent reality and abstraction, and which disseminates messages to a diverse public, is being used to express a uniform vision of a film author. This vision is influenced to some
degree by stated goals, while at the same time serving to reflect the diverse ideals of many collaborators. The latter intent is less overt than the primary purpose of national film, which is to uniformly characterize a national identity for Australia. In this instance, and in terms of the act, the message of the medium is consistent with the essence of content messages. These shall be explored in the next chapter.

Conclusion

This exploration of the film medium as one aspect of the agency in this drama has demonstrated the following to be true: 1) The film medium can be used in myriad ways; it may represent reality or express abstract concepts. Because of this, it is suited to the aesthetic sensibilities of a broad range of viewers. 2) Due to the introduction of new technological media and their ability to broadly disseminate film commodities, the messages contained in films are far-reaching and may be appreciated in remote as well as in well-populated areas.
3) The intent demonstrated in previous chapters is further supported by this analysis, in that film is able to present a uniform vision as determined by a director while involving and subsuming the input of many collaborators, and as a many-faceted form of artistic expression appreciated as whole and integrated. Diverse views about Australian identity are, therefore, reconciled under a singular artistic vision. Stylistic visions are diverse among sponsored films, but still seem to offer similar identity themes. These content messages will be explored in the next chapter as the second aspect of the agency.
NOTES


5. Gianetti, pp. 194-197.


9. This occurs through montage and the manipulation of time perception.

10. The series includes *Mad Max*, *The Road Warrior*, and *Mad Max: Beyond Thunderdome*.


12. DeFleur and Dennis, pp. 97-98.

13. Schmude, p. 159.

15. In realist films, the director, writer, and cinematographer are most important. In expressionist works, the director and editor are the primary collaborators.

17. Giannetti, p. 140.
18. Giannetti, p. 141.
22. Giannetti, pp. 87-91.
27. Giannetti, pp. 198-199.
31. Harrington, pp. 119-158.
32. Stratton, pp. 200-201.
33. White, p. 170.
34. Stratton, p. 55.
CHAPTER SIX

THE AGENCY: FILM CONTENTS

The broad spectrum of films financed by the Australian Film Commission, state commissions, and private entities would, at first glance, seem to defy coherent interpretation and analysis. The subjects and styles of these cinematic art works are exceedingly diverse—from ancient Aboriginal legends of apocalypse\(^1\) to the Australian World War I campaign at Gallipoli,\(^2\) from the rebelliousness of a young woman in Victorian times\(^3\) to post-nuclear civilizations of savagery.\(^4\) Still, amidst the varied and plenty, a certain thread of commonality may be appreciated even by the casual viewer. In some sense, almost all of the sponsored films deal with the basic, universal concept of identity-seeking.

One clear strain of this identity-seeking theme involves individuals coming-of-age—a journey frequently complicated by gender, race, economic status, and other demographic attributes. In films dealing with the individual and his/her subculture, the action generally
takes place against a backdrop of what might be called "Australian typicality." The individual is pitted against the demands of the status quo as it is deemed to be in that particular film.

The second characteristic strain of identity-seeking in these films deals with Australian nationalism—efforts to depict Australians learning to feel unified, despite their diverse backgrounds, in efforts to wrest themselves from the apron strings of the Mother Country and implicitly, from economic dependency upon the U.S. Race, ethnic origin, and socio-economic status are elements frequently producing thematic complications in these films.

In each case of identity-seeking, a rhetorical attempt at Burkeian identification may be realized. Australians are attempting to identify with one another, while also seeking to distinguish themselves from—and find some commonality with—other cultures. The questions to be addressed in this chapter analysis are as follows: 1) Do the identity messages emanating from each group of films contradict one another, or are they compatible? 2) How do the contents of the films in each group serve to synthesize a uniform national identity while preserving the essence of Australian subcultural
diversity? 3) How are the myths of Australianness as identified by Bertrand--geographical, egalitarian, authoritarian and multicultural--reflected in these bodies of works? 4) Is a basic assumption underlying the use of Burke's representative anecdote borne out in this analysis--that is, do the motives embodied in these films offer "equipment for living" or coping strategies to the typical Australian?

Based on this chapter investigation, the following contentions may be made: 1) Under an umbrella of uniformity, conflicting identity elements in the cultural milieu are subsumed and reconciled in the content messages of national film. 2) The contents of these films further the cause of pursuing a uniform appreciation of cultural identity which includes a respect for the diversity of subgroups within the larger Australian culture. 3) The identity myths identified in studies of the Australian identity quest can be seen clearly in the content messages of these film productions. 4) The messages of the sponsored films provide "equipment for living" in response to the socio-cultural needs of the Australian audience.

In order to analyze the two varieties of identity-seeking films, Burke's concept of the
representative anecdote will be employed. To review, the representative anecdote provides the critic with a method of synthesizing a body of rhetorical data in terms of a unifying theme which relates in some fashion to the culture and the times out of which the rhetorical data are generated. The discourses in this chapter--film contents as agency--are seen to offer viewers "equipment for living" or coping strategies--in this case, for dealing with the lack of a sense of individual, subcultural, and/or cultural identity. Thus, the sponsored films may in some way aid the Australian viewing public in establishing a unifying identity while providing non-Australians with a corresponding vision of the uniqueness of Australia and Australians. As this occurs, consubstantiality or mutual identification may also be attained.

The analysis of each group of films will begin with a description of key films included within that category of identity-seeking. A rationale for grouping those particular films together will be offered. Then, the film chosen as the representative anecdote for that strain of works will be described and analyzed in detail in terms of the essence of its meaning. A rationale for selecting that film as the anecdote will be provided.
Meaning will be derived based on the totality of the film—the story as it is communicated through dialogue, through the juxtaposition of sound and visual shots, and through any other mechanism or attribute that is semantically significant. The meaning of the film relative to the current Australian scene and its genesis through history will be emphasized. The background of production, as well as the critical and popular response to the film will be considered.

