Creating Heritage in the
Australian Historical Miniseries 1978–1995

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Abstract

This thesis examines Australian historical miniseries considering them as heritage artefacts rather than as historical records. Historical miniseries are interrogated for the nature and significance of their interpretations of events from the nation’s past as being the heritage of all Australians. How and why miniseries imagine the past as heritage establishes heritage interpretation as being related to, but not the same as, historical interpretation. The argument is made that the makers of historical miniseries are best thought of as ‘heritage interpreters’ bringing a heritage imagination to their storytelling. These miniseries makers are shown to have much in common with professional heritage interpreters working in museums and other cultural venues, where heritage interpretation is designed to inform, educate, and entertain audiences, viewers, and visitors. Consequently, particular attention is given to the specific heritage rules and expectations discernible in a historical miniseries production that have parallels to the rules and expectations evident in the work of the heritage professional and practitioner.

There has, to date, been no study that systematically considers the many parallels and intersections between Film and Television Studies and Heritage Studies and what these similarities and connections might mean when analysing the historical miniseries or film. This thesis is concerned with outlining and elaborating these parallels and intersections. It is particularly focused upon: firstly, those processes of imagining, interpreting, representing, and communicating a version of the past developed by historical miniseries producers and comparing these processes to those applied by heritage practitioners; second, examining the nature and scope of the historical worlds created for historical miniseries and those constructed within cultural heritage institutions; and third, outlining the intersections of approach and object between Film and Television Studies and Heritage Studies.

The peak period of Australian miniseries production between 1978 and 1995 is examined to reveal how and why historical miniseries makers interpreted and represented aspects of Australia’s past as heritage. A number of key Australian historical miniseries are singled out as case studies. The miniseries examined are Bodyline (1984), The Cowra Breakout (1984), Anzacs (1985), The Dunera Boys (1985), Vietnam (1987), The Leaving of Liverpool (1992), and Bordertown (1995). These miniseries offered audiences challenging and innovative – and often provocative – heritage interpretations and representations of events from their nation’s past. They were made in a cultural and political environment dominated by official multiculturalism, the Australian Bicentennial, and Australia’s increasing engagement with Asia.
Assessments are made of the heritage value and cultural significance of the stories and historical worlds visualised and actualized in the miniseries, and an evaluation is undertaken of the miniseries themselves to determine their value as heritage items with cultural significance. This assessment and evaluation process employs an interdisciplinary approach combining perspectives from Film and Television Studies and Heritage Studies, as well as from Cultural Studies and History. Andreas Huyssen’s notions of ‘monumentality’ and ‘public culture’, John T. Caldwell’s discussion of ‘televisuality’, and the Australian heritage sector’s significance assessment processes, will be combined and adapted to assess Australian historical miniseries. This thesis seeks to show how Film and Television Studies can productively engage with many of the principles, orientations, theories, and practices of Heritage as a disciplinary and institutional field.
Declaration by author

This thesis is composed of my original work, and contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference has been made in the text. I have clearly stated the contribution by others to jointly-authored works that I have included in my thesis.

I have clearly stated the contribution of others to my thesis as a whole, including statistical assistance, survey design, data analysis, significant technical procedures, professional editorial advice, and any other original research work used or reported in my thesis. The content of my thesis is the result of work I have carried out since the commencement of my research higher degree candidature and does not include a substantial part of work that has been submitted to qualify for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution. I have clearly stated which parts of my thesis, if any, have been submitted to qualify for another award.

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Publications during candidature
No publications.

Publications included in this thesis
No publications included.

Contributions by others to the thesis
No contributions by others.

Statement of parts of the thesis submitted to qualify for the award of another degree
None.
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Completing this thesis as a part-time graduate student at The University of Queensland while also teaching full-time at the Queensland University of Technology, has been a challenge. Over an extended period of time, I have encountered various intellectual and academic orientations in cultural, media, and screen studies. They are now part of my own intellectual and cultural heritage. In a shifting intellectual environment, my thesis was anchored once I encountered John Caldwell's work on televisuality, Andreas Huyssen’s writings on monumentality and public culture, and Tom O’Regan and Jason Jacobs's interest in television history and its relation to public culture.

Understandings within the field of Heritage Studies of heritage value and cultural significance provided new ways into materials that had become stale, illuminating these materials and offering an opportunity to see them in a new light. The reputation of the miniseries changes: once the powerhouse and innovator of Australian television drama production, miniseries became rare events. Assessments of the miniseries form and of many earlier miniseries have now been revised and been brought back into the spotlight.

At The University of Queensland, I completed this thesis under the direction of my initial advisor P. David Marshall, until his departure from the university. Tom O’Regan, on becoming my new thesis advisor, worked with my associate advisor Jason Jacobs to provide me with exemplary guidance. I thank previous associate advisors – Graeme Turner, Liz Ferrier, and Jane Stadler – for their advice. I would also like to thank Angela Tuohy, Cathy Squirrell, and the School of English, Media Studies and Art History for their forbearance. Special mention to James Cole, a fellow PhD traveller at UQ, although his work is in another field.

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Australia, historical miniseries, heritage imagination, interpretation, representation, actualization, multiculturalism, colligation

**Australian and New Zealand Standard Research Classifications (ANZSRC)**

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### List of Abbreviations

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<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10BA</td>
<td>Division 10BA (1981) of the Income Tax Assessment Act</td>
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<tr>
<td>ABC</td>
<td>Australian Broadcasting Corporation</td>
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<td>AFC</td>
<td>Australian Film Commission</td>
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<td>AIF</td>
<td>Australian Imperial Force</td>
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<td>AJN</td>
<td>Australian Jewish News</td>
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<td>AMOWC</td>
<td>Australian Memory of the World Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>BBC</td>
<td>British Broadcasting Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DVD</td>
<td>Digital Video Disc, Digital Versatile Disc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>New South Wales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POW</td>
<td>Prisoner-of-War</td>
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<tr>
<td>RSL</td>
<td>Returned and Services League of Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBS</td>
<td>Special Broadcasting Service (Australia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US, USA</td>
<td>United States, United States of America</td>
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<td>VC</td>
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Chapter 1

HERITAGE CREATION AND STORYTELLING

Introduction

This thesis examines how selected Australian historical miniseries from the 1980s and first half of the 1990s imagined events associated with the nation’s multicultural history; and how, in the process of creatively interpreting and representing aspects of this history, these miniseries became works of heritage value. It evaluates why selected miniseries were culturally significant works at the time of their initial broadcast. It establishes why they remain significant. It also asks and outlines what it means to recall these productions two and even three decades after they were screened on Australian television.

In the 1980s, multiculturalism and the 1988 Australian Bicentenary were important markers of Australian public life and culture. Over that decade, the ethnic diversity and multicultural heritage of the nation were recognised by the federal government under official multiculturalism so that by the first half of the 1990s cultural identity became congruent with ethnicity. This was the social, cultural, and political environment that gave rise to the historical miniseries examined in this thesis. *Bodyline* (1984), *The Cowra Breakout* (1984), *Anzacs* (1985), *The Dunera Boys* (1985), *Vietnam* (1987), *The Leaving of Liverpool* (1992), and *Bordertown* (1995) offered Australian viewers challenging and often controversial interpretations and representations their nation’s history. Most of these miniseries achieved popular success and enjoyed critical acclaim.

At the time of their production and broadcast, commentary and discussion of the miniseries within the field of Film and Television Studies was extensive. Much discussion was and continues to be attentive to their achievements as television and to their cultural politics. Nevertheless, since they were first broadcast, Australian historical miniseries have continued to be castigated by historians and history educators (see Gray) and by other commentators including representatives of ethnic communities (see Sondheim) for their lack of historical accuracy and divergence from the ‘facts’. This criticism inevitably opposes historians’ necessary investment in historical accuracy against the exigencies of creating effective fictional *historical* miniseries – and historical films.
Despite the many insights into aspects of the past (the ‘history’) interpreted and represented in these fictional television shows and the public correction of their inaccuracies by historians and commentators, filmmakers have not, and are unlikely to, change the way they make such productions (Freeman, *Introduction*). For their part, film and television scholars have tended, by and large, to support these filmmakers and the creative license they take with ‘facts’. Similar to Rosenstone (*JFK 506*), they contend a work like a historical miniseries is not a piece of written history merely transferred to the screen. Consequently, there should be no expectation that historical miniseries be subject to the same rules of professional historical practice as are works of academic history. These miniseries require a different kind of deliberation with their own yardsticks and measures. This gap between Film and Television Studies and Historical Studies is continuing and arguably constitutive. It is now widely understood, for instance, that film and television scholars and historians ask different questions of historical film and television productions (Engelen 29).

However, since the early 1990s, Rosenstone (*Historical Film*) and a number of other historians as well as film and television scholars internationally – like Lowenthal (*Heritage Crusade*), Sorlin, Samuel (*Theatres*), Sturken (*Re-enactment*), Bertand, and others – have considered how historical films and miniseries construct, in the words of Rosentone (*Introduction*), their own ‘historical worlds’. Filmmakers need to create a ‘vision’ on-screen to make events and people from the past meaningful to audiences in the present. For this reason, it is more productive to analyse the nature of the historical vision in films and television programs interpreting and representing past events. This entails considering how and why their historical worlds, and the stories that take place in these worlds, are imagined and constructed.

Taking my cue from Rosenstone, I propose to investigate and evaluate the historical worlds constructed in each of the case study miniseries, and the stories about the past these miniseries tell. Instead of reiterating and replicating criticisms made about their historical accuracy, I want to position the ‘historical work’ the miniseries engage in when they imaginatively construct and interpret the past, alongside similar and comparable imaginative constructions and interpretations of the past undertaken in the broader cultural field. There are other professional interpreters of the past besides historians and authorised institutions (such as universities, archives, and libraries). Central to the revisionist impulse found in Lowenthal, Sorlin, Bertrand, Samuel, and Sturken is the contention that there are many ways through which the past can be understood other than through History (Rosentone, *Revisioning History 6*).
Historical miniseries makers are professional interpreters of the past. The miniseries they produce are an intrinsic part of a broader cultural field similarly concerned with imaginatively constructing historical worlds in literature, theatre, art, museums, galleries, and monuments. The historical worlds they create, and the stories about the past that take place in these worlds, are best thought of as ways of interpreting and representing the past as heritage rather than as history. This is because the field of Heritage is closely connected with, but is not identical to, History. As a result of interpreting and representing past events, miniseries producers are not only creating artefacts with potential heritage value, they are also interpreting the past in a heritage-like manner, communicating their interpretations through the stories and historical worlds created for their miniseries. This suggests that Australian historical miniseries can be interrogated for the nature and importance of their interpretations and representations of the nation’s past in terms of how and why they imagine the past as heritage. My interest here is in paying particular attention to the specific heritage rules and expectations of historical miniseries production.

While historical miniseries are indeed artefacts dealing with history, it is the argument of this thesis – and that of Heritage Studies scholars more generally – that the evaluation of such artefacts for their heritage value requires an approach with its own set of rules, measures, and yardsticks. This evaluative approach would necessarily be different from, and an alternative to, any provided by History. There is a difference between the kinds of interpretations of the past undertaken by historians in their work, and the interpretations of the past evident in the work of historical miniseries producers and heritage practitioners. There is also a difference between the public uptake of the work of historians, and the uptake of work from filmmakers and heritage professionals.

To get at this difference, and to develop the particular rules, measures, and yardsticks for considering historical miniseries as creating heritage and also as artefacts with heritage value, it will be necessary to bring together perspectives from Film and Television Studies and Heritage Studies. Film and Television Studies has certainly investigated historical film and television shows, and discussed ‘heritage films’ and related television productions as adaptations combining fictional and historical recreations. These investigations, with their focus upon realism and naturalism, melodrama, and visual style, have provided useful templates for the consideration of historical films and miniseries. Studies by film and television scholars have also attended to the kinds of consensus narratives that are produced. These investigations and their outcomes will be dealt with later in this chapter. But Film and Television Studies’ interdisciplinary links have mostly been with adjacent fictional and docufictional literary and theatrical fields.
For their part, heritage professionals and theorists have theorised the interpretation and representation of the past as heritage, acknowledged the work of historians in productive ways, formulated measures and yardsticks for the critical evaluation of artefacts as heritage, and developed processes for the promulgation of a broad range of artefacts assessed to be of heritage value. Such orientations have much to offer Film and Television Studies in its task of understanding, analysing, and evaluating historical films and miniseries; and it will extend in new directions consideration of what is involved when interpreting and representing past events in fictional films and television shows. This consideration will involve systematically elaborating the connections and overlaps between ‘heritage films’ and television shows, and other heritage artefacts housed in museums and galleries or constructed as monuments; identifying the continuities across their respective production practices; and exploring the fit between the respective analytical frameworks of Film and Television Studies and those of Heritage Studies.

There has to date been no study that systematically considers the many parallels and intersections between Film and Television Studies and Heritage Studies, and what these might contribute to the analysis of historical films and miniseries. This thesis is concerned with outlining and elaborating these parallels and intersections. It is particularly focused upon: firstly, those processes of imagining, interpreting, representing, and communicating a version of the past developed by historical miniseries producers and comparing these processes to those applied by heritage practitioners; second, examining the nature and scope of the historical worlds created for historical miniseries and those constructed within cultural heritage institutions; and third, outlining the intersections of approach and object between Film and Television Studies and Heritage Studies.

A Heritage Studies perspective starts with a recognition that any process of bringing events and people from the past ‘to life’ in the present necessarily involves engaging and entertaining audiences, and requires the exercise of a particular kind of imagination – a ‘heritage imagination’ – on the part of the heritage practitioner. Heritage practitioners have, at times, greater freedom and latitude for exercising creative imagination than is the case with academically-trained professional historians. This is attested to in work these practitioners undertake in heritage contexts such as museums, galleries and public spaces; in educational environments where they produce or curate exhibitions; in public artworks and memorials; and in the production of informational-educational materials for young people. The kinds of heritage interpretations that curators undertake in selecting and displaying artefacts – or when architects plan memorials or restore and preserve buildings and spaces – often requires them to compress complex histories into schematic and simplified stories. Curators, architects, and interpreters are able to design and produce something that was not
previously there in order to evoke a feeling and sense of purpose. To design and create works of heritage value and cultural significance, they need to do more than re-present the past; they need to re-imagine and interpret it as ‘heritage’. As Weinstein (29) puts it, such an interpretation always involves an “imaginative leap” from “social relationships and events to mind or mentality, a leap that is rarely confirmed or, under current conditions, confirmable by evidence”.

Storytelling in historical miniseries requires similar kinds of compression, simplification, interpretation, and leaps of imagination. Both the heritage practitioner and filmmaker exercise a heritage imagination that accepts the need to inform and entertain audiences, while blending fact and fiction to reach and engage these audiences. Like the filmmaker and miniseries producer, the heritage practitioner interprets aspects of the past to meet the cultural needs of the present. These producers and practitioners have a responsibility to creatively and imaginatively interpret the past for their audiences and visitors. They have to develop and then apply an imaginative interpretation process to present the artefact, item or event in ways that render it informative and entertaining for the contemporary reader, viewer, and listener. The makers of historical miniseries did not claim they were bringing a specifically ‘heritage imagination’ to their work. They typically saw themselves as filmmakers and television producers working with historical materials to attract and entertain an audience. However, what they visualised and actualized on-screen can, nonetheless, be usefully described as the end result of exercising a heritage imagination.

Both the Film and Television and the Heritage disciplinary fields appreciate that imagining, creating, and telling stories interpreting the past are meaningful only when these stories have cultural and social value for contemporary audiences. Artefacts and miniseries with heritage value (‘heritage artefacts or items’) need to be commonly understood in several similar ways. They need to be understood in terms of the social, cultural, economic, geographical, and administrative environment in which the artefacts or items were made and used; in terms of the environment in which the items exist in the present (Mason 5); and in terms of the their entertainment purpose since they need to engage audiences.

Both miniseries producers and heritage professionals imagine and then actualize a version of the past in the present for a target audience. This is a process of creating heritage for a contemporary group or community through storytelling, and it is a social and cultural practice. To be sure, historians are always writing and creating for the present too, and their storytelling is also a social and cultural practice. However, considerations of public uptake and recognition are as much components of the heritage imagination as are its aesthetics or its formal presentation and execution.
in a heritage item. Therefore audience uptake needs to be taken as seriously as are the context, nature, and heritage value of the item itself (Mason 5).

To increase the communicability and effectiveness of their interpretations of the past as the heritage of contemporary visitors and viewers, heritage practitioners and miniseries producers strive for an appropriate level of generality in themes and topics. Both practitioners and producers use visuals, audio, and captions to concisely and succinctly convey a narrative image when actualizing issues and events. In filmic and televisual representations of historical events, for instance, viewers are provided with “captions, voice over, reproduction of documents, re-enactment of well-known scenes … which testify that the pictures are meant to reproduce ‘what really happened’” (Sorlin 43).

Filmmakers and heritage practitioners work under similar though not identical limitations of the form within which they create their productions. On the one hand, they work within the limitations of exhibition and display space (display panels and captions or set and production design features, and with limited space for images, stories, and information), the restrictions imposed on a performance (location, time, accessibility), and within the formal constraints of the public artefact (the location of a memorial and monument or the regulatory environment within which television networks operate). On the other, they work within the attention constraints of their visitors, viewers, and publics. The combination of these constraints means they need to engage with their public and to provide this public with various pathways and hooks into their productions, exhibitions, and performances. They both need to evoke an experience of what it might have been like to live in the past or what it is that has been lost in the present. They need to inform and entertain. Both the historical miniseries producer and the heritage practitioner need a ‘vision’ of the past that has to then be creatively represented as a ‘reality’. To achieve this they have independently developed a number of similar strategies.

Viewers, audiences, and visitors alike engage with a story about the past through characters. While heritage performances have visible characters (played by actors), even static displays can create characters by identifying an item or object as belonging to a particular real or fictional person. In dramatic historical films and television shows history is viewed or imagined from the standpoint of individual characters, and this is the case no matter whether it is a “mainstream drama [that] focuses on documented people or creates fictional characters and sets them amidst some important event or movement” (Rosenstone, History on Film 18). Entirely new and invented events and people find their way into a historical film or miniseries. This happens, for example, when a number of historically verifiable people are conflated into one composite ‘historical’ character. The practice of
invention and conflation is also permissible when narrativising ‘facts’ about the past as heritage stories, but this practice is necessarily unacceptable in a work of history – further demarcating the boundaries between heritage and history, and the different practices of the filmmaker and the historian.

Both Film and Television Studies and Heritage Studies stress the importance of infotainment and visualisation. The visualisation of the past evident in 1980s Australian historical miniseries anticipated the increasing visualisation of displays, performances, and the like in the heritage sectors of Australia, North America, and Europe more generally since the 1980s. It also anticipated the move of many filmmakers – particularly documentary filmmakers – into museums, galleries, and other heritage-related venues and media. As Gwinn points out, there has been a general shift “from the textual to the visual, performative and embodied in popular historical representation” in heritage displays and performances, particularly in public spaces (Gwinn).

What the historical miniseries has in common with heritage practice, then, is a similar practice of producing a type of accessible popular history through heritage interpretation, a concern to create appropriate and compelling (‘monumental’) productions to narrativise and communicate these heritage interpretations, and the application of a heritage imagination. By bringing the disciplines of Film and Television Studies and Heritage into dialogue and connection with each other, it is possible to recognise the continuity of ends and practices between the filmmaker and the heritage practitioner; between historical miniseries and exhibitions and memorials that interpret the past; and between the concerns of the two disciplines more generally. Such an intersection with Heritage Studies can also expand the ways in which historical miniseries can be appreciated, remembered, and made sense of by television scholars and by others with an interest in these productions. This entails considering a particular historical miniseries as a particular kind of heritage artefact.

However, before discussing the issues raised up to this point at greater length, it is important to note that for all the many similarities of approach between heritage practitioners and filmmakers, there are differences. Audiences experience historical miniseries not only through stories based on factual events and people that emerge from the historical record, but also through events and people that are entirely fictional set against actual events. The miniseries also combine documentary and drama. Although they have documentary-like features, historical miniseries are not documentaries. Instead many are docudramas. Through the creative use of dramatic, melodramatic, and documentary-like form and style, the miniseries maker intends to evoke an experience of encountering an imagined past. While heritage practice can use all of these features associated with historical miniseries
production, it does so from within a range of constraints. Heritage practice at institutions such as the museum and gallery tends to favour interpreting real people and events rather more than entirely fictional people. Living history museums are constrained by the requirement to remain ‘in period’. The use of melodrama and naturalism at a range of heritage venues is defined and limited by the panel display, interactive exhibit, period performance, or memorial. Consequently, the scope and kinds of visualisations and representations of past events and people at these heritage venues are necessarily different from that of the historical film and miniseries.

Miniseries as Monumental Public History and Heritage Imagination

The Miniseries as Public History

It is now generally acknowledged that films and television shows are the principal means by which most people in countries like Australia learn about their nation’s history (Edgerton 1; Lowenthal, Fabricating Heritage; Samuel, Theatres). Historical miniseries, like other work dealing with the past, are not only works of popular history but also of public history and, as such, they contribute to the broader public culture. The concept of public history as defined by Samuel connects a range of storytelling practices to public culture rather better than does the more usual term of popular history. Public history, according to Samuel (Theatres 15), is a social form of ‘unofficial knowledge’ about the past that develops when people learn about their history by viewing stories in films and on television, as well as through primary-school history lessons, popular literature, and folklore. There are also connections here between public history and heritage stories developed for these media. In this way, the historical miniseries as a form of public history contributes to a national public culture “consist[ing] of generally shared visions of meaning, values, and preference” (Waters 13).

Historical miniseries can turn their screening and viewing into a group or community phenomenon. By providing opportunities to engage in a common shared cultural experience, miniseries are carrying on “a millennia-old human tradition of ritually or symbolically recreating the past as a way of understanding who we are” (Stanton vi). The broadcasting and viewing of historical miniseries can become ritualised national cultural events, with “social representation and social argument [being] ... intrinsic to the identity” of these productions (Corner 367).
When watching historical miniseries or historical films audiences expect a non-academic form of history that will be both informative and entertaining. Historical miniseries and films are designed to engage and entertain their audiences by offering them emotional experiences. As Sorlin (49) points out, historical films (and by extension historical miniseries) “draw their viewers into the stream of past times’ fears, hopes and passions” and they enable their viewers “to experience a sense of life close to reality”. For Sorlin, this aspect is the moving image’s ‘advantage’. In its more conventional sense, History generally cannot provide this kind of experience. Sorlin goes on to explain that: “[e]motion and sensitivity, which are central to social relationships, cannot but briefly and inadequately be expressed on paper, whereas films, by mixing sounds and pictures ... merge the spectators inside what is happening and get them to participate in the (supposed) feelings of the screened people” (49).

Once engaged with a historical miniseries or film, individuals have the opportunity to learn a form of history. Samuel calls it public history. Sorlin (50) specifies it as the opening of “our minds to another, more vivid and human, less literary understanding of the past”; while Rosenstone (Historical Film 5-23) contends that such film – and television – “stands adjacent to written history” [italics added]. The historical miniseries and film thus provide another way of understanding the relationship of people to their past (Historical Film 5-23). Like Samuel, Sorlin sees it as important not to dwell on historical inaccuracies as a ‘distortion’ or as a ‘weakness’ in the historical material of ‘historical’ films and television shows (Sorlin 51). What is striking about such comments is that they could just as readily apply to heritage professionals working in mixed media in contemporary museums and galleries. They are close to the comments Heritage Studies theorists and analysts describe and normatively propose for heritage practice. Works of public history identified as such within History and Film and Television Studies are often works of heritage value.

The Monumentality of the Miniseries

At the time they were first broadcast, in academic work, journalistic commentaries, and television network publicity material, many of the case study historical miniseries were called ‘monumental’ productions. More recently, the monumentality of these miniseries has been attested to by critics, filmmakers, academics, and other interpretive communities. Although ‘monumental’ has become a well-used adjective to suggest both the import and nature of such productions, it is also suggestive of their purpose. They aimed to be ‘monumental’ not only in the way they were to stand out from
other television series in their ambitions, scale, and cost but \textit{they would be monumental (in a heritage sense) by remembering, staging, performing, and memorialising the national past.}

Cultural theorist Andreas Huyssen (Before) usefully centres just such a concern in his notion of ‘monumentality’. He calls it a feature of public culture that is rendered visible in Holocaust memorials in Berlin and Washington, in Vietnam War memorials in Washington and Canberra, and in other memorials in cities and towns around the world. For Huyssen (Twilight Memories) the \textit{monumentality} of these memorials is ascribed to them by individuals responding to a monument’s or memorial’s aesthetic appeal, its formal construction, and its persuasive execution. Both the creation and subsequent interpretation of monuments by their publics are cultural practices developed from within particular social environments. This is why it is important “to pay close attention to the ways in which cultural practices and products are linked to the discourses of the political and the social in specific local and national constellations” (Huyssen, After 6).

Moreover, this is a monumentality that can “do without permanence” (Huyssen, Present Pasts: Urban 46). Monumentality can still exist even though the monument or memorial may not be remembered or used. When this happens it is not necessarily a ‘failed monument’ (Hamilton, Monuments).\footnote{Hamilton (Monuments) notes that “many monuments fail” because “no-one is present to witness them or because the narratives authorising their significance have been all but forgotten from popular, collective discourses” (A. Hamilton, Monuments).} Rather it points to the dynamic and inevitably recursive character of such monuments. They can be revived. Alternatively, their heritage value and their cultural significance can emerge over time. All the historical miniseries selected as case studies still exist but they are not all remembered or screened on public television. This does not necessarily make them heritage failures. Rather it points to the fundamental impermanence and ceaseless work associated with keeping films and television programs, like other artefacts and items, alive so their heritage value and cultural significance can be allowed to emerge retrospectively. This is suggestive not of failure as much as the very necessity of revival and reinterpretation.

Interpreters of the past have to be imagine and reimagine the past for their contemporary audiences, whether that past is imagined and interpreted in films and television shows or in other works of public history (Samuel, Theatres), or in the work of historians and heritage professionals. As Lowenthal (Fabricating Heritage) points out in his study of heritage and history: “the past is ever remade”; this means that “[o]nly a heritage ever reanimated stays relevant”. Unless an item or event from ‘the past’ has cultural meaning for a contemporary general community, the item or event will have no heritage value for that community (Simon and Ashley 248). Regardless of the size of
the community, heritage is formed in the present through the interpretations and actions of people in
this community (Tunbridge and Ashworth 20).

Adopting Huyssen’s notions, a historical miniseries can function both as a monument and as a
memorial. In his conceptualisation of monumentality (Huyssen, After; and Present Pasts: Urban
46), monuments are aesthetic structures which are designed as aides-mémoire. They are texts
intended to facilitate recalling past events and people. Just like monuments, the miniseries is
dependent on its ability to speak directly to the cultural needs of a contemporary community.
Miniseries also provide memory experiences for people in their communities and, again like
monuments, they require a focus upon aesthetics, formal construction, and persuasive execution,
while also attending to the “discourses of the political and the social in specific local and national
constellations” (Huyssen, After 6).

For Huyssen, social forms of knowledge enable creators to construct monuments and memorials
that facilitate particular interpretations of the past. In turn, social forms of knowledge influence how
audiences interpret these monuments and memorials. It is inevitable that the social knowledge
audiences acquire will change over time and from one community or generation to another.
Similarly, as Burgoyne (Prosthetic Memory) argues with respect to films, films and television
miniseries that take history as their subject are “bounded by the public sphere in which they
participate”. Indeed, Rosenstone (JFK 509-510) is surely correct when he points out that any work
interpreting the past enters “a body of pre-existing knowledge and debate”. As an example:
Australian historical miniseries makers from the 1980s and early 1990s interpreted and represented
events from Australia’s past. These interpretations and representations were influenced by the
national social, cultural, and political concerns of the day. The debates over multiculturalism
circulating within Australian public culture over this period impacted upon and influenced (to
varying degrees) the production and content of the miniseries, as well as their viewing, public
uptake, and commentary. Some miniseries contributed in no small measure to multicultural
understandings.

For a heritage imagination to be effective in historical films and miniseries, it must not only
interpret the past creatively and imaginatively through stories and their on-screen actualizations, but
audiences and viewers must be captured and engaged by these stories. To achieve this engagement,
fictional interpretations of the past are permissible. The monumentality of a historical miniseries is
not so much dependent on its historicity and historical accuracy as it is upon what can be identified
here as its ‘heritage work’.
This heritage work is tied up with storytelling. Historical miniseries makers, like heritage interpreters, want to tell informative and entertaining stories interpreting aspects of the past – stories that capture the attention and imagination of viewers. This is an inherently imaginative enterprise. To align the story with its audience, the story creatively interprets and represents actual and fictional events and people while not radically or deceptively altering the outcome of events on the historical record. When, in 2005, George Miller offered an assessment of the 1980s miniseries made by his Kennedy Miller production house, he acknowledged the importance of getting the narrative right, of aligning the story with its audiences: “[n]arrative ... We seem to want it, and we’re able to invest the time, providing the story is good enough” (Miller quoted in Idato, Culture).

At the same time, these miniseries were produced at a particular moment in the development of Australian television drama. The concept of televisuality advanced by Caldwell (Television) constructively holds together aesthetic and production concerns alongside contemporary political and social contexts. It effectively connects the particular circumstance of historical miniseries production with the various characteristics Huyssen attributes to monumental artefacts.

The concept of televisuality emphasises specific television institutional environments, connecting them with aesthetic structures and purposes. These are then set beside the cultural, social, and political values of the programs. Televisuality positions and examines such programs as simultaneously an industrial product, a programming phenomenon, and a function of audience recognition. In holding together formal and generic concerns, economic and programming functions, and forms of audience recognition and response, Caldwell used the concept of televisuality to account for the influence of the production environment on the televisual style of 1980s American television shows across a range of genres. This treatment of televisuality has broader applicability to historical miniseries production in the context of 1980s and early 1990s Australia, providing insights into the influence of a production environment on the content, form, and style of a historical miniseries and on its work of interpreting aspects of the past as heritage.

Of course, interpreting past events and people through storytelling, and then presenting these stories as the heritage of a community or a nation, is not confined to historical miniseries. A number of film and television genres, such as costume dramas, war and combat productions, and Westerns also use creative storytelling to interpret and comment upon a particular historical period and place. In addition, as Freeman (Introduction 2) points out, historical film and television shows cover a wide range of productions, “everything from film adaptations of Shakespeare’s history plays to Indiana
Moreover, there are films and television shows set in the past that often deal with fictitious people who engage with historically verifiable figures and events (Introduction 2) – this is the case with the Classic Hollywood Western and its engagement with the frontier period of American history. Other ‘Westerns’ have interpreted the history of Australia, Canada, and Latin America. More recent revisionist Hollywood Westerns have reinterpreted American history for contemporary audiences while renovating the form. But the Western, despite its pedigree in Hollywood filmmaking, is no longer the significant cultural form it once was. It does not connect with audiences in the way it once did. This points to how, at particular times and locations, some genres, forms, and styles are favoured more than others when interpreting and representing the past on film and television. This is why the overwhelming success of the historical miniseries in 1980s and early 1990s Australia commands attention.

In the United States, Australia, and elsewhere, the historical miniseries over this period was one of a number of vehicles for the performance, embodiment, and dissemination of popular history – or public history in Samuel’s terms (Theatres). Historical miniseries provided Australian audiences with opportunities to experience and emotionally engage with interpretations and representations of their past through images and sound, with the added bonus that viewers were also participating in and appreciating cutting edge audiovisual productions. Art and social purpose were effectively combined in a product that interpreted the nation’s past as heritage, and that was valued for its broader cultural and public significance.

The Australian Miniseries

The creative interpretation and representation of the past in Australian television shows preceded the 1980s miniseries boom. The high-rating BBC–ABC coproduction dramas of the 1970s such as the two Rush series (1974, 1976), paved the way for 1978’s high rating landmark Australian miniseries Against the Wind. The Australian historical television series The Sullivans (a 1976–1983 series) had already successfully narrativised and represented life in Australia during World War Two (Darian-Smith War Stories). Indeed some of the personnel from The Sullivans were involved in the making of Against the Wind.

Against the Wind, made by Ian Jones and Bronwyn Binns, is generally regarded as the first Australian ‘historical’ miniseries. From their previous television work they took into this miniseries the forms and styles of long-running television drama, as well as the desire to negotiate private
memories and to create a work of public commemoration. The historical research undertaken in the
pre-production of Against the Wind can, retrospectively, be used to discern the nature of the
heritage imagination Jones and Binns brought to their work, and how this imagination relied heavily
on visual authenticity to actualize Australia’s colonial past. The authenticity of its historical world,
based on the verisimilitude of its production design and mise-en-scene, was praised by
commentators at the time of its initial broadcast and later defended as historically correct against
detractors who reflexively charged it with being inaccurate (Jones, Historical Mini-Series). Jones
also took great pleasure in pointing out that historians criticising Against the Wind had got their
facts wrong (Jones, Historical Mini-Series). Its emphasis on production design and visual
authenticity became hallmarks of the ‘realist’ qualities of subsequent Australian historical
miniseries, including the case study miniseries.

Prior to its broadcast, it was uncertain if Australian viewers would accept the genre, form, and style
of the program. Yet it proved to be an enormous critical and commercial success. Made before
filmmaking tax incentives (provided by Division 10BA) were introduced in 1981, Jones and Binns
produced the miniseries on a comparatively small budget (O'Regan, Enchantment 140). Later
Australian historical miniseries that achieved similar or greater levels of success would be made on
much higher budgets with federal government support, taxation incentives, and television industry
patronage.

Against the Wind’s social significance and popularity, when combined with its informative and
entertainment qualities, ensured that this miniseries became a reference point for the many historical
miniseries produced over the next fifteen years. As historical drama, the miniseries worked as
public history and quickly became identified as a work with heritage value and cultural
significance. Broadcast in 1978 on the commercial Seven Network, Against the Wind’s high ratings
were taken to be indicative of the success of its ‘authentic’ and engaging storytelling. The
miniseries told a story of love among ordinary people sent to colonial Australia as convicts between
1798 and 1812, and who then conquered all in this land of Irish convicts and cruel British redcoat
overseers. As a hybrid ‘history from below’ series-serial, the form and style of its televisual
interpretations and representations of the past would be replicated in miniseries from other
Australian producers over in the 1980s and 1990s (Courtis 6).