Individual Identity-Seeking

Like the United States, Australia is a nation of ethnic and racial mixture. The British and the Irish were the first white settlers intruding upon a continent populated by black natives. They were followed by migrants from China, Greece, Italy and a plethora of other lands. The initial shortage of women among the early settlers was alleviated by special attempts to ship women—many of them prisoners and indentured servants—to the colony. The lowly status of the Australian woman is
derived, to a certain degree, from this historical image.\textsuperscript{7}

The economic status of individuals has also been a significant theme, and has characterized the conflict between British aristocracy and the more egalitarian view of the Australian nationalist. The mateship ethic has exaggerated the importance of a particular variety of "manhood" and has become a defining element of Australianness. Gender, race, ethnic origin and economic status are the complicating aspects of Australian individual identity-seeking which are covered in the films to be reviewed in this section.

A pivotal effort, and one which deals straightforwardly with white Australians' mistreatment of Aborigines, is \textit{The Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith}.\textsuperscript{8} This 1978 film was directed by Fred Schepisi and deals with a half-Aboriginal named Jimmie Blacksmith who lives in New South Wales, circa 1900. His white adoptive parents raise him in the ways of the white culture and encourage him to marry a white woman so that he will be even more accepted. After leaving home, Jimmie encounters brutal racism at every turn and is mercilessly cheated by his employers. Eventually he marries Gilda, a white woman who is carrying his child. The resulting
bigotry and recrimination ultimately lead to a violent encounter in which several whites are killed. Jimmie is eventually hanged for murder.

For Aborigines, the message of the film is clear: retain your subcultural identity and stand together to become a significant force in the larger Australian society. Other Australians, however, interpreted the film as an attempt to probe the white-Australian conscience on matters of prejudice.9

For some, a nationalistic message may also be appreciated. Susan Dermody has indicated that Jimmie's quest is for adulthood in a society not prepared to grant it to its Black citizens.10 This parallels Australia's quest to be recognized as an adult nation—to break the "umbilical cord" as it is metaphorically referred to in Dutton's poem, to wit: "A people of grown up babies dangling from their hairy bellies/ The shrivelled, sacred umbilical cord."11

The film is an adaptation of Thomas Keneally's novel. Schepisi, coming off the heels of another success, was able to raise over a million dollars to produce the film. Most of the money came from the AFC and the Victoria Film Corporation, a state entity.12 Tommy Lewis was plucked from anonymity to play the title role.
...Jimmie Blacksmith was submitted to the Cannes Film Festival amidst much fanfare and anticipation. Although it failed to win an award, Australian and foreign critics raved. The film was a commercial failure, however, even within Australia. One explanation for this failure was that the film was too long and too violent. But it is true that for many Australians, the film was a reminder of a cultural guilt they were not yet ready to face. Later, the film enjoyed a brief revival, and Australians seemed to take pride in the fact that the film was critically acclaimed overseas. The recognition of Australian films by outsiders, then, may have the result of making Australians consciously aware of even the negative aspects of their society.

Caddie, the 1976 film directed by Donald Crombie, is an example of a sponsored effort that failed to sell for distribution in the United States. It concerns a young wife in Sydney, circa 1925. Caddie leaves her callous, insensitive husband when she finds him in a compromising pose with one of her friends. From her comfortable, suburban surroundings, Caddie moves on to an environment more suited to blue collar poverty. She undergoes other kinds of transformations, too. One night while Caddie is working as a barmaid, one of her children
nearly dies in the care of a babysitter. With regret, Caddie decides to put her two children in a home—at least temporarily. Several relationships later, Caddie falls in love with a Greek immigrant and businessman named Peter. Soon, however, he is called back to Greece because of a family illness. Caddie eventually gets her children back, and must face the hardships of the depression without a man.

From an obscure paperback brought to the attention of film editor Tony Buckley, the project was launched. Joan Long wrote the screenplay. Part of the funding came from the AFDC, part from the National Advisory Committee for International Women's Year, and the remainder from the advance sale of television rights.18

The film's lack of appeal for U.S. distributors has been explained in terms of the film's bittersweet ending. If Caddie's man had returned to offer her "happy-ever-after," some believe that the film would have been considered more marketable in terms of the American audience.19 The film was a critical success, however, and Australian audiences were generally pleased. Helen Morse, the film's star, became a nationally recognized face, and the film won two major prizes overseas.20
The theme of a woman facing societal and economic injustice in Australia has been a frequent one in the new Australian cinema. These films often reflect the life of women in Australian country towns and villages. In a study of the mateship ethic in the Australian hinterland, Kenneth Dempsey describes the plight of the womenfolk:

They are trapped not only by the strong traditional norms surrounding marriage, but also by economic dependence, for country towns are communities where opportunities for paid employment for married women are extremely scarce.21

Australian films indicate that the situation of the modern country woman in Australia is not substantially different than that of a city woman--such as Caddie--several decades ago.

Along with Caddie and My Brilliant Career, the representative anecdote which shall be analyzed shortly, a film worth mentioning about an exceptional Australian woman is Dawn.22 This 1979 film directed by Ken Hannam is a biography of Olympic swimming star Dawn Fraser. Obviously a successful Australian woman, Fraser is nonetheless caught within a society not prepared to accept her. In an article about social realism in Aussie films, Keith Connolly observes of
Beyond the film's episodic account of Dawn's clashes with officialdom, marriage, and other intense friendships is a suggestion of modern Australian society's impatience with any sort of non-conformity, particularly from a female so palpably superior to most men in physical activity.23

The love and respect for athleticism as a unique element in the Australian identity scheme, then, is not as applicable to the female half of the population.