As Against the Wind’s status as a hybrid series-serial suggests, the term ‘miniseries’ is not as self-
evidentiary and unproblematic as it first appears to be. In fact, ‘the miniseries’ is hard to define. It
means many things to different writers, scholars, producers, and others with an investment in this
form of television. It covers a wide range of Australian and overseas television programming, and its definition is correspondingly complicated. Additionally, writers on various national miniseries have noted their confusion about what constitutes ‘a miniseries’.

This confusion remains today and is arguably intrinsic to the form. Burnett regards such confusion as “partly attributable to the fact that the term ‘miniseries’ has a ‘special event’ draw-power and consequently has been used extensively in pre-release network publicity” (Burnett 32). As a result, the label ‘miniseries’ has been applied to everything from a two-part, one-off special, to 26-hour sagas of “daunting and exhausting proportions” (Burnett 32). Generally, the miniseries has “a limited-run” of “two or more episodes (but usually less than [a] 13 episode block) ... whose narrative is developed over the block and resolved in [or by] the last episode” (Burnett 32). The serialised form and narrative structure of these productions, Creeber notes (Serial Television 9), are little different from that of the traditional television serial – they simply consist of a limited number of episodes that lead progressively towards a conclusion. Functionally, the form and style of a miniseries are designed to attract and keep an audience. Miniseries need to be both visually and dramatically arresting to encourage audiences to watch episodes over a number of nights (Goodall, 139).

From the late 1970s in the United States, miniseries creators, television programmers, and audiences came to regard the miniseries as ‘special event’ television (Creeber, Serial Television 9). This practice and audience orientation was replicated by Australian television networks and viewers. As special events, miniseries took on the mantle of cultural events, with their cultural event status deliberately foregrounded by the publicity departments of television networks. It follows from this, however, that a miniseries would lose its ‘special event’ status if it was unable to rise above the flow of television programs being screened around the same time. In addition, a miniseries ceased to be a ‘special event’ after its first broadcast (Visontay, The Year) since a miniseries is rarely a special event when repeated. As Burnett (36) observes, re-runs are generally left until several years after the first screening for a degree of turn-over of audience”.

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2 The 10BA-funded production boom did result in an overproduction of Australian miniseries. By 1986 there was an average of one miniseries a week screening on Australian television: 15 new Australian productions and well over 30 miniseries from overseas (Visontay, The Year).

3 Burnett (35) identifies a problem when scheduling miniseries: unlike the series, the serialised episodes of the miniseries cannot be split for programming as re-runs. According to Burnett perhaps the most dramatic flaw with the format is that “the first episode has to do well on the night or the network is left holding a multiple-evening disaster.”
Generally, miniseries are high budget and high quality productions. Over the 1980s and early 1990s Australian miniseries had the highest standards of production of any Australian television drama shows made at that time. The availability of quality foreign productions jostling for position on Australian television schedules also placed enormous pressure on local Australian miniseries producers to match the overseas standard on a fraction of the budget (Burnett). Despite the ratings success of some Australian miniseries, Australia’s commercial television networks (Seven, Nine, and Ten) remained nervous about investing in a miniseries as it was the most expensive form of television (Craven 89). Consequently they looked for others to pay for its development.

In the 1980s a combination of circumstances led to Australian feature filmmakers turning to the miniseries, and to Australian television becoming the single largest market for miniseries producers. With no Australian television network able to totally underwrite such expensive ‘special event’ productions (Murphy, *Editorial* 3), federal government patronage (through the Division 10BA tax concession introduced in 1981)⁴ proved crucial to the production and uptake of Australian miniseries. The unprecedented boom in Australian television drama production in the first part of the 1980s was largely financed by taxation concessions. Consequently, once the financial benefits and incentives offered under 10BA were progressively reduced from the late 1980s to the mid-1990s, commercial television networks gradually lost their interest in miniseries. By the 1990s television networks were also competing with each other for other forms of television programming. As a result, Australian miniseries production fell sharply. For this reason, the case study miniseries investigated in this thesis cover the most prolific period of Australian miniseries production from 1984 to 1995.

This era of ‘quality’ miniseries production in Australia emphasised both production values and the value of their content (their aesthetic standing and their historical, social, and cultural value). This dual orientation was, in large part, due to the legacy of 1970s British-Australian drama co-productions such as the high-rating BBC–ABC co-production of *Rush* (1974, 1976), the success of the Australian miniseries *Against the Wind*, and the international influence of the American, British, and European produced miniseries Australian audiences had access to (Burnett 33).

Australian television programmers were able choose overseas, particularly American and British, product already successful in its home territory. Like their overseas counterparts, significant

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⁴ In 1981 tax incentive scheme commonly known as 10BA (Division 10BA of the Income Tax Assessment Act) meant investors in 10BA-certified projects acquired an interest in the copyright of new, qualifying Australian programs and could claim a tax concession of 100 per cent in the year the investment was made. This had been 150 percent when first introduced in June 1981 but was gradually reduced.
Australian miniseries were also more ambitious in their content and form than had been the case with other forms of television. Such miniseries usually had “longer shoot times, often with actors who [were] unwilling to do long form [television] series and where scripts ha[d] been years in development not weeks” (Levy). When Against the Wind achieved high ratings, this was taken by the television industry and filmmakers to indicate historical miniseries could be entertaining as well as being informative. As a result, future Australian television packagers would mostly concentrate on ‘quality’ historical miniseries, although there were occasional variants such as an Australian Western action-adventure thriller Silent Reach (1983) and the revenge melodrama Return to Eden (1983).

By the mid-1980s, in almost all cases in Australia, ‘quality’ television drama was found mainly in the miniseries (Goodall 139). The demand for ‘quality’ television drama by the television networks helped to counter the loss of audience interest in Australian feature films (Australian Film Commission, Film Financing 19). Unlike much locally-produced television drama (and despite notable exceptions in this period such as the serials Prisoner 1979–1986, and Flying Doctors 1986–1991), some Australian miniseries exported well (Moran, Images 137). It was a bonus that as well as fulfilling an Australian cultural mandate, these miniseries proved to be commercially viable (137).

Even though miniseries were created within specific national and industrial contexts, stylistic innovation in miniseries production was an international norm. Over the 1980s and into the early 1990s, the miniseries form sanctioned a depth of narrative- and character-based study not possible in other forms on television at that time (Thompson). Regardless of national background, the form of the miniseries offered filmmakers the potential for stylistic and aesthetic experimentation. Writing in The New York Times in 1985, Vincent Canby found miniseries “had a shape (beginning-middle-end), and they had the luxury in which to explore and develop a sense of time, place, character, and narrative in a manner that has not before been available in the theatre or films” (Canby, Heimat). Extending this argument, Creeber (Mini-Series 37) claims the miniseries form, as a finite serial (whether based on the literary adaptation or the original screenplay), seemed “to provide an important space for more complex issues and stylistic innovation than either the series or continuous serial can provide alone”. Creeber (Taking) argues that the length of the miniseries

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5 Ratings are a guide to how many people are watching a program, and not to how ‘popular’ a program is, in the sense of how much it is liked. Niven (434) suggests (in relation to historical films) high viewing statistics may indicate something about a historical film's commercial success, but was it “successful because [its] view of the past harmonized with that of the audience, or for quite another reason?” Nevertheless, ratings do tend to indicate the viewing preferences of the audience (see Windschuttle 69).

6 Some lengthy British ‘finite’ series included Brideshead Revisited, The Barchester Chronicles, and I, Claudius. Lengthy American miniseries included The Winds of War (seven segments, 18 hours), Roots (eight segments, 12 hours), Roots – The Second
form made it an ideal vehicle through which politics and history could be understood not as mere ‘fact’ or ‘polemic’, but as memory and experience” (453):

The twin characteristics of ‘intimacy’ and ‘continuity’ which it shares with the soap opera, means that the television serial or miniseries can transform history so that it gradually becomes identifiable, empathetic and discursive to a mass audience. ... The television drama serial inherently celebrates the ‘seriousness’ of our personal lives and in doing so continues to have a unique role to play in the contemporary portrayal and understanding of history and personal experience. (453)

Caldwell (Televisuality 163) asserts that by the 1990s, event-status programming in the United States, such as the ‘special event’ miniseries, tended to be preoccupied with “the epic possibilities of large-scale narrative”. This was also the case in Australia.

Producers, television programmers, viewers, media critics, and academics made judgements about the ‘quality’ of a miniseries as it was broadcast. Typically, the broadcast was followed by “a cascade of reviews, editorial commentary, academic criticism, rejoinders, defences, [and] conference presentations” (Burgoyne). In addition, many Australian miniseries were broadcast alongside Hollywood-style spinoffs such as novelizations and television programs made about the making of the miniseries itself (Goodall 139).

In this production environment and with a receptive public, historical miniseries on television became as rich in creative possibilities as the cinematic historical film. Developments in the miniseries form, and associated innovations in its narrative, televisual style, and genre-based attributes evolved over the 1980s and into the 1990s. Some historical miniseries dramatized large and complex ‘historical’ narratives (Creeber, Taking 444), indicating the form of the miniseries to be extremely capable of imaginative and creative interpretations and representations of the past.

**Melodrama and Visual Style**

The narratives in historical miniseries are character-driven, with a predisposition towards melodrama. This melodramatic style of televisual storytelling was central to the success of a miniseries in Australia and elsewhere (Thorburn, Television Melodrama 587, 603-605). As Edgerton (2) notes, the “fashioning [of] most fictional and non-fictional historical portrayals” adopt...
styles premised on “personal dramas or melodramas played out between a manageable number of protagonists and antagonists”.

As a miniseries unfolds over a number of nights characters develop a history. Audiences are able to recognise characters and know them by their first names, furthering insights into their personalities. This encourages viewers to develop a personal attachment to and emotional engagement with characters, and with their character-driven narrative arcs. Over the duration of a miniseries, characters visually change as they grow older, as they survive wounds and injuries, and so on.

Emotional engagement through individual characters in historical storytelling had been recognised by Georg Lukács to be a feature of the historical novel (Lukács), and remains a key component of historical television and film productions. Such is the case, for instance, with the Australian miniseries Against the Wind (1978). Much of the intangible emotional elements attributed to this miniseries resulted from its melodramatic storyline of love against the odds set in early colonial Australia. Developing an emotional attachment with the key characters encouraged viewers to engage with the miniseries over a number of episodes.

The melodramatic qualities of miniseries align them with soap opera and its serialised narrative and complex narrative structures. Serialisation in television drama generally tends towards narrative complexity (Creeber, Serial Television 7). The “sheer breadth” of the television miniseries allows “room for multi-narrative strands and subplot digression”, while being able to produce a clearly defined a beginning, middle, and end – a structure favoured by audiences (Creeber, Serial Television 19).

From the late 1970s on, miniseries with complex narrative structures were popular internationally. Two such narratively complex American miniseries were Roots (1977) and Holocaust (1978). They remained the highest rating miniseries watched by Australians up until at least the late 1990s (Wright). This supports the general observation that “a mass audience can engage with and enjoy quite challenging and intricate storytelling” (Mittell, Narrative 38).

Narrative complexity in a miniseries is supported by the visual authenticity – the ‘visuality’ – of the text (Caldwell, Televisuality 5). The importance of the historical world for a miniseries is evident in attention paid to production design, to the recreation of places and costumes, and to the verisimilitude of events actualized on-screen. In Against the Wind, the Castle Hill Rebellion by convicts in 1804 and the successful armed takeover of government as a result of the 1808 Rum Rebellion, were both recreated. In the 1980s, this kind of televisuality would contribute to the
miniseries form itself being recognised as “a quintessential televisual form” (Caldwell, *Televisuality* 5). In ways that recall Huyssen’s discussion of contemporary monuments and memorials, Caldwell sees the emphasis on the *visuality* of television texts as extending and transforming the nature of televisual aesthetics while possessing a particular sociocultural and political charge.

Regardless of national context, over the 1980s producers were developing a new aesthetic zone or televisual style with the historical miniseries. For many observers, it appeared commercial television had finally developed its own art form (Courtis 6). Australian producers watching overseas developments came to appreciate the potential of the miniseries form, and began to think about the working out of these innovations in the Australian context. During the eighties, it seemed the miniseries form itself encouraged experimentation. Like American miniseries producers, Australian miniseries creators during this decade experimented continuously with form and style.

The aesthetic value of a miniseries has often been expressed in terms of its ‘cinematic’ style. Evaluating the aesthetic value of such a production is one of the measures able to be applied when determining if a television program was a ‘monumental’ artefact with heritage value and cultural significance. Caldwell (*Televisuality* 18) points out that to be ‘cinematic’ meant more than the television show in question being shot on film. There was nothing new in this because television dramas had been shot on film since the early 1950s in the United States. Instead, other cinematic values were brought to television screens: “spectacle, high-production values, and feature-style cinematography” (Caldwell, *Televisuality* 5). This represented a radical stylistic change for television production. American audiences came to associate a cinematic style with ‘quality’ television (Caldwell, *Televisuality* 18). When the two American blockbuster miniseries *Roots* (1977) and *Holocaust* (1978) achieved international success, it seemed the miniseries form had indeed come of age. Merging cinematic and documentary styles, these miniseries were identified by the *New York Times* reviewer Vincent Canby as being ‘maxi-movies’ (Canby *Heimat*).

However, there were differences between Australian and American deployments of a cinematic style in a miniseries. Australian historical miniseries, unable to match Hollywood budgets, often confined cinematic style to important sequences rather than extending it over a larger number of individual scenes. Some Australian miniseries such as *Vietnam* (1987) achieved critical approval for the cinematic nature of their key scenes and sequences. The scale, production values, and cinematography of sequences set in Vietnam depicting the soldiers at their base and on patrol in Vietnamese villages were particularly praised and seemed to enhance the prestige and aesthetic
value of television itself, allowing “a mundane and demotic mass form” to be raised above the ordinary and the mundane (O’Regan, *Australian National Cinema* 126).

In addition, the Australian style of cinematic filmmaking has itself been described by Martin as more of a ‘televisual cinema’ (*Ghosts* 15) in that it is geared to “a different intensity, a different mesh of style, content and ‘social text’ than either a pumped-up Hollywood spectacle or a lush, visionary, European art film” (Martin, *Ghosts* 15). Australian filmmaking brought its televisual-cinema style to television through the miniseries. This provides a point of contrast with the situation Caldwell describes in the United States in that, generally, a different intensity of televisual aesthetics operated in Australian miniseries when compared to high-cost 1980s Hollywood miniseries productions.

Nevertheless, even with the financing and production problems encountered wherever a miniseries was made, miniseries producers thought this to be a worthwhile creative endeavour. According to Stan Margulies, a producer of the American miniseries *Roots* (1977) and *Roots: The Next Generation* (1979), the process of creating a miniseries was far more satisfying than a conventional television production:

> The continuing problem of television ... is that you do not have the shooting time or the budget of a major feature. Even with a miniseries you must shoot it much more quickly than you would like. You have to cut corners in a million ways. But at least you are not compromising the story. You are telling a total story, and that is a very rewarding process. (Margulies quoted in Farber)

As the miniseries form became established in the United States, Australia, and elsewhere over the 1980s, television networks appeared to endorse the foundations upon which a heritage imagination could be developed when the networks acknowledged that “deep research, historical authenticity, powerful screenplays, appropriate locations, and inspired ensemble acting” could combine with visual style in a miniseries to attract and engage the mass audiences desired by the television networks (Courtis 6).

**Realism and Naturalism**

The ratings success in the United States and Australia of *Roots* in 1977 followed by the success of *Holocaust* in 1978 set new benchmarks for historical miniseries as being productions adopting particular modes and styles of realism and naturalism. However, as Rosenstone (*JFK*, 509) points
out in relation to historical films, despite Hollywood’s desire for ‘realism’, historical films (and therefore historical miniseries) are not windows onto the past but rather a construction of a past: “like a history book, a film handles evidence from that past within a certain framework of possibilities and a tradition of practice”. Australia has its own tradition of practice in realist filmmaking, albeit a tradition influenced by the filmmaking traditions of other countries notably Britain and the United States.

While realism is an aesthetic construct, it is also subject to changing conventions of ‘the real’. Since there is no single ‘realism’ it is an elusive concept capable of a variety of inflections in film and television productions (Fiske 20). Different cultures and audiences, in different places and at different times, produce and accept different realisms (Branston and Stafford 360-363, 374). *Roots* and *Holocaust* adopted a realism and realist style based on a Hollywood realist and continuity style of filmmaking adapted for television in the late 1970s. The Hollywood realist and continuity style is premised on the process of filmmaking being transparent and invisible to an audience. This style means audiences of historical films and television shows, and other screen productions with historical settings, were more likely to ‘suspend disbelief’ and enter into an internally consistent historical world actualized on-screen

That Australian filmmaking (and television production) is more televisual than cinematic in its orientations can be discerned in the realist style of Australian miniseries over the 1980s and into the 1990s. Martin has identified some of the characteristics of Australian feature film productions at this time as resulting from a general acceptance by film producers that Australian scriptwriters should be encouraged to “craftily and precisely cultivate what they want[ed] to say” and not what “they might want to see and hear” (Martin, *Nurturing* 97). This greater importance placed on dialogue rather than on obtrusive visual style in Australian films is also evident in Australian miniseries. When combined with melodrama, such miniseries production encouraged an emotional realism where the scriptwriter and the actor dominated (O’Regan, *Australian National Cinema* 206). However, while emphasising dialogue as a feature of the melodramatic style of a miniseries from the 1980s and 1990s, this style was supported by the continuity style of filmmaking.

Adapting the Hollywood realist and continuity style, most Australian historical miniseries tended not to draw audience attention to their filmmaking techniques. This goes some way to explain why Australian audiences responded to *Bordertown* in the negative way they did when this miniseries deliberately drew attention to such techniques. Two different styles of realism are presented in Chapter Seven – social realism and magical realism. The similarities and differences between these
styles of realism are outlined in more detail in that chapter where two miniseries – the social realist *Leaving of Liverpool* and the magical realist *Bordertown* – are compared. Both miniseries interpret and represent dissimilar parts of the post-World War Two European migrant experience. It is opportune here to note that the social realist style of *Leaving*, a 1992 British-Australian co-production, offered realist-naturalist interpretations of an often harrowing period when British child migrants were sent to Australia. Its non-obtrusive but still highly suggestive visual style supports naturalistic acting styles that often result in an emotional viewing experience for audiences. By contrast, *Bordertown*, released in 1995 and based on Australia’s assisted migration scheme for post-War Europeans, was an ‘experimental’ interpretation of the Displaced Persons phenomenon. Except for a relatively small number of appreciative commentators and critics, Australians avoided watching *Bordertown* and the program was lambasted by vocal critics that included Displaced Persons, members of ethnic communities, and political leaders. This response suggests that Australian viewers did not appreciate a magic realist style where fantasy and ‘magic’ intrude on reality; this style was seen to diminish and disrespect the migrant experience. Attending to the ways different individuals experience artefacts that ‘imagine the past’ is as important as the intentions, priorities, and purposes of its creators.

An emphasis on the authenticity of the visual in production design moved Australian historical miniseries makers towards naturalism. Verisimilitude in clothing, settings, and in the appearance of characters depended on the veracity of the image, where naturalism as a production style becomes a particular instance of realism (Fiske 34). Naturalism here becomes an extension of realism: it is a representation of something as realistically and as precisely as possible. It is worth noting that there are significant continuities with heritage practice in that it also goes about actualizing a past through the authenticity of, for example, the restorations of heritage-listed buildings which need to be interpreted in the present to be as close as possible to their original condition.

Since realist and naturalist traditions and practices are time and place specific, there are particular national inflections of realism in 1980s Australian films and television programs. Turner (*Mixing* 69), for example, in commenting on Australian historical miniseries in the late 1980s, detected a realism in Australian productions where “fact has been interrogated, reshaped” and where fictions have been given “the invocation of history”. Realism in these miniseries was capable of “challeng[ing] the status of fact, and of history, while proposing competing, even fictional definitions of the real”. Here the ‘real’ is both a visualisation and actualization of the past: how historical worlds (including events and people) are imaginatively and ‘realistically’ created
on-screen. The argument advanced in this thesis is that a heritage imagination is the creative impulse behind such visualisations and actualizations in a historical miniseries or film.

Similarly, this thesis presents the case that a feature of the heritage imagination in the case study miniseries – except for *Bordertown* – is that they creatively interpret and represent the past in a realist and naturalist style expected and understood by Australian audiences in the 1980s and early 1990s. Different styles of screen-based visual and audio representations of the past appear to particular audiences, at a specific place and time, to be more realistic and naturalistic – and therefore more appropriate – than other styles. The ratings and critical success of key Australian historical miniseries, such as *Anzacs*, *Vietnam*, and later, *The Leaving of Liverpool*, indicate the extent to which Australian audiences and critics recognised and preferred the realist and naturalist stylistic qualities adopted by the makers of these miniseries.

The realism and naturalism evident in the *Anzacs* miniseries supported its reinterpretations of the Anzac legend where the Anzac story is extended to fighting on the Western Front, with a German-Australian Anzac playing a significant role. *Bodyline* reinterpreted and recreated the controversial bodyline cricket test between Australia and Britain in often verisimilitudinal detail. This level of detail is also evident in *The Dunera Boys* with its depiction of war-time Jewish refugees transported to Australia. A cinematic style of realism and naturalism is evident in representations of combat in the *Vietnam* miniseries, while the more televisual realist-naturalist representations of ethnicity are reserved for the post-Vietnam War migration of Vietnamese refugees to Australia. More controversially, *The Cowra Breakout* presented its interned Japanese prisoners-of-war as victims of Australian ignorance and incompetence. The realist and naturalist style of this miniseries contributed to the series being regarded by many Australian ex-servicemen as a provocation and by others as an overdue recognition of this aspect of the war and the need for greater Japanese-Australian understanding.

Realism and naturalism, working with dramatic and melodramatic styles of storytelling, certainly engaged and entertained Australian audiences, while also transmitting information and knowledge about the past. The realist and naturalist styles of filmmaking associated by audiences and critics with documentaries and with dramatic productions come together in the docudrama. As O’Regan points out, for most Australian audiences naturalism has a close relationship with the documentary (*Australian National Cinema* 204). The docudramatic qualities of many of miniseries were foregrounded in critical and academic reviews.
Many positive critical evaluations of the Kennedy Miller miniseries *Bodyline* (1984), *The Cowra Breakout* (1984), and *Vietnam* (1987) highlighted their authentic interpretations and representations of the past. These estimations are likely the result of their utilisation of a docudramatic style that foregrounds particular filmmaking approaches to realism and naturalism. Such filmmaking styles, approaches, and techniques contribute to the construction of the historical worlds in each miniseries. In Turner’s (*Mixing 72*) estimation, the Kennedy Miller production house “consistently experimented with documentary and fictional conventions” in both storytelling and production design by

taking a deliberating mythologizing perspective on the histories it has fictionalised for television, while still making extensive use of historical research, documentary footage and look-alike actors playing famous personages. The effect can be complex, and it is unwise to assume that their retelling of Australian stories in *The Dismissal, Bodyline* (Carl Schultz, George Ogilvie, Lex Marinos, Denny Lawrence, 1984), *Vietnam* (John Duigan, Chris Noonan, 1987), *Fragments of War* and others simply recycles conventional views of those stories. (Turner, *Mixing 72*)

There are various performance styles professional actors can adopt. Australian commentators have noted that naturalism dominates not only Australian feature film and television drama production styles, but also performance styles – with “minor streams of … other performance styles” (O’Regan, 1996, *Australian National Cinema 202*). The authenticity and integrity of actor performances in the Kennedy Miller miniseries *The Dismissal* (1983) was praised by Australian critics and academics such as Turner (*Mixing 72*) on the basis that realist and naturalist performance styles as much as the production design of the miniseries contributed to effective storytelling.

Key miniseries over the 1980s and early 1990s acquired a vanguard status. These miniseries were lauded as much for their cultural significance as for their aesthetic qualities (O'Regan, *Enchantment* 123). One such production acclaimed for its realism and naturalism was *Women of the Sun* (1982). SBS-Tv, open to purchasing new programs from independent producers, supported this important miniseries on Aboriginal Australia, presented in some episodes in Aboriginal languages (O'Regan, *Enchantment* 123). This major fictional epic adopted a style of realism and naturalism that embraced Aboriginal approaches to acting, and accommodated Indigenous interpretations of their heritage (Barta, *History*). By the 1980s, Aboriginal experiences in colonial and post-colonial Australia had become dissonant heritage for many Australians. In national contexts, heritage dissonance often results when the histories and memories of a particular group or community are not remembered or are modified to reduce anxiety over some aspects of a nation’s history (Tunbridge & Ashworth, 1996). The histories and memories of many Aboriginal communities were
forgotten, modified, or reworked in some way to alleviate anxieties Australians might experience when confronted with the less noble aspects of Aboriginal–non-Aboriginal encounters since 1788. Available historical evidence about such encounters was, by the late 1980s, interpreted by many Australians from diverse cultural backgrounds as dissonant heritage.

Aboriginal agency and viewpoints were central to the heritage imagined in *Women of the Sun*. With its focus on Aboriginal women in traditional, colonial, and modern Australian society, the miniseries interpreted these experiences in ways that made them an important indicator of the innovative cultural and socially important work underway on Australian television in the early 1980s, and in Australian politics and culture more generally. According to Moran (*Emergence* 113), this was a miniseries with prestige ‘seriousness’ secured both by its subject (Aboriginal women) and by those working on it: several directors on the production were associated with their work in Australian feature films.7

The ‘Aboriginal’ performances in *Women of the Sun*, as well as the ‘multicultural’ performances in the case study historical miniseries, were created during the multiculturalist moment in Australia over the 1980s and into the 1990s. A discursive space was fashioned in this era of official multiculturalism that increased the visibility on television and in films of the nation’s different cultural and ethnic communities and their heritages. Paradoxically, when official policies of multiculturalism promote all ‘official’ cultures as being equal, this presents challenges not only for miniseries producers but also for their heritage sector counterparts when deciding whose stories (and pasts) to include and exclude in their films and exhibitions.8

**Revising and Rewriting the Past**

Over the 1980s, the multicultural nature of the nation’s heritage supplemented the more longstanding themes and characterisations of ‘monumental history’, such as those associated with bushrangers, convicts, and the Anzacs. Australians over this decade were contending with politicised issues such as official multiculturalism, the Australian Bicentennial, the Republican Movement, and a renewed Australian engagement with Asia. In addition, Australian miniseries were heirs to the “enormous weight of cultural nationalism” that had been carried by Australian

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7 O'Regan (*Film*) also points out that *Women of the Sun* marked the first of many television collaborations of writers and directors drawn from feature film and television at a time when most worked in either film or television but not both. There was no other Australian miniseries after *Women of the Sun* that would use Aboriginal themes and actors to the extent that *Women* did.

8 For a discussion of the heritage problem of deciding amongst (equal) competing options see Tunbridge and Ashworth (21).
films in earlier decades (Jacka, *The Films* 71-72). In her study of Australian miniseries, Jacka (*The Industry*) points out the miniseries form “inherited the mantle of respectability and the task of projecting national identity that used to be the task of the [Australian] feature film”. In the period of official multiculturalism, historical miniseries foregrounded Australia’s cultural and heritage diversity as intrinsic to the nation’s identity (Ang, *Intertwining Histories*).

In this complex social, political, and cultural environment, making a miniseries interpreting events from the nation’s past tested the imaginative and creative skills, and the filmmaking capacities, of miniseries producers. Interpreting Australia’s past, as Ang (*Intertwining Histories*) observes, requires “critical and creative engagement with the myriad intertwining histories that have made up the nation”. When interpreting aspects of the past, what miniseries creators, heritage practitioners, and professional and popular historians all encounter is “the impossibility of ever escaping [their] own time and culture as [they] attempt to understand other times and other cultures” (Stanton 34). Interpretations of the past as history or as heritage are contestable. According to Smith (*Uses* 23), the first version of Australia’s Burra Charter on the management of heritage-listed places (written in 1979) was developed for an Australian context that, by the late 1970s, included public debates about multiculturalism and Indigenous heritage.9

Unlike professional historians, makers of historical films and television shows are like heritage professionals in accepting that an imaginative and creative process employed to interpret the past requires aspects of that past to be invented. Invention is also necessary to increase the effectiveness of communicating interpretations to viewing and visiting publics. As a consequence ‘factual error’ will inevitably creep in for the sake of the larger picture and to facilitate communication. But this does not mean that such ‘errors’ are part of a wider attempt at deception. Neither miniseries creators nor heritage professionals deliberately set out to deceive their audiences and visitors. While these inaccuracies may be intentional, as long as factual errors are not an attempt to deliberately deceive the public (Howard), and as long as the general ‘truth’ of an event remains intact, then such errors are permissible. In any case, when a miniseries was broadcast, its publicity and promotion activities, along with media interviews and related media events, usually indicated where omissions and changes were made to the historical record, or where creative liberties were taken with characters based on real people. This is also the case for heritage sector exhibitions.

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9 Written in 1979 specifically for the Australian context, the Australian *Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance* (known as the Burra Charter) was intended to manage heritage. Adopted at a meeting of Australia ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites) at the historic mining town of Burra, South Australia, it was given the short title of *The Burra Charter*. The Burra Charter, though rewritten in 1999, still has a basic focus on items, objects, and places (on ‘fabric’) and their innate value (Waterton, Smith, and Campbell).
It is within this context that I propose two cultural interpretive frameworks for thinking about how miniseries creators and their audiences framed historical miniseries. I have called these \textit{renouvellement} and \textit{rapprochement} tendencies in the exercise of a heritage imagination. \textit{Renouvellement} approaches renovate the past and its landmarks that feature prominently in ‘monumental history’ (such as the Anzac legend, convict heritage, the bush myth), renewing and reinterpreting these familiar monuments for contemporary audiences. Such approaches are consensus aiming and consensus creating, affirming such events and their associated cultural heritage value as belonging to all Australians regardless of their cultural and ethnic backgrounds.

When Australian miniseries creators promoted consensus by emphasising the nation’s heritage as being based on an incremental process of cultural renewal, they were adopting a \textit{renouvellement} approach as central to their cultural interpretive framework. For example, the history of Australians of British ancestry was imagined as contributing to the common heritage of all Australians, a heritage created and updated by producers in \textit{Anzacs} and \textit{Bodyline} to more align itself with the multiculturalist Australian experience of the 1980s. While acknowledging their British ancestry, \textit{renouvellement} in these miniseries suggests that the descendants of British immigrants were no longer British; they were culturally Australian. They, along with non-British European migrants and their descendants, were creating a unique and evolving Australian cultural identity. A production like \textit{Anzacs} manages the past by interpreting the Anzac legend in such a way that it is extended to include non-Angloceltic Anzacs. The evolution of a national cultural identity premised on interpreting aspects of Australian history from \textit{renouvellement} perspectives is the focus of Chapter Five’s discussion of \textit{Anzacs}, \textit{Bodyline}, and \textit{The Dunera Boys}.

By contrast a \textit{rapprochement} strategy interprets and seeks to manage specific past events and stories which are in some senses dissonant – events and stories distinct from and even specialised to a group within the broader Australian polity. These might be the indigenous-settler encounters as told by the indigenous side in \textit{Women of the Sun}. They might be multicultural and cross-cultural encounters. These are outsider narratives, which are then interpreted as being part of Australia’s history and image of itself. \textit{Rapprochement}, therefore, is employed to manage \textit{dissonant} heritage in historical miniseries. Dissonant heritage has a political context since it is inevitable interpretations of the past will be contested and challenged, underscoring such interpretations to be politically and ideologically contentious.

The Australian Burra Charter which defines the basic principles and procedures to be followed in the conservation of Australian heritage places has been challenged by some Heritage Studies
scholars for ignoring dissonance. While acknowledging that the Burra Charter was rewritten in 1999 in an attempt “to deal with community issues”, Laurajane Smith (Uses) argues that it “explicitly ignores the dissonant nature of heritage” (106), and the contested cultural values of different groups. In a similar fashion, Australian historical miniseries were often criticised for their mainstream values and attentions, and for their failure to rigorously engage with contested values and dissonant heritage. But there were some Australian historical miniseries that did engage with dissonant heritage, attempting to manage this dissonance through rapprochement.

Recognition of dissonant heritage is useful not only because it reveals how a miniseries manifests a heritage imagination, but also because it opens up ways in which publics respond to miniseries and to other cultural artefacts. Writing on dissonant heritage, Ashworth and Tunbridge (1996) note that contemporary conditions result in subjective decisions about what ‘facts’ from the past will selected and then interpreted. This means that while some cultural items or events are chosen to cover a range of pasts, other “pasts are not selected” and consequently these histories and memories will not be represented (Tunbridge and Ashworth 30). Heritage dissonance may result when the histories and memories of a group are not be remembered, or when they are modified in some way perhaps to reduce apprehension over some aspect of the group’s history. Dissonance, therefore, arises in and is a feature of the interpretation process (Tunbridge & Ashworth). Dissonance is created when some histories and memories are remembered, while others are overlooked – perhaps quite deliberately – in order to forget or to alter memories as part of a rapprochement strategy.

A heritage imagination motivates the deliberate selection and interpretation of events and ‘historical’ items, objects, places, and people associated with these events. As cultural interpretive frameworks, renouvellement and rapprochement approaches provide ways of framing and describing the process whereby these events and associated items are interpreted – or ‘packaged’ (Tunbridge and Ashworth) – in heritage stories that re-imagine facets of the past. When miniseries creators chose certain aspects of Australia’s multicultural history for inclusion and modification, the legacy of the past was being re-imagined and ‘repackaged’. For miniseries creators and heritage professional alike, this involves not only marginal enhancements “but the selection, assembly and integration of the chosen resources in an appropriate mix with the aim of deliberately creating a particular product” (Tunbridge and Ashworth 8).

The case study historical miniseries in Part B interpret Australia’s ethnic and cultural diversity through these renouvellement and rapprochement strategies or approaches. In addition, renouvellement and rapprochement influence the narrative and televisual form and style of a
miniseries. By the early 1990s, as Chapter Seven points out, the Australian-British coproduction of *The Leaving of Liverpool* (1992) and the Australian miniseries *Bordertown* (1995) extend *renouvellement* and *rapprochement* in new directions.

A good example of creating miniseries from within these two broad approaches is provided by the Kennedy Miller production house. Kennedy Miller purposefully interpreted and represented aspects of Australia’s past, including its dissonant heritage, as the shared inheritance of all Australians and a feature of a shared and universal humanity. Their reprise of the infamous bodyline cricket series in *Bodyline* and the events leading up to the dismissal of the Whitlam Labor government in 1975 in *The Dismissal* entailed *renouvellement* perspectives in that they took familiar and iconic events and narrativised them for a new audience. By contrast, the two Kennedy Miller miniseries examined in Chapter Six – *The Cowra Breakout* and *Vietnam* – adopted *rapprochement* strategies which brought together factual and fictional events to reconcile problematic past interactions between European Australians and Asians. In *Cowra Breakout* (broadcast in 1984) factual and fictional events are interpreted to support an argument that Japanese prisoners were massacred by their Australian guards as a result of “Australian incomprehension and bastardry” (O’Regan, *Australian National Cinema* 323). While in the 1987 *Vietnam* miniseries a *rapprochement* strategy is used to seamlessly move from cross-cultural encounters between Australians and Vietnamese in Vietnam itself at a time of war, to multicultural unions between Australians and Vietnamese in Australia. By attempting to reconcile audiences with some of the darker aspects of their nation’s history these *rapprochement* strategies confronted Australian viewers with often challenging interpretations and representations of their past, representations that without careful handling had the potential to alienate a mass audience.

**Thesis Approach, Scope, and Organisation**

This thesis takes an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approach, bringing together concepts and ideas principally from Film and Television Studies and Heritage Studies but also from Cultural Studies and Historical Studies. Given this interdisciplinary range I have not included a separate Literature Review. Instead, comparisons with and discussion of work from Film and Television Studies and other disciplines are dispersed throughout the four chapters making up Part A. The relevant literature associated with each chapter’s themes and topics are covered in that chapter to better interrogate the connections among disciplinary fields.
The nature of interdisciplinary research presents challenges. As Windebank (6) notes, “when working within an established discipline, a researcher can position his/her work within the clearly structured and codified debates concerning method and theory which disciplines have evolved over the years. Interdisciplinary researchers do not have such a structured framework within which to operate”. While this lack of structure favours interdisciplinary studies adopting blended research and investigative methodologies, it also adds to the complexity and difficulty confronting the interdisciplinary researcher (Windebank 6).

The scope of this present study was dependent on accessing relevant creative work. Assessments of the heritage value and cultural significance of selected 1980s and early 1990s Australian historical miniseries is possible because many miniseries productions from this period have remained publicly available. The beginnings of a public archive developed in the 1980s when miniseries were available in libraries, and on self-recorded and then on pre-recorded videocassette tapes. During this period, historical miniseries were also commercially available on videocassettes (able to be bought, sold, and rented). All the miniseries examined as case studies are now available on DVD, with some archived in libraries. In addition, as Vanhaesebrouck observes, with any group or collection of cultural items studied some time after they were made, the items are embedded in two chronological layers. The first consists of the time in which the artefact was “seen, told, read [or] written [about], [and] used;” while the second consists of the time in which it “is read [about], used, [and] studied” (Vanhaesebrouck). Both chronological layers are considered in this thesis.

The thesis is organised in two parts. Part A introduces and discusses key concepts and ideas while Part B applies these concepts to particular miniseries.

**Part A**

*Chapter 1: Heritage Creation and Storytelling* has outlined the approach and scope of the thesis, and introduced a number of concepts that will then be applied. This chapter has introduced the notion that there is a discernible heritage imagination evident in each historical miniseries, and that the makers of these miniseries interpreted aspects of the past as heritage. Huyssen’s formulation of *monumentality* (*Monumental Seduction*; and *Present Pasts: Urban*) was introduced to add further depth to assessments of the heritage value and cultural significance of the case study historical miniseries; while Caldwell’s concept of *televisuality* (*Televisuality*) provided a specifically televisual context in which these miniseries can be evaluated. The tendency of these miniseries to favour melodrama, realism, and naturalistic filmmaking was also interrogated as contributing to the heritage imagination underscoring the creative work in each production. Finally, some
consideration was given to the broad cultural interpretive frameworks which alternatively stress *renouvellement* and *rapprochement* strategies of heritage interpretation in the miniseries.

*Chapter 2: Heritage Studies and Historical Miniseries* begins by exploring the most sustained engagement to date by Film and Television Studies scholars with the concept of heritage, and with films and television programs as heritage artefacts – all coming together in the British ‘heritage film’ debate. This debate initially saw these scholars critique the ‘heritage film’ for its heritage aspects but later interventions by both heritage practitioners and theorists and other film and television scholars re-evaluated the heritage value of so-called ‘heritage films’ in ways that acknowledged both the legitimacy of heritage itself as a practice, and the value of adopting critical and evaluative criteria developed within Heritage Studies. The chapter then moves to an examination of the differences between interpreting the past as history or as heritage, noting how these differences turn on the interpretive approach or methodology adopted to interpret past events and how past events and people are represented. This allows for a more detailed consideration of the nature of a ‘heritage imagination’ and its differences from and connections with the ‘historical imagination’ advanced by R.G. Collingwood. This opens out onto a consideration of the particularities of heritage interpretation and its public necessities of engagement and communication.

*Chapter 3: Evaluating Heritage Value and Cultural Significance* demonstrates how the Australian heritage sector’s assessment process can be usefully adapted and applied to three foundational miniseries – *Roots, Holocaust, and Heimat* – to provide greater insight into their heritage value and cultural significance. Parallels are drawn between how and why historical miniseries makers interpret and represent the past, and interpretation approaches adopted and theories developed within the Australian heritage sector. This chapter outlines and interrogates key features of the thesis’s blended and interdisciplinary methodology.

*Chapter 4: Public Culture and Cultural Change* outlines the importance of historical miniseries for 1980s and early 1990s Australian public culture. Circulating as important public events during a period of intense cultural, social, and economic change, each of the miniseries examined as case studies was positioned as a quality and special event television production when first broadcast on Australian television. This chapter utilises Huyssen’s conceptualisation of public culture to account for the prominence (or ‘publicness’) of the miniseries as not only contributing to Australia’s collective cultural memory, but also to the nation’s heritage and public culture.
Part B

The second part of the thesis is organised into three case study chapters (where the heritage imagination apparent in a selection of miniseries is examined) and a final concluding chapter. Because it would have been impractical to examine every Australian historical miniseries, a group of ‘monumental’ productions were selected for comparison and evaluation, with their different interpretations of multiculturalism establishing a common frame of reference. Indeed, in common with observations made by Caughie (Television Drama 89), limiting the scope of the thesis in this fashion helps establish “the foundation of a shared vocabulary of reference and judgement which may be debated or agreed [with]”. This is because such a ‘shared vocabulary’ prevents scholars from “slip[ping] into endless relativism in which the search for a common frame of reference is always contingent” (89). Together, the three case study chapters plot the trajectory of renouvellement and rapprochement interpretation strategies over the 1980s and first half of the 1990s.

Chapter 5: Renouvellement and Authenticity: The Consensus Heritage Narratives of Anzacs, Bodyline, and The Dunera Boys compares these miniseries in terms of their distinct renouvellement approaches. Each miniseries incorporates multicultural Australian identities and, in the process, diversifies mainstream representations of culture and heritage. Created in the era of 1980s official multiculturalism, each offers televisual ‘performances of multiculturalism’. In each miniseries, the European background of Australians encourages relationships to grow and develop between Australians and Europeans from British and European continental backgrounds.

Chapter 6: Rapprochement and Interpretation: Humanist-Inspired Heritage Themes in The Cowra Breakout and Vietnam examines two miniseries created by Kennedy Miller Productions. Kennedy Miller’s house style, inspired by both humanist interpretations of the past (including aspects of the past interpreted as dissonant heritage) challenged the traditional cultural boundaries and distance separating Australians from the unknown Asian Other: whether they be the Japanese in Cowra Breakout or the Vietnamese in Vietnam. Through rapprochement, cultural bridges are created on the basis of Australians sharing a common humanity with all people, and sharing a universalised heritage that binds and connects Australians and Asians even in times of war. The two miniseries were made at a time when Australia was beginning a new phase in its relations and engagement in Asia during the 1980s.
Chapter 7: Negotiating Authenticity: The Endorsed and Contested Heritage of The Leaving of Liverpool and Bordertown are the final case studies of the thesis. Both miniseries extend renouvellement and rapprochement interpretation strategies through an emphasis not only on content but also on style. Created by the same production team in the first half of the 1990s, each miniseries offered distinct interpretations of European migration to Australia and the nature of the migrant experience, with the representations of this experience garnering very different viewer and critical responses. The social realist style of The Leaving of Liverpool encountered a favourable environment of critical reception and public endorsement; while the magical realist stylistic and experimental approach of Bordertown met with public condemnation and critical ambivalence as a result of perceptions that the miniseries seemed to belittle the migrant experience.

Chapter 8: The Value of a Heritage Approach concludes this thesis, by summarising the outcomes of the heritage approach developed in the thesis to evaluate and assess significant historical miniseries. It underlines what Heritage Studies and its theories, approaches, and practices of heritage assessment can contribute to film and television scholarship and can bring to the analysis of ‘historical’ film and television.

Each of the case study miniseries in Part B are televisual stories based on interpretations and representations of events from the nation’s complex multicultural past. In each miniseries, aspects of this past are imagined as the shared cultural heritage of all Australians. The next chapter will outline why ‘heritage’ is useful when evaluating the heritage value and cultural significance of these Australian historical miniseries.
Chapter 2

HERITAGE STUDIES AND HISTORICAL MINISERIES

Introduction

Taking ‘heritage’ in the historical miniseries seriously means attending to practice and theory in the still-developing field of Heritage Studies. Since the 1970s the concept of ‘heritage’ has evolved and expanded so that there are now a range of ideas around this concept (Waterton and Watson, *Framing Theory* 2). Consequently, there is no one-size-fits-all method for assessing the heritage value of an item (Stig Sorensen and Carman 9). At the same time, ‘heritage’ has proved a usefully broad concept covering a wide variety of social and cultural practices (Samuel, *Theatres* 205-221). Now it refers to not just the heritage sector of museums, galleries, monuments and memorials, historical sites and buildings, but increasingly covers the ‘heritage aspects’ of different media (such as film, television, literature, music, architecture and design), trades (blacksmithing is a heritage trade) and professions (including heritage building methods in architecture and heritage musical instruments and styles of performance in music), and occasionally theme parks.

The descriptor *heritage* now covers not only tangible objects – places and the built environment, media (‘heritage media’ and heritage in media forms) – but also the intangible heritage: the knowledge and skills of musicians, craftworkers, filmmakers, and various other professions. It covers the experience of visitors and the nature, quality, and extent of visitor and viewer engagement. Heritage has become an important social and cultural phenomenon almost everywhere. Tangible and intangible heritage together expand the range and scope of heritage to such an extent that it is now best thought of as a family of ways of doing, presenting, imagining, and working with aspects of the past to create particular social forms of knowledge about that past. This is heritage as public history, to use Samuel’s term (*Theatres*). But it is more than this: it is also heritage as a field.

This broad, diverse, and evolving heritage field is in the business of interpreting aspects of the past as the heritage of communities and people, and developing stories around these interpretations. These heritage stories of past events and people are situated in imagined historical worlds constructed in a variety of public spaces, through different media, using various kinds of
performances. Heritage Studies, with its concern for the evaluation and instruction of heritage practices, emerged to interrogate this far-reaching and extensive cross-sectoral, cross-institutional, and cross-media way of dealing with heritage across professions that work with and interpret the past and its artefacts. This interrogation is undertaken through the application of associated technologies by people with relevant competences.

Unlike Film and Television Studies which is necessarily concerned with other priorities and issues, Heritage Studies has exclusively centred its attention upon the various manifestations of heritage, regarding it as a multifaceted phenomenon. Heritage Studies is concerned with heritage as a social practice, and as a way of working with, imagining, and interpreting the past; with evaluating the cultural significance of diverse artefacts and skills ascribed with heritage value; and with the communities and publics for heritage. This focussed attention on a multifaceted phenomenon has generated important insights in the field of Heritage Studies, its ways of approaching and interpreting the past, and its proposals for developing appropriate evaluative mechanisms and methodologies for considering and working with ‘heritage’.

Consequently, Heritage Studies has developed a more complex and nuanced account of the work of heritage than those Film and Television Studies scholars who critique and evaluate the heritage value and content of historical film and television productions. These scholars can usefully learn from Heritage Studies. This field’s evaluative criteria, research methodologies, perspectives, and multiple approaches to establishing the heritage value and cultural and social significance of an object, item, performance, and the like, can all be brought into worthwhile dialogue and connection with methods and perspectives associated with Film and Television Studies. This is the central task of this chapter.

The chapter begins with the most sustained and controversial intersection between, on the one hand, Film and Television Studies and the ‘heritage industry’, and on the other hand, Film and Television Studies and Heritage Studies in the British ‘heritage film’ debate. Film and Television Studies scholars initiated this debate by attacking not only the British ‘heritage film’ but also the notion of heritage itself as an intrinsically conservative enterprise complicit with Thatcherite neo-liberalism. From this unpromising beginning later contributors, from within and outside Film and Television Studies, came to the kind of estimations of heritage and its public value that have animated this thesis. The films were not nearly as conservative in either their cultural politics or stylistic presentation as they were held to be; heritage was not in itself a problem. The debate should have properly been about kinds and types of heritage not heritage more generally. This conclusion holds
true today. Therefore, Film and Television Studies still requires a different and more nuanced engagement with heritage, particularly with the heritage industry and with heritage scholarship. The British ‘heritage film’ debate demonstrates how film and television scholarship could benefit from systematically engaging with the work of Heritage Studies theorists and professionals.

Then the chapter moves to clarify the relation between heritage and history. Central to this clarification is spelling out the ways that heritage, like history, creates social forms of knowledge. Knowledge about the past is generated by disciplines, practices, and forms outside the field of History. This means heritage interpretations of the past work alongside rather than as an alternative to the interpretive work of history and historical institutions. To indicate how social forms of knowledge such as heritage interpretations connect with, but are different from, History (and its practices and institutions); Samuel (*Theatres*) uses the term *public history*. Since public history has much in common with heritage, this thesis uses the term ‘heritage’ in line with its more general usage (and adopts the term ‘public history’ as a more productive descriptor than ‘popular history’).

Works of heritage interpretation, and other forms of public history, are open to forms of creative and imaginative expression not available to the academic historian. Unlike the academic historian, for instance, the popular historian (novelists, film and television producers, musicians, heritage practitioners, and so on) has creative license to interpret and represent the past in ways that History and historical institutions cannot. This way of working with and interpreting the past requires a particular kind of ‘imagination’ that is related to but is not identical with what R.G. Collingwood famously called the ‘historical imagination’. While heritage practitioners have the creative license to combine fact and fiction in their work in ways the professional (academic) historian cannot and should not, these practitioners exercise this license within the constraints imposed by specific forms and medium of expression; by reliance upon storytelling styles and production techniques to create (and visualise) plausible and authentic historical worlds; and by a dependence upon an engaged public recognising and valuing this work as heritage work. Indeed part of the business of Heritage Studies has been attempting to identify, codify, and theorise these limits.

Heritage Studies theorists from Tilden on have recognised the practice of heritage interpretation and creation is best thought of as an interpretive ‘art’ – an art placing great importance upon communicating with and publicly engaging its visitors, viewers, and consumers. This necessitates attention to the different kinds of theoretical frameworks that have developed within Heritage Studies to ascertain the dimensions and responsibilities attendant to this art. These are: theories
framing the heritage value of an object (an item, place, performance, and so on); theories framing social and cultural commentaries on the cultural significance of the object; and theories framing an individual’s or group’s experiences upon encountering the object. This combination of approaches inevitably points to the multiple ways in which heritage is communicated to people and engages them. An item or object, like a historical miniseries, needs to produce or generate memorable heritage interpretations of and stories about the past that are informative, educational, engaging, and entertaining. These different framings of heritage also point to the need for blended methodologies, and for interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approaches, in both Heritage Studies and heritage practice.

The final sections of the chapter are concerned with different aspects of work in the Heritage field. First, there is concern for the kind of generalisations that are permissible and possible within a heritage context. The practice of heritage interpretation relies upon themes, theses, and arguments as organising principles. Second, there is a concern for how heritage is experienced and performed in heritage sector work and its reliance upon creating and securing emotional connections with visitors, viewers, and audiences. The chapter then concludes with a consideration of how heritage practice is inevitably implicated in the creation of public memories that are often contested. This relationship of memory to the imagining and creating of heritage stories, and how these stories are experienced and remembered, directly connects with the kind of popular memory the historical miniseries was thought to be creating in the late 1970s and 1980s.

This chapter establishes the many parallels, continuities, and connections between concepts from Film and Television Studies and Heritage Studies. Heritage Studies perspectives, methodologies, and orientations of particular value for the analysis of the Australian historical miniseries are pointed to. The aim here is to outline the theory and practice of heritage – the work of heritage theorists and professionals – to establish ways in which this work parallels and intersects with the work of film and television producers as they interpret the past and create historical worlds.

The British ‘Heritage Film’ Debate

The terms of the ‘heritage film’ debate were formulated in the early 1990s by British film and television academics and critics with left and Marxist sympathies as a reaction against the British costume dramas of the Thatcher era. These academics, decidedly anti-heritage, questioned the ideological integrity of so-called British ‘heritage films’. However, their criticisms were later
challenged by the work of other British scholars such as Monk, Samuel, and other writers who came to quite different estimations not only of the value of heritage but also of these particular films. Robert Hewison (*Heritage Industry*) attacked what he called the British ‘heritage industry’ in 1987 for creating a version of the past that was sanitised and commercialised as heritage. According to Hewison, heritage was a structure largely imposed from above to capture middle-class nostalgia for the past as a golden age in the context of a climate of decline. The heritage industry, in presenting the past inaccurately for entertainment purposes, was corrupting an authentic version of the past, replacing the past with simulacra, and threatening History itself (Harvey 325). The British ‘heritage film’ debate tapped into Hewison’s critique of heritage, and brought into focus longstanding worries held by theorists and critics alike from a variety of academic and intellectual fields about the nature and consequences of entertainment. This was a criticism not only about how entertainment functions in ‘heritage’ institutions, but also in historical films and television shows. It was a concern for what were seen to be the outcomes and impact of works of heritage for viewers and audiences.

The label ‘heritage films’ was applied by Andrew Higson to 1980s British films that were interpretations – often adaptations – of literature, such as the writings of Jane Austen and Charles Dickens. Higson claimed these adaptations were similar enough to be part of a ‘heritage genre’. For Higson (113) this ‘heritage genre’ covered historical biographies, costume dramas, and historical re-enactments. It also entailed a shared aesthetic. Higson’s work was soon supported by other British critics and scholars like Craig Cairns and Tana Wollen (Wollen; also see Monk, *The Heritage Film*). They argued that British ‘heritage films’ were ‘dumbing down’ history and authentic heritage. The films were regarded as being akin to “Thatcherism in period dress” (Samuel, *Theatres* 290). These critics further charged that visual representations of heritage were so powerful that British audiences could not help but be irresistibly drawn to them. This sort of visualisation masked an ideologically-driven Conservative Thatcherite agenda and a neoliberal enterprise culture.

One criticism was that ‘heritage films’ evoked a sense of nostalgia which romanticised the past. Such nostalgia was regarded as being intrinsically and deeply conservative (Jameson in Caughie 211). When the films attributed to this genre were lambasted for promoting ‘conservative nostalgia’, the assumption being made was, as Smith points out, that all ‘heritage’ “invokes a sense of nostalgia” and that ‘heritage’ is always synonymous with “a plea for social continuity” (LJ. Smith, *Uses* 41). These claims are illustrative of a particular interpretive community’s politics that often adopts critical structuralist perspectives based on delineating antagonistic binaries such as nostalgia/progress and heritage/history (Windebank 6).
Claiming nostalgia to be conservative and more concerned with visual style (Jameson in Caughie 211) is not unusual. Similar claims and accusations have been levelled against historical costume dramas and Hollywood films. Indeed there is a long line of theorising in film studies suggesting that stylistic qualities encourage conservative forms of social nostalgia (Pickering 206). However, the difference lies in the polemic use of ‘nostalgia’ as a term and concept by British ‘heritage film’ critics who – as Monk pointed out (The Heritage Film; and British Heritage-Film) – paid selective attention to only parts of a film to further their own overtly political readings of that film. As is often the case in studies of genre, Higson and other critics of British ‘heritage films’ created the ‘heritage genre’, then identified films that fitted into this new ‘genre’, and then highlighted only those parts of the films that could be used to rationalise their criticisms of the ‘genre’.

It is important to note here the two assertions underling these criticisms: first, there was a claim related to a particular group of films. This was that they were intrinsically conservative in both their structure and intent. Second, there was the clam that their historical subject-matter and literary sources combined with the films’ production design and mise-en-scene, to create ‘heritage’ but not history. That is, it was not that these films were simply conservative films trading on nostalgia and reactionary ideologies, but that the very stuff of heritage itself – the mix of stories, institutions, audience expectations, and so on – were themselves intrinsically conservative and reactionary.

From amongst those who launched a counter-attack against these estimations of the films and this negative evaluation of heritage, Samuel (Theatres) stands out. He declared, as an historian, that the practices associated with the ‘heritage industry’ were valid techniques for exploring an individual’s relationship with the past. He took exception with the notion that history was superior to heritage (Samuel, Theatres). He defended heritage as a historically grounded – and therefore an authentic and legitimate – expression of subaltern values and popular cultural responses (Waterton and Watson, Framing Theory 5).

From within Film and Television Studies, Monk pointed out the major gaps in the British ‘heritage film’ critics’ understanding of heritage practice and theory, genre theory, and the ways audiences engage with heritage. Monk also argued that Higson and other critics failed to adequately address the question of defining the films, with the result that the ‘heritage’ label was unevenly applied (Monk, British Heritage-Film 182). Importantly, Monk established that Higson and his supporters constructed the genre of ‘heritage films’ to further their own ideological agenda, while not taking into account what was actually being represented on-screen. Monk demonstrated, through an
analysis of actual films (and miniseries), the hospitality of British ‘heritage films’ to minority histories, and their ability to interrogate national and nationalist mythologies.

For Monk the films labelled as British ‘heritage films’ could be readily interpreted as liberal-humanist social critiques rather than celebrations of conservative Thatcherite values.¹ She also pointed out that those academics making these allegations of conservatism often failed to adhere to the structures and codes of their own disciplines. Support for Monk’s argument that ‘heritage films’ were typically more challenging than conservative came from Samuel. He argued that ‘heritage’ was not as restrictive as the critics of ‘heritage films’ had alleged. Heritage was employed in far more progressive and socially diverse ways than was generally admitted in the British ‘heritage film’ literature (Samuel, Theatres). ‘Heritage films’ could, in fact, be interpreted as part of a “new revisionist period” that was more radical than reactionary (Samuel, Theatres 281). Samuel (Theatres) demonstrated that ‘jazzing up’ (and in the case of British ‘heritage films’, ‘dressing up’) aspects of the past through visual and other modes of representation need not result in dumbed down interpretations of that past. Arguments supporting the conservatism of the British ‘heritage film’ were based on mobilising a particular notion of heritage that demonstrated limited understanding of the concept and practice of heritage interpretation and representation (Samuel, Theatres 259-273).

For Monk and Samuel heritage was not an inherently conservative concept and heritage did not work to lessen or obfuscate the liberalising and democratising power of popular historical practices. Some interpretations and visual representations of heritage are indeed conservative and cautious. However, while heritage as nostalgia may be conservative it is not necessarily conservative with capital ‘C’. As Smith notes, there is “nothing inherently reactionary nor right wing or indeed progressive and left wing in the idea of heritage” (LJ. Smith, Uses 41). Television scholars like Thorburn (Television as an Aesthetic Medium) have independently demonstrated what heritage theorists have concluded: that creative work (from the film, television, or heritage sectors) assessed to be ‘conservative’ is still able to “engage with more critical and challenging social values and experiences” (LJ. Smith, Uses 41).

¹ Monk identifies the basis for claiming British ‘heritage films’ to be Thatcherite Conservatism to be problematic in a number of areas. “The first was the monolithic nature of the critique and its tendency to trample over significant differences between films at the textual level.... Second, the derogatory coinage of the term 'heritage film', and the definition of the films in terms of ideological and aesthetic shortcomings, were symptomatic of the fact that heritage cinema was fundamentally derived from – and by – a top-down reading perspective which distanced itself from the films and their audiences. ... Third, and connected with this, the heritage-film critique depended on unspoken and unsubstantiated conjecture regarding the political-cultural orientation of the films' audiences and their reception of the films.” (Monk, British Heritage-Film 183)
In short, the anti-‘heritage film’ critics failed on two counts: not only had they undertaken criticisms of the films themselves that were limited, partial, and incomplete in order to render the films capable of a specific appreciation; but they had also confused a particular kind of heritage with the field of Heritage as a whole. Even if films and television programs can be interpreted broadly with opposed conclusions sometimes being drawn, it is quite another thing to claim that the whole field of Heritage is intrinsically conservative and reactionary. The British ‘heritage film’ debate, and Higson’s theories and the responses of Monk and Samuel, reveal heritage interpretation to be a cultural process and social practice, one that can challenge as much as promote social continuity.

However, the critics, counter-critics, and filmmakers featured in the British ‘heritage film’ debate never denied the past as a reality. On the contrary, they always acknowledged the past existed; they were fighting over who had the authority to claim a past, and then what, how, and why aspects of that past could be interpreted and represented on-screen. From outside the field of Heritage Studies, non-heritage scholars were also fighting over the legitimacy or otherwise of heritage and heritage perspectives as ways of dealing with and orienting people to this past.

Higson and other critics of British ‘heritage films’ have, in recent times, moderated their original charges, with the term ‘heritage film’ now more of a critical term rather than a reference to a film genre (see Vidal). Nevertheless, what the original British ‘heritage film’ debate reveals is that there are scholarship traditions in Film and Television Studies that, to some extent, are inclined towards developing various theoretical, historical, and critical approaches advancing overtly – perhaps overly – ideological agendas. This is a legacy of the 1980s when, as Bordwell (Common Sense) observes, a number of approaches were emerging and influencing film (and television) scholars:

... neo-Marxism, psychoanalysis, cultural studies, and the study of modernity and postmodernity ... their proponents weren’t asking about how films are understood. These writers focused on questions of how social, cultural, and psychodynamic processes were represented in films. Typically those questions were answered by interpreting individual films, reading them for traces of the larger processes made salient by the given theory.

A number of insights can be drawn from the ‘heritage film’ debate. In many ways Film and Television Studies, even when it takes on-board other disciplinary approaches, maintains traditions of developing theories validating hypotheses a priori; Marxist, feminist studies, queer studies, postcolonial studies, and other area studies have this in common. This kind of confirmatory research with its testing of hypotheses a priori by mining specific aspects of certain films or television shows to confirm and conform to these hypotheses, means nothing significant is likely to turn up that would refute the original hypotheses. Researchers know what they are looking for and they
usually find it. As American filmmaker and theorist Paul Schrader (40) has observed, the “pleaders of special causes” in minority, gender, cultural, and other area studies produce “fascinating and important” work but they often overlook the film (or television program) itself. What is needed – and Heritage Studies can help Film and Television Studies with this – is a return to the primacy of the object.

Heritage professionals can remind Film and Television Studies about the worth of exploratory research that is based on the primacy of the object. This kind of exploratory research, as practiced by heritage professionals, has benefits. The relative heritage value of an object or item (in this case a miniseries) is determined postpriori after the application of interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary methodologies appropriate for the analysis of this object or item. These methodologies are developed on a case-by-case basis. In relation to this thesis, after some exploratory research, the group of miniseries brought together as case studies were assumed to have the potential to tell significant heritage stories. The nature and extent of their heritage value and cultural significance was indicated after the application of an interdisciplinary methodology.

Heritage Studies and heritage professionals encourage multiple explanations for why something is of heritage value. Film and television scholarship can only benefit from avoiding monocausal explanations. As Stuart Hall (1988) has observed, while monocausal explanations may have the advantage of simplicity, they just do not work very well as accounts of the world. The purpose of heritage research is not to aim for a singular ‘truth’ but to conceptualise the changing meanings and evolving cultural importance of an object, item, or practice associated with a particular community. In heritage theory and professional practice an object, item, or practice is not ‘heritage’ until it is evaluated and judged to be of heritage value by professionals applying an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary heritage methodology. This leaves open the possibility that an ‘historical’ object may, at some point, lose its heritage value. Heritage professionals have the authority to pass such judgements as a result of their connoisseurship, a concept discussed later in this chapter.

Film and television scholars, like theorists, scholars, and critics from other fields outside of Heritage Studies, are free to use the term and concept of ‘heritage’ even if they have no or very little knowledge of the field. However, if a concept also delineates a field or discipline, then theorists outside the Heritage field need to engage in some way with this field. Accordingly, film and television scholars who discuss ‘heritage’ should consider theories developed in the field of Heritage Studies. As noted earlier in this chapter, historians have engaged more thoroughly with Heritage Studies – Film and Television Studies theorists and scholars should do likewise.
Heritage and History

While history and heritage both interpret the past, the aphorism that heritage is not the same as history remains and continues to be validated by scholars and researchers. Heritage is created; it is never already there. Anything that happened in the past is not heritage, whereas it already is history waiting to be discovered, interpreted, and understood. While this distinction seems straightforward enough, as Freeman points out, the word ‘history’ has several different meanings:

On the one hand, the word [history] signifies everything that has happened in the past. It can also signify the ways in which the past is interpreted and understood. And ‘history’ is also the name for an academic discipline that seeks to understand what happened in the past and to interpret it in the light of available evidence. (Freeman, Introduction 25)

According to the third definition of the word, no historical film or television show can be a work of history, because these films and shows do not adhere to the methodological standards of the discipline (Freeman, Introduction). These methodological standards are known as the ‘historical method’. The historical method is premised on finding traces of the past (historical evidence that survives in the present), and then interpreting and understanding this evidence. Evidence is compared, its reliability authenticated whenever possible, with some evidence judged by (usually professional) historians to be more useful and of historical value than others.

Even if filmmakers consult and use some primary sources, and even if historians are employed as advisors, historical films and miniseries are not cultural history interpretations of the past. Cultural historians are still historians, and their academic training requires them to follow the historical method; they are not free to disregard or rearrange evidence as can filmmakers. According to Freeman (Introduction 25), while a historian may on occasion intentionally misinterpret or even misrepresent facts, if she or he wants to “gain acceptance [as a professional historian, then the] historian’s interpretation has to conform to all the known facts and more than this, it has to interpret them plausibly. Contrary to what some post-modernists maintain, one historical interpretation is not as good as another”. Historical films and miniseries are not historical in the academic sense (Freeman, Introduction 5).

However, like film and television scholars and critics or anyone else with an interest in film and television, historians are free to interpret the stories and critique how they are actualized in historical films or television shows. They are also free to analyse films and miniseries for ‘factual’ inaccuracies. But most historians no longer expect a historical film or a historical miniseries to ‘get
it right’ historically (Freeman, Introduction 26). Indeed, there are now many historians who agree with White’s (Historiography 1195) contention that historical films (and therefore also historical miniseries) are of value because they point out the extent to which the past is always interpreted, and “the extent to which history is a constructed or [...] shaped representation of a reality”.

Therefore, if the historical method cannot provide a conceptual framework that accommodates how historical film and television productions interpret and represent the past, another conceptual framework is needed. Heritage, being closely related to history but operating on different epistemological assumptions, provides such a conceptual framework. As Rosenstone (Historical Film 5-23) observes, “[t]o take history on film [and television] seriously is to accept the notion that the empirical is but one way of thinking about the meaning of the past”. Heritage Studies is not bound by empiricism, or by the historical method, although there is a place for these approaches in heritage theory and practice.

Samuel (Theatres 434) has made the most compelling case that history as much as heritage is a social form of knowledge. His contention is that popular history forms (such as British ‘heritage films’) are works of public history, and are just as legitimate as academic historical research. Therefore popular history needs to be taken just as seriously as academic history. “We get”, Samuel observes, only “some of our sense of what happened in the past from historians”. We get “much of the rest from novels, drama, museums, gossip, and other forms of popular culture” (Samuel, Theatres 434). As was noted in the first chapter of this thesis, Samuel uses the term ‘public history’ for popular forms of knowledge about history derived from popular culture; ‘heritage’ therefore is a form of public history’, as are historical miniseries.

As works of public history, historical miniseries or films are not in competition with works of written history produced by professional historians. All forms of historical practice and interpretation are influenced by the social, cultural, and political concerns of their time and place of production. Therefore significant miniseries, such as those from Kennedy Miller and many more made by other production houses, were influenced by and contributed to Australians’ sense of public history and to the nation’s public culture. Recalling the Kennedy Miller miniseries of the 1980s, George Miller claimed in 2005 that when they were first broadcast, all his miniseries made significant contributions to Australian public life through their examination of ”pivotal stories in the Australian narrative” (Idato, Culture). Public culture is picked up in Chapter Four, but at this point it can be noted that the concept of public culture is compatible with Samuel’s thinking about public history.
Contributing to public history and not being bound by the dictates of academic history Australian historical miniseries often challenged official versions of events circulated by government agencies and other authorities (including historians) in what White (Historiography) calls ‘official meta-narratives’. For instance, the Cowra Breakout miniseries rejected the official meta-narrative contained in the official history of the breakout. Instead, Cowra replaced this official narrative with another interpretation that relies on establishing an alternative cause-effect relationship. The miniseries was revisionist when it purports to offer alternative explanations for why the breakout occurred. However, no singular ‘truth’ presented as being the ultimate cause of the breakout.