Films such as Journey Among Women24 and The Getting of Wisdom25 highlight different kinds of impulses under the thematic umbrella of feminist awakening. The former traces a group of escaped women convicts who manage to form a community in the wild, and the latter foreshadows the image of the independent young woman rebelling against authoritarian attitudes toward female behavior, that is anecdotalized by My Brilliant Career.

Other films stressing individual identity-seeking include a recent success directed by George Miller--The Man From Snowy River.26 This tale is of a teenager who must "prove himself" a man by working on a Victoria ranch near the Snowy Mountains.
where he was raised. Here, the rites of Australian mateship and coming-of-age are explored. Ina Bertrand observes that this film, which broke all attendance records in Australia, successfully employs Australian mythic/historical images with "no identifiable historical reference, incident, or character." Similarly, Donald Crombie's *The Irishman* chronicles the maturation process of the son of an Irish immigrant in the early twenties.

The distaff side of this aspect of individual identity-seeking is provided by Peter Weir's surrealistic *Picnic at Hanging Rock*. The film depicts the conflict between Victorian morality and the danger, mystery and allure of the Australian landscape. The fantasy may be interpreted as a symbolic representation of young women facing their blossoming sexuality within a repressive cultural environment.

*My Brilliant Career* has been chosen here as representative of the entire number of individual identity-seeking films. Both gender and class-consciousness add to the conflict in this 1979 film directed by Australian Film School graduate Gillian Armstrong, who attained international prominence as a result of this effort.
It is the 1890's in New South Wales, and drought has come to the farm country. Sybylla Melvyn, an independently-minded young woman, is told by her parents that she has become a financial burden—that she is "useless, plain and Godless." Since she is of age with no prospects for marriage, she is banished to her wealthy grandmother's hay ranch. Living with privilege, now, Sybylla is able to immerse herself in books and music. Her Aunt Helen, who was abandoned by her husband years earlier, manages to convince Sybylla that she is attractive, and that she should not wait for love to marry. Sybylla is advised to "cultivate feminine vanity."

Frank, a wealthy but snobbish Anglophile who longs to be on his British Estate, is interested in Sybylla and presumptuously believes that she will jump at the opportunity to marry him. Instead, Sybylla is attracted to a more typically Australian neighbor, Harry Beecham. She is not at all certain that she wants to jump into a relationship with Beecham, though, because of her aunt's as well as her own mother's unfortunate experiences with men. At a neighborhood dance, a sophisticated woman from the city monopolizes Harry's attention and Sybylla counters by flirting with a servant. As a result, Harry
is persuaded to admit his feelings for Sybylla. Her
impulsive response is to slap him and tell him that she
never intends to marry.

Harry must leave his ranch to recoup his family
fortune, and Sybylla is forced to work as a governess on
the outback in payment of her father's debts. The family
to which she is indentured is unkempt and unruly, and
Sybylla does her best to teach them respect and pride.
Once back on her parents' farm, Sybylla discovers that
Harry has been seeing her younger sister. Even so, Harry
comes around to ask Sybylla, one more time, to marry him.
By now Sybylla has become comfortable with her
independence and she turns him down—graciously.
Sybylla's first book is on its way to publication—an
autobiography entitled *My Brilliant Career*. Her
earlier frank declaration, "I don't want to be part of
anyone," comes to fruition.

The film emphasizes conflicts between many of the
primary Australian identity myths. The conflict between
the British way of life and the spirit of Australian
nationalism is manifested in the characterizations of the
two men—Frank and Harry—who vie for Sybylla's
attention. The fact that Sybylla prefers Harry, the more
Australian of the two men, is significant. Even in a
society which excludes women from mateship rituals that symbolize Australianness, Sybylla sees more opportunity and potential for the egalitarian spirit that this Australianness, nevertheless, represents.

The conflict between bush life and the encroaching "civilization" is also evident. Sybylla is confronted with the ruggedness of the outback when she is indentured there as a maid and nanny. The ordeal is a difficult one, but through it, Sybylla gains the confidence she needs to pursue her career as a writer.

The film project began with the friendship between Armstrong and producer Margaret Fink. One day Fink handed Armstrong a copy of the novel by Miles Franklin, and the project was set in motion. Because both women had recently been involved in an unsuccessful film effort, the AFC refused to fund *My Brilliant Career*. Instead, the New South Wales Film Corporation, a state government entity, agreed to sponsor the film with the help of private investors. Judy Davis, a fine stage actress, was awarded the title role.

Of Armstrong, David Stratton writes: "...there was also the burden of carrying the torch for all the other women in the film industry; for her, it was important to make a success of the film in order to establish the fact
that women could direct films in Australia."\textsuperscript{34} In fact, the film's main creators were predominantly women, and this along with the film's story made it a kind of landmark feminist enterprise. It was eventually submitted as the official Australian entry at Cannes, and was very well-received.\textsuperscript{35} The AFC came to regret its decision to deny funding.\textsuperscript{36} The film's production history became inexorably tied to its theme of women's independence. This theme has responded to a cord in the Australian conscience—a deep need to appreciate the female side of what it means to be Australian, even while rebelling against and endeavoring to change it.

Not surprisingly, the film's feminist perspective was the main subject of critical commentary. Geraldine Pascall of the \textit{Australian} observed that the feminist point was made unpretentiously and honestly,\textsuperscript{37} while Geoffrey Barker felt that the female roles were developed to the detriment of the male characters, who he thought to be nondescript.\textsuperscript{38} In the U.S., \textit{MS Magazine} commented that Australia is doing what other countries, more schooled in filmmaking, have been unable to do—deal with the issue of women's identity head-on.\textsuperscript{39} \textit{Newsday} observed the same and described the film as "a woman's coming of age in oppressive social
The metaphor of the child growing up is evident in many of these identity-seeking films. The same metaphor has been used to describe the search for Australian national identity itself. White also sees this metaphor as representative of Australia's quest for economic self-sufficiency. An exploration of the second strain of identity-seeking involving intercultural identification, follows.