In general, Australian historical miniseries from the 1980s and early 1990s avoided or minimised what might be called ‘postmodern’ storytelling and filmmaking approaches or techniques. Bordertown is the partial exception. It incorporated some postmodern stylistic elements when it utilised ‘authentic’ historical representations alongside imaginative narrative invention where some of the action takes place in an imaginary space not subject to the normal limitations of time and space. However, while a classic realist style of filmmaking is indeed mixed with fantasy in some sequences, the series does not challenge or question the chronology of events (the ‘history’) represented in the production, nor does it undermine its classic realist and naturalist production design and mise-en-scene (realism and naturalism were discussed at length in Chapter One).

As works of heritage interpretation, the case study miniseries are also works of public history that did not want to compromise either their audience’s engagement or the contract with their audience that what they were seeing was a kind of history. Accordingly, these miniseries deployed only limited experimentation with the form and style of the miniseries. So even the limit case of Bordertown, which attracted considerable criticism at the time of its release for its postmodern strategies, still conformed in important ways with how ‘history’ is expected by audiences to be represented on-screen. This is also the case with most other historical film and television productions because, as Rosenstone (Historical Film 66) points out, to be taken seriously by critics and audiences, the historical film (and the historical miniseries) should “not violate the overall data and meanings of what we already know of the past. All changes and inventions must be apposite to the truths of that discourse, and judgement must emerge from the accumulated knowledge of the world of historical tests into which the film enters”. This perceptive comment, from a historian, is relevant for the study of historical films and television productions by scholars from a range of disciplinary fields, including Film and Television Studies. Importantly, it points to the rhetoric of heritage and to its necessary boundaries.
While postmodernism is a component of some theory and practice in Heritage Studies, and indeed of some contemporary historiographies, postmodernist interpretations and (for the most part) representations of the past do not feature in the case studies miniseries. As Rosenstone’s observation – that historical films should “not violate the overall data and meanings of what we already know of the past” – indicates, audiences expect the historical worlds created in films and television productions to be created and actualized realistically. Postmodern approaches would have discouraged Australian audiences from engaging with the interpretations and representations of the past in the miniseries.

Film and television audiences need to accept the illusion that the historical world in a historical film or miniseries is ‘real’ in some significant sense. This necessity is something of an international norm. The American medievalist David Herlihy has claimed that historical films, wherever they are made, must ‘pretend’ to show more about the past “than its makers could possibly know. It must fill the field of vision with objects that will serve to maintain the illusion of reality” (*Am I a Camera* 1189). On the DVD commentary for *Gladiator* (2000), Ridley Scott explains how he walked the line between historical accuracy and the integrity of the story:

> History is conjecture. In fact, what seems to be the fashionable thing to do is to revisit and rewrite it. Actually, for the most part, the experts are being quite supportive, saying “Well, you took a few liberties, but in general it seemed to look pretty good”, but I always say “How do you know? You weren’t there!” What we do is jump back in time into our own *impressions* [italics added], which is the most important thing to do. ... Historians say, “I’m not sure they did that.” And we say “Well, they bloody well do now, right?” (Scott, *Gladiator*)

Herlihy’s use of the word ‘pretend’ is clearly meant to have negative connotations; the more neutral and appropriate word here would be ‘imagine’. When they are imagining the past in this way, filmmakers are like their heritage counterparts in that they are both in the business of creating stories about the past and placing these stories in appropriate historical worlds. They are exercising a heritage imagination to imagine the past in ways that are not quite history,

**The Heritage Imagination and the Historical Imagination**

What sort of ‘imagination’ does Ridley Scott, the makers of historical films and miniseries, and other producers interpreting and representing the past, bring to their productions? As this section will point out, it is not quite a ‘historical imagination’ despite that concept allowing for the
imaginative recalling of the past. The ‘historical imagination’ as conceived by historian R.G. Collingwood is useful but it was meant to be bound in the final analysis by the limitations of historical evidence. Therefore, it is necessary to speak of another form of ‘imagination’ at work in historical films and miniseries, one that assimilates the premise underling the historical imagination, but goes beyond this premise to accept fiction as well as facts about the past. I am calling this a ‘heritage imagination’.

A heritage imagination motivates a filmmaker or miniseries maker to deliberately select and interpret particular historical events, as well as to modify and create ‘new’ events, people, and places. However, since it is a heritage imagination, the exercise of this imagination needs to accord with the practices of heritage professionals and theories from the field of Heritage Studies. In this way, concepts and theories from this field of professional and intellectual activity can be channelled into the study of historical miniseries – and into other historical productions such as historical films.

A heritage imagination is operationalized through a particular cultural interpretive framework. As outlined in the first chapter, two broad cultural interpretive frameworks provide some insight into the heritage imagination discernable, postpriori, in a miniseries: renouvellement and rapprochement. Heritage imagination diverges from R.G. Collingwood’s historical imagination in that it accepts that both factual and fictional material can provide ‘evidence’ about the past. From this array of evidence, material can be selected to be interpreted as heritage.

The implications of creatively ‘imagining’ the past have concerned philosophers of history since the positivist and scientific turn in professional history during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. How and to what extent professional historians should imagine the past was central to the work of English historian and historical philosopher R.G. Collingwood (1889-1943). At the turn of the twentieth century, Collingwood resisted the positivist or scientific approach to knowledge construction then being adopted by his and other disciplines (Lemisko). Instead he appreciated that the past had to be interpreted subjectively by those living in the present (Collingwood, Historical Imagination; Dray). This meant that historical ‘facts’ could not stand on their own. Rather they are interpreted by historians as evidence upon which “to build up [their] imaginary picture of the past” (Collingwood, quoted in Dray 199). With these insights, Collingwood developed his concept of ‘the historical imagination’.

For Collingwood, that past human actions did really happen is not enough. Since these actions took place and remain in the past, they have no real substance at the point in time that the historian, or
another investigator, decides to study them (Collingwood, *Historical Imagination*). Since a historian in the present cannot observe human events that have already taken place, she or he must *imagine* them. Accordingly, historical inquiry requires an exercise of the historian's imagination (Collingwood, *Historical Imagination*; Dray 191). However, Collingwood maintained that when the historical imagination reconstructs pictures, ideas, and concepts from the past, it necessarily does so from the evidence that exists in the present. The often imperfect material surviving in the present provides insights into what actually happened and what was really thought (Collingwood, *Historical Imagination*).

While Collingwood used the term ‘imaginative’ he did not intend it to mean ‘fictional’. To underline this point, Collingwood (*Historical Imagination* 245-246) pointed out the main differences he saw between an historian and a novelist. While both use imagination to construct a narrative with continuity and coherence, the novelist's entire construction or picture can be derived out of ‘fanciful’ imagination. The fiction writer is free to imagine or create anything as long as the story and narrative have continuity and coherence (Collingwood, *Historical Imagination*). The historian, on the other hand, must use sources as evidence to begin her or his ‘imaginative’ process (Collingwood, *Historical Imagination*). If the historian cannot demonstrate a link between the picture constructed or imagined and the evidence available – that is, to actions and thoughts that really occurred for which there is some form of evidence in the present – then such a picture or imagining must be discarded as mere fantasy.

Throughout the twentieth century, Collingwood’s notion of the historical imagination has generated much controversy and debate amongst professional and academic historians as well as philosophers of history. However, the historical imagination has much in common with contemporary theories of heritage. But the historical imagination as formulated by Collingwood cannot be carried forward into Heritage Studies without change. Rather, Collingwood’s historical imagination can be thought of as being a precursor informing the related concept of ‘heritage imagination’ being developed here.\(^2\)

Even with Collingwood’s riders on his conceptualization of the historical imagination, his critics have reacted negatively to his holding that historical thinking requires *any* exercise of the imagination. Dray (191-192) has collected a number of common criticisms of Collingwood. One critic took issue with how Collingwood, as a historian and archaeologist of Roman Britain,

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\(^2\) Hayden White, in his *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in 19th-Century Europe*, a work of historiography published in 1973, employed the notion of ‘a historical imagination’ but it was used as a rhetorical technique of narrative discourse.
“interpolates motives, builds characters, constructs episodes with a liberality or even license that is
great fun, but is liable to shock the pedant. Fact and speculation stand shoulder to shoulder”
(R.E.M. Wheeler in the late 1930s, quoted in Dray 191). Another critic complained of his
“extensive flights of the imagination”, protesting that, in his treatment of King Arthur, Collingwood
had “out of a minimum of facts” created “a new Arthurian Legend” (Philip Bagby in the late 1950s,
quoted in Dray 192). As a final example, a critic claimed that if imagination is a criterion of
acceptability for historical accounts, this must surely destroy the distinction between history and
fiction, and thereby legitimise “subjectivity and idiosyncrasy” (L.O. Mink in the late 1960s, quoted
in Dray 192). Even today, professional historians are urged to “keep their imagination on a tight
rein ... avoiding the needless utterance of opinion” (Samuel, Theatres 430).

All the examples cited as criticisms in the paragraph above could be made of historical films and
television productions. These criticisms are suggestive of the ways in which the historical
imagination could make a contribution to Heritage Studies. As long as the intention is not to
deliberately deceive audiences, and as long as it is appropriately acknowledged, mixing fact with
speculation and invention need not be of concern for heritage professionals (Howard 22).
Contemporary heritage theory and practice accepts ‘facts’ can work with ‘fiction’ when interpreting
past events (and artefacts associated with these events) as heritage.

Those who interpret the past – whether they are the makers of films and miniseries, academic or
popular historians, heritage professionals, or anyone else with an interest in interpreting the past –
can oftentimes detect or impose a pattern on certain past events. Retrospectively discerning a
pattern in selected past events is called colligation. Collingwood's philosophy of history influenced
W.H. Walsh’s concept of colligation, a term now well-established in the philosophy of history
(Dray 215). According to Walsh, many historians seek to make ‘a coherent whole’ by finding
“certain dominant concepts or leading ideas by which to illuminate [their] facts” – ideas like the
‘Romantic movement’ or ‘Hitlerian policy of expansion’ (Dray 215) are acceptable, as long as there
is sufficient understanding by the historian for interconnections to be demonstrated (Ritter).
Colligation is an interpretation that finds a pattern in an event after it has happened to provide it
with meaning, thereby helping to explain it (Ritter 52).

The ‘creativity’ implied in the concept of a heritage imagination is capable of extension to the
concept of colligation. Colligation can contribute to heritage interpretation. However, the reasoning
behind colligation – of imposing patterns on past events in hindsight – is not limited to historical or
heritage interpretations of events. The process of colligation is common when outlining legal cases.
However, professional historians and lawyers are not free to colligate invented events. Through a process of what I am calling *creative colligation* an interpreter, such as a filmmaker, deliberately and purposefully colligates both factual and *invented* events and people to further an argument about the meaning of an event, concept, or idea whose outcome is already known. In the practice of heritage interpretation, as long as the interpretation does not deliberately deceive an audience, creative colligation would be permissible. In *The Cowra Breakout*, for example, fact and fiction are creatively colligated but the outcome of the event on which the miniseries is based – the breakout – cannot be changed. Creative colligation is taken up more extensively in Chapter Six with the discussion of *Cowra Breakout* and *Vietnam* miniseries. While Collingwood and Walsh would not have countenanced *creative* colligation as a legitimate historical method, the creative combination of fact and fiction contributes to the imaginative process of interpreting and representing past events as heritage in these miniseries.

Creative colligation and other features of a heritage imagination already outlined might suggest an affinity with postmodern approaches to interpreting the past as heritage or as history. However, the addition of invented events and people in the case study miniseries do not violate the overall data and meanings of what is known about the past represented in these productions (Rosenstone, *Historical Film* 66). The ‘inventions’ in these miniseries conform to an appropriate period look. Although they did not set out to deliberately deceive viewers, the concepts of heritage imagination and creative colligation serve to indicate that miniseries creators are permitted more latitude than historians in their creative interpretations of past events and people, even if some of these events and people are invented. The extent of this creative latitude is sometimes a concern even for some film and television scholars. Nevertheless, Heritage Studies approaches demonstrate such inventions often are necessary to further the practice of heritage storytelling as an interpretive art.

**Heritage Practice as an Interpretive Art**

Heritage storytelling is an *interpretive art*. Many practical and theoretical approaches developed to determine the heritage value of items, objects, places, and events stress the importance of storytelling. American heritage theorist Freeman Tilden has been particularly influential in promoting the practice of creating interpretive stories as an art form in its own right. Writing in 1957 Tilden claimed that heritage interpretation was a form of storytelling “which combines many arts” (Tilden) and which needed to engage visitors by being both informative *and* entertaining (Tilden). An emphasis on creativity and imagination was therefore central to heritage interpretation.
Moreover, this creativity was essential to further the education functions and responsibilities associated with professional heritage practice. Tilden’s axiom has been taken a step further by Beck and Cable (22) who argue that heritage interpretation is an art that should inform, educate, entertain, and enlighten audiences. The closeness of these axioms in language and tone to the mission and practice of public service broadcasting is clear enough. But how Heritage Studies uses these storytelling axioms has the scope to renew a sense of their meaning and significance within film and television scholarship.

Adapting the work of Tilden and Beck and Cable, the makers of historical miniseries can be thought of not only as heritage interpreters, they can also be held to account (as are heritage interpreters) over the extent to which their stories informed, educated, entertained, and enlightened their audiences. Such an extension of Heritage Studies to film and television is made more tenable when it is appreciated that heritage interpretation must do more than just present factual details about the past. The connections between artistic and imaginative approaches to heritage storytelling, and to the storytelling undertaken by the makers of historical miniseries, are also discernible in Tilden’s four principles of heritage interpretation.

Tilden’s first principle of storytelling is that “[a]ny interpretation that does not somehow relate what is being displayed or described to something within the personality or experience of the visitor will be sterile” (Beck and Cable 6-7). As a corollary of this, “information, as such, is not interpretation. Interpretation is revelation based upon information. But they are entirely different things. However, all interpretation includes information.” The second principle, already mentioned, is that “[i]nterpretation is an art, which combines many arts, whether the materials presented are scientific, historical, or architectural. Any art is in some degree teachable” (Beck and Cable 6-7). The final two principles are that “[t]he chief aim of interpretation is not instruction, but provocation,” and that “[i]nterpretation should aim to present a whole rather than a part, and must address itself to the whole man [sic] rather than any phase” (see Beck and Cable 6-7). Again, it is worth reiterating that Tilden believed that it is the story based upon information that provides the visitor with revelation and insight. The story must relate to and engage with the experience of the visitor. It must provoke and it must strive for a level of generality. This emphasis on storytelling as an experience is also fundamental to the creation of historical miniseries and films, and other historical productions.

Beck and Cable’s updates of Tilden’s original principles are also adaptable, with appropriate modifications, to an examination of an individual miniseries. The updates indicate that a heritage interpretation “needs to” relate ... to the lives of the people in [...] the] audience” (Beck and Cable 8).
Interpretations need to go “beyond providing information to reveal deeper meaning and truth”. Its stories need “to inspire and to provoke people to broaden their horizons”. They need “a complete theme or thesis and [should] address the whole person” (Beck and Cable 8). This “must be done with foresight and thoughtful care” so that the world can be revealed “in exciting new ways” (Beck and Cable 8). Heritage interpreters need to create “optimal experiences through intentional and thoughtful program and facility design” and to do this they need to “be familiar with basic communication techniques”. Quality interpretation necessarily “depends on the interpreter's knowledge and skills, which must be continually developed over time” (Beck and Cable 8).

Finally, Beck and Cable (22) argue that without information, entertainment activities do not qualify as interpretation while the presence of information does not automatically mean interpretation is taking place. Heritage interpretation, in their reformulation of Tilden, should be “a work of art ... designed as a story that informs, entertains, and enlightens”. While retaining Tilden’s injunction to heritage professionals to create artistic and imaginative storytelling, these updates continue the strong parallels with how the creators of a miniseries develop their stories.

These several principles of heritage interpretation have an impact on how and why heritage is imagined by professional interpreters, and therefore on the heritage stories created. The principles are also adaptable to a historical miniseries: for instance, ‘facility design’ corresponds to the form and style of that miniseries. Being familiar with “basic communication techniques” includes understanding genre (especially melodrama) and narrative style. Viewers of historical miniseries were not expecting a formal history lesson, but they were expecting to be entertained. Similarly, professional heritage interpreters also aim to entertain visitors and audiences in order to provide them with a viable heritage experience (Tunbridge and Ashworth 22). Just as is the case with commercial television, the need to attract audiences in the heritage sector can – as Beck and Cable (74) point out – often result in heritage presentations that place an emphasis on their entertainment value. On occasion, this may necessitate the embellishment of ‘facts’, sometimes to the point where interpretations and representations become an exercise in ‘fantasy’ (Beck and Cable 74). As long as they are “honestly presented as such” and are not intended to deliberately deceive (Howard 22) employing fantasy and inventing fictional events and characters may be necessary to create effective heritage stories, and then to visualise and actualize them in displays, performances, and museums. This is also the case with historical miniseries.

It is useful to note here, as an aside, that Collingwood did find a respectable, if marginal, role for the ‘fanciful imagination’ in history (see Dray 198). He observed that uncritical, popular history
served the valuable function of drawing those intrigued by fanciful tales and legends into a more serious inquiry into the past (Dray 198). Such ‘fanciful imagination’ is evident in stories told by and in historical miniseries. The process of combining actual events with new and fictional incidents and characters can be seen in all the case study miniseries.

The integrity of an item or product determined to be of heritage value is as important as the integrity of the content (and the stories told by or interpreted from) this artefact. There are, therefore, two forms of integrity at work here: the item’s physical integrity and the integrity of its stories. Evaluating the integrity of stories is not as straightforward as determining the physical integrity of an item or object. The heritage sector also usefully theorises integrity and authenticity to assess the physical authenticity and integrity of items, objects, or places (Alberts and Hazen). These points are taken up again in the next chapter when discussing condition and physical condition. The integrity of the story told by a miniseries is of greater importance for the thesis than is the condition or physical integrity of a miniseries available on DVD.

Integrity of the story is associated with its plausibility, credibility, sincerity, and aesthetic value. Assessing the integrity of the story involves assessing perceptions of the authenticity of its actualization. Therefore, I will be using authenticity of actualization to refer to how the story and the historical world in which it takes place are audiovisually interpreted and televisually represented in a miniseries. For makers of historical films and television productions, this kind of actualization – bringing the past to life on-screen realistically – does not have to be entirely factual, since it is more important to actualize an imagined past emphasising “the filmmakers’ creative interpretation of why certain episodes occurred, their relative importance, and the motivations of characters” (Frost 4).

The visualisation of heritage has had, and continues to have, an immense impact on heritage professionals and their work, with many film and television professionals and their production techniques employed in the creation of heritage displays and performances. This is the legacy of the greater visualisation of culture over the twentieth century (Osborne; cf. Rudin). Critics of British ‘heritage films’ faulted these films for their visualisation of heritage since it was regarded as being symptomatic of a loss of historicity, the result of an “over-concern with materiality, [and] the dramatic and the visual” (Waterton and Watson, Framing Theory 4). In the Australian context over the 1980s, a more measured approach was taken by Australian critics, academics, reviewers, and audience members when they evaluated a historical miniseries for the integrity of its story and the authenticity of its actualization.
‘Authenticity’, however it is defined, is a social and cultural construct that is likely to change over time, from place to place, and from theorist to theorist. This is indicated in Cohen’s concept of emergent authenticity, developed to describe the evolutionary process of attributing authenticity to a cultural item as a result of the passage of time. For Cohen, authenticity is best thought of as “negotiable” so that “a cultural product, or trait thereof, which at one point [may have been] generally judged as contrived or inauthentic may, in the course of time, become generally recognised as authentic” (Cohen 279–280). Emergent authenticity encourages thinking about an experimental miniseries like Bordertown (with its magical realism and fantasy) as having the potential for an emergent authenticity. Over time, some re-imaginings, even if they are invented, can come to be accepted as part of a group’s cultural heritage. As Tunbridge and Ashworth (6) argue, a group or community can imagine its heritage as fantasy “even in the sense [that] Avalon or Atlantis exist as products of a creative imagination, in response to some need in the creator.”

Even so, heritage professionals and theorists emphasise the core, foundational message of a heritage interpretation developed and communicated in a story should always remain precise, and should not be lost or obscured. This emphasis on a central message most certainly applies to storytelling and televisual production styles and techniques in historical miniseries. From media reports and other sources, a miniseries researcher is able to detect something of what the miniseries creators intended their core messages to be. However audiences respond to miniseries, or to any story, in often unpredictable ways. This has been the basis for audience studies in a number of disciplines, including Film and Television Studies. The responses and experiences of audiences and viewers are also of concern for heritage researchers, theorists, and professionals.

Heritage professionals and theorists contend that to provide a visitor, viewer, or audience member with a memorable heritage experience, interpretations of the past in the form of stories need to be informative, educational, engaging, and entertaining. As most of this chapter to this point has demonstrated, this contention has been the basis for much theorising and professional concern in the Heritage discipline. The continuous need to define and theorise heritage and assess its practice is central to Heritage Studies. While Film and Television Studies has been theoretically focused its theoretical attentions have not been so resolutely focussed on the nature and possibilities of a film or television production’s heritage work and this work’s responsibility to inform and entertain.

3 An example could be how Francis Ford Coppola, in The Godfather, re-imagined how the Italian-American gangsters dressed and talked. There was no basis in reality for this imaginative cinematic representation. Subsequently, the ‘real’ Italian-American mafia liked what they saw in the movie, and adopted features of the movie as part of their heritage (such as speech patterns and stylish clothes).
Theorising Heritage

‘Theorising heritage’ itself has a history. According to Waterton and Watson, attempts at defining heritage are “the most difficult challenge” for theorists. It is necessary to “to unpack notions of ‘practice’ and ‘process’”, even though heritage ‘practice’ and ‘process’ continue to be “difficult to pin down, methodologically and conceptually” (Waterton and Watson, Framing Theory 7). Post-structuralist notions that one past is as valuable as any other are not helpful in this regard (7).

As noted at the head of this chapter, Waterton and Watson (Framing Theory) have developed three frames to make sense of how heritage has been defined and theorised. These three frames are: theories framing the heritage value an object (an item, place, performance, event); theories framing social and cultural commentary on the cultural significance of the object; and theories framing an individual’s or group’s experiences encountering the object. These three approaches to heritage theory are chronologically sequential. One frame has built upon the other, and emphasised different characteristics of heritage. However, there is no end date for any of the frames: theories identifiable with one or more of these frames continue to be developed, with much contemporary thinking about heritage combining all three frames and their associated theoretical approaches. The concept of a heritage imagination, for instance, would operate across all three frames.

The First Frame: Theorising Heritage Value

Historically, the first group of theories were developed before the 1980s; these theories had a focus on objects and their innate and intrinsic value (Waterton and Watson Framing Theory). This is why Waterton and Watson call them ‘theories in heritage’. In these early stages of heritage theory, “ideas, constructs, concepts and levels of abstraction ... [were] theoretically informed without necessarily constituting fully-fledged theories in themselves” (Waterton and Watson, Framing Theory 2). Theories with a focus on objects and their innate and intrinsic value were developed by professionals, practitioners, and experts. This kind of ‘heritage’ was acknowledged by international agencies like UNESCO in the 1970s when it dealt with items, objects, and places. National legislation associated with official heritage was also enacted in countries like the United Kingdom (Carman and Stig Sorensen 17). Australian theorists have been and continue to be at the forefront in theories supporting the practice of evaluating the heritage value of objects (Heritage Collections Council; Russell and Winkworth). Evaluation and assessment processes related to object assessments, including the development of relevant criteria, are taken up at length in Chapter Three.

Practical methodologies and typologies formalising criteria-based assessment processes for the evaluation of an object’s heritage value are a feature of this frame. Developing such criteria has
methodological advantages: as Bordwell (Film Criticism) points out, in any discipline or field, criteria “are intersubjective standards” that stakeholders (and assessors) can discuss and “dispute if they choose”. If this suggests a more formalist approach to heritage assessment, it also suggests an approach that many film and television scholars (such as Bordwell himself, who is a film scholar) advocate based as it is around the aesthetics and communicability of the object.

This analogy with film studies is furthered when the competency of those undertaking such assessments is taken into account. Assessors, like their qualified film studies counterparts, exercise a kind of connoisseurship courtesy of their “ability and competence to pass critical judgements on items ... [and] based on [the assessor’s] knowledge of history, style, technology, and comparative examples” (Heritage Collections Council 70; Russell and Winkworth 62). Researchers studying Australian historical miniseries and many other cinematic and televisual texts, likewise establish their own connoisseurship through the exercise of specialised knowledge.

The Second Frame: Theorising Heritage’s Social and Cultural Significance
Over the 1980s, theories moved beyond object-based and expert-informed perspectives to consider heritage as a social and cultural process. These new theories involve thinking about the place of the past in contemporary societies (LJ. Smith, Uses). Waterton and Watson (Framing Theory) call these ‘theories of heritage’ because they are closely identified with historically, socially, and culturally informed commentaries on heritage as a range of social and cultural phenomena (Carman and Stig Sorensen).

It was also during this period that a field of activity now called ‘Heritage Studies’ became recognised in the Anglophone world in its own right. Carman and Stig Sorensen (17) contend that prior to the publication of the first commentaries on heritage as a social and cultural process in the 1980s, a field of Heritage Studies cannot be said to have existed. The years 1985 and 1987 saw the publication of a number of key Heritage Studies texts in the United Kingdom, where they had considerable impact on scholars interested in the role of the past in the present. This included the work of Lowenthal and Samuel (Carman and Stig Sorensen, 18). Although these writers often disagreed about the function and purpose of heritage, their historically informed and culturally important commentaries moved thinking about heritage away from objects towards their social and cultural context and significance (Waterton and Watson, Framing Theory 5). The work of Lowenthal (Fabricating Heritage; and Heritage Crusade), Samuel (Theatres), and Hewison (Heritage Industry) drew upon historical and cultural studies perspectives (Waterton and Watson, Framing Theory 5). As a result, their collective view of heritage as a cultural phenomenon has had a critical and interdisciplinary edge (Waterton and Watson, Framing Theory 5).
Over the 1980s and 1990s, Heritage Studies and its different theoretical and ideological approaches were influenced – to varying degrees – by structuralism and Marxism, postcolonialism, post-structuralism, and postmodernism. Commentaries on heritage within and outside the discipline in these decades tended to “reflect the dominant theoretical movements of their time” and place (Waterton and Watson, Framing Theory 5). For instance, Film and Television Studies theorists critical of the British ‘heritage film’ – like Higson, who invoked the work of Hewison – constructed notions of heritage based on structuralist approaches emphasising base–superstructure relations (Waterton and Watson, Framing Theory 5). The work of Hewison, Lowenthal, and other British scholars discussed earlier in this thesis are representative of agendas, perceptions, and ideological currents associated with a particular approach to heritage taken up by a specific community of scholars at a particular temporal moment and location (Harvey 320).

Other developments in the developing field of Heritage Studies over the 1980s saw post-structuralist and postmodernist critiques of knowledge claims and authority finding their way into some theoretical work on heritage value and cultural significance (Carman and Stig Sorensen 17). Although the authors of these critiques do not always recognise this, the ‘reality’ that a past existed was never disputed. As Fiske (42) points out, structuralism and post-structuralism do not deny the existence of such a reality: what they question is the objectivity of interpreting this reality and its representability.

The Third Frame: Theorising the Heritage Experience

Theories in this third frame, called by Waterton and Watson ‘theories for heritage’, were influenced by post-structuralism, and are associated with a recognition that individuals respond differently to their ‘heritage experiences’ (Waterton and Watson, Framing Theory 11). These theories theorise the authenticity of personal and emotional responses when encountering and experiencing heritage. In museology, for example, a visitor- or viewer-centred approach has become a feature of the ‘New Museology’ where practice and process are shared between curators and individual visitors and members of the public. Non-professionals participate in the creation of shared practices and values (Marontate 293). When museum exhibitions invite visitors to make judgements and develop opinions, the museum or gallery curator becomes less of a learned expert who delivers scholarly knowledge to visitors, and more of a ‘cultural technician’ who facilitates the exchange of ideas between the members of groups and communities (Bennett 103–104; Carman and Stig Sorensen 19). Even so, the New Museology cannot provide a positive but challenging heritage experience for every visitor. The issue for professionals becomes one of how to reach those who value the kinds of pasts not interpreted and represented in a museum, heritage site, and other locations. Similar
dilemmas based on meeting audience expectations confronted the makers of the case study miniseries, and their solution was to acknowledge these dilemmas in interviews and publicity material, but to not let this interfere with their interpretations and representations of the past.

Miniseries producers did engage in a process of purposeful selection and interpretation of ‘facts’ about the past. They evaluated the relative value of some ‘facts’ as being more useful than others. They did not – and neither do their heritage counterparts – propose that one interpretation is necessarily as valid as another. However, despite their careful selection of material from the past, miniseries were intended for a mass audience and miniseries makers could not control how their work was received by individual members of this audience. Members of the general public, historians, journalists, and other commentators interpreted events and people represented in a miniseries in ways that often diverged from those intended by the makers of the series. The often vituperative and sometimes unforgiving nature of reviews and academic discussion these series generated provides ample evidence of this. Even so, some indication – albeit imperfect – of viewers’ experience with a miniseries can be discerned from professional reviewers; this is why these reviews are referred to in the second part of the thesis.

A miniseries researcher adapting approaches from the first and second frames of heritage theorisation (and their associated theories of the heritage value of an item and its significance in a social and cultural context) would undertake an analysis of a particular miniseries in combination with placing the series in its social, cultural, political, and industrial context. As Pickering (208) explains it: “one method is to examine a cultural text for its particular conventions of language, expression and action, its structuring codes and stylistic features”. Then the second approach attends to historical conditions and circumstances to see how the cultural text, including its form and mode of performance, relates to them. This kind of integrated analytical approach is already a feature of film and television studies methodologies but it is the particular inflection Heritage Studies gives to it as a practice that makes it useful for Film and Television Studies.

However, an important difference between scholarship in the field of Heritage Studies and that of Film and Television Studies is that heritage theorists often have professional and practitioner backgrounds as well as academic affiliations. Consequently, heritage theorisation combines practice and process. As a general rule, most film and television scholars and theorists have academic rather than industrial affiliations and experience. There are, of course, exceptions to this rule. However, the point being made here is that when heritage theorists develop what was called in the first chapter ‘heritage rules and expectations’ these tend to combine practice with process. Such is the
case when theorists outline the nature and benefits of adopting thematic and generalised approaches to heritage storytelling. This makes Heritage Studies especially useful for its attention to communicability and commitment to entertaining and informing as ends in themselves.

**Making Productive Generalisations**

As a form of storytelling art (Tilden), heritage theorists and professionals claim interpretation needs to employ generalisations, themes, topics, and theses to provide a viable heritage experience. As Tunbridge and Ashworth (22) put it, heritage practitioners are obliged to reduce “a rich and complex past to a set of easily recognisable characteristics”. This is because the heritage product needs to be “rapidly assimilated into the existing experience, expectations, and historical understanding” of a consumer who usually has limited historical or cultural knowledge. Generalisations in the form of themes are what visitors respond to in their encounters with and experiences of items, exhibits, and performances. Thematic interpretations of items contribute to designing a heritage story that is both informative and entertaining (Tunbridge and Ashworth 8). A thematic approach not only avoids overloading a visitor – and, by extension, a miniseries viewer – but it saves time for the heritage interpreter preparing an item for exhibit or preparing for a performance (Beck and Cable 48-49). Messages are communicated in stories through themes.

While there has been a long discussion about the use of themes in the study of literature, film, and television, in Heritage Studies perspectives themes are usefully deployed not so much as analytical devices but, rather, as a set of devices and tools necessary for engaging with and making heritage relevant for diverse publics. Importantly for this thesis, each case study miniseries undertakes thematic interpretations to provide a unifying focus for a story that is intended to be both informative and entertaining. Stories premised on generalisations in the form of themes communicate simplified interpretations to encourage audience engagement, even though the stories may contain omissions, contradictions, and inventions (Howard 21). The heritage sector appreciates that themes are remembered by people after visiting a site or after watching a performance.

In addition, some human conditions and situations seem to have a universal meaning and significance (Beck and Cable 50-51), with these often involving human conflict – “conflict within a person, conflict among people, or conflict between humans and their environment” (50-51). Like the miniseries producer, the heritage practitioner needs to be mindful of this and work productively towards it. As an example, Beck and Cable (50) point out that at heritage-listed battlefields in the
United States, many stories are provided alongside the statistics or ‘the facts’. Such stories are based on universally-identifiable themes relating to bravery, cowardice, intelligence, suffering, honour, terror, heroism, and pain. Visitors forget the statistics. They remember the stories and the themes they exhibit.

If heritage sector interpretations need themes to productively generalise, so too do historical miniseries. Themes based on victimhood are found in *The Leaving of Liverpool* and *The Cowra Breakout*; and the theme of endurance is common to *Anzacs*, *The Dunera Boys*, and *Bodyline*. *Anzacs* thematises a coming-of-age story as a metaphor for the Australian nation during World War One. Themes supporting this national coming-of-age story drive the narrative and motivate the actions of various key characters, including the ‘multicultural’ character of Kaiser, the German-Australian Anzac. There are also a number of other related themes including the loss of innocence as a result of their wartime encounters, an anti-war theme (which is depoliticised) and a *mateship* theme posed here as a uniquely Australian trait.

There is some debate among heritage theorists about whether or not thematic interpretations go far enough in providing a consumer with confronting, challenging, and ultimately memorable experiences. Thematic interpretations can be argumentative yet, even when heritage interpretations are argumentative, it is not always clear where themes stop and argumentation begins. Beck and Cable (50), drawing on the work of Ann Lundberg, propose that a thesis or argument (as opposed to a theme) goes beyond subject content to challenge a visitor’s attitudes or perspectives. As Lundberg (cited in Beck and Cable 50) puts it: “they will have to choose sides”. When they are argumentative, provocative themes and theses became memorable. Just such a thesis-based (or augment-based) approach was developed in *The Cowra Breakout* miniseries. Audiences were positioned to identify with Japanese prisoners-of-war as the victims of their Australian guards. This was a controversial and provocative interpretation that needed to be handled sensitively.

Heritage interpreters combine generalised thematic interpretations with challenging argumentation. This presents visitors with opportunities to develop memorable encounters with cultural objects, items, performances, or events. This approach was used in the challenging and often visually disturbing miniseries *The Leaving of Liverpool* which argued that the child abuse it showed was not only endemic but was well-known at the time. But, as with heritage interpretations, such miniseries were intended to be informative *and* entertaining in order to keep their audience engaged. The development of arguments as part of a challenging and confronting experience that is memorable can be achieved by direct provocation (as in deliberately shocking or antagonising a visitor) or more
subtly. Beck and Cable (52) argue themes may themselves argue a point-of-view and fall into the thesis category (‘thesis’ here indicating a proposition or argument).

However, developing challenging and confronting experiences does not preclude the creation of heritage narratives that encourage consensus. Laura Jane Smith has argued that ‘traditional’ heritage promotes an ‘authorised heritage discourse’ (LJ. Smith, Uses). For Smith (Uses) this heritage discourse promotes a consensus approach to heritage which tends to smooth over conflict and social difference. It presents heritage as complete, untouchable, and ‘in the past’ (LJ. Smith Uses). If this recalls aspects of the British ‘heritage film’ debate introduced earlier it also suggests that there are different kinds of heritage discourse. There are discourses that are authorised and those that are less authorised. Ashton (393-394) claims that just such an authorised heritage discourse is at work when the national story of contemporary Australia glosses over the more shameful or distasteful episodes and themes in Australian colonial and postcolonial history. However, Ashton (382) also goes on to say in relation to “the resilience of the authorised heritage discourse” that it involves the incremental and gradual accommodation of social and historiographical changes though “a conservative revisionist paradigm”. Likewise, for Smith, heritage is “about cultural change” as much as it is about the “stasis of cultural values and meanings” (LJ. Smith, Uses 4).

The notion of an authorised heritage discourse is perhaps too monolithic and conservative a conception of the working and possibilities of heritage – not only in the case study miniseries but also in heritage practice more generally. From within the field of Film and Television Studies, the term that most relates to ‘authorised heritage discourse’ is that of consensus narrative. For Thorburn (Television as an Aesthetic Medium 168), television dramas in particular tend to promote consensus narratives since they rely upon and simultaneously project “an inheritance of shared stories, plots, character types, cultural symbols, and narrative conventions”. This kind of consensus narrative “operates at the very centre of the life” of a culture and is “almost always deeply [small ‘c’] conservative in its formal structures and in its content” (168).

Yet, as discussed earlier in relation to the consensus nature of renouvellement, developing a consensus heritage narrative in a story can be used to invoke and represent dissonant heritage, as often happens in heritage exhibitions or performances, and as is the case in Cowra Breakout and Leaving of Liverpool. Approaches premised on consensus (such as renouvellement) can viably represent and comment on social contradictions. As Thorburn claims, consensus narratives are where “the deepest values and contradictions of society are articulated and, sometimes, understood” (168).
Regardless of whether or not the case study Australian historical miniseries attempt narrative closure through *renouvellement* (consensus) or are based on *rapprochement*, the miniseries do not attempt to close down interpretation – by professional interpreters such as academics or by audience members – in the way an authorised heritage discourse is claimed to do. In any case, an authorised heritage discourse does not shield heritage visitors from the possibility they will experience conflict and tension as a result of their attending to the stories created by an exhibit, performance, or event.

**Experiencing and Performing Heritage**

A heritage experience is the result of visitor and viewer encounters with tangible items. A historical miniseries is a tangible item in that it is able to be seen and heard on television and is made from tangible products such as film stock, sets, and actors’ bodies. But the final product – whether a heritage story or exhibit, a miniseries story, a performance at a heritage site, and so forth – generates intangible experiences in the viewer. Such intangible experiences are the core product when individuals encounter a heritage performance or a historical miniseries.

Audience studies by film and television scholars have much in common with similar studies in Heritage Studies. Both demonstrate that individuals experience their encounter with a historical miniseries or a heritage work in varied and often dissimilar ways. As Waterton and Watson (*Framing Theory*) observe, individuals only know heritage through their personal experiences and encounters with items, performances, exhibits, and so on. Therefore, conflicts may develop amongst members of a particular group or community as the result of a particular heritage exhibition or and performance. However, many heritage theorists and professionals adopting a significance assessment approach maintain heritage interpreters are not required to offer solutions to these conflicts. Conflicts are not only inevitable but intrinsic to objects and practices assessed to have heritage value.

Emotional experiences are important intangible experiences for both miniseries viewers and heritage visitors. These experiences can include “fantasy, nostalgia, pleasure, pride, and the like” (*Tunbridge and Ashworth*). It can never be known how the majority of individual Australians experienced miniseries in the 1980s and 1990s, but – as with heritage displays – there are publicly available interpretations of and commentaries on these miniseries. This material, by film and television scholars, critics, journalists, and viewers are relied on in this thesis.
In this context, television has been identified by scholars from a range of disciplines, including Film and Television Studies, as being an ideal medium for interpreting past conflicts. Following the logic of this chapter, television is also an ideal medium for the representation of these conflicts as heritage. As McGregor (*Vietnam*) notes, television “cannot provide solutions to deep human problems, or even answers to complex questions”. Rather, what it does is offer viewers opportunities for re-examination; it can provide “the stimulus for fresh insight and new judgements”. Television interpretations and representations “of [for example] great events in national life may cause us [as members of the audience] to ask questions of ourselves and our nation” (*McGregor Vietnam*). Interpretations of past events in the Kennedy Miller miniseries *Vietnam* did not offer solutions to the issues represented on-screen. What *Vietnam* did was to initiate opportunities for Australian viewers to experience an interpretation and representation of the past, and thereby to develop new insights into specific issues and themes. These interpretations were delivered through performances and staged for viewers.

Performance and performativity have been considered not only by film and television scholars but also by heritage theorists. The integrity and authenticity of intangible experiences audiences feel while viewing others performing heritage have been discussed within Heritage Studies in relation to the staging of an event as a performance. This notion of staging has relevance for historical films and television productions in that heritage events as well as films and television shows are staged performances. MacCannell introduced the concept of staged authenticity into heritage tourism (MacCannell; Chhabra, Healy, and Sills 705) in an attempt to understand how a host community interprets and represents its culture in ways that can be sold to tourists as an appealing informative and entertainment package. For all its negative associations, staging for tourists can still provide visitors with an emotionally authentic heritage experience. This is because the concept of staged authenticity need not preclude authenticity since the staging might contain elements of the original tradition (MacCannell).

Staging may also involve displacement of (a tangible) cultural production from one place to another, with modifications designed to fit the new conditions of time and place. However, staging (even when it is displaced) does not necessarily mean superficiality (see Chhabra, Healy, and Sills 715). Indeed, there are now claims that all cultures are staged: “[c]ultures are invented, remade and the elements reorganized” (Crick 65; and see Chhabra, Healy, and Sills 705). With Hobsbawm and Ranger offering many examples of newly invented traditions, it is now commonly understood that many cultural practices regarded as ‘old’ or ‘ancestral’ and part of the heritage of a community or a nation, and given prestige as a consequence, are in fact relatively recent (Pearce 3). This
perspective explains why the ‘invention’ of new or modified traditions for a historical miniseries, such as the Anzacs being a multicultural group of men, or that post-World War Two Displaced Persons in migrant camps encountered mysterious and wondrous events in these camps, would be evaluated by audiences and critics on the basis of their contributions to the heritage of a community or of a nation.

The *framing* of an event (such as a performance or exhibit) or a site (such as a building) as heritage contributes to visitor interpretations and experiences of that event or site. Performance and performativity are crucial to the social practices surrounding heritage events, sites, exhibits, and the like (Bagnall 87). Jackson and Kidd (12-13) contend that framing an event, performance, or site as heritage needs to take into account the way these locations, objects, and events are experienced by individuals since “[a]n audience’s quality of engagement and the extent of learning will partly depend on the way the experience is framed”. In addition, according to Jackson and Kidd “[w]hat happens before and after a performance, and the way the visitor is engaged during it, are just as important as the content” (12-13). They also claim that performances where actors perform the roles of characters intensify the authenticity of storytelling and of the heritage experience for individuals. Relating to a particular *character* in a heritage performance “brings the history alive” although people often “remember the *experience* of the performance more vividly than the factual content” (Jackson and Kidd 10). This may result in an ‘empathy paradox’ which leads audiences to “develop such a strong sense of empathy with a particular character that they can lose sight of the bigger picture: the larger historical context” (Jackson and Kidd 10). The miniseries equivalent of this might be that the heroic status attributed to the portrayal of Bradman in the *Bodyline* miniseries may have deflected viewer attention away from other themes. On the other hand, the performance of the ‘multicultural’ character Kaiser in *Anzacs* was deliberately intended to establish empathy with that character, and to develop a particular narrative arc.

Staging is a performance and therefore requires performers. Audiences respond to the tangible physical bodies of actors and to their style of performance, providing these audiences with more intangible experiences. Television viewer responses to actors and to their on-screen characters and characterisations may change over time. First-time viewers encountering a miniseries years or decades after initial broadcast may not recognise the actors or their performance style. When *Anzacs* was initially broadcast to Australian viewers in 1984, audiences of the period would have recognised Paul Hogan as a comedian who ‘came down’ from the Sydney Harbour Bridge (where he was employed) to begin a career as ‘Hoges’ in television sketch comedies. Hogan brought his ‘Hoges’ persona and idiosyncratic acting style to the character he played in *Anzacs*. Decades later,
Australian audiences watching the *Anzacs* miniseries on DVD are unlikely to have knowledge of Hogan’s past history as ‘Hoges’. They would at best recognise Hogan as being the actor who played the lead role in the movie *Crocodile Dundee* (1986). The ‘Hoges’ persona may have been forgotten by viewers since it no longer actively circulates within popular culture, yet for many older Australians ‘Hoges’ is remembered as an authentic Australian character. Memory therefore becomes the key to how individuals recall their heritage experience at a later date.

### Memory and Heritage Interpretation

Memory is deeply implicated in imagining and creating stories and experiences in many artistic endeavours. Huyssen has observed that memory is a powerful stimulant for cultural and artistic creativity. According to Huyssen, even when “a fissure ... opens up between experiencing an event and remembering it in representation ... [r]ather than remembering or ignoring it, this split should be understood as a powerful stimulant for cultural and artistic creativity” (Huyssen, *Twilight Memories* 2).

Like history and heritage, memory recalls aspects of the past in the present and is, therefore, an interpretation of that past. For Huyssen (*Twilight Memories*) such memories are always represented (or ‘re-presented’) later. This means memories can be examined only by through their discursive or material manifestations in ‘memory texts’ existing in the present. In this sense, historical miniseries can be thought of as ‘memory texts’ in that they both represent memory and create new memories.

Like heritage interpretations in exhibits, museums, and sites, Australian historical miniseries provided a means for the recall of events often not personally experienced by viewers. In this way, audiences could acquire a vicarious memory of events, people, and cultures they had no connections with or had not encountered previously. As Jelin (141) points out, while some viewers may have lived through a given event or period, other viewers may be part of ‘a collective body’ sharing a cultural knowledge base transmitted by others. Watching a historical miniseries then provided the Australian community with opportunities to develop shared memories of a past interpreted and represented for them. It also enabled community members to learn something about Australia’s complex multicultural heritage.

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4 Also, while famous or well-known actors have a tangible presence on screen, they bring with them intangible associations. As Rosenstone (*JFK* 509) points out, famous actors are an “elusive, extra-historical element” who cannot “simply disappear” into a historical film (or miniseries).
In contemporary circumstances, a community’s collective memory of the past and the memories of individuals belonging to that community are often created for them by popular media interpretations and representations. For example, when outlining how fighting on the Western Front in World War One has entered into popular memory and culture, Wilson (80) points out that it has not been historians and their work that has led to this; instead, the popular media “have provided the archetypal image of industrialised war and meaningless slaughter” (80). Popular memory of the past therefore constitutes a kind of public history in Samuel’s terms (*Theatres*).

The recall – by individuals within their communities – of actual and invented events and characters in a miniseries serves a social and cultural purpose. Individuals (and a group of individuals collectively forming an audience or community of interest) remember miniseries in the present, from within specific social and cultural settings. Huyssen (*Twilight Memories*) firmly locates the act as well as the products of memory in the realm of culture. As Halbwachs famously observed, the past is a social construction mainly, if not wholly, shaped by the concerns of the present (Halbwachs quoted in Coser 25). This is because individuals draw on their group-based affiliations to remember, interpret, and recreate the past: "[e]very collective memory," writes Halbwachs (*Collective Memory* 84), "requires the support of a group delimited in space and time". The social transmission of memories highlights "the importance of societal frameworks as the basis for retaining memories in a specific society" (Ross 197). In this way heritage interpretations – and historical miniseries – enable the *social transmission* of imagined, recreated, and constructed memories.

With memories always socially constructed and recalled in specific cultural contexts, any distinction between ‘living’ and ‘artificial’ memory can be rejected (Huyssen, *Twilight Memories*). However, constructed or artificial memories can be and often are contested by individuals as being unauthentic. Additionally, people with some personal experience of the events or of the people represented in an exhibition or miniseries often have competing memories. They often make their recollections known to the wider community through the media. Australian soldiers who fought in the Pacific campaign recalled their wartime experiences in letters to newspapers where they contested the interpretations and representations of the Japanese soldier in *The Cowra Breakout*. Memories of their time in migrant camps prompted many migrants to contest an imagined migrant camp experience in the *Bordertown* miniseries. In similar ways, museum exhibition are called to task by their visitors.
There is, however, no template for how a society remembers, interprets, and represents its collective past. Neither does an item, artefact, or work of art provide on its own a clear indication of how a society recalls its past. As Niven (434, citing Alon Confino) usefully points out, cultural artefacts do not necessarily provide definitive insights into the heritage, history, or collective memory of a cultural group or society: “A film or novel, even if we can talk of it in terms of auteurist or authorial intention ... does not tell us how [a] society remembers the past”. Instead, items such as a historical miniseries, film, or novel provide insight into how the filmmaker or author imagines the past. It is this imagined past – including the historical world created for and by the purposes of storytelling – which is remembered by viewers and readers and enters, perhaps, into a community’s collective memory.

Heritage Studies theorists and professionals often have to re-assess the heritage value and cultural significance of items, objects, events, and so forth. Original assessors may be involved in a re-assessment process. In either case, assessors are evaluating items that have been displaced over time. Recalling a miniseries over a number of days or weeks while it is being broadcast, and then remembering that miniseries some time later (perhaps years later), alludes to the notion – from heritage theory – that such recall and remembrance of cultural items constitute time and experience gaps. These gaps impact on how these cultural items are interpreted and remembered at different historical moments (Vanhaesebrouck). Additionally, the information and entertainment qualities of a miniseries are different each time the miniseries is viewed.

Australian audiences at the time each of the case study miniseries was broadcast shared a common viewing experience and developed shared memories. Every time a viewer or researcher watches the same miniseries, there is a different viewing experience since the series is interpreted anew – a time gap impacts on the viewing experience. There is also a time gap when a new viewer watches the series years after its initial release. This then constitutes an experience gap, since the viewing experience and how a miniseries is remembered in a later period also changes.

**Conclusion**

That films and television shows are made in a particular place at a particular time in the past might encourage approaching the study of these items as historical traces of the past or as evidence of how others in other times interpreted and engaged with the past, and lead to the adoption of methodologies from the field of Historical Studies. This has often been the case in studies of
historical films and miniseries by history scholars (see Freeman, Introduction). However, the argument advanced in this chapter has been that an appreciation of the complex work of heritage provides more nuanced critiques and evaluations of historical films and television productions.

Approaching historical miniseries as cultural works capable of being assessed to be artefacts of heritage value and as works of art telling their own heritage stories, acknowledges the ways creative interpretations of the past as heritage are at their best when they engage in and provoke debates between scholars and between members of the viewing public. Many Film and Television Studies methodologies and approaches encourage debates over particular ideological issues. Heritage Studies practitioners, professionals, and theorists likewise see debate and even controversy as inevitable and necessary. This is because the interpretation of an object, item, event and so on, as heritage is ideological in the sense that “sets of ideas are being conveyed through the heritage product” (Tunbridge and Ashworth 28). However, there is no ‘hegemonic ideology’ – as the initial proponents in the British ‘heritage film’ debate claimed – connecting Heritage Studies approaches or heritage theories into a single ‘heritage agenda’. Likewise, the case study miniseries do not share a common ideological framework. Heritage Studies also points to the implausibility of proposing that a wide range of films or television shows, or an entire genre, are driven by a singular deterministic ideological agenda and framework.

It is not possible, practical, or even desirable to position all the case study miniseries into a dominant and singular story or ‘narrative of Australia’. As Ang (Intertwining Histories) notes, Australia’s collective heritage comprises many stories with themes based on “both pride and shame, celebration and remorse, triumph and tragedy”. The miniseries examined in this thesis tell connected but different stories of Australia’s history and multicultural heritage. This makes the stories they tell and the way they interpret and represent the past on-screen culturally significant. Developing procedures to determine how and why these miniseries are of heritage value and are culturally significant is the task of the next chapter.
Chapter 3

HERITAGE VALUE AND CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

Introduction

The historical miniseries investigated as case studies in this thesis tell different but connected stories interpreting events from Australian history, with most of them addressing a difficult and contentious cultural issue. This makes the stories they tell and the miniseries themselves culturally significant, but it does not indicate how and why they are significant. This chapter engages with criteria and protocols for assessing the heritage value of items developed by the Australian heritage sector. Since items with a range of heritage values are of cultural significance, after outlining the criteria and protocols for assessing heritage value, discussion moves on to the practicalities of adapting the heritage sector’s approach to assess the historical miniseries in terms of their heritage value and cultural significance.

The chapter points to the many parallels between these assessment criteria and those developed in Film and Television Studies. It also shows how concepts of televisualty (Caldwell) and monumentality (Huyssen, Present Pasts: Urban) – borrowed from Film and Television Studies and Cultural Studies respectively – can be usefully merged with heritage assessment criteria to provide a framework for understanding the complexities of interpreting the past as heritage in a historical miniseries. This thesis argues that this heritage assessment methodology can be productively combined with a range of approaches from other disciplines to focus on determining why the case study historical miniseries are significant cultural items.

The assessment of cultural significance begins with an evaluation of the items themselves for their heritage value. Beginning with the primacy of the object or item the focus is upon conducting a case-by-case assessment of an item to determine how and why it is of heritage value. This involves assessing and theorising the innate and intrinsic value of the item in question. From the perspective of the contemporary Australian heritage sector, interpretation is the presentation of an item, object, collection, or performance in order to bring out its meanings and heritage values (Heritage Collections Council 70; Russell and Winkworth 63). The cultural significance of an item is determined by the aggregate of heritage values attributed to it (de la Torre and Mason 3). These
values are, of course, never fixed. Moreover, assessors, scholars, and stakeholders can discuss and dispute these values if they choose. Ongoing value assessment is required, necessitating the development of new models. These circumstances dictate that a flexible approach needs to be taken to heritage value assessment.

As noted in the first chapter, Australian heritage professionals and theorists have gained international recognition for developing theories, criteria, and protocols to determine how and why an item is of heritage value (Waterton and Watson, Framing Theory 2). These include a wide variety of assessment tools and a diverse suite of methods which are then integrated in a blended and interdisciplinary evaluative methodology (Mason 14, 16). This blended methodology is developed to respond to a range of heritage values associated with an item, and to take into account the diverse reasons for undertaking a particular assessment project (Mason 16). This chapter outlines the characteristics of such a blended and interdisciplinary evaluative methodology – one that can be adapted to evaluate the heritage values of a historical miniseries so as to then determine the nature and scope of its cultural significance.

The attraction of a heritage-based significance assessment process for film and television scholars interested in the heritage value and content of film and television productions is that, as a norm-based assessment process, it is explicit. Its criteria for assessing the heritage value of an item are well thought out. An explicit assessment process that adopts assessment criteria enables a rigorous and multifaceted assessment to be undertaken. Premised on a blended methodology, this process facilitates the development of reasoned and logical explanations for how and why a select group of miniseries are of heritage value and cultural significance.

After an account of the significance assessment process and criteria developed by the Australian heritage sector (hereon in, the heritage sector) with a view to determining their applicability in the examination of historical miniseries, the second half of the chapter is concerned with a heritage evaluation of the landmark international historical miniseries Roots (1977), Holocaust (1978), and Heimat (1984). This evaluation demonstrates the concurrences between Heritage Studies and Film and Television Studies approaches that aim to identify culturally significant productions. It also points to some of the insights the heritage sector’s systematic approach to heritage evaluation can provide in establishing the heritage imagination at work in each production.

Since heritage evaluation necessitates an evaluation of the heritage values of an item, the next section begins by outlining and explaining heritage evaluation as a rational assessment approach.
Determined Cultural Significance

In the heritage sector’s significance assessment approach, the cultural significance of an item (or object, artefact, site, performance, and so on) is determined by professional assessors with the experience and training to sensitively apply a range of criteria to establish the heritage values of the item. The exercise of this professional expertise is conceptualised as a form of connoisseurship. Connoisseurship here denotes “[t]he ability and competence to pass critical judgements on items of cultural heritage, based on knowledge of history, style, technology, and comparative examples” (Heritage Collections Council 70; Russell and Winkworth 62). It is important to note that professional assessors do not apply criteria to determine an item as being a ‘good’ or ‘bad’ instance of its type. Accordingly, no judgement is made in this thesis about whether or not a miniseries is a ‘good’ or ‘bad’ production; the thesis is not critical in this sense.

The application of a normative assessment process requires interpretations and judgements by professionals who determine the relative heritage value of one item (such as a miniseries) in comparison to another related item. While impartiality and objectivity, in any absolute sense, are not likely to be achievable when applying a norm-based assessment process, a high level of connoisseurship (with its professional standards) and personal judgement (with its requirement of professional justifiability) are required when an assessor evaluates an item’s heritage value. When professionals outline and report on the cultural significance of an item, the assessment process they develop and then employ still results in subjective opinions. No matter their level of connoisseurship, their reasoned reports are based on opinions, even if these are ‘informed’ opinions (Mason 15). The Australian Heritage Collections Council advises those developing and conducting a significance assessment process to make every effort to be maintain their objectivity; but the Council also acknowledges that “both assessors and assessing instruments cannot guarantee a scientifically objective result” (Australian Heritage Projects and Winkworth 77). The Council points out that even after developing and applying “a consistent process and criteria [that] helps to develop assessments that are rigorous and well substantiated by evidence, research and logical argument” there “will always be an element of personal judgement in the assessment” (17). This is because the relative social and cultural values of items are assessed according to post-positivist methods that embrace difference, contradiction, and ambiguity (Mason 28).

It is to be expected that the application of a blended methodological approach will also generate pluralistic, contradictory, and ambiguous assessment results. Consequently, while positivist methods do have something to contribute towards a heritage evaluation and significance assessment
process, contemporary heritage professionals and theorists contend post-positivist methods should always be a part of any blended methodology since post-positivist methods not only accept contradiction and ambiguity, but are able to “embrace the values and politics surrounding any epistemological effort” (Mason 28). A significance assessment process can still be consistent and rigorous, while at the same time embracing contradiction and ambiguity.

Contradiction and ambiguity often accompany assessments by professionals of the relative heritage value and cultural significance of an item. Individuals and communities often generate their own conflicting assessments of the item (Heritage Collections Council 13). This is the case when values held by non-professional stakeholders are taken into account. These stakeholders, such as members of a local community, are likely to hold a range of highly subjective opinions about the value and significance of an item. Heritage professionals and theorists are aware that visitors, viewers, and consumers of cultural items interpret them as their heritage in multiple ways. Visitor studies in Heritage Studies and audience studies in Film and Television Studies have yielded much the same insights into their active audiences, with these studies showing how individuals interpret exhibitions and screen productions in a variety of ways. In addition, multiple viewpoints and equivocal assessments result when, as de la Torre and Mason (3) point out, the values considered in an assessment process also includes those held by non-heritage experts with an interest in heritage such as historians and, in the case of this thesis, film and television academics and theorists. Accepting the inevitability of multiple viewpoints is also a feature of Caldwell’s concept of televisuality, as well as being a central feature of Huyssen’s theorizations on monumentality.

The development of a heritage sector significance assessment process begins by selecting and adapting criteria from a typology of criteria that have relevancy and applicability for the assessment project in hand. In particular, criteria associated with social and cultural value, historical value, and research and educational value, are integral to this assessment method. These evaluative criteria can be used to assess a wide array of artefacts because they are broad enough to cover a diverse range of values, some of which overlap or compete (Mason 5). In addition, values change over time and are shaped by contextual factors such as social forces, economic opportunities, and cultural trends (Mason 5). Therefore, broad general criteria provide scope to consider the aesthetic qualities and production values of items and objects, their social and cultural value, as well as audience and critical responses.

1 The assumption usually made by professionals from a range of disciplines with an investment in ‘scientific’ empiricism, is that ‘scientific’ methods are inherently consistent and rigorous, and the application of such methodologies avoid contradiction and ambiguity. While a ‘scientific’ method is positivist and assumes a value-free, objective perspective, such an approach is unable to take into account social and cultural factors which are inherently contradictory and ambiguous.
Even though there are several distinct categories of heritage value, with some values intersecting, developing a typology permits the *systemic and logical evaluation* of an item (Mason 24). However, criteria typologies tend to maximise and minimise some kinds of value at the expense of other values. The Australian Burra Charter (discussed in the first chapter) makes it explicit that *there is no heritage without cultural value*. The Charter clearly indicates that cultural values are used to build cultural affiliation in the present, with these affiliations being historical, political, or ethnic (Mason 11). Consequently, economic values are minimised because they are regarded as being derived from cultural and historical values and are therefore given secondary consideration (Marquis-Kyle and Walker; Mason 10, 27). Like the Burra Charter, this thesis emphasises cultural and social values; therefore these values are at the head of any criteria list.

Since a heritage assessment process maintains the primacy of the object, emphasising the social and cultural values of a miniseries should not obscure the fact that miniseries are designed to tell a story televisually. The aesthetic value of a miniseries can be assessed by evaluating its *televisual* style, form, genre, and narrative. For example, when comparing the American miniseries *Holocaust* (1978) to the German production *Heimat* (1984), Bondebjerg found their overall aesthetic value to be the result of their shared emphasis on “the melodramatic close-up, [where] a focus on the personal, individual level, dominates”. As Bondebjerg goes on to further note in relation to *Heimat* (1984), it is through the visual detail of its historical world – what the past might have looked like – that drama becomes bonded to historical context: “the day-to-day life of the figures [characters] is eloquently visualised using overlays of carefully composed, symbolically laden visuals; it is largely through visual detail that Reitz [the creator of *Heimat*] establishes and maintains strong associations between the micro-drama and its historical context” (Bondebjerg 6).

Some features of the visual style of a miniseries, such as its production design and *mise-en-scene*, have both tangible attributes (viewable on-screen) and intangible qualities (the emotions and feelings that result when a viewer watches the miniseries). Intangible outcomes are notoriously difficult to assess compared to the physical or tangible attributes of an item because they are not easy to identify. Assessors must not assume that their response to a cultural item is the same as that of others. In an evaluative and assessment process, hindsight is often needed to appreciate the intangible significance of items (Russell and Winkworth 42).

As items offering audiences interpretations and televisual representations of past events, and as objects with their own intrinsic heritage value, miniseries are able to be contextualized and
evaluated at two levels. Firstly, the miniseries are cultural items that individually and collectively tell stories about their creation. Caldwell’s concept of televisuality (*Televisuality*) is useful here in that it considers a television program’s form and style to be directly influenced by its production environment. This environment not only includes social, cultural, and political events, but also the financial environment; for instance, in 1980s Australia, a particular miniseries may have obtained funding through the federal government’s 10BA tax incentive scheme.

Secondly, the miniseries are the stories in the world – the particular historical miniseries examined as case studies told ‘multicultural stories’ during a multiculturalist period in Australian history. In Australia over the 1980s, official discourses on multiculturalism as articulated by the Hawke and the Keating Federal Labor governments tinted political rhetoric. Multicultural themes entered into many of the miniseries from this period as the cultural heritages of a number of different ethnic and cultural groups were reinterpreted as the collective heritage of *all* Australians. How and why a miniseries imagined multicultural heritage in these ways contributes to the ongoing social, cultural, historical, aesthetic, and research value of this miniseries (Heritage Collections Council (11), as well as to its monumentality.

Every miniseries has its own pre-production and production history. Being aware of the history of an item contextualizes it. Contextualization assists in establishing logical connections or coherence between items brought together in a group or collection. Coherence can then be established by examining the connections between a number of similar items as well as with the places where these items were used (Russell and Winkworth 32).

**Contextualization and Coherence**

Contextualization – knowing the history of an item – is an essential facet of the Australian heritage sector’s significance assessment process. It takes into account the production and reception environment that gave rise to the item in order to provide a more detailed assessment of its significance. It places the item in a wider historical and geographic context (Heritage Collections Council 370). A similar move is made in a range of studies of films and television programs. Connections are likewise made between the original ‘owners’ of the item (in the case of historical miniseries, the creators of these productions) and those who used and appreciated it. In addition, contextualizing a show like a miniseries – along the lines of Caldwell’s conceptualization of televisuality – encompasses televisual developments such as innovations in the form and style of the
miniseries at the time when it was made, as well as the social and technological changes impacting on television production and consumption. Through appropriate contextualization, significance assessment processes seek to promote discussion and debate about an item’s meanings and themes (Australian Heritage Projects and Winkworth 35).

Considering the high-rating Hollywood miniseries Roots (1977) illustrates the importance of contextualization. This miniseries was disputed by some interpretive communities and lauded by others. While Roots was not the first miniseries, it was the most popular broadcast in the United States. It continues to be of significance within American public culture and is remembered within American television’s memorial system as a landmark program. It retains its monumentality as a result of multiple judgements: by television historians, Film and Television Studies scholars, cultural and social historians, political activists, and American ethnic groups. Roots developed the form and style of the historical miniseries. As Creeber (Serial Television 23) points out, Roots was an enormous national and global ‘television event’ – the first blockbuster miniseries. It started the push for the historical miniseries form that swept through the American and international television industries in the late 1970s. It had the greatest impact of any miniseries on the subsequent form, style, and popularity of the historical miniseries in the United States (Courtis 6) and internationally.

At the time of its production and first screening the miniseries format was at the cutting edge of programming for American network television. It was a format explicitly designed to counter the impending threat of cable television (Fetherston 22). American television executives were interested in developing a televisual form employing a style capable of attracting a mass audience of diverse American viewers, and keeping them interested over an extended period. The formula decided upon – as summarised by Fetherston (22) – was to bring together “[a]n absorbing story, an attractive cast, a huge budget, and a story spun out for at least six hours – probably to be shown over consecutive nights. The audience would be hooked and there would not be the temptation to push the button on the cable box.” Although it was a strategy that worked, the original idea to schedule Roots over consecutive nights was also partly an attempt by ABC to get it over with quickly if it proved to be a ratings disaster (Fetherston 22). Twelve hours long and running over eight successive nights as 90-minute episodes (beginning on 23 January 1977), each episode of Roots was watched by millions of Americans from a multitude of ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

Contextualization also involves establishing the cultural interpretive framework the historical miniseries maker adopted to attract and engage a mass audience. In Roots African-American history was interpreted and represented as the nation’s heritage through a re-versioning of the traditional
‘immigrant success story’. At the same time, the dissonant heritage of slavery became the shared heritage of every American. Its makers positioned *Roots* deliberately as an emblematic ‘saga of an American family’ and a new kind of saga of life in the Deep South. Its subsequent ratings success internationally confirmed the general appeal of its televisual interpretations of American cultural heritage. Even though it was the tale of an American family, as an immigrant success story it connected with non-American viewers. The approaches developed by its creators for their diverse American public had the consequence of sufficiently universalising this story for international audiences. Such contextualization helps establish and qualify the monumentality of a miniseries.

The principle of coherence is also important when making meaningful comparisons between items since there is not much point in comparing totally dissimilar items (Russell and Winkworth 47). This has similarly been the case with the study of Australian narrative films and television productions, when Australian scholars construct linkages between a range of films and television shows. It is a typical move on the part of those who study national film industries. In his chapter ‘Unity’ in *Australian National Cinema*, O’Regan notes how Australian “critics, policy-makers, filmmakers and bureaucrats problematise Australian cinema” in order to provide “Australian cinema [with] a certain representativity” and to identify “progressive and regressive tendencies in the [Australian national] cinema” (201). In this thesis, a point of coherence among the case study Australian historical miniseries is their shared interpretations and representations of multiculturalism, and their stories of the Australian people in their ethnic and cultural diversity. Similar to *Roots*, these were stories about people facing and responding to epochal events. Australian historical miniseries would also contribute to the ‘story of a nation’ and to the nation’s cultural heritage.

Like many American-produced historical miniseries, the majority of Australian miniseries in the 1980s and early 1990s were developed for commercial television. Some miniseries rated well while others did not. However, as attested to by work on the cultural importance of media texts arising out of Film and Television Studies, commercial success (in the case of commercial television) or popular success (in the case of public broadcasters) is not essential for an item to have cultural significance under heritage sector protocols (Young). Commercial value and popular success may be important in some contexts, as was the case for miniseries such as *Bodyline*, *Anzacs*, and *The Leaving of Liverpool*. But commercial value and popular success are not necessarily indicators of heritage value. The miniseries *Bordertown* was not a ratings success in Australia (or anywhere else) and it was widely criticised. Yet it can be assessed as being of cultural significance because of its innovative televisual style, for Australia at least. So another association and point of coherence
between the case study miniseries can be established on the basis of their stylistic strategies and innovations.