National Identity-Seeking

The second strain of identity-seeking commonly found in sponsored films involves Australian nationalism and its subcultural components. In these films, Australians appear to be defining Australianness as distinct from Englishness or Americanness. In many ways, such films are logical extensions of the individual identity-seeking films, which represent coming-of-age. In the effort to distinguish themselves from citizens of other cultures,
Australians must also reconcile the diverse subcultural makeup of modern Australia.

A film which fits snugly into this category is *Gallipoli*, Peter Weir's realistic and sensitive account of the World War I campaign known as ANZAC. In this contest, more Australians lost their lives than in any other battle in the nation's short history. This is one of the historical events that Ina Bertrand highlights in discussing what has unified Australia with a sense of identity.

In this film, two young men, one an Irish-Australian of common background and one an aristocratic British-Australian, find friendly competitiveness at leisure and comaraderie at war. They discover what it truly means to be Aussie "mates," as the mateship ethic, within an historical framework, is used to define Australianness. Bertrand observes:

*Gallipoli* is really structured round the cultural paradigms of mateship, and the associated accession to manhood, yet it ties this closely to an historical narrative familiar to all Australians, and so provides instant confirmation of the chosen images.

Individual as well as national "coming-of-age" are
thematically apparent in this film.

A review in *Cineaste* commented: "Peter Weir's *Gallipoli* shows the social and psychological support system for the canine mentality of the Aussies themselves."45 It echoes, certainly, the anti-colonial theme which dominates much Australian literature. Indeed, one of the boys in the film declares: "It's not our bloody war--it's an English war!"

A Peter Weir film that fits less comfortably into this group is *The Last Wave*.46 This 1977 fantasy pits modern white-Australian society against the mysterious but simple ways of the Aborigines. In this story, the weather in various parts of the country is severe and unpredictable. With all their expertise, the logical, "civilized" population is unable to explain or cope with these phenomena. A white attorney in Sydney is called upon to defend a city-dwelling Aborigine and becomes privy to the Blacks' predictions of an apocalyptic "last wave" that is on its way to the Australian coast.

Beyond its dealings with the supernatural, *The Last Wave* comments on modern Australia's quest to become like other Western cultures when it should, perhaps, be more mindful of the connection to the natural
environment which energizes the Aborigine. The connection was one of the first elements of Australian identity established and discussed by White and others.

Adrian Martin sees the film's theme in terms of "pan-determinism," and highlights the film's attempt to pit civilization against "the marvellous" and its association to bush life. The conflict is keenly apparent in the character of the lawyer, who must set aside all his training in logical argument and skeptical thinking to accept the possibility that there are things a "civilized" person may not perceive or understand. As a result of this conflict, the issue of what it means to be Australian is brought to the fore. The theme implies that the aspirations of western society and its consumer baggage—as seen in the lawyer's plush suburban home—are not enough.

The film selected as a representative anecdote for this type of identity-seeking is Breaker Morant. Bruce Beresford's 1980 film chronicling a highly publicized incident that occurred during the South Africa Boer War in 1901. Guerilla-like battles and attacks were characteristic of this British colonial conflict. A unit of mostly Australian fighters called the Bushveldt Carbineers is ambushed and their leader,
the Englishman Captain Hunt, is maimed and killed. His mate and lieutenant, English-born Harry Morant, leads a retaliatory strike against the Boers. He spies a man donned in Hunt's uniform and orders him killed without trial. Further executions, and the death of a missionary, follow this attack. Morant, along with assistants Handcock and Witton, are tried by a British court. The defendants are given an inexperienced attorney who is unfamiliar with the case, while the prosecution is led by a masterful lawyer who has been given ample time to prepare. During the trial, a contingent of Boers attack, and the three defendants show great courage in warding off the guerillas. Despite appeals for mercy, the three Australians are convicted. Witton is given a life sentence, but Morant and Handcock are executed.

Beresford's angle on the incident is straightforward. Even though Morant and the others are clearly guilty of the killings, they are scapegoated by the British at a time when Australian nationalism is taking hold. The British soldiers in the film refer to both the Boers and the Aussies as "colonials." The Prime Minister calls for a conviction in order to disavow the "frontier mentality" of Australia. The image of Morant
and Handcock going to their death holding hands is more
is more representative of nationalism than of the
mateship ethic.49

The similarity of these events to the Vietnam War
and the My Lai situation, in particular, is
evident.50 The nationalistic fervor evident at the
time these events occurred is reinterpreted for
modern-day Australia in this film. Now, the separation
from American culture seems to be more critical,
especially in terms of media, and the mental connection
to Vietnam is significant.

An English actor, Edward Woodward, was selected to
play Morant. Bryan Brown, whose career was given a boost
by the film, appears as Handcock.51 Beresford was
under contract to the South Australian Film Corporation
when he made the film, and that state entity financed the
effort.52 The film represented Australia at Cannes
in 1980. The national and international reception was
positive, and the film did unusually well in the
U.S.53 Newsweek called the film "fiercely
nationalistic," and the underdog theme, also popular in
the U.S., was a main attraction.54

Although films presenting nationalistic themes are
fewer than those which anecdotalize individual and
subcultural identity-seeking, their contribution is critical. As mentioned earlier, all of the identity-seeking themes may be extended to represent the entire culture. The coming-of-age scenario, in which individuals seek to affirm their unique identities by relating to others in mutual appreciation of autonomy, is certainly symbolic of Australia's identity search.

The Agency/Act Ratio

In terms of film contents as agency, the act may be seen in terms of the effort to highlight Australian diversity, unpredictability and rebelliousness, while incorporating these attributes in terms of a national identity myth that appears uniform and is appreciated as such by audiences. The ratio may also be analyzed according to the attempt to promote that uniform myth with films of many genres and subjects.