Caldwell’s concept of televisuality (Caldwell, *Televisuality*) provides additional insights into the stylistic strategies and broadcast innovations of the miniseries. During the 1980s and 1990s, television networks in Australia and the United States broadcast miniseries as important ‘special’ televisual events, and as highlights of each new season’s programming line-up. When critics and commentators claim a group of miniseries are related due to their status as special events, or because they are called monumental productions, they are establishing connections between these shows. Such shows can be compared on the basis of the stories they tell, their televisual style, their placement on a television programming schedule, and their production environment. Caldwell coined the concept of ‘televisuality’ to get at this multifaceted aspect of broadcast television presentation in the 1980s.

In the heritage sector specifically and in Heritage Studies more generally, the analysis of particular items has traditionally been undertaken by academic and professional experts drawn from a number of allied fields (Mason 19). For these experts – typically art historians and historians with other specialisations, curators, and collection specialists – a form of connoisseurship based on the exercise of professional competencies is important. However, their judgements cannot be value free since, as Mason (19) notes, they are made through “theoretical screens” that “tacitly mak[e] a great many epistemological assumptions”. The same point can be made about the role of ‘theoretical screens’ developed within Film and Television Studies. A great many epistemological assumptions are likewise made by screen critics when they exercise their professional judgement. A kind of connoisseurship is similarly involved when the screen critic brings together a group of miniseries (or a group of films or other television shows) to compare them on the basis of their stylistic and thematic elements. This can be seen in Glen Creeber’s (*Serial Television*) discussion of the stylistic connections among *Roots, Holocaust*, and *Heimat*. This explains why the Australian heritage assessment protocols recommend that professional heritage assessors make every effort to reach conclusions not too bound by personal ‘value judgements’ (Russell and Winkworth 13).

Creeber points out that at the time of their original broadcast, *Roots, Holocaust*, and *Heimat* had cultural prestige by virtue of “their contradictory place” as television programs. They were not in “the trivialised realm” of long form serials such as soap operas, although they derived their power in part from the soap opera form. They borrowed from long-form serialised television drama its more thoroughgoing representation of themes and handling of complex and often contentious
historical events. This serialisation enabled the three miniseries to deploy multilayered narratives which were both self-conscious and politically complex (Creeber *Serial Television*). Serialisation, evident from the start of the miniseries phenomenon, was integral to the form and style – and to the achievements – of these miniseries. As Creeber points out “[i]t is hard to imagine ... that a single play could ever attempt to do justice to *Roots* (Alex Haley's epic generational story about his family history from slavery to emancipation)”. Indeed Creeber argues it could not have been accomplished in any “narrative form other than the television miniseries” (*Serial Television* 7). He contends that the serialised form of the miniseries allowed for greater complexity and coherence than that typically offered by a single play or one-off drama, while also encouraging greater narrative ambiguity (Creeber, *Serial Television*). As Creeber (*Serial Television* 6) observes, it should come as no surprise that historical epics are commonly regarded as prime material for serialised television drama.

Such complexity and ambiguity also accompanies heritage sector storytelling. It was, for instance, a readily identifiable attribute of ‘the story of the Australian nation’ told in various forms and venues during Australia’s 1988 Bicentenary celebrations. When multiple narratives interpreting Australia’s past intersect and intertwine in different ways, then complexity, ambiguity, and contradiction inevitably feature in these stories. Additionally, many of Australian 1980s historical miniseries – like heritage sector blockbuster exhibitions such as the touring Australian Bicentennial exhibition – were conceived as grand historical epics. Here as elsewhere there is a coincidence and sharing between stories developed for television and those created by the Australian heritage sector that has remained under-examined but is nonetheless important.

A significance assessment process needs to maintain an awareness that some cultural items will be evaluated by assessors to be of greater heritage value and therefore of greater cultural significance than others, and that the cultural significance of any item changes over time, and from community to community. For example, claims about the national significance of one miniseries in comparison with another are variable and contestable. Moreover, such disputes over the interpretations, meanings, and relevance of an item or group of items enhance the storytelling importance of the item or items for researchers.

In summary then, the development and application of a significance assessment process is more productive if the items to be compared are contextualized and have coherence. To assist in this task

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2 It is often claimed that in the mid-1970s the miniseries form came into its own in the United States with the serialised long-drama adaptation of Irwin Shaw’s novel *Rich Man, Poor Man* in 1976 (Courtis 6).
the Australian heritage sector has set out a number of criteria to enable heritage practitioners to reach conclusions as to the relative heritage value and cultural significance of an item, object, place, performance, and so on. These criteria for the assessment of heritage value now need to be considered and attended to.

Assessing Significance: Primary Criteria

While it is beneficial to understand the history and context of an item, object, or collection (Heritage Collections Council 11), ultimately a significance assessment process needs to identify the heritage value of the item for individuals and their communities. A significance assessment process involves determining how and why an item is culturally significant (Heritage Collections Council 11; Russell and Winkworth 14). To assist in the assessment of an item (or object, site, performance, and so forth) a typology of primary criteria has been developed and subsequently formalised by the Australian heritage sector. There are several distinct, though not fully separable, criteria of heritage value which together form the basis of significance statements.

Significance statements summarise the results of an assessment process. They assert the primacy of the object. More than a description of content, or what the item, object, or collection looks like (Russell and Winkworth 40), such statements provide a reasoned case for the heritage values, meaning, and importance of the item or items (Heritage Collections Council 12). Any judgements and assertions made in statements of significance need to be explained and supported by research, evidence, analysis, and comparison with similar items (Russell and Winkworth 13). It is important that statements exhibit some knowledge of comparable cultural items and objects “of a similar type” (Australian Heritage Projects and Winkworth 62) because, as Young adroitly explains it, a significance assessment process is “a qualitative technique [applied in order] to evaluate the relative importance [by undertaking comparisons] of cultural heritage items and objects (Young).

Developing a significance assessment statement for an Australian historical miniseries would entail prioritizing the heritage values of a miniseries as a cultural item in its own right. It would focus attention on the status of that miniseries as an item with heritage value, and would clearly indicate the criteria to be applied when undertaking an assessment of its cultural significance. While much of what is proposed here bears more than a passing family resemblance to Film and Television Studies research protocols, the specific purpose of assessing heritage value foregrounds heritage as a legitimate end in itself. In addition, developing, outlining, and then applying assessment protocols
– those social and cultural practices, processes, and evaluative mechanisms of heritage assessment – enables identification of a particular miniseries as being a heritage artefact able to be positioned alongside other, more familiar, heritage artefacts.

Even after an item is assessed to be culturally significant, this assessment is not fixed. Establishing significance itself can change with each new assessor and the number of times an item is assessed, so that evaluations of the cultural significance of the same item will vary – even, perhaps, each time it is assessed by the same assessor (Australian Heritage Projects and Winkworth 77). Consequently a significance assessment process needs to recognise that an item’s significance can grow or fade over time (Young; Heritage Collections Council 11). It might be the case, for example, that Bordertown will attain greater public recognition in the future. But it also might be the case that miniseries now regarded by academics and other commentators as having monumentality may not continue to be regarded as such. Significance statements always require revision and review as circumstances change and knowledge develops (Russell and Winkworth 40).

Significance assessors realise that, at times, individuals, associations, cultural groups, and other interpretive communities – including assessors on the same evaluative project – may be significantly at odds with each other over the meaning, heritage value, and cultural significance of particular items. Significance statements therefore should reflect and record the nature and substance of multiple points-of-view (Russell and Winkworth 13). If there are disputes over the significance of cultural items and objects, these disputes are noted when developing significance statements because they can contribute to the present and future value and significance of the item or object. The implication of this approach is that contestation is assumed to be an attribute of heritage evaluation and of those protocols developed for handling such contestation. When the meanings and perceived value of cultural items or objects are contested (Russell and Winkworth 13) the significance assessor “do[es] not have to resolve conflicting viewpoints, or determine which is right or wrong” (Heritage Collections Council 17). While Film and Television Studies has, in its turn, developed ways of allowing for and acknowledging the importance of such contestation, the heritage sector clearly centres it as an outcome of its practice. Heritage practice, therefore, requires contestation to be rigorously handled.

\footnote{This avoids what Nancy Fraser (71) has identified as ‘cultural and symbolic’ injustice rooted in social patterns of representation, interpretation, and communication. According to Fraser, examples include: "cultural domination (being subjected to patterns of interpretation and communication that are associated with another culture and are alien and/or hostile one's own); [and] nonrecognition (being rendered invisible via the authoritative representational, communicative, and interpretative practices of one's culture)" (N. Fraser 71).}
For their part, the producers of an Australian historical miniseries act like professional heritage interpreters because they apply criteria developed on a case-by-case basis to determine what aspects of the nation’s past and its cultural history they will include or exclude from their miniseries. In a very real sense, each miniseries is the final ‘significance assessment statement’ of its creator. Therefore, outlining a typology of criteria to determine heritage value results in an assessment process which can help establish the heritage imagination at work in a miniseries. Of course, as noted earlier, there are differences between how miniseries creators and heritage sector practitioners interpret the past, and these differences need to be acknowledged. But the fact and extent of a fundamental continuity existing between their respective practices should not be obscured.

Assessments of cultural significance begin by evaluating items according to primary criteria or categories of heritage value: social (and/or cultural) value, historical value, aesthetic (or artistic) value, and research value (Young, *Significance Assessment*; Australian Heritage Projects and Winkworth 23; Mason). The criteria in this typology are not mutually exclusive: for example, evaluating the heritage value of an item on the basis of its “style has both historic and aesthetic aspects” (quoted in Australian Heritage Projects and Winkworth 24). According to Australian heritage sector theorists, it is not necessary to find value in all the primary criteria. One or two primary criteria are sufficient (Australian Heritage Projects and Winkworth 4; Young) to indicate that an item “may still be highly significant” (Heritage Collections Council 11). Adapting the significance assessment process to evaluate a miniseries can result in it being evaluated to be of cultural significance after consideration of one or two (or more) of the primary criteria of heritage value.

These primary criteria of heritage value are qualified by comparative criteria. Comparative criteria are used to determine the relative heritage value of an item based on its provenance, representativeness, rarity, condition (completeness or intactness and integrity), and its interpretive potential (Australian Heritage Projects and Winkworth 4; Heritage Collections Council 11; Young). Thus, a significance assessment process evaluates the content and structure of an item, including its physical appearance, structure, and characteristics (Young). Consideration of an item’s appearance, design, context, environment and production history, provenance, uses, and functions is an important procedure (Russell and Winkworth 40). In terms of the evaluation of historical miniseries, Caldwell’s consideration of a show’s televisuality productively extends and elaborates this heritage focus on appearance, structure, and provenance. Determining the monumentality of a miniseries can be based, in part, on considering its present and future research potential, interest, value in promoting cultural understanding.
Other primary criteria such as cultural and social values, historical value, and aesthetic (or artistic) value have their own applicability for this thesis. Over the 1980s and into the 1990s, claims about the monumentality of a particular miniseries were often made when it was first broadcast. Each of the case study miniseries has already been judged by critics, academics, and others to be an important (significant) representative of ‘quality’ Australian television drama. Published material on historical miniseries is readily available. Since Australian miniseries are reasonably well-provenanced, a contextual examination can be supplemented by such sources as published reports and interviews in newspapers, and by audiovisual material in other media.

Cultural and Social Value

A significance assessment process acknowledges that for items and objects to have cultural significance, they must have cultural and social value for individuals and groups. There is, in short, no heritage without cultural value. As Mason (11) points out, values are attached to items, objects, places, and the like, because they hold meaning for people and social groups. The cultural and social value of these items, in combination with their historical value, connects them with a contemporary community’s beliefs, ideas, traditions, places, or stories. At the time each miniseries was made and broadcast, they had social and cultural value for audiences. Some cultural artefacts are kept alive or remembered by the group or community though social and cultural practices, memorials, or memorabilia (see Russell and Winkworth 39 & 49; Young; Australian Heritage Projects and Winkworth 60; UNESCO AMOWC). As intrinsically cultural items themselves, particular historical miniseries were remembered after the 1990s by specific interpretive communities. This was the case with *The Leaving of Liverpool*, a miniseries remembered well into the early 2000s by British child migrants resident in Australia, even though they had reached middle age.

Social and cultural values are, therefore, also specific to an identifiable group or interpretive community. *Cultural values* apply to those items, objects, and collections with a demonstrated contemporary attachment or importance to a group or community (Russell and Winkworth 39; Heritage Collections Council 32; UNESCO AMOWC). Establishing the *social value* of an item connects individuals with each other and establishes a sense of community identity (Throsby 104). According to Mason (12), social values attributed to an item enable a shared heritage that facilitates

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4 The work may have particular value for a cultural or community group today. The work may embody the beliefs, ideas, traditions, places, or stories important for a particular group or community (see Russell and Winkworth 39 & 49; Young; Australian Heritage Projects and Winkworth 60; UNESCO AMOWC).
social connections, networks, and other relations in a broad sense – social values not necessarily related to the central historical values of the item. All the miniseries examined as case studies hold cultural value. Most have been assessed by various groups to be of social value at the time they were broadcast. At that time and to varying degrees, each of these miniseries was implicated in debates then underway within Australian public culture over the nation’s identity and its multicultural heritage. Mason (11) notes that *cultural value* is, like historical value, a part of the very notion of heritage.

**Historical Value**

An item or object develops *historical value* under a number of conditions. It can occur when individuals belonging to a group or community no longer have an attachment to an item (when the item ceases to exist or hold importance for them), or when the community valuing the item ceases to exist. Items of social history interest are of historic value (Russell and Winkworth 39; Heritage Collections Council 32; UNESCO AMOWC). By the second decade of the 21st century, bar a couple of notable exceptions, the case study miniseries are not generally remembered by public or community groups. Thus, while they all retain their cultural value, they are now more of historical value and are of value as cultural research items.

Determining an item or object as having historical value connects the item with the past. History and heritage are fundamental to all cultures (Throsby 104). The capacity of an item, object, site, or performance to convey and stimulate in a viewer or visitor a relation or reaction to the past is part of the fundamental nature and meaning of heritage items. The historic value of an item such a miniseries is based on associations with a person (such as the producer of a historical miniseries); or on associations with a group, an event, a place, a period (1980s and early 1990s Australia); or an activity (the making and broadcast of historical miniseries) or social movement (official multiculturalism); or on a historic theme or process; or on cultural history (Russell and Winkworth 39 & 49; Young; UNESCO AMOWC; Heritage Collections Council 25). When the makers of historical miniseries are thought of as being heritage interpreters and contributors to public history in Samuel’s sense of the term (*Theatres*), then their miniseries have historic value as interpretations and representations of Australia’s multicultural history during a period of official multiculturalism, and when miniseries were regarded as the high-water mark of Australian television drama.

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5 The item could be a good example of a work associated with a particular person, group, event, place, or activity. The work may relate to important individuals, groups or social movements, or to significant social and cultural change. The work may contribute to understanding a period, place, activity, person, group, or event (Russell and Winkworth 39 & 49; Young; UNESCO AMOWC; Heritage Collections Council 25).
There are two important sub-types of historical value: educational value and symbolic value (Mason 11). There has been a long-established recognition that the educational value of heritage lies in the potential to communicate knowledge about the past to future generations through stories and artistic work. Knowledge can be obtained through, for instance, an artist’s creative interpretation of an event from the historical record represented as heritage in an art work or item (Mason 11) – this certainly applies to the stories actualized in historical miniseries. Symbolic value in this context refers to those shared meanings associated with heritage that are not, strictly speaking, historical, with ‘historic’ in this sense referring to the meanings an item, object, or site develops and which change over time (Mason 11).

**Aesthetic Value**

In heritage practice, aesthetic value is widely agreed to be a category of sociocultural value. According to Mason (12), although it refers to a wide range of qualities, aesthetic most often refers to the visual qualities of the item. The aesthetic (or artistic) heritage value of an item is based on its associations with particular forms and styles, perhaps with an artist (here a particular miniseries writer or director or production house such as Kennedy Miller), or with a genre (in this case, melodrama); with innovation, design, and technical accomplishment; or with representations and depictions of significant people, places, periods, activities, stories, ideas, and events (Russell and Winkworth 39 & 49; Young; Australian Heritage Projects and Winkworth 60; UNESCO AMOWC; Heritage Collections Council 28). Aesthetic attributes contribute to assessments of the monumentality of items including assessments of the monumentality of a historical miniseries. The televisual form and style of a miniseries, in combination with its past abilities and present and future potential to tell significant stories about Australia’s ethnic and cultural heritage contribute to the heritage value of that miniseries. Additionally, as noted in the previous chapter, the integrity of the story and its actualization on-screen contribute to the aesthetic value of a miniseries.

**Research Value**

The possibility cultural items may attain social value in the future increases as they are rediscovered. A significance assessment process grants that items and objects, if they are preserved, may acquire social value with the passage of time (Heritage Collections Council 32). Miniseries, for instance, may be rediscovered for their research value: that is, for their present and future

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6 The work may be a good example of a style, artistic movement, or an artist’s body of work. It may show a high degree of artistic, innovation, or technical accomplishment and quality, or be well-crafted or made. It may depict a particular subject, person, place, period, activity, story, idea or event of interest or importance. The work could be aesthetically pleasing (by common standards, not personal view). The work may be an innovative or high art; or it may be mass produced. Items do not have to be art works to have artistic value. Some items may have little artistic value but still have historic value instead (Russell and Winkworth 39 & 49; Young; Australian Heritage Projects and Winkworth 60).
research potential or research interest (Russell and Winkworth 39 & 49; Young; UNESCO AMOWC; Heritage Collections Council 30). George Miller was claiming just such research value in recent media interviews where he promoted the political, cultural, and storytelling achievements of his Kennedy Miller miniseries upon their re-release more than twenty years after they were broadcast (Idato, *Culture*). Certainly these miniseries continue to be held in high esteem by specific groups and communities of interest including the miniseries makers themselves. They have been kept alive by academics and researchers in various ways. Through academic publications, digital heritage sites such as that maintained by Screen Australia (*From Wireless*), and the availability of miniseries on DVD, the memory and the content of at least some miniseries has been preserved and extended. All the case study historical miniseries have this sort of existing and future research value and potential.

Comparative criteria may increase or decrease the relative significance of an item. The comparative criteria – provenance, rarity (or representativeness), condition (or integrity or completeness), and interpretative potential – interact with the primary criteria. A significance assessment process contends items need to be significant under at least one of the primary criteria; they cannot be significant if only the comparative criteria apply (Russell and Winkworth 39). Each case study miniseries is of cultural significance under one or more of the primary criteria. Comparative criteria usefully supplement and qualify these primary criteria.

**Assessing Significance: Comparative Criteria**

*Provenance*

Provenance takes into account the evidence available about those who created, made, owned, or used the item. The production and broadcast of the case study miniseries have been well documented and are therefore reasonably provenanced. Provenance, considered along with the history of an item (Russell and Winkworth 15), gives the item a context within society at large (Heritage Collections Council 37). Provenance is “the life story of an item or collection and a record of its ultimate derivation ... Well-provenanced items are the building blocks of artefact histories and connoisseurship” (Russell and Winkworth 15).

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7 Researchers may have an active interest in studying the item or collection, or will they may want to do in the future. Items and objects may be significant for their potential to enhance understanding of history and may have the potential to contribute to an understanding of a culture (Russell and Winkworth 39 & 49; Young; UNESCO AMOWC; Heritage Collections Council 30).

8 This takes also takes into account who created, owned, or used the item, as well as where, when and how was it used (Russell and Winkworth 39 & 49; Australian Heritage Projects and Winkworth 80 and 61).
When they are accessible, the opinions of miniseries creators contribute to the provenance of their miniseries. In a range of forums and media, these creators displayed (and, like George Miller, continue to display) a particular knowledge about their work in media interviews or in articles written to express their reasons and motivations for producing a miniseries on a particular theme or interpreting an event. For the researcher, the provenance of a miniseries facilitates assessments concerning its significance according to the primary criteria. Miniseries creators do not, however, usually pass *critical* judgements on their own work in the tradition of scholarly criticism and critique.

*Rarity, Representativeness*

Rarity or representativeness is determined when experts with connoisseurship make assessments based on the item’s associations with uniqueness, iconicity, or representativeness. An item or work may be significant as a rare, unusual, or particularly fine example of its type (Australian Heritage Projects and Winkworth 61). At the time each miniseries was broadcast, critics, commentators, and publicists drew the attention of Australian viewers to the uniqueness or iconicity of a miniseries. Many miniseries were made in Australia over the 1980s and in subsequent decades, but aspects of the *styles* adopted by historical miniseries produced in 1980s and early 1990s are now quite rare.

An item, object, or work may be an outstanding representative of a particular class or category, or representative of an activity (Heritage Collections Council 39). Questions relevant in assessing ‘rarity’ or ‘representativeness’ include: Is the item an outstanding or iconic example, representative of its class or type? Is it typical or characteristic? (Russell and Winkworth 40 & 49; Australian Heritage Projects and Winkworth 60; Young). The claim advanced in this thesis is that each case study historical miniseries is an outstanding or iconic production from the 1980s and early 1990s, and each production from this period will be shown to have had qualities of rarity as well as representativeness.

*Condition*

Condition – the physical integrity or completeness – of an item provides another comparative criterion. An item or work can be significant because it has *physical integrity*: it is unusually complete, or in sound, original condition (Heritage Collections Council 43; Alberts and Hazen 60). The physical condition or integrity of each miniseries has not been identified by scholars and critics.

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9 Provenance has very particular meanings in some collection areas (Heritage Collections Council 37) because the definition and use of provenance as a tool for analysis and assessment varies among different collecting domains and disciplines (Russell and Winkworth 15).
as a pressing issue in the way that it has been for Australian silent film. Available on DVD and with many lodged in film archives and libraries, the miniseries maintain their completeness, as well as their structural and physical integrity.

**Interpretive Potential**

Interpretive potential is associated with capacity of an item to interpret historical themes, processes, events, experiences, and activities (Australian Heritage Projects and Winkworth 61; Heritage Collections Council 45). Items can be of significance due to their interpretations of historical themes (Heritage Collections Council 39). All the case study miniseries have maintained their interpretive potential and capacity for future researchers. Their narrative and televisual content are based on themes relating to Australia’s developing and intertwined multicultural heritage.

In the tradition established by Tilden and other professional heritage interpreters of items, objects, and places, a miniseries may be evaluated to have educative potential; and as a group, the case study miniseries may aid in the understanding of Australia’s cultural history and multicultural heritage (Australian Heritage Projects and Winkworth 61; Heritage Collections Council 45). Most items, objects, and collections have potential to tell their story, and their significance is best described by reference to one or more of the primary criteria (Heritage Collections Council 45). The case study historical miniseries, at the time they were broadcast in the 1980s, were widely held to have had such a broadly educative value, informing Australians about aspects of their past, including past conflicts. The miniseries retain this educative value and potential.

At this point, it would be worthwhile to apply my adaptation of the heritage sector’s significance assessment process to particular historical miniseries. Here the heritage assessment criteria and protocols adapted for assessing television productions are constructively augmented by Film and Television Studies research conventions in order to develop significance statements for each miniseries. To demonstrate the viability of adapting a significance assessment methodology for historical miniseries, three internationally recognised benchmark historical miniseries will be considered: *Roots* (1977), *Holocaust* (1978), and *Heimat* (1984). The case study chapters in Part B are, in effect, the significance statements for each miniseries, with the expertise of television studies scholars adding depth to these statements.
Roots, Holocaust, and Heimat

Roots, Holocaust, and Heimat individually and collectively demonstrate the complex heritage issues that arise in historical miniseries production. Importantly, each miniseries interpreted and represented a contested history and dissonant heritage: slavery and racial discrimination, or the Holocaust and the rise and fall of Nazism. These miniseries display the heritage imagination of their creators who utilised renouvellement and rapprochement approaches to imagine, recall, and interpret specific events from their nation’s past. In addition, these miniseries demonstrated that the form of the miniseries itself was capable of creating engaging and multifaceted historical worlds. These miniseries provided a repertoire of strategies and techniques to visualise and actualize, to remember and memorialise, and to interpret and re-interpret the past in a television drama production.

Before filming a miniseries, producers (like their heritage practitioner counterparts) need to take into account the time and place of its production and of its subsequent viewing. Attracting and keeping an audience are also principal considerations for its producers and for the networks broadcasting the miniseries. The three miniseries comprehensively demonstrated that creatively interpreted stories based on ordinary people living through major epochal events could attract and keep the attention of national and transnational audiences. As with so many heritage exhibitions, the events interpreted in these miniseries were understood in terms of how they shaped ordinary people’s lives and those of their families and their communities. In addition, these miniseries strove to be monumental as popular blockbuster miniseries in the case of Roots and Holocaust, and as a critically acclaimed production in Heimat’s case. Their monumental status was furthered by aspects of their form and style (such as their length of time on-screen) contributing to their ‘special event’ status, by their high production values, and by the sweep of their multilayered melodramatic narratives.

More than any other subsequent miniseries, these three productions announced to the world what could be done with the miniseries form. The success of Roots in 1977 and then of Holocaust in 1978 in their home territory of the United States was mirrored by their high viewer ratings in a number of countries (including Australia). For its part, Heimat rated very highly inside West Germany in 1984, but was more of a critical success upon its international release; it received much praise from Australian critics and attracted the notice of Australian filmmakers. However, with its German language and English subtitles and its length of time on-screen, it did not rate well in Australia.
Roots and Holocaust were the forerunners of an international trend over the 1980s and into the 1990s to remember and monumentalise (see Huyssen, Present Pasts: Urban). This trend was articulated somewhat differently depending upon the national context. Heimat was produced in Germany by a leading figure of the German New Wave, Edgar Reitz, and was developed explicitly in reaction to Holocaust’s Hollywood-inspired interpretation of German history. Heimat was to be, by contrast, a German view – a story told from below – of the same historical period covered in Holocaust. It would likewise address Germany’s ‘immaterial’ past (Kaes).

While interpretations of the past in a miniseries are meant to entertain, these interpretations also inform and educate audiences. The balance between information, entertainment, and education resulted in much controversy when each series was first broadcast. Roots, for instance, precipitated public as well as academic debates over its mix of information and entertainment. These debates coalesced around the production’s melodrama and ‘emotional realism’ – a ‘realism’ often identified as characteristic of melodramas and soap operas (Ang, Watching), but intrinsic to the genre and style of the 1980s miniseries. For Creeber (Serial Television 42) what was notable about each of the three miniseries was their common “attempt to ‘adapt’ the past not as a piece of traditional naturalism but as a form of subjective ‘memory’ or ‘emotional realism’”. In this way, the creators of the miniseries were acting like professional heritage interpreters who wanted their visitors to get ‘inside’ a story and understand what ‘it felt like’.

In much the same way as heritage professionals, the producers of Roots, Holocaust, and Heimat saw themselves as explicitly contributing to their nation’s public culture by imaging, creating, and actualizing historically significant stories. The difference between heritage professionals and filmmakers turns on the license filmmakers have to make value judgements about the relevance of material necessary to imagine and represent themes and events compared to their museum curator and other heritage sector counterparts. Through their miniseries, producers-as-heritage-interpreters provided the kind of contribution to public culture Huyssen (After) claims for various contemporary monuments and memorials. Both Roots and Holocaust continue to be significant works of American public culture while Heimat remains a significant work of German public culture.

The cultural interpretive frameworks adopted by the creators of Roots, Holocaust, and Heimat drew criticism. Each series re-enacted factual as well as fictional interpretations of past events. Each attempted to televisually imagine their historical material provoking many critics to argue that, given the sensitivity of this material, their interpretations and representations should have been
more historically accurate. However, from a heritage standpoint, miniseries makers should not be required to reproduce a historically accurate analysis of past events. The value of a significance assessment approach is that it foregrounds, through its focus on re-enactments and re-creations (or performances), the heritage imagination of the (here miniseries) producer rather than the accurateness or appositeness of its historical analysis. For each of these three seminal miniseries, the cultural, social, and aesthetic value of their imaginative and creative interpretations and representations of historical events, no matter how fictional, is what maintains their cultural significance in the present and into the foreseeable future. This does not mean historical criticisms are rejected or devalued in a heritage significance assessment process. Instead, such criticisms become part and parcel of the heritage significance of the works themselves by staging publicly the difference between (accurate) History and (not as accurate) Heritage.

*Roots* and *Holocaust* held and captured the imagination of their American audiences, attracting and maintaining some of the largest viewerships of any television program on American network television before or since. Their emotional realism and melodrama appealed to large segments of an American mass audience. This emotional realism and melodrama was particularly controversial in *Holocaust*’s case. Critics argued that its melodramatic soap-opera approach was inappropriate for a production on the genocide of a people. Nevertheless, Creeber (*Taking 446*) contends it was the “very ‘soapiness’ of the serial form [*Holocaust*] employs” that resulted in its American audience being forced to identify with its central Jewish family as viewers gradually learns to see the Holocaust through the eyes of family members (446).

*Roots* and *Holocaust*, and then *Heimat* did much internationally for the promotion of the miniseries as an interpretative form. It attracted the attention of Australian filmmakers, and significantly influenced Australian perceptions of and practice in the miniseries form. *Roots* demonstrated the potential of the miniseries form to imagine and actualize the past; while *Heimat*’s focus on an ordinary German family and community had close affinities with an Australian televisual mode of storytelling that focused on ‘battlers’ (ordinary people). 10

Each miniseries had and continues to have interpretative potential for general viewers as much as for researchers and filmmakers. This ongoing interpretive potential facilitates the present and future monumentality of all three miniseries. Future researchers are likely to refer to these productions

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10 *Heimat* had greater ‘proximity’ to Australian miniseries production. Like *Heimat*, no Australian miniseries acquired the international blockbuster status of the two Hollywood miniseries *Roots* and *Holocaust*. In addition, Australian miniseries – again like *Heimat* – were more successful in their home market and dealt with often difficult and controversial issues associated with the nation’s cultural heritage.
when assessing the work of their creators, as well as when investigating popular culture representations of the places, events, and historical periods actualized in each series. New productions will be measured against these previous achievements and, perhaps, each may be remade in new productions.

In the Australian context, this research value is further enhanced by the influence each series had on the production and reception of local Australian miniseries. For example, although not having the same cultural resonance in Australia as it did in the United States, *Roots* was also a major television event in Australia. It was valuable in that it highlighted Australia’s own ‘race’ and multicultural relations issues. These issues would become more significant as the Australian historical miniseries evolved over the 1980s. *Roots* and *Holocaust* remain amongst the highest rating miniseries screened on Australian television (Wright). *Heimat*, though not a rating success when screened on Australia’s SBS television network in 1987, won a great deal of Australian critical acclaim as a drama made for ‘the people’.

*Roots* was popular history – or public history in Samuel’s terms (*Theatres*) – since it traced (in a popular novel and then as a miniseries) the semi-factual and often imagined story of Alex Hayley's ancestors back to Africa, beginning with the journey of Kunta Kinte into slavery. The television producers of *Roots* wanted to encourage a wide cross-section of the American viewing public to identify with its black characters (Creeber, *Taking* 23,446). They wanted to establish viewer empathy by encouraging identification with Kunta Kinte's plight: initially, when he is captured and imprisoned in West Africa, and then when he is sold into slavery and eventually living as a slave in the United States. Kinte's profound sense of loss for his African homeland is conveyed, “not by making his African culture appear ‘strange’ to its audience, but by making the audience so strongly identify with it that it is the white man who eventually appears as ‘other’, not the black” (Creeber, *Taking* 447). This *renouvellement* approach facilitated audience identification with Kinte.

Personalisation was likewise achieved in *Roots* by interpreting the heritage of named individuals, their families, and their communities. As Creeber points out (*Taking* 446), in dramatizing the personal dimensions of ‘ontological events’, the audience is “slowly and carefully forced” to make sense of history, “not as rhetoric but as discursive practice, not as knowledge but as private experience”. In this way *Roots* succeeded in interpreting aspects of American history as being meaningful for a wide cross-section of American viewers. It was, in effect, a heritage experience.
In the process of becoming ‘American’, *Roots* showed people of African descent as integral to ‘the narrative of the American nation’. Through *rapprochement*, the miniseries represented the experiences of African slaves and their descendants as a story of ‘an American family’ and as another ‘American immigrant success story’. The dissonant heritage of slavery associated with black America was reinterpreted as part of the myth of ‘the American melting pot’. Since the history and public recognition of slavery in the 1970s was such a divisive lightening rod for an America not long out of segregation, the ratings success of *Roots* in the United States validated this *rapprochement* approach. For a rare moment in American television history, “a national audience was actively made to identify with black characters and black history”, an event which arguably forced its viewers to re-evaluate the issue of racial discrimination from within both a contemporary and a historical context (Creeber, *Serial Television* 23-24).

Though not identified as such at the time, *rapprochement* worked with *renouvellement* strategies to underpin the heritage imagination at work in the miniseries, with the result that critics claimed *Roots* had made too many concessions in its bid for mainstream success (Creeber, *Serial Television* 23). In their analysis of the miniseries, Tucker and Shah (335) contend the network executives transformed the original novel into a ‘dominant white’ interpretation:

> In the case of TV *Roots*, the white producers and network executives made several structural changes during the production process that altered the original characterizations, content, and theme of Haley's story in such a way as to promote an entirely different social meaning and ideology. By placing the black experience in the context of the classic immigrant story, the creators ignore the distinctiveness of Kunta Kinte's struggle – and the struggle of all black Americans – against the institution of slavery and oppression in favour of an emphasis on the idea of universal assimilation implicit in the immigrant myth. (Tucker and Shah 335)

What is evident here is how these critics were pitting the *rapprochement* and *renouvellement* strategies of the miniseries against each other. Despite such criticisms, *Roots* was a popular culture event with a so-called ‘water-cooler effect’ in the United States. Wheen, for instance, points out that as a result of highly visible and successful promotional activities, the miniseries built up an exclusive culture over the eight consecutive nights of its American screening in January 1977 (Wheen). People who were not watching the program felt excluded from the dominant topic of conversation, and from one of the major public cultural interventions of the era.11

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11 As its executive producer, David Wolper, put it: “People would get up in the morning, would go to work and talk about what they saw last night, and if you didn't watch *Roots* you were out of the conversation. So when you went home the second night you said, I'd better watch *Roots* otherwise I've nobody to talk to tomorrow morning” (quoted in Wheen 152; see also Creeber, *Taking* 444).
The serialised dramatic and usually melodramatic narrative in *Roots* was another facet of its remarkable success. Serialisation meant “the intrinsic complexity of history itself was alluded to in its structure, if not always in its content” (Creeber, *Serial Television* 29). The melodramatic qualities of the series augmented its heritage storytelling. Its soap-like melodrama promoted an emotional realism that furthered the development of complex, multiple storylines – storylines based on individual characters from multiple generations, and mapped over a number of multigenerational narrative arcs.