Carrie Richey, who has reviewed Australian films for the Village Voice, has noted that the Aussies,
"...must repeatedly demonstrate rebellion by declarations of independence from authority."

The emphasis on women and scapegoats in these films is indicative of this urge.

By the very redundancy of these themes, a realization of Australianness by critics and filmgoers is attained. Even in the most nationalistic of these offerings, the diversity comprising the "national character" is apparent. In Gallipoli, for example, the athletic competitiveness between the two young men is based partly on their differing socio-economic backgrounds, but is also an integral element of the Australian national identity myth.

My Brilliant Career presents a portrait of an individual who interprets the myth of egalitarianism in her own independently-minded fashion. Sybylla's rebelliousness seems to be atypical of the Australian women of her era, but nevertheless, it serves to redefine and strengthen the uniform appreciation of egalitarianism and unpredictability as part of the national character.

Although these films deal with many different subjects using variegated styles, they all still manage to evoke the same basic identity myths. From the reality of war, to the magical lore of the Aborigine, to racial
strife, to the plight of women, the consistency of identity images is maintained. Thus, this analysis of content messages further supports the essential validity of the encompassing act: reconciling uniformity with diversity.

Conclusion

This examination of representative films in terms of the meanings generated by content and of discourses commenting on these works has led to the following claims: 1) As demonstrated respective to the agency/act ratio, elements of Australian identity which conflict on one level are subsumed and reconciled as part of a uniform vision of Australianness promoted on another level.

2) As a democratic nation composed of many subgroups, Australia must establish its national identity
while acknowledging and respecting the diversity within. The significance of this requirement is manifested in the contents of sponsored films. As in The Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith, ethnic and racial minorities are pictured searching for their own special place within the larger culture, and concurrently, the larger culture is persuaded to respect ethnic and racial diversity as part of the process of intracultural identification. This can be but is not always accomplished by appealing to the national conscience.

3) The identity myths recounted in investigations of the scene and purpose in this drama appear with regularity in the content messages of national film, and seem to confirm the intent of the agent, as well as the feelings of the Aussie populace. Bush values, egalitarianism, authoritarianism and consumerism are all depicted—sometimes within a single work. Most of the sponsored films reviewed here take place in the past and thus, reveal developing identity conflicts over the course of history. The Last Wave tells a contemporary story which involves all of these conflicts, even while suggesting a possible resolution of these conflicts.

4) The contents of sponsored films provide coping strategies or "equipment for living" to the present-day
Australian who is seeking to resolve conflicts apparent in the themes of many of these films. Filmmakers are in tune with the needs of the audience. Bertrand writes: "Such an audience enthusiastically supports local productions, thus ensuring the financial viability of the industry, because the films address deeply-felt needs in the community and help to resolve social tensions." 57

Thus, the assumptions underlying the use of the representative anecdote to synthesize and analyze media fare are borne out. A final summary of the findings of this study is next.
NOTES

1. Peter Weir's *The Last Wave*.
2. Peter Weir's *Gallipoli*.
4. The "Mad Max" series - privately financed.
5. see Brummett, "Burke's Representative Anecdote as a Method in Media Criticism," pp. 161-176.
7. Davidson, p. 33.
8. Stratton, pp. 133-139.
15. Stratton, p. 137.
17. Stratton, p. 145.


27. Bertrand, p. 181.


30. Stratton, pp. 216-221.


32. Stratton, p. 217.

33. Stratton, p. 219.

34. Stratton, p. 218.

35. Stratton, p. 219.


38. Stratton, p. 219.


41. White, p. 151.

42. Bertrand, pp. 182-183.
43. Bertrand, p. 181.
44. Bertrand, p. 182.
46. Stratton, pp. 74-79.
48. Stratton, pp. 54-56.
49. Stratton, p. 55.
50. Stratton, p. 55.
52. Stratton, p. 55.
53. Stratton, p. 56.
56. Bertrand, p. 183.
CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

In *The Creativity Question*, Ernest Schachtel observes:

The main motivation at the root of creative experience is man's need to relate to the world around him, a need which...becomes particularly strong and striking when urgent physical needs such as for food and rest have been stilled.¹

Anthropologists extend this notion to the cultural level by comparing the egocentrism of the individual to the ethnocentrism of a culture. A basic text notes that self-centered cultures are deficient in their dealings with other cultures, just as egocentric individuals have difficulty relating effectively with other persons, and introduces the notion of "shared culture" as being facilitated by communication of whatever kind or scope necessary.² Edward T. Hall, an anthropologist who studies cultural characteristics in terms of

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communication, has supported the notion that there is a
need for a culture to establish an identity inside as
well as outside geographical boundaries.3

Psychologist Rollo May has connected the creative
impulses of a society to the presence and influence of a
unifying medium. He writes of the ancient Greeks and the
Delphic Oracle of Apollo: "The anxiety that Apollo helped
people meet was the apprehension that accompanies a
formative, fermenting, powerfully expanding period."4
In May's conceptualization, the oracle became the
"embodiment of the collective insights of the group"—a
kind of medium through which the cultural identity of
Greeks from the several city-states became
synthesized.5

The situation in Australia has not been unlike that
of Ancient Greece. As a relatively young country which
has moved beyond an undue concern with basic needs and
emerged as a productive, industrial nation engaged in
worldwide commerce, Australia has realized a desire to
assert its identity through creative means. This has
occurred at the precise time when communication media are
pervasive, and when the contents of media commodities
coming from outside threaten to dilute any sense of
Australianness which may exist.6 The Australians
have responded to the threat by focusing on the film medium and by using the explosion of new modes of dissemination to the advantage of the home-grown fare which has been generated.

This study has addressed secondary issues within the individual chapter analyses, and the conclusions of these analyses support the validity of the overriding act which encompasses the drama—the human desire to reconcile uniformity with diversity. The task for Australia has been somewhat different than it has been for its cousin—the United States. The U.S. was declaring its independence from Britain at approximately the same time the Australian continent was being settled by the British. During the 19th century, in relative isolation and unhampered by the intrusion of electronic media, Americans were able to get a handle on some uniformly American identity myths. With the advent of film, radio, and television, a sense of American diversity gradually became part of a uniform conception of cultural identity; although those media increasingly began to present images of ethnic and racial mix, the Americanness of media offerings, by and large, was evident. The "melting pot" idea was reinforced.

Australia, on the other hand, has been coming of age
at a time when new electronic media--from film to television to cable to satellite, etc.--have bombarded the typical Australian viewer with mostly American fare. The early years of the nation's history were spent in attempting to establish a separate identity from Britain. Now, it is from the United States that the Australian image must be distinguished. Not only have Australiana had to acknowledge their own diversity, but have had to do so against diverse images coming from the outside. Ironically, it is in coping with a world of diversity that Australia has been forced to come to terms with its own fragmentation.8

Democratic, multicultural nations frequently must find ways of doing this, and the media have provided effective methods. While Communist and other authoritarian nations cope with diversity by employing media to deny the existence of such diversity, free cultures employ media to reconcile that diversity with their uniform identity myths.9

In the foregoing chapters, the act has been related to the other pentadic constituents, and it has been demonstrated that the desire to reconcile uniformity with diversity is a key element in all aspects of the drama. The chapter examining the scene lends support to the
contention that Australians are seeking to embrace their own diversity while endeavoring to communicate a uniform vision of Australianness to the outside. The chapter investigating the Australian government as agent examines the governing process Down Under and its propensity to subsume diverse opinions in consensus, and change in stability. The analysis of purpose reinforces the conceptualization that the acceptance of diversity is part of the intention to make clear a sense of cultural identity. The examination of the film medium as agency sees cinema as a form of artistic expression conceived and coordinated by a single author while influenced by collaboration, and as a potpourri of sights and sounds appreciated by a viewer as a uniform whole. The analysis of film contents as agency further demonstrates the validity of the act in that various genres are represented in identity-seeking efforts, and in that thematically, the films deal with diverse visions of Australianness under an identity-seeking umbrella. All of this leads to the preliminary findings involving the major research focus of the study.
Preliminary Findings

To review, the preliminary questions with respect to theory and method include the following: 1) Is dramatism, as used in this case, an effective method for understanding the complexity of broadly-based communication dramas? 2) How may motives be determined through the application of the pentad and the representative anecdote and how do such motives relate to the concept of "equipment for living?" 3) Is the distinction between persuasion and identification changed or clarified as a result of this analysis?

First, the use of dramatism has been warranted in this instance. Because the commentary, film contents, and other rhetorical data emanating from the event take on the qualities of a drama being played on the cultural level, the pentad provides a way to get hold of each contributing factor individually as well as the entire, fully-integrated situation. Motives pertaining to each individual factor are discovered, and their relationship to the whole determined.
Because the discourse, in and of itself, reflects and/or constitutes diversity respective to Australian cultural attributes, the act encompassing this drama has proven to be appropriate. The use of the act as the integrating nucleus of the pentad rather than as the element used to describe the discursive acts of the agent as rhetor is necessary here, and the only effective way to apply the pentad to this rhetorical drama and still maintain a macroscopic perspective.

Second, Burkeian theory sees motives as arising out of rhetorical acts. As employed here, the pentad and the representative anecdote have examined discourses which are commentaries on the event, as well as the film medium and film contents as agencies. These analyses have served to reveal consistency in terms of general intention. This intention runs from the fully conscious to subconscious levels—from persuasion to identification. This point shall be discussed respective to the third issue. It is clear, however, that whether the need for a sense of cultural identity actually exists or whether it exists as a result of discourses which talk about and/or attempt to respond to such a need, the need has been, to some degree, attributed through symbol-using behavior.
Regarding the representative anecdote and the notion of "equipment for living," there is more than one possible interpretation. Burke appears to view this literary "equipment" as strategies projected by discourse--discourse responding to a cultural situation or need. Like motives, these strategies are generated through symbol using. Brummett, however, essentially equates "equipment for living" with motives in his discussions and applications of the representative anecdote.

Depending upon the case being studied, this distinction may or may not be significant. In this study, the two appear to be describing the same things. The need to identify and the strategies for identifying are, for all intents and purposes, revealed in the same rhetoric. In Breaker Morant, for instance, the preponderance of expressions of Australian nationalism presumes a need to assert that nationalism.

In response to the third query, it is contended that intent at the conscious level--persuasion--is clearly evident in primary data generated by the government and government officials. These have included The Vincent Report, The Willis Report, and the Film Act itself. Such discourses have not been the focus of this study,
since as official documents they are far removed from the macroscopic, cultural perspective this investigation adopts. The commentaries which have been highlighted, as well as the films' contents, are rhetorical at levels below consciousness. These may be viewed as attempts to identify, even as they may speak to a culture's efforts to identify. As art, film contents are the furthest removed from the persuasive level in terms of their identity-seeking meanings.

In the chapter surveying the scene, a quote of Eleanor Hodges' made this same point. In her commentary on the identity myths propagated by the Australian intelligentsia in the 19th and early 20th centuries, Hodges writes: "...it was probably literature, being less class bound and operating at a deeper level of consciousness, which was the more important force in osmotic process."13 This quote also reveals the motives and methods of Australians a century later with regard to national film--an art form different from but in many ways akin to literature. In film art generated by democratic cultures, the intent is less detectable than it might be in a totalitarian nation, where the government takes a stronger hand in controlling the contents of art and literature and in essence,
establishes a cultural identity for the masses. This is why Marxist-style media criticism would not be an appropriate method for analyzing films in this particular context.