*Roots* went beyond historical ‘facts’ to personalise history (Creeber, *Serial Television* 27), usually through fictional material. This enabled the miniseries to “get both the social and emotional complexity of slavery across to millions of people who may otherwise never have contemplated the subject in any historical depth” (29). Very similar to a Tilden-inspired approach to heritage storytelling, Creeber believes “the twin characteristics of ‘intimacy’ and ‘continuity’ which the historical miniseries shares with soap opera”, allowed ‘history’ in *Roots* to be transformed in such a way that “it gradually becomes identifiable, empathetic and discursive to a mass audience” (Creeber, *Serial Television* 42-43). This identifiable, empathetic, and discursive character is a goal heritage practitioners also hold for their interpretations of items and for their thematic exhibitions. Personalising history (as already noted) is a common strategy recommended to, and undertaken by, contemporary heritage sector professionals in their exhibitions and displays to achieve similar ends.

At the level of its form and style, aesthetic innovations also contribute to the ongoing interpretive potential of *Roots*. A case in point is Castleman and Podrazik’s aesthetic evaluation of *Roots*. They claim viewers in the present and future can still appreciate the televisual qualities of *Roots* as a result of “its excellent writing, first rate acting, effective violence, strong relationships, tantalizing sex angles, a clear cut conflict between good and evil, and an up-beat ending”. *Roots* demonstrated it was possible for a quality television program to simultaneously emphasise information *and* entertainment values (Singhal and Rogers 123). It quickly became and remains a prominent feature of American public culture and public history because it not only was a public and national event, but also because it retains its value as a significant interpretive work of art.

Just as heritage significance assessment processes consider the producer’s own viewpoints and assessments of an item, so too do critical assessments adopting Film and Television Studies perspectives have recourse to the producer’s viewpoints and assessments. These perspectives also contribute to assessments of the heritage value and cultural significance of a historical miniseries. Given the success and popularity of *Roots*, it is well provenanced, making the thoughts of its
creators accessible to contemporary researchers. At the time of its initial broadcast in the United States, when a critic dismissed *Roots* as a ‘middle-brow *Mandingo*’, its executive producer David Wolper publicly defended the series, claiming that

American television is ‘middle-brow’, and I wanted to make a subject that was important in a middle-brow way so a large audience could appreciate it, understand it, and get something out of it. I mean, people actually turned off basketball games in bars around America and put on *Roots* because they wanted to learn and they wanted to learn on their own terms – they wanted terrific drama, entertainment, and stars. (quoted in Wheen 152; and see Creeber, *Taking 447*)

*Roots*, then, retains its monumentality as a result of a combination of heritage values: its social and cultural values, its historical and research values, and its aesthetic and technical values. The miniseries is clearly a significant cultural artefact for *all* Americans including its producers. It is a story based on dissonant heritage bequeathed to the American nation by the institution of slavery. While it is a story of the heritage of a particular person from an American ethnic and cultural group (a story of Alex Haley’s African-American heritage), it is also emblematic of the heritage of African Americans generally. *Roots* meets several criteria of the significance assessment process.

The overwhelming success of *Roots* on American network television guaranteed “it was a winning formula [American] television executives wanted to emulate” (Creeber, *Serial Television* 30). A year later, in 1978, *Holocaust* became the next American blockbuster miniseries. It was a four-part series about Hitler's extermination of European Jews. The success of *Holocaust* was – like *Roots* – dependent on its producers adopting an appropriate cultural interpretive framework which universalised the story of a Jewish family in Germany during the Nazi era. The story is told from the point-of-view of members of this well-to-do Jewish family and takes place in a cultured, middle class, professional European society. Its combination of *renouvellement* and *rapprochement* approaches encouraged viewer identification with the tribulations and tragedies of this family living in a Germany where cultural diversity was interpreted to be an innate part of its cultural heritage. Cultural diversity was naturalised in the miniseries as a normal way of life such that the extermination and expulsion of Germany’s Jews became a comment on the need for and value of cultural diversity and cultural tolerance everywhere. This, then, was the thrust of the heritage imagination at work in the series, interpreted and represented for the television screen.

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12 Like *Roots*, it aired in the United States over a number of consecutive evenings (16-18 April 1978). It captured the imagination of Americans. Subsequently, *Holocaust* was broadcast in Europe and in Australia to massive television audiences in these territories (see Creeber, *Serial Television* 30).
The cultural significance of *Holocaust* can partly be attributed to its awareness that the traumatic experiences and memories of individuals and communities can become integral to the collective heritage of any community and nation. Stratton (*Before 59*) points out that the immense popularity of the miniseries suggests Judeocide was becoming a part of a general, non-Jewish cultural memory: “[t]he miniseries helped to establish the Holocaust as having a western universal, that is no longer specifically Jewish, theme. . . . [It was now] a morality story about Good and Evil.” Stratton means to be critical of this process, seeing in it a general appropriation of a specifically Jewish history and tragedy. However, for the purposes of the thesis, this *universalising* of the Holocaust as the dissonant heritage of all humanity allowed the historical miniseries form to accrue another layer of significance and potentiality.

Again like *Roots*, the cultural interpretive framework employed in *Holocaust* was criticised. Creeber (*Taking 445*) points out that one of the most frequent criticisms of the miniseries was the criticism most strongly made by the filmmaker and critic Claude Lanzmann (who would later go on to make *Shoah*, screened in 1985 as his own nine-and-a-half-hour documentary account of the Holocaust). Lanzmann alleged that the Jews had become so ‘normalised’ and ‘Americanised’ that they lacked ‘authenticity’ and ‘realism’ (*Creeber, Taking 445*). This criticism – that German history and dissonant heritage were appropriated, recreated, and reimagined as American – provided the production with an additional layer of cultural meaning and debate. Rather than dismissing such criticisms as irrelevant or inconsequential, a significance assessment process valuably acknowledges and focuses attention on these critical concerns. The range and variety of responses provides the *Holocaust* miniseries with additional value from a significance point-of-view.

Many German and non-German writers commenting on the miniseries pointed out that its success and social impact in West Germany was unexpected. When German filmmaker Edgar Reitz (the creator of *Heimat*) viewed *Holocaust* on West German television in the late 1970s he thought the production was a cliché-ridden exercise in Hollywood-style sentimentalism. But it nonetheless became the catalyst for Reitz to make *Heimat*, with Reitz often claiming *Heimat* was his response to Hollywood’s *Holocaust*, a miniseries made with Americans as its primary intended audience. Clearly stamped as ‘Made in Germany’ with Germans as its primary audience, *Heimat* was popular in (the then) West Germany and became the highest rating television series in that country (*Visontay, There’s No Place*).

When *Heimat* was first released at international film festivals in 1984 as a very long motion picture it did so to wide critical acclaim. Reitz intended *Heimat* to be a ‘megafilm’ operating on an epic
level. These epic qualities were, however, still evident when *Heimat* was screened as serial television. As conceived by Reitz, *Heimat* was subtitled ‘A Chronicle in Eleven Parts’. The length of the production had a marked impact on its form and style. *Heimat* is founded on a particular interpretation and representation of German social history in which modern Germans are seen to have become estranged from their past (Visontay, *There’s No Place*). Reitz’s interpretations and representations of the day-to-day lives of ‘ordinary’ Germans emphasised the ‘ordinary’ qualities of a people living through a turbulent period.

As public history (Samuel, *Theatres*), *Heimat*’s interlocking saga of a German family from the end of World War One in 1919, to the more contemporary period of 1982, was intended to be a chronicle spanning sixty-three years of German history. This was a period that included much that is now part of the dissonant heritage of Germany and its people – a period which has been insightfully characterised by Kaes as its ‘unmastered past’. On its first screening on German television in 1984, Germans watched *Heimat* with perhaps the same mix of pride and shame as did Americans when viewing *Roots*.

In order to allow a wide cross-section of Germans to connect with Reitz’s interpretations of German history, his re-imagining of Germany’s cultural heritage did not focus on specific historical or political events (Jeffries). According to Kaes, Reitz’s portrayals of the past were deliberate attempts to tell German history ‘from below’, from the perspective of the ‘ordinary people’. This approach – *Alltagsgeschichte* or ‘the history of the everyday’ without much reference to political and social concerns 13 – tends to place wider political and social concerns in the background (see Kaes 188). *Alltagsgeschichte* is not premised on establishing an ‘accurate’ historical record as its first priority. Reitz’s *renouvellement* strategies are aligned with this *Alltagsgeschichte* approach in that Reitz wanted his German viewers to reconcile themselves to the epic history of their nation and to their difficult dissonant heritage. While this insistence upon the everyday events and experience of ordinary Germans prevented *Heimat* from achieving international popular success it nonetheless turned its extremely positive German reception into a monumental event of lasting significance.

*Heimat* is like *Holocaust* in that the particular cultural interpretive framework of its creator provoked much debate and criticism. Many of the complaints levelled at *Heimat* were similar to

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13 *Alltagsgeschichte* is a form of microhistory particularly prevalent amongst German historians during the 1980s. The name comes from German, where *Alltag* means "everyday life"; it can thus be roughly translated as "everyday history". In this sense, *Alltagsgeschichte* can be considered part of the wider Marxian historical school of ‘history from below’. The purpose of *Alltagsgeschichte* is to find and prove the links between the down-to-earth, everyday, basic experiences of ordinary people in a society, and the broad social and political changes which occur in that society (see Kaes 188; Creeber, *Television Series* 42-43).
those made about Holocaust. Heimat, Creeber (Taking 450) noted, “gradually ‘mutates’ into a soap” and tends “to prioritise the personal over the political, to indulge in individual human drama at the expense of wider social, political and economic concerns.” Its soap opera elements are evident in “its fair share of sudden deaths, automobile accidents, mysterious disappearances, unrequited loves, abortions, reconciliations, and illegitimate births” (Canby Heimat). But in significance assessment processes such observations and criticisms do not diminish the heritage value of an item. Rather, in this case, they contribute to heritage assessments of Heimat as having both present and future research potential. They also enable it to be identified as a monumental work of cultural significance.14 Both Holocaust and its German ‘answer’ Heimat together reopened discussion in (West) Germany over the dissonant heritage bequeathed by the Nazis to post-war Germans. Both were, in this sense, heritage enablers.

The aesthetic qualities praised by German audiences and international critics are attributable to Heimat’s approach to heritage storytelling. Its use of both colour and black-and-white photography suggests that “what we witness [on-screen] is a mixture of … a history which has been filtered by individual eyes or perhaps even a collective memory” (Creeber, Taking 450). The intermittent use of colour in the midst of a mostly black-and-white film further underscores the closeness of the miniseries to “an authentic representation” of the chronicle genre (Bondebjerg 17). Black-and-white “also connotes documentary authenticity and historical truth”: it provides the miniseries with “a classical austerity which stands in dramatic contrast to the ordinary flood of colour television images” (Bondebjerg 17).

The importance of Heimat for Australian miniseries production lay in its form and style. Australian critics, filmmakers, historians, and academics all acknowledged its innovativeness. It was picked up by Australian miniseries producers rather in the manner of a toolkit. When Heimat was screened on SBS-TV (Australia’s multicultural television network), it was not popular with Australian audiences. However, Australian critics and filmmakers were more prepared to make the time and watch this 16 hour long miniseries edited into 11 episodes.

14 The form and style of Heimat contributes to its ongoing monumentality. Canby, writing in the New York Times in 1985, thought that while Heimat (in its cinematic form) “is not a masterpiece”, it still is “a monumental achievement . . . in the narrative form of the popular cinema” (Canby, Heimat).
Conclusion

The previous chapters noted that many historical miniseries are a blend of factual and fictional material, a common practice in docudramas. Discussions about the form and content of the historical miniseries led commentators to consider the docudrama qualities of *Roots*, *Holocaust*, and *Heimat*. Creeber (*Serial Television* 42) observes these miniseries were referred to as docudramas both “to give their historical aspirations a little more significance and weight” as well as to advance their aesthetic claims. However, these miniseries were “clearly more ‘drama’ than ‘docu’” in that they attempted “to dramatize history rather than document it” (Creeber *Serial Television* 42). That is, these filmmakers were involved in a process of imaginatively interpreting and representing past events in ways familiar to heritage practitioners.

Other parallels with the heritage sector are striking. Like the producers of other historical miniseries the producers of *Roots*, *Holocaust*, and *Heimat* had to make value judgements in the process of bringing their productions to television screens. The audience-centred imperatives of making commercial television have parallels with the contemporary heritage sector’s practice of making its exhibits and performances accessible and popular. In addition, the centrality of creating stories that engage audiences, and the approaches to storytelling adopted to achieve this, are common to both filmmakers and the heritage sector – indicating the differences between them are matters of degree. For one thing, miniseries producers needed their miniseries to rate well immediately on the first night and then to attract and keep a large audience over a number of nights; while for museum curators the museological exhibit can grow its public over a more extended time frame.

Australian television miniseries producers in the 1980s and early 1990s experimented with the form of the miniseries from within a particular aesthetic-televisual-programming space. This space was carved out for them by the popularity of a range of miniseries on Australian television. To evaluate the significance of miniseries, individually and as a group, means recognising that the medium of television is meaningful and culturally significant in its own right. As Thorburn (*Television as an Aesthetic Medium* 162) points out, those undertaking an examination of ‘event’ programming confer significance on both television productions and on the medium of television. By selecting particular shows for serious consideration and comparison, these productions “inevitably become part of a system or process of ‘museumization’” where television texts are appropriated “for historical or anthropological or aesthetic use” (162). As a result, the medium of television is itself ‘transformed’. It has conferred upon it “something of the dignity accorded to the [non-televisual] texts and artefacts already elevated into the culture that is preserved in museums, art galleries,
scholarly books, and university curricula” (162). That is, culturally significant historical miniseries become monumentalised. They become works of heritage and forms of public culture in much the same way as are artefacts in the museum and gallery, and in scholarly publishing.

To pick specific miniseries as case studies to be assessed for their significance – as I have done here – implies other productions are of lesser significance, or are even insignificant (Young). It also acknowledges the impossibility of assessing every Australian historical miniseries made over the 1980s and the first half of the 1990s. Although the miniseries discussed in Part B are accessible, many more are no longer available, and even if they had been, there were so many miniseries produced in Australia over this period it would be impossible to discuss them all. The heritage sector’s rationale for selection and assessment usefully addresses this very problem with its recognition of the practicality and acceptability of making selections among cultural items (Russell and Winkworth 14). It is comfortable with assessing and arguing for the significance of a group of such items on the basis they are connected by a common theme, association, or history.

It is relevant to note here that heritage professionals, like scholars in Film and Television Studies and researchers in other fields, extend the memory of selected items by choosing them to be evaluated and interpreted. Like the monuments Huyssen (Twilight Memories) discusses, miniseries creators undertake similar ‘memory work’ when they interpret and represent particular stories about past events and people for public consumption. Their imaginative and creative interpretations of these events and people generate mediated memories that circulate within public culture. Any assessment process, therefore, should evaluate the ability a miniseries has to tell heritage stories that are of significance for a community’s or nation’s public culture. This is discussed at length in the next chapter where the notion of public culture advanced by Huyssen (After) will be deployed to enable a more extended critical, social, and cultural commentary of the historical miniseries.
Chapter 4

PUBLIC CULTURE AND CULTURAL CHANGE

Introduction

While other film and television genres and forms have contributed to public culture debates and discourses, over the 1980s in Australia it was the *televisual* interpretation and representation of past events as heritage in the historical miniseries that worked alongside professional and academic history to write and frame the cultural and social memories of Australian communities and of the nation (Dayan and Katz; also see Olick and Robbins 124). The inclusion of social memories here is important: memory itself is one of the main places where culture exists (Teski and Climo 2). Therefore, the influence of historical miniseries on cultural memory and on public culture demands attention.

Andreas Huyssen’s conceptualization of public culture is introduced in this chapter. *Public culture* integrates cultural memory and heritage with the production and reception of significant cultural artefacts. After a summary of Huyssen’s work on public culture and related concepts, the chapter connects heritage and memory with public culture. Heritage and memory are integral components of the stories told by historical miniseries. Accordingly, the chapter works through their relationship and that between storytelling, public culture, and cultural change. The final section of the chapter highlights Australian cultural identity as it continues to evolve within public culture, while also motivating the production of heritage stories with multicultural themes and perspectives. Multiculturalism becomes a prominent feature in the landscape of Australian public culture.

This chapter acknowledges Huyssen’s observation that history in the contemporary period, in “a certain canonical form may be delegitimized as far as its core pedagogical and philosophical mission is concerned” (*Present Pasts: Urban 5*). The ‘delegitimization’ of history in the form of canonical history or ‘monumental history’ has resulted in a more significant public role being played by heritage institutions and media in interpreting and representing the past. In this regard Australian television drama has been especially significant.
Huysen develops the notion of a memorial culture as an important attribute of contemporary public culture. For Huysen, memorial culture has been a defining characteristic of public culture over the last thirty years such that there has been a “voracious and ever-expanding memorial culture” (*Present Pasts: Urban*). The stories told in historical miniseries interpreting past events as part of the nation’s cultural heritage situates these miniseries as contributing to an Australian memorial culture that, in turn, was a feature of the nation’s public culture.

According to Huysen, incorporating a media-generated memorial culture into public culture results in the creation of “new spheres of memory” (*After 11*). These mediated spheres of memory rely on memory texts like miniseries to establish sites of memory that simultaneously have storytelling and aesthetic attributes. As Jelin puts it, cultural products such as miniseries and “books, museums, films, rituals of commemoration and photographs” demonstrate “the embodiment of the past and its meanings”, where these cultural items “can be conceived as vehicles [or spheres] of memory” (Jelin 141). Historical miniseries are memory texts that ‘imagine’ (through textualisation) the Australian national community, with these ‘imaginings’ then circulating within the national’s cultural memory.

Miniseries texts are sites of memory in that they are places where new memories of Australia’s cultural heritage can be created and communicated through storytelling. Adopting Huysen’s nomenclature, historical miniseries help shape public spheres of memory where heritage stories develop, enhance, and augment the nation’s cultural memory practices. What is driving this memorial culture is a “contemporary desire for narratives of the past” (Huysen (*Present Pasts: Urban* 5)).

The influence of cultural memory on public culture – ‘public’ memory is, by its nature, ‘cultural’ – and on television texts such as miniseries, augments a social and cultural desire for interpretations and representations of the past. This relationship has been gestured to by a number of scholars. Representative of this scholarship is the work of Shohat and Stam (356). They see television as setting agendas and framing debates, as well as “inflect[ing] desire, memory, [and] fantasy”. Edgerton’s (3) observations on British television drama are also applicable in the Australian context: namely, that by the 1990s, television had developed an “affinity and ability to embody current concerns and priorities within the stories it telecast about the past”.

By the late 1980s historical miniseries had become associated with ‘quality’ Australian drama. Yet defining ‘quality’ has proven to be notoriously elusive. ‘Quality’ miniseries circulated in Australia as works of popular culture, though with variable “aesthetic appeal” (Huysen, *Present Pasts*, 109).
Some commentators may have judged a particular miniseries to be a work of high culture or low culture. Cunningham (*Textual Innovation* 40) claims many 1980s Australian historical miniseries had a status “analogous to that of the ‘art cinema’ in relation to mainstream commercial cinema, albeit without the financial and promotional marginalisation typically experienced by art cinema.” This evaluation is made from within an academic interpretive community. Employing a significance assessment approach, it needs only to be noted that different evaluations of a cultural item such as a miniseries, including evaluations of its heritage value, are made by individuals belonging to particular interpretive communities. The aim of a significance assessment process, however, is not to support or reject claims that an item is a work of high or low culture.

There is another space outside the heritage sector and Heritage Studies where there is no imperative to demarcate a high / low culture divide; this space is provided by Huysen’s concept of public culture. For Huysen, public culture establishes a discursive space in which it is possible to acknowledge both high and low culture since public culture “encompasses high art as high art and mass culture as mass culture both, to the extent they trigger or participate in public debate” (*After 7*). Therefore the notion of public culture encompasses items, stories, and other cultural artefacts drawn from both popular and elite culture. Huysen’s (*After*) strategy is to use the concept of public culture to step away from high / low distinctions. He also formulates it so as to “reintroduce issues of aesthetic quality into the analysis of specific cultural practices and products” (6). Considering aesthetic quality in this way allows the aesthetics of a product to be evaluated in relation to similar products (rather than through high/low culture hierarchies). The product or item is to be judged on its own merits as a public cultural artefact. A way to make such ‘aesthetic’ judgements is outlined in *Present Pasts*: these judgements are to be made on the basis of “aesthetic appeal” in association with “formal construction, and persuasive execution” (Huysen, *Present Pasts* 109). Indeed, some degree of aesthetic appeal, formal construction, and persuasive execution are necessary for any memory site (such as a historical miniseries) to maintain a visible presence in the public sphere and thus contribute to public culture (109).

In a period of official multiculturalism, miniseries were works of popular culture that employed aesthetics (for Huysen ‘aesthetics’ is more analogous to ‘aesthetic techniques’) and production techniques to represent and perform multiculturalism. Some miniseries were deliberately ‘multiculturalised’ in ways retrospectively identifiable as being provocative and challenging, and therefore memorable, heritage-inspired re-interpretations of an historical event. For many filmmakers and miniseries creators, intervening in Australian public culture debates over a multicultural Australia became – as O’Regan (*Australian National Cinema* 67) notes – an
increasingly “important definition of Australian nationhood from the mid-1980s”. In the case study miniseries, multicultural and related cross-cultural interpretations of the past identifies them as being created in an era of official multiculturalism, a policy promoted by successive Labor Federal Governments from 1983 to 1996. In the year following the 1988 Australian Bicentenary, official multiculturalism was enshrined in the 1989 National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia (O’Regan, *Australian National Cinema* 67).

The aim of official multiculturalism over the 1980s and first half of the 1990s was to regulate Australia’s ethnic communities and the nation’s complex cultural heritage. However, cultures cannot be so easily tamed. Accordingly, multiculturalism as public policy has had a varied history. But the idea of multiculturalism did decisively enter the public imagination as a point of reference. Considering Australia to be a ‘new world society’ (O’Regan, *Australian National Cinema*) recognises the nation’s cultural heritage as one that is always evolving. Multiculturalism is part of this evolutionary process. From within this complexity miniseries creators developed their cultural interpretive frameworks, and interpreted and represented aspects of the past in their heritage storytelling.

Over the 1980s, miniseries producers developed appropriate cultural interpretive frameworks that, in some instances, performed multiculturalism. Performances of multiculturalism in Australian historical miniseries were largely performances of Europeanness. Notable exceptions are *Vietnam* and *Cowra Breakout*, where Asian-ness is also performed. Indeed the *Vietnam* miniseries normalises the Vietnamese presence in Australia. Except for *Cowra Breakout’s* cross-cultural encounters, the case study miniseries developed memorable multicultural characters and interpreted and represented some part of their stories (from the character’s own perspective, or from the perspective of others). This is the case, for example, with the German-Australian Anzac in the 1984 *Anzacs* miniseries. The 1987 *Vietnam* miniseries represents both cross-cultural and multicultural relationships.

When comparing the miniseries as a group there is a discernable utopian impulse behind their performances of multiculturalism. Most Australian historical miniseries makers adopted cultural interpretive frameworks that imagined the utopian possibility of cultural heritages intertwining in productive and non-confrontational ways. Even the bleak *Leaving of Liverpool* ends with Lily, the only real ‘survivor’, moving into (although probably not fully integrating with) Australian society. O’Regan’s (*Australian National Cinema*) theorization of Australia as a new world society (discussed in more detail shortly) accommodates heritage-inspired storytelling where
multiculturalism is ‘performed’ in dynamic and innovative ways. Nevertheless, there are those – like Le Goff (xvii) – who warn against an uncritical and unexamined acceptance of such utopianism. Le Goff contends cultural forms such as historical miniseries are far from being “objective, innocent raw material”. On the contrary, these kinds of symbolic and material forms are an expression of a social group's “power over memory and over the future.” Power over memory is expressed both at the individual and collective level.

An audience community of viewers was established at the time each miniseries was broadcast and watched.¹ Televisual works of popular culture in an era of mass mediated communication circulated within public culture and invited the creation of an audience community. As people watched one miniseries after another, this community of viewers shared and experienced “the same context knowledge of contents and codes” in these cultural productions (see Kukkonen 262). A cultural community developed from an audience community largely as a result of viewers sharing the same context knowledge. Though it can lead to the development of a cultural community, audience communities tend not be stable or fixed for any length of time; cultural communities have more longevity. The cultural and ethnic diversity characteristic of 1980s and early 1990s Australian audiences meant that an audience community did not always become a cultural community; this resulted in a mixed reception for some historical miniseries.

The term community has its own set of problems. As Burke (57) points out, the term is “at once useful and problematic”. The problematic nature of (re)constructing or ‘(re)imagining’ a community – along the lines of Anderson’s now familiar concept of ‘an imagined community’ (Imagined Communities) – has been highlighted by many commentators (see de Sola Pool; Schlesinger; Zynda). A community, such as a national community, or even a cultural community, has to be continually constructed and reconstructed; and it has to be continually imagined and remembered. A cultural item has no cultural significance unless it is remembered and has heritage value for an interpretive community. Therefore, consideration needs to be given to the relationship between memory (remembering and forgetting) in historical miniseries specifically, and in public culture more generally.

¹ The 1980s and the early 1990s was an era of mass mediated communication; the fragmentation of Australian audiences into niche audiences – characteristic of the digital era of television from about 1995 on – was yet to take effect. Pre-1995, and particularly over the 1980s, high rating historical miniseries attracted a mass, though culturally and ethnically diverse, audience.
Memory and Public Culture

A miniseries provides opportunities for individual viewers to acquire memories of past events they have not personally experienced. As Lipsitz (5) points out, instead of relating to the past through “a shared sense of place or ancestry”, consumers of electronic media (and by extension, television productions) “can experience a common heritage with people they have never seen; they acquire memories of a past to which they have no geographic or biological connection”. Memories of past events not personally experienced by an individual are still powerful (Shils 51). Memory therefore is central to the creation of a heritage story, and again comes into play when that story is watched on television by individual viewers. As individuals share and discuss their memories of what they have watched in a miniseries, memory attains another level of importance since it directly impacts on the reception of the miniseries in public culture.

Scholars and researchers have developed a number of theories to explain the relationship between memory, cultural artefacts, and society. One such theory explains how, when watching a miniseries, memories of past events not personally experienced by the viewer are created, with these vicariously acquired memories contributing to how individuals imagine their cultural community. The events remembered can be factual or fictional. Vicarious memories are a feature of a community’s public culture practices shaping interpretations and perceptions of pastness (Shils, 51) and therefore of that community’s history and heritage. Cumulatively, vicarious memories contribute to aggregate memory: to “a cultural continuity of experience” where members of the group share common memories of their experiences within the group (Teski and Climo 4). Each miniseries became a part of the collective and aggregate cultural memory of the Australian community.

Miniseries also had an impact on historical memory. With historical memory, the individual does not remember events directly. Rather remembrance and memory are stimulated in indirect ways through forms such as reading, or listening, or through commemoration when people remember the deeds and accomplishments of long-departed members of the group (Coser 24; Keightley 176).

Regardless of the labels applied to the experiences individuals and groups have when watching, recalling, and then talking about a miniseries, these television shows intervened in Australian public culture. The medium of television itself, particularly in the 1980s and early 1990s, worked to establish links between various cultural communities. This is the case for other countries as well. As Elsaesser (One Train) observes for the American context, sharing televisually-mediated memories
helped to “restore something like a sense of social identity that was at once ‘individual’ as well as ‘national’”. In the Australian context, television performed similar functions (though with some modifications), with historical miniseries contributing to an evolving national identity and culture.

Australian miniseries in the 1980s were usually made for an Australian audience. The public culture interventions of historical miniseries were therefore largely local and national, since they were recalled by individuals in a local and national context. Huyssen (Present Pasts: Urban 16) points out that it is important to recognise that “although memory discourses appear to be global in one register, at their core they remain tied to the histories of specific nations and states”.

With an increasing reliance on international co-productions from the late 1980s, the reception of a miniseries by non-Australian audiences increased in importance. But up until then, miniseries creators developed stories that were primarily geared to local Australian interpretive communities. This is keeping with Sorlin’s observation that for historical films (and the same arguments apply for historical miniseries) “their historical value is only warranted for people who share the same concerns and are able to interpret the same clues – in other words for the members of a cultural community” (Sorlin 43).

Cultural communities remember and forget as a way of defining themselves. Miniseries contribute to what is remembered and forgotten. As Hamilton (Knife Edge 23) writes, communities demarcate themselves into groups or nations by always utilising the dual processes of inclusion and exclusion, in combination with remembering and forgetting. Similar to a heritage management process, the makers of the case study historical miniseries adopted various cultural interpretive frameworks to select aspects of the past to be remembered and forgotten.

Forgetting need not be a negative facet of memory. The liberating possibilities of forgetting for a nation’s public culture should not be underestimated. Considering how the past is interpreted as heritage in historical miniseries encourages an appreciation that forgetting is one of the most powerful forces shaping national remembering and the memories of a cultural community. This makes forgetting an important factor in shaping public culture itself.

Many miniseries became controversial when critics alleged miniseries creators chose to forget ‘important’ people and events from the past. This sort of allegation is expected by professional heritage interpreters. There will always be interpretive communities displeased with the stories created by these interpreters. Because there can be no single interpretation of the past, “there will
always be other stories, other interpretations, and other memories” (Jelin 140). Indeed “the existence of different interpretations of the past implies that at any time and place, it is unthinkable to find one memory, a single vision and interpretation of the past shared by a whole society (whatever its scope and size)” (140).

The significance assessment process developed by the Australian heritage sector emphasises assessment criteria should be applied in ways that distance the professional assessor as much as possible from the politics of heritage interpretation. However, complete separation from such politics is never achievable. The creators of miniseries, aware that their interpretations of the past were subjective and often political, usually defended their interpretations in the media. In these public forums, their interpretations and creative representations of the past entered into public culture.

Heritage storytelling by miniseries creators is a cultural practice linked to the political. This aligns with Huysen’s (After 6) contention that public culture pays “close attention to the ways in which cultural practices and products are linked to the discourses of the political and the social in specific local and national constellations”. The political and social are also features of a nation’s heritage practices. On their initial broadcast, miniseries promoted a shared awareness amongst Australian viewers of the country’s collective national heritage (see Ang Intertwining Histories). Following this line of argument, as Australian audiences watched a historical miniseries such as Against the Wind in 1978, their viewing experience enabled them to acquire and then to share memories – in this way calling into existence a cultural community.

A cultural imperative therefore appeared to be at work when a miniseries was broadcast. As Breen (Australian) has argued, high ratings for many Australian historical miniseries “seemed [to provide] tangible proof that a cultural imperative was also inherent in their [that is, in historical miniseries] acceptance by the indigenous [Australian] audience”. For commercial television networks, high ratings for an Australian miniseries contributed to the network’s bottom line. Following the ratings success of Against the Wind, Australian television programmers were open to the possibilities of scheduling other miniseries. Since Australian miniseries were more popular with Australian audiences than the majority of overseas shows (Wright) 2, more Australian product was commissioned. However, regardless of how well a miniseries rated, Australian television network executives concluded that, in addition to artistic and technical quality, the subject of an Australian

2 The report, 1977-1989 Miniseries, A Ratings History, showed that an average Australian miniseries rated seven points higher (at 27 audience percentage points) than a foreign made one (Wright).
miniseries needed to have broad appeal for local Australian audiences (Visontay, *The Year*). That is, the past interpreted and represented in a miniseries should have an appeal for as a wide a range of Australia’s cultural communities as possible. This sets the stage for 1980s miniseries and their interventions into public culture.

With *Against the Wind* now looked to as a successful model, 1980s Australian miniseries foregrounded popular history, cultural memory, and heritage. In so doing, they indicate the importance of a *useable past* for creative works with the potential to impact on the nation’s public culture debates over interpretations and representations of the nation’s past. As Edgerton (4) notes in relation to Britain – but his conclusions are also applicable to Australia – television producers and audiences in the 1980s and into the 1990s became “preoccupied with creating a ‘useable past’, a longstanding tenet of popular history”.

In the search for a useable past, historical miniseries creators were aware there was an established – an ‘establishment’ – perspective on Australian history circulating within Australian public culture, an established history based on traditional monumental or canonical history. Monumental history was the history of Australia that the majority of Australians were familiar with from their school years. In Huyssen’s terms (*Present Pasts: Urban*), dramatized televisual interpretations and representations of past events and people as part of the nation’s cultural heritage were undertaken within a particular Australian cultural context where monumental history dominated.

Traditionally, monumental history tends to be a highly visible component of a nation’s public culture. Monumental history focuses on specific moments of (usually) national history. The traditional emphasis on monumental Australian history may, as Healy (131) observes, be due to Australian history defying periodisation. Instead, “general historical narratives” become organised “around discrete moments – discovery, settlement, convicts, free settlers, gold, and so on” (Healy, 132). These moments constitute a monumental history that had been part of the historical memory of many Australians where the past became “solidified in particular interpretive structures which have a name, a shape, and a story” (132). Further, these moments retained their iconicity within 1980s Australian public culture; and they still remain familiar markers of many surveys of Australian history today.