We see, then, that persuasion and identification exist on a continuum. Here, government discourse is on the persuasion end, commentaries on the situation are in the middle, and the film contents themselves are at the identification end. It is important to note that the films are the means used to identify with a popular audience inside and outside of Australia, because it is at this level of consciousness that the diversity of the masses may be reached.

The preliminary issues involving cultural identity-seeking and the mass media are as follows: 1) How has Australia proceeded on its quest to establish a cultural identity, what coping strategies reveal themselves in the data analyzed, and what claims may be made respective to cultural identity searches in general? 2) How does the world media environment and the introduction of new technological modes of dissemination affect the choice of film as a vehicle for identity messages and the intention of Australia as revealed by the data?
First, it is clear that Australia has endeavored, through the government sponsorship of film efforts, to ensure that its media portray indigenous works. The government has set guidelines for what constitutes indigenous material, but has left other aspects of artistic expression up to the filmmakers. As previously discussed, art operates at a subconscious level. By giving artists the economic means to create, the natural identity-seeking impulse of a diversity of contributors is let loose. Indeed, some cultural pride has been taken whenever any Australian film has received acclaim abroad.

The coping strategies or "equipment for living" may be seen in terms of the act encompassing this drama. The diversity of film content, genre and style, for instance, is appreciated as a uniform whole by the audience, both within a single film and among a body of works. As Bertrand has noted, the historical films typical of the new Australian cinema have a special ability to synthesize cultural myths.14

Even non-indigenous films directed by Australians seem to reflect or embody Australianness to some degree. Witness, an American film directed by Australian Peter Weir, has already been mentioned as one in which the landscape--here, the Pennsylvania landscape--is made
into a character as it might be if had been produced Down Under. Another Weir film, The Year of Living Dangerously, which deals with two Australian journalists living in Indonesia during a time of political upheaval, attempts to highlight the Australian character as it exists within an international arena. In each case, the Australian element is appreciated as part and parcel of a diversified but integrated whole.

At the subconscious level, diversity is acknowledged but subsumed by viewers who have learned to appreciate a multifaceted film as a singular whole. The coping strategies involve the ability to embrace diversity in terms of individual identity, the identity of one's national culture, and ultimately, among world cultures without losing, in each instance, the appreciation of the whole.

Some generalizations may, therefore, be made respective to the identity quests of multicultural, democratic societies. Diversity cannot and should not be denied by media generated in these societies, but instead, such diversity should be accepted as part of a reasonably uniform conceptualization of cultural character.
In response to the second issue, it may be contended that mass media create a sense of urgency with regard to cultural identity. Just as social functions provide adolescents with opportunities to identify with peers, and in the process, to get a sense of their own identity as reflected in those relationships, so do media offer "maturing" cultures apparatus for identifying with and among masses of people. The influx of these technologies forces the hand of nations concerned about their cultural autonomy. Australia has taken an "if you can't beat 'em, join 'em" type of attitude, and used the advances new technologies represent to disseminate cultural messages through film and other popular media.

The film form, however it is disseminated, has the potential to reach a large and varied audience. New modes of dissemination extend the reach of film to remote areas and to those who prefer staying at home rather than travelling to the theater. McLuhan's theories aside, it is clear that film, whether portrayed on the large screen or small screen, is an involving medium. It appeals to the senses of sight and hearing directly, and to the other senses indirectly. New technologies which make these appeals more vivid are bound to intensify the
potential for influence of the filmic form of art and communication.

The contributions to knowledge offered by this investigation proceed from these preliminary findings. First, the study makes a methodological contribution. Although Burke's pentad is a frequently applied and generally accepted tool for rhetorical criticism, its use has been further validated and extended here. The interpretation of the "act" as the poetic encompassment of the drama is not the rule in rhetorical criticism, and this study demonstrates that this interpretation is particularly effective when the analyst considers rhetorical events from a systemic, cultural perspective. Because the act is used to establish interrelationships between pentadic variables in terms of ratios, the existence of a dynamic and integrated system becomes apparent, and the workability of the systems framework is evident.

This analysis has also been illuminating in terms of the notion of persuasive identification. The study has shown that identification, on the cultural and individual level, involves the expression of autonomy as well as an effort to find commonality with others.
Burke's belief that persuasion and identification almost always exist side by side is borne out, in that conscious and subconscious persuasion appear together within this system in a mutually influential dynamic.

The application of the representative anecdote in this methodological scheme is also contributive. Although the anecdote and the pentad may each be used without the other, their integration in this kind of analysis is noteworthy. Because the anecdote is employed in order to synthesize a body of rhetorical data in terms of its cultural essence, its use is proven to be warranted and logical respective to the overall study. It does in this case, and may in many instances, make tasks manageable for the rhetorical/cultural critic without lessening the validity of the critic's findings. Also, because the films themselves are examples of drama and as a body, become part of the larger dramatic event, the representative anecdote serves to characterize, simply and cleanly, the dramatic thrust of that event.

The concept of motives as "equipment for living" as they have been identified through the use of the representative anecdote is also clarified in this study. As these motives embody the need for cultural selfhood, so do the meanings emanating from the sponsored films
establish strategies for responding to that need. This dual role is not clearly explained by Brumett in his articles on the use of the anecdote.

Second, knowledge about Australian culture, Australian film, the film medium, and cultural identity-seeking in general is contributed through this investigation. The Australian culture, which is maturing under the influence of pervasive mass media, has been shown to be a prototype against which other similar situations might be considered. The success of national film has affected the other aspects of the cultural system examined here. Now evident in the U.S. are commercials for Indigenous Australian ale. Australian sponsored travel logs specifically directed at Americans are shown on cable television networks. Australian popular musicians continue to make their mark in America and a dramatization of the popular Australian novel *The Thorn Birds* was recently a successful mini-series on American television. The victory of the Indigenous Australian yacht "Australia II" in the America's Cup sailing race has moved the event to Perth, Australia in 1987 and the fanfare is already evident in American sailing publications. As mentioned earlier, greater interest in all types Indigenous art has been realized.
Carroll's anthology Intruders in the Bush contains essays on indigenous painting, film, literature, etc., and emphasizes the way the success of each influences the other, and how they all relate to the need to create and propagate indigenous cultural identity myths.

This need, whether attributed or actual, has been shown to be an immediate and strong impulse in maturing Western-type cultures with access to new media. Media become the focal points of intracultural and intercultural identity-seeking efforts and visual media, such as film, have been especially appropriate for use in this type of environment and for the purposes delineated herein. Wider access and distribution of film via new technologies has served to enhance its persuasive power. The multisensory appeal of film, its subliminal influence, and its collaborative and integrated nature, have all been highlighted in terms of this drama. The study demonstrates that in this situation and presumably, in like situations, the film form and its defining attributes take on new importance, new meaning, and new purpose.

This study contributes through clarification, validation, and/or extension in all of the above-mentioned areas. Ultimately, a special context for
the study of communicative behavior emerges. This context, made gradually clear through the course of this investigation, may be labelled: "mass intercultural identification." An explanation of this context for rhetorical research, of the concepts it involves, and of its nature and possible uses, is next.

**Mass Intercultural Identification:**

A Relevant and Useful Concept

Mass Intercultural Identification is a context for rhetorical communication study with its own defining attributes, specific applications, and relevance to the communication discipline as it exists today. "Mass" refers to the use of mass media, as well as to the idea that the rhetoric occurs between masses of people instead of between individuals. "Intercultural" describes a situation in which differing cultures communicate with each other. "Identification" may be equated with identity-seeking, and is the Burkeian term labelling rhetoric whose persuasive intent is subliminal. In sum, "mass-intercultural identification" involves the efforts
of cultures to identify with other cultures through mass media. Through the act of identifying with other cultures, a culture also gains a sense of its self—i.e., the identification is also intracultural.

The possible applications of this concept are many and varied. First, it is ideal when considering art forms as rhetorical examples of mass communication. Since art and literature, if popularly known, communicate on an individual and on a cultural level, it is almost always important for a critic to consider the broader, cultural aspect. Regarding culture, art presents subliminal rhetorical themes more frequently than definite, persuasive messages, and must be labeled as identification in the Burkeian schema. Also, the context implies that certain cultural needs are being addressed through artistic efforts, and may be used as a framework from which to decipher more direct and conscious motives present in the discourse emanating from other elements of the broader drama under scrutiny.

This is a relevant and much-needed concept in the communication discipline. Precisely because of pervasive new media, the situation just described occurs with increasing regularity. The persuasive intent of art and literature generated within Communist nations is more
appropriately investigated by Marxist media criticism, because such criticism assumes that the economic environment in a society is at the root of any changes or reaffirmations influenced by art. In Western nations, however, such situations are better examined by the rhetorical methods this context involves, since the communication itself is seen to be generative of intent and change.

Implications for Further Research

Many avenues for investigation open up under the umbrella of the communication context defined above. With new technologies affecting the appreciation of artistic media commodities, the effects upon culture are continuous and ever-changing. Mass intercultural identification provides a groundwork from which these effects may be weighed by the rhetorical scholar, and may also provide hypotheses for testing of media effects by the communication social scientist.

The case of the new Australian film industry
analyzed in this study may be viewed as a prototype against which other similar situations might be investigated. The Canadian government, for instance, has established laws limiting the number of American programs shown on Canadian television, and has provided considerable financial encouragement for the production of Canadian television and film.\textsuperscript{18} Respective to Canada, where the distinction between American and Canadian cultural characteristics is a fine one indeed, the use of the context and methods defined and utilized in this study would be appropriate. The findings of and methods applied in this analysis might also be used prescriptively in such instances.

Another application might be to historical analysis. Rhetoricians who decipher the past may have neglected the rhetoric generated by a particular culture through its art. Although Renaissance art, for example, has been examined with other types of critical methods and within other contexts, the methods and context used here would be helpful in understanding the subtle rhetorical influences upon that culture and all its aspects. The identifying of a popular medium through which cultures of the past have attempted to establish a sense of identity may prove interesting. A question emerges: what
distinguishes a literary culture from a culture which identifies primarily through painting and sculpture? Such questions might be successfully addressed within the context introduced here.

Summary

This study has investigated the Australian government's attempt to ensure and facilitate a sense of Australian cultural identity through the subsidizing of indigenous cinema. Encompassing this situation is the need, specific to free societies, to understand and embrace diversity while relating to others inside and outside cultural boundaries in terms of a uniform sense of cultural selfhood. Burkeian dramatism has been employed to decipher the rhetorical drama and the data emanating from its elements, but the films themselves have been analyzed in terms of Burke's representative anecdote. The use of these critical tools has been clarified through their application in this instance.
As a result of the investigation, various levels of motive have been uncovered. At the level of government pronouncement, conscious persuasion is present. At the level of the cinematic art produced, however, rhetorical identification is evident. Ultimately, the concept of "mass intercultural identification" has emerged. This context for communication study is especially appropriate for understanding identity-seeking at the cultural level occurring via some mass medium. Finally, the implications of this study have been enumerated and the possible applications of the methods used and the context defined have been suggested.
NOTES


3. Edward T. Hall, Beyond Culture.


5. May, p. 108.


7. Concern for civil rights, reaching its pinnacle in the 1960's, was mainly responsible for promoting media commodities expressing racial and/or ethnic diversity.


9. Those concerned with cultural hegemony would argue that capitalist identity myths in these media are meant to extend beyond internal and/or Western influence. See Hamelink.


11. Burke, Philosophy of Literary Form, pp. 293-304.


17. Rhetorical scholars generally acknowledge the knowledge-producing nature of human symbol-using.

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