Televisual interpretations of monumental history therefore played a prominent part in shaping public culture. Even though this thesis advances the argument that ‘heritage’ underpins significant historical miniseries from the 1980s and early 1990s, monumental history as such did not simply
disappear. Over this period, monumental history continued to appeal to those Australians searching for a useable and understandable interpretation of past events.

In the 1980s and into the 1990s, monumental history coexisted with heritage. Ang (Intertwining Histories) argues the most powerful and influential history in any country is the monumental kind of national history, “the official story of national heroes and founding legends which are supposed to instil pride, patriotism and a sense of unity in the population at large”. The stories told by monumental history are concerned with a relatively stable national identity. Aspects of monumental history did find their way into some of the miniseries brought together as case studies in the thesis, even though most of the heritage-inspired narrative and associated audiovisual elements in these series tend to emphasise an evolving national cultural identity.

The 1978 miniseries Against the Wind is an early historical miniseries intervention into Australian public culture. Being public history in Samuel’s terms (Theatres), the intent of the miniseries was to provide Australian audiences with new insights into the formative years of white settlement (Moran, Images). Ian Jones, the creator of the miniseries, was a history buff, a historian, and a filmmaker. These attributes would have encouraged him to take a more ‘popular’ approach to Australian history (Jones, Historical Mini-Series). Against the Wind’s interpretation of Australia’s convict past as part of the nation’s heritage was evoked through a story of a spirited Irish lass transported to Australia as a political prisoner. She falls in love with a fine upstanding convict, unjustly treated by a vicious and oppressive British convict system (see Breen, Australian 170).

The Australian tradition of monumental history clearly made its way into the miniseries; but at the same time it foregrounds a specific reading of Australia’s cultural and ethnic heritage. As monumental history, the series was criticised for its limited range of emblematic historical events. Yet the series is also a ‘history from below’: a history told from the perspective of ordinary women and men fitting into an ‘Australian type’ that, in its turn, became monumentalised. For many critics, Jones seemed to favour recreating an authentic visual representation of Australia’s colonial past – an authentic historical world – at the expense of connecting his interpretations and representations of the past with more contemporary problems and priorities.

Nevertheless, Against the Wind did recreate the almost civil war-like divisions within the founding ethnocultural Angloceltic sector of Australia’s colonial population. These divisions were based on ethnicity, religion, and class; and on the jail and jailer cleavages in colonial Australian society. In foregrounding issues congruent with Australia’s Angloceltic history, Against the Wind may have
been regarded by some critics as encouraging exclusivity. Instead of being read as showing how hard won peace between Australians of Irish and British descent had been, and how it was a product of struggle – thereby becoming a lesson for late 1970s struggles with ethnic and cultural difference – it may have been read as the reverse: as a narrow-minded profoundly ethnic and self-congratulatory conversation that was largely exclusive.

There were some readings, commentaries, and reviews of the miniseries interpreting it as a colonial heritage story with liberatory potential: it was a saga of ordinary people who had the courage to cross ethnic and cultural divides. This was a feature of Against the Wind’s “widely discussed ‘revisionist’ account of the historical record on early convictism, its promotion and reception as ‘history’ as well as drama, and its huge critical and ratings success” (S. Cunningham, Textual Innovation 39).

The range of interpretations made by various cultural and interpretive communities positions Against the Wind as a miniseries that holds an anomalous place as both a production inspired by monumental history and as a revisionist heritage story. This anomaly maps onto debates over the nature of Australia’s national and cultural identity underway from the late 1970s. In addition, whether the cultural interpretive framework adopted by the creator of the series is assessed to be conservative or revisionist, given the high ratings it achieved, many producers during the Australian historical miniseries boom in the 1980s would turn to monumental history.3

Against the Wind did enter in Australian public culture. It provided Australian audiences with a heritage experience, and commentary in the media suggests a cultural community was being formed as it was being broadcast. Moran (Images 208) argues – based on his interviews with the producers of the miniseries – the aim of the production was to portray the development of a national Australian consciousness inside an emergent individual consciousness. The miniseries, according to Moran, attempted “to examine the origins of a nation. As a publicity blurb for Against the Wind put it, Mary Mulvane's story was “the story of Australia” (Images 208). Another interpretation of the series by Breen assessed it to be a television “program [that] fulfilled the requirements of standard founding myths which are requisite in all cultures” (Breen, Australian 170).

The mythic qualities of the miniseries were established in the way it remembered and represented Australia’s colonial past, by its mix of history and heritage, and by the position it held within

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3 It was not until Kennedy Miller's The Dismissal in 1983 that the “Australian miniseries juggernaut” started (Visontay, The Year).
Australian public culture. These would be the very elements that would attract George Miller to make historical miniseries in the 1980s. George Miller still asserts that the miniseries Kennedy Miller created told “pivotal stories in the Australian narrative ... [since] obviously there is something elemental about the stories ... [because] they speak across time to us today” (Idato, Culture).

As they circulated within public culture, heritage narratives and stories inspired by a need to interpret the past connected the past to the present. The popularity of historical miniseries resulted in many series being made, with the result that audiences acquired a general awareness of narrative conventions, in association with the form and style of the genre. As these narrative conventions and generic elements came to be associated with ‘quality’ Australian television drama, aesthetic and cultural vocabularies were created.

**Storytelling and Public Culture**

As one miniseries followed another over the 1980s, an aesthetic vocabulary came into existence that was understood by the creators of historical miniseries. This aesthetic vocabulary then contributed to a shared cultural vocabulary that entered into Australian popular culture. According to Kukkonen, as a result of the “common ground of [aesthetic] codes and conventions” circulating within public culture, an attentive audience was able to learn the cultural vocabulary of historical miniseries” (Kukkonen 262). In its turn, this cultural vocabulary became available to miniseries creators, television viewers, network programmers, media critics, and academic commentators.4

The results of an evolving aesthetic vocabulary were visible on television screens for all to see. Historical miniseries would not only be culturally significant and feature innovative storytelling techniques, they would also include innovations in aesthetic quality. From the perspective of a miniseries researcher – as Caughie (89) points out in relation to film and literature researchers – the development of a shared aesthetic and visual vocabulary allows for a researcher to undertake an assessment of cultural values through the ‘monuments of cinema and literature’, where “[t]he monuments of cinema or literature form the foundation of a shared vocabulary of reference and judgement which may be debated or agreed, permitting [the researcher] to work out the values of the common culture” (89). This approach would be familiar to heritage researchers.

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4 Academics often shared the same cultural vocabulary, but many academics writing about miniseries in the 1980s developed their own ‘vocabulary’.
In the decade following *Against the Wind* the miniseries form proved an adaptable vehicle for telling stories inspired by the nation’s history and its cultural heritage.\(^5\) While its social realist style and naturalist acting became the model for subsequent historical miniseries, later miniseries exhibited a more cinematic approach when filming action sequences (as is the case with the jungle warfare and prison breakout sequences in *The Cowra Breakout*). As Jacka (*The Films 89*) points out, over the 1980s miniseries experimented with textual innovation. After almost 15 years of such innovation, it should not have come as such a surprise when the experimental magical realist 1995 miniseries *Bordertown* was broadcast. Yet the low ratings for this miniseries suggests that for Australian audiences and many critics there were limitations on the kind and character of innovation they found acceptable. The other lesson from *Bordertown* was that local and national cultural contexts are critical not only to the production but also to the reception environment for a miniseries.

Over the 1980s and into the early 1990s, the novel and innovative possibilities of the miniseries form were recognised and explored in Australia. Novelty in contemporary public culture, Huyssen (*Twilight Memories*) asserts, is now associated with new versions of the past rather than with visions of the future. The Kennedy Miller production house is a good example of filmmakers interested in the innovative and novel possibilities, along with the production processes, afforded by the miniseries form. According to Turner (*Mixing 72*), the 1983 Kennedy Miller miniseries *The Dismissal* was a televisual event with “progressive consequences: *The Dismissal* opened up space [in Australian public culture] for the analysis of politics in Australian television drama – a space that was infinitesimal before, but . . . expanded to include Kennedy Miller’s *Vietnam*”.

By the late 1980s, pressures and opportunities for Australian film and television to internationalise seemed to result in declining opportunities for national historical concerns to be represented on Australian television. Even so, in 1988 Kennedy Miller could still claim that, despite growing overseas interest in some of their miniseries, they were content to make television and tell stories for Australia and for Australians. If their miniseries sold overseas, this was just a bonus (R. Oliver, *Bicentennial Drama*).

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\(^5\) *The Forsyte Saga* heralded a trend for British productions to be based on novels that were framed within particular historical contexts. The influence of *The Forsyte Saga*, and association of the miniseries with the telling of sagas, was evident in United States miniseries from the late 1970s. Wheen suggests that when the miniseries form took on its next manifestation in the United States, its success was due to the imported *Forsyte Saga*, broadcast on public television (PBS) in late 1969 and again in 1970 in weekly instalments (Stoehr).
With the increase in international miniseries co-productions from the early 1990s, many public commentators started to question the value of these productions as significant contributors to Australian public culture. Overseas audiences did not share the same heritage experiences and cultural knowledge as Australian viewers. Non-Australian audiences could not be expected to share similar cultural memories, the same public culture, or have the social and cultural investments as local Australian audiences. Non-Australians often lacked an appropriate Australian cultural vocabulary with which to interpret Australian miniseries. This meant coproductions were risky since miniseries made over most of the 1980s were not usually co-productions, but were “designed more safely for the local [Australian] market” and for Australian audiences (Jacka, The Industry 27).

For overseas sales, much of the story material in co-produced miniseries needed to be deliberately universalised. The stories would therefore often be more concerned with other places and nations as is evident in the Kennedy Miller foray into this field with Bangkok Hilton (Moran, Three Stages 13). However, one benefit from more universalised storylines was that a miniseries had the potential for rescreening and international circulation. In general, though, for industrial reasons the miniseries form usually discourages repeat broadcasting: the special event status of a miniseries is lost the second time round.

One kind of miniseries with a tendency to be rebroadcast and therefore to have a longer shelf life has been the ‘issues’ miniseries. Whatever the reason for its repetition, with each repetition the issues canvassed in this type of miniseries recirculate within public culture. An issues miniseries could speak to the public culture of Australia. Sometimes it could speak to another country, as was the case with the issues-based 1992 Australian-British coproduction The Leaving of Liverpool, a miniseries that intervened in both Australian and British public culture. This miniseries could be said to be Australian in terms “of well-known events, situations and figures” (Moran, Three Stages 13). But in dealing with the issues and horrors associated with British child migrants abused in Australia by those charged to care for them, it raised matters relevant for both Australia and the United Kingdom. Leaving of Liverpool was funded by public broadcasters in Australia and the United Kingdom. Commercial considerations were not as great a concern in this case as there was a supervening moral imperative.

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6 A miniseries to take big cuts for the American market was Anzacs (1985), but the cuts were done to cash in on the Crocodile Dundee phenomenon. All the Paul Hogan bits were left intact in the expurgated Anzacs, although there was not much of a press for “the mini-ised mini” in the United States (Oliver, Bicentennial Drama).
Some of the most popular and most critically acclaimed miniseries screened by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation – the ABC, Australia’s public broadcaster – are in the issues tradition. These miniseries include a production from the same creative team that made *The Leaving of Liverpool*. Screened in 1991, *Brides of Christ* deals with changes in the Catholic Church in 1960s Australia (Goodall). With their narratives set in the past, in pre-publicity material and during the broadcast of each episode, both *Brides of Christ* and *Leaving of Liverpool* authenticated their content and thereby their integrity and relevance for contemporary audiences. Even after their initial broadcast, the interventions of these miniseries into Australian public culture debates continued through ongoing media-initiated discussions of the issues raised by the television shows. Issues television remains a powerful presence in Australian television drama (Goodall 136).

Some issues miniseries adopted a docudrama format to support the issues represented, and to enhance the authenticity and integrity of the series. As Paget observes, “[f]ailing the presence in the story of well-known names and events ... docudrama[s] link ... specific events to a more general set of historical events. A historical ‘macro-story’ is thus hooked on to a lesser-known ‘micro-story’ (especially in pre-transmission publicity)” (62). But docudrama techniques were not just adopted in issues miniseries. Some high rating Australian historical miniseries were popular docudramas in a more macro-story mode – a mode accommodating a heritage approach to storytelling. The 1984 *Bodyline* miniseries from Kennedy Miller, about Australia’s 1932-33 cricketing confrontation with England, is an example of a miniseries that adopted contemporary docudramatic filming techniques for its recreations of cricket games. Historical miniseries can also make extensive use of archival material and reconstructed diegetic material (historical dramas based largely on historical events or people, as is the case in the docudrama format). Again, the Kennedy Miller miniseries *Bodyline* and *Vietnam* use both archival and recreated material.

Australian audiences over the 1980s and into the 1990s came to expect Australian miniseries would be ‘quality’ productions. Docudrama techniques contributed to perceptions by Australian audiences that these television shows were ‘quality’ drama. Historical miniseries perceived to be ‘quality’ television by audiences received greater recognition and were more prominent features of the public culture landscape. ‘Quality’, however, was hard to define even though Australian miniseries circulated among television producers, television networks, and in Australian Broadcasting Tribunal (ABT) regulations as ‘quality’ television (Moran, *Images* 137).

With a rise in their cultural status, many historical miniseries acquired a cultural mandate previously assigned to Australian feature films; as Jacka puts it, with the advent of quality historical
miniseries, the “quality film / period film” (associated with the so-called ‘AFC-genre’) migrated to Australian television (The Industry). From about 1983 on, the miniseries rather than the feature film was awarded the flagship status previously held by films like Picnic at Hanging Rock or My Brilliant Career, “and [miniseries] were seen by many times more people than the feature films made in the same period” (Jacka, The Industry 25).

However, in the Australian context, innovations in quality television productions were not possible until the nation’s film and television industry received support from government-initiated schemes; Australian broadcasters were then able to consider these to be viable productions. Without such patronage, Australian historical miniseries creators would not have had the funding to develop and experiment with storytelling and televisual aesthetic styles. As Hursthouse (277) points out, art historians know it is a mistake to infer that “artists make entirely free choices about how to represent ... people and scenes”. Their choice is “not only limited by the schemata available to them at their time and within their tradition, but the influences of patronage” (277).

Over the 1980s and into the 1990s, Australian television networks were also undergoing structural changes. Due to industry imperatives, television networks sought out ‘quality’ television programming to rebrand their network identity. The networks looked to local production houses such as Kennedy Miller, Hector Crawford, Reg Grundy, Generation Films, and Willard-King for more Australian product “free of the vagaries of American tastes” (Windschuttle 67). As part of Ten’s rebranding, the network established a working relationship with Kennedy Miller – Kennedy Miller would make Bodyline for Ten. Other independent production houses, such as Bob Weis’s production house Generation Films, also supplied Ten with miniseries (Fetherston 23); this was the case with the 1984 miniseries Waterfront from Generation Films.

Government and industry patronage also provided opportunities for filmmakers to explore new ideas and techniques. Patronage ameliorated the cost of making these often risky productions. Consequently, productions became more adventurous and inventive, drawing on European and American styles of production, while also reflecting Australian cultural and social themes (National Film and Sound Archive). The creative space and the demand for quality television product that developed as a result of government subsidies and television network encouragement resulted in some Australian film production houses investing heavily in television miniseries production.

Successful production houses often created miniseries to intervene in debates over Australian cultural identity. Kennedy Miller is a production house in point. George Miller claims that when
Rupert Murdoch bought the Ten Network “[h]e said ‘I want drama. I don’t care what it is, provided it’s really bold’, and we [Kennedy Miller] said ‘well we’re not that interested in doing television but if we were we’d have to have no interference’” (quoted in B.Turner, Curious). The three Kennedy Miller miniseries examined in the second part of the thesis – Bodyline, The Cowra Breakout, and Vietnam – were experimental in many ways and were also significant cultural and political interventions. Kennedy Miller’s inaugural miniseries, The Dismissal (screened in 1983) was an overtly political intervention. The risks associated with these productions were underwritten by the Division 10BA (the tax incentive scheme), in combination with television network support (B.Turner, Curious).

The Dismissal, made at a cost of $2.6 million, became the most expensive miniseries produced in Australia up to that time (J. Bell, The Dismissal). In 1983, Kennedy Miller’s Terry Hayes (who coproduced of The Dismissal with Byron Kennedy and George Miller), credited the 10BA film investment incentive for enabling The Dismissal to be made (Murphy 3). As Moran (Three Stages 19) notes, the industrial conditions of the Australian film and television industry in the 1980s, supported by the Division 10BA tax incentives and feature film budgets, attracted talented screen and theatre producers:

All four [Kennedy Miller mini]series [The Dismissal (1983), Bodyline (1984), Cowra Breakout (1985), Vietnam (1987)] employed a distinguished group of directors drawn from feature film, television and, in the case of George Ogilvie, the theatre. The first three [mini]series were particularly innovative in terms of their collaborative writing and acting workshops. All four used a cinematic style of production. (Moran, Images 19)

From the early 1980s, patronage through the 10BA, coupled with a corporate television environment privileging the miniseries form, marked the period as one of creativity, innovation, and experimentation, while also extending the form and style of the Australian historical miniseries. 10BA can be credited with opening up a space for experimentation for miniseries producers at a time when broadcast television in Australia was still on the ascendant.

Inevitably, the terms of 10BA were modified and wound back over the decade with the scheme eventually losing its value to producers. The demise of 10BA as a vehicle for production investment had a direct impact on miniseries production, and thereby on their future interventions into Australian public culture. By 1986, with the declining power of 10BA to fund a miniseries, a consensus seemed to have been reached that acknowledged fewer Australian miniseries were being made (Visontay, The Year). From the late 1980s on, with increasing dependence on the international market (Moran, Three Stages 13), a tension developed between the objectives of
fostering uniquely Australian programs and meeting the supply requirements of overseas distributors (Australian Film Commission, *Introduction* 4-15).

Creative and innovative storytelling also seemed to suffer. According to Cunningham and Miller (142), the ‘transitional phase (1988-1989)’ of greater international orientation in the miniseries “relied on either fairly standard Australian ethnocentrism, using Asian-related stories as backdrops for Western characters (*A Long Way From Home: Barlow and Chambers*, 1988; *Bangkok Hilton*, 1989), or took the much-worn route of importing an American star to bolster potential sales for an Australian-based story (*The Last Frontier*, 1986”).

For almost a decade, the stories told in Australian historical miniseries had played a prominent role in the larger social and cultural debates underway in the nation’s public culture forums. Televisual interpretations and representations of historical events contributed to a public reimagining of the nation’s heritage and what it meant to be an Australian at a time when Australian identity was being deliberately refashioned through government policy. Concern over Australian cultural identity was closely associated with multicultural policies in the 1980s and with the planning for Australia’s Bicentennial celebrations in 1988.

**Cultural Identity and Public Culture**

In the period of official multiculturalism which included the lead up to the Australian Bicentenary, opportunities became available to talk and think about Australian identity, history, culture, and heritage. The years immediately prior to the Bicentenary provided a discursive space within Australian public culture where it was possible for some risk taking and experimentation to be undertaken in the content of long-form television production.

Though the case study miniseries fall either side of the 1988 Bicentenary, the reach of Bicentennial politics extended back to the early 1980s and forward into the early 1990s. The theme of this celebration – to find a national identity – made its way from public culture into the interpretations and representations of historical events in miniseries released in the months prior to and during the 1988 celebrations. Debates over heritage, especially leading up to and at the time of the Bicentennial, brought into sharp focus the contested nature of creating, interpreting, and representing past events as heritage in historical miniseries. They helped frame the public uptake and audience viewing of these miniseries.
The Bicentenary was expressed in monuments, activities, and programs. It was public culture writ large. According to the Australian Bicentennial Authority, the Bicentenary was to celebrate the two hundred years since the British/Europeans began their colonisation of the continent. The Bicentenary also capped off a period when Australians were preoccupied with federal government-sponsored initiatives promoting Australia as a multicultural society. The Australian government’s policy of multiculturalism, formulated in the 1970s, would peak in public culture debates of the late 1980s, as well as in the period leading up to the 1988 Bicentenary under Prime Minister Bob Hawke. Yet even this short summary reveals the stress points that would facture during the Bicentennial year. Indeed by 1988, a cohesive and unifying Australian identity did not seem possible.

Prior to 1988 there were many versions of Australian identity being articulated in the nation’s public culture forums, resulting in many “re-statements, interrogations, and a re-writing of Australian nationalism, history and identity in print and electronic media” (O'Regan, *Enchantment* 140-141). But the problem, as Richard White (*Inventing Australia Revisited* 18-19) argues, was the sheer number of versions of Australian identity and the many ways of thinking about Australia circulating within the nation’s public culture. This was recognised in the Bicentennial celebrations where “many group identities within Australia [were] competing with each other” (White, *Inventing Australia Revisited* 18-19). The Bicentenary capped off a period that – according to O'Regan (*Enchantment* 140-141) – was not only distinguished by Bicentennialist nationalism and multiculturalism; it was also a period when there was a “sense of crisis about Australia's future in which neither Europe nor America would hold the key” (140-141). This certainly provides a powerful background against which Japan’s East Asian ascendancy in the 1980s could be read into the miniseries *The Cowra Breakout*.

Official multiculturalism raised a number of other concerns which found their way into many of the case study historical miniseries. These concerns included the relationship of ‘Old Australia’ to a new Australia re-imagined as multicultural; the impact of non-European cultures on a European-derived new world settler society; and the problematic use of the label ‘Anglo-Celtic’. In addition, Betts (34) contends official multiculturalism had a number of features: “high immigration,

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7 The invented ethnocultural label ‘Anglo-Celtic’ had a history that, according to Inglis (21) can be traced back to the nineteenth century, “to supply a need of that time, then [so] lay dormant until wanted again”. According to Inglis (21), the ‘Anglo-Celtic’ expressed “a recognition of homogeneity among all peoples from or descended from the United Kingdom and Ireland, in the face of peoples from elsewhere”.

8 Betts (34) also argues that that during the Hawke and Keating Labor Governments (1983 to 1996) Australia experienced dramatic structural changes which deregulated the financial system and exposed the economy to global markets in a revolutionary
multiculturalism, enthusiasm for integrating Australia into Asia, and support for equal-opportunity legislation and minority rights, particularly for Aboriginal rights”. When Prime Minister Keating’s described Australia as a ‘multicultural nation in Asia’ this was, for some commentators like Berry, overly political as well as being “an oxymoron” (Berry 44).

Official multiculturalism sanctioned the identities of officially recognised ethnic communities as being different from, but equal to, other officially sanctioned ethnic groups. Ethnic identities were conceived as being stable but evolving. However, as noted previously, there are difficulties when interpreting aspects of the past as heritage within a multiculturalist environment where ethnicities and their cultures are equal (Tunbridge and Ashworth 21). The political purpose of official multiculturalism, though, was clear: to contain difference through consensus. Indeed, this was also the objective of multicultural policies elsewhere in the world. This was so much the case that Homi Bhabha regarded “[m]ulticulturalism [as] an attempt both to respond to and to control the dynamic process of the articulation of cultural difference, administering a consensus based on a norm that propagates cultural diversity” (quoted in Rutherford 208-209, italics in original).

Looking back over the 1980s from their vantage point in the first part of the 1990s, Stratton and Ang contend Australian identity was being “figured culturally” in that “Australia sought to emulate the European idea of a homogenous race/culture as the basis of the imagined community of the nation” (Stratton and Ang 149-150). Consequently, the society being “constructed by multiculturalism” in Australia during the 1980s was registered “as an inclusive particularism” (144) with “ethnic minority cultures now welcomed and celebrated as enriching Australian national culture rather than threatening it” (Stratton and Ang 150). Multiculturalism seemed to be a way to overcome “an old historical narrative [that] had to be left behind – the history of Australia as a homogeneous, white, ‘Anglo-Celtic’ outpost of Europe, racially cleansed inside and shying away from relations to the world outside, especially with its [Asian] closest neighbours” (Ang, Intertwining Histories).

These changes brought wealth to some and insecurity to many. But they were not a matter of economics alone: “they were accompanied by a social and cultural agenda. This agenda had a longer history, dating back to the Whitlam and Fraser Governments, but it came to its full flowering in the late 1980s and early 1990s.”

According to Berry (44), when a Prime Minister like Keating describes Australia as ‘a multicultural nation in Asia’, it is political code: it is a phrase that assumes the rhetorical form of a direct and positive statement which masks ambiguity, contradiction, and paradox.

The older settler ‘Anglo-Celtic’ culture simply regarded itself as being ‘Australian’. It did not “see itself as having a diasporic identity but rather its own identity as ‘simply Australian’ (O’Regan, Australian National Cinema 316). But ‘Old Australia’ and its values were being interrogated. In the new, post-war Australia, as others have argued, and as Sneja Gunew and Fazal Rizvi (xii) point out, multiculturalism emerged in Australia during the 1970s “as a compromise formation”, designed “to pacify increasingly volatile ethnic communities on the one hand, and allay the fears of the dominant Anglo community alarmed by a changing demography on the other”.

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9 Prime Minister Paul Keating had used the phrase ‘a multicultural nation in Asia’ to describe Australia (Berry 44).

10 According to Berry (44), when a Prime Minister like Keating describes Australia as ‘a multicultural nation in Asia’, it is political code: it is a phrase that assumes the rhetorical form of a direct and positive statement which masks ambiguity, contradiction, and paradox.
Multiculturalism could now be used by miniseries creators as a resource for their heritage inspired storytelling. The makers of historical miniseries were able to appropriate ‘multiculturalism’, using it to imagine a ‘new’ Australian identity at a moment of cultural crisis, and at a time when what it meant to be Australian was openly debated (Tulloch 93). In addition, imagining Australia as multicultural could be used by Australian filmmakers to discount the authority, legitimacy, and reach of British settler culture and its associated aesthetic traditions that once “provide[d] the basic grammar of Australian film and television production.” Multiculturalism could now “imagine possibilities shaped by other less dominant interests. [Multiculturalism provided] . . . new vocabularies for film and television production and nationhood” (O’Regan, *Australian National Cinema* 324).

Under official multiculturalism, the ‘Anglocelts’ became another European ethnicity in Australia’s European-derived multicultural mix; they were now Angloceltic-Australians. Moreover, Australia was being re-imagined as being more of a European derived society than an Angloceltic society (O’Regan, *Australian National Cinema* 312). Australia as a European-derived society is variously represented and recreated in the miniseries *Anzacs*, *The Dunera Boys*, and *Bordertown*; and is used to make sense of the experience of Australian soldiers and of the experiences of Vietnamese refugees in Australia in the *Vietnam* miniseries.

In 1980s miniseries, British (or ‘Angloceltic’) Australians were represented as the numerically dominant ethnicity. Nevertheless, the case study miniseries still problematised the relationship of the dominant ethnic group to other ethnic and cultural groups (Berry 41-46). Even the notion of ‘Britishness’ and of being ‘British’ was questioned. During the period of the historical miniseries boom over the 1980s, 'Britishness' tended to “simply refer to the geographical entity of Britain” (O’Regan, *Australian National Cinema* 312). The 1920s and 1930s tradition that British Australians had a special connection to the Mother Country was no longer maintainable in an era of multiculturalism. ‘Britishness’ in a miniseries like *Bodyline* was therefore used to demonstrate just who Australians were by “providing a culturally different foil, showing who they were not” (O’Regan, *Australian National Cinema* 312-313).

However, even when miniseries (or other film and television productions) represented the dominant ethnic group, other groups were not automatically rendered invisible on-screen. As O’Regan (*Australian National Cinema* 178) argues, in order to represent an ethnic group as being dominant, a film or television production usually needed to undertake a cinematic or televisual interpretation.
of the subordinate group: “if national cinema and television drama will always centre on the
dominant ethnicity and its social values, minorities will not be simply excluded. Australian cinema
has evolved its particular instruments – including structural and critical instruments – to think and
produce its margins”. In the *Vietnam* miniseries the ethnic identity of Serge is established in the
first episode as being Hungarian-Australian, although no more is made of this in the rest of the
series. But in *The Dunera Boys* the central themes of the miniseries are based on ‘Angloceltic’
Australian guards having to come to terms with their Jewish European (and very cosmopolitan)
prisoners.

The problem with multicultural heritage interpretations of Australia’s past was that Australia’s
indigenous population were not post-1788 settlers. As the original inhabitants living in Australia for
many thousands of years, what would Aboriginals be celebrating during the Bicentenary? It was
always going to be the case that the Bicentennial celebrations would expose contradictions and
tensions within Australia’s complex multicultural heritage, and expose tensions surrounding the
social and cultural construction of ‘ethnic’ identities integral to official multiculturalist policies.

Official multiculturalism would combine with the 1988 Bicentenary to reveal the anomalous
position of Aboriginals in multicultural discourses. Reporting on the Bicentennial Day celebrations
under the page 1 headline *Day of Contradictions*, the *Sydney Morning Herald* noted the

> [d]escendants of the Europeans celebrated 200 years of settlement, while descendants of
> those who have been [in Australia] 200 times as long looked on. ... Such are the
> contradictions of Australia. A new society in an old land; and old people living on the
> fringes of the new society. (quoted in Tulloch 93)

As Bertrand (*Bicentennial History*) points out, despite proclamations from politicians that the 1988
celebrations were not meant to be divisive, and that the achievements of all were to be equally
recognised as being intrinsic to Australia’s public culture, “heated arguments developed from very
early in the year about the ethics of ‘celebrating’ any anniversary of the conquest of one people by
another”:

> [Aboriginals] boycotted official bicentennial ‘celebrations’ and conducted competing events
> as occasions for mourning. Black pressure – and white guilt – was further fuelled by the
> continuing Royal Commission into Black Deaths in Police Custody. Later in the year, race
> issues were revived in the debate on national immigration policy, and specifically whether a
> preferred racial mix in current and future immigration should be specified. (Bertrand,
> *Bicentennial History*)
During the Bicentennial year itself miniseries were broadcast: the ABC screened *True Believers* and *The Alien Years*; the Seven Network had *Melba*; and the Ten Network had *Dirtwater Dynasty* (R. Oliver *Bicentennial Drama*). According to Bertrand (*Bicentennial History*) only the ‘moderate’ though still ‘conservative’ miniseries *The Dirtwater Dynasty* was able to engage with the legacy of ‘black’ and ‘white’ relations in Australia. Australian miniseries screened on Australian television in 1988 had to contend with the highly-politicised climate in the lead up to the Bicentenary. In this politically-charged environment, miniseries producers had to be wary.

In the latter part of the 1980s, George Miller claimed Australian film and television had ‘used up’ all of Australia’s stories (Hamilton, *Monuments*). Yet few Australian production houses developed and ‘used’ stories based on Aboriginal culture and heritage, or incorporated ‘Aboriginal characters’ into televisual interpretations and representations of Australia’s past as contributing the shared cultural heritage of the nation. There was only one notable exception: *Women of the Sun* broadcast on SBS-TV. 11

The cultural interpretive frameworks developed by miniseries producers accepted, perhaps unconsciously, the basic tenets of official multiculturalism. This indicates the fractures and problems identified by heritage theorists as being associated with a process of selecting aspects of the past and then interpreting these aspects as ‘multicultural heritage’, are present in the case study miniseries. Even so, miniseries creators took the opportunity to interpret and represent Australia as a diverse multicultural society. The way out of this conundrum is to hypothesise that at some instinctive or perhaps intellectual level, miniseries creators conceptualised Australia in ways more congruent with thinking of Australia as a new world settler society. In a corresponding fashion, the concerns expressed in debates underway within public culture seem to align with O’Regan’s delineation of Australia as a new world society.

The notion of Australia as a new world society did not garner anywhere near as much attention as multiculturalist discourses. Nevertheless, O’Regan’s discussion of Australia as a new world society does encourage consideration of new world identities in historical miniseries. In his *Australian National Cinema*, O’Regan points out that thinking of Australia as a new world society accounts for

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11 Except for a minor supporting character or two, Aboriginals were not represented in 1980s historical miniseries, but they were present in other television genres such as ethnographic documentaries, where a televiusal space was made for their representation. However, Aboriginals appeared in many Australian feature films (such as *The Last Wave* and *Fringe Dwellers*), though even here, their representation was still often subject to great controversy. With the issue of the Bicentenary looming in 1988, there was never going to be a harmonious synchronisation between the narratives of ‘settler Australia’ and indigenous Australia in 1980s historical miniseries. From the mid-1990s, there was a recognition that coming to terms with Aboriginal Australia was ‘unfinished business’ carried over from the 1980s. Some of this ‘unfinished business’ was picked up in 1990s miniseries such as *Kings in Grass Castles* (1998), but it wasn’t till the first decade of the 21st century that the Australian government finally issued an official apology for the cultural traumas experienced by Aboriginal Australians.
the evolving nature of Australia’s national identity. A ‘multicultural’ identity becomes a part of this evolutionary process. Identities in a new world society are always emergent (O’Regan, *Australian National Cinema* 318). A new world identity is gradual and evolving: Australia’s dominant ethnicity changes over an extended period of time from British to Anglocelt to European. Establishing a singular national identity and an associated national heritage is always going to be problematic in a new world society. In such a society “each individual has multiple identities in that everyone identifies with a range of social groups” (White, *Inventing Australia Revisited* 18-19).


Public culture discourses in the 1980s and early 1990s skirted around the idea of a new hybrid ‘ethnicity’ emerging in Australia. Stuart Hall ( *Ethnicity*, 18) argues ethnicity needs to be understood in terms of “a politics of location, positionality, and enunciation” – not so much as “a process of discovery of lost ‘roots’ but of a construction of a ‘new’ or ‘emergent’ ethnicity”, linked to contemporary social relations and to relations of power (18). The Anzacs miniseries does suggest just such a notion of *ethnogenesis*: that Australian soldiers from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds can coalesce into an emergent Australian ‘ethnicity’. Bodyline also forecasts the emergent nature of a new people or ‘ethnicity’ in Australia.

It was possible to imagine an Australian ‘ethnicity’, but the issue then would be how to represent it on-screen. When conceived as being a cultural or symbolic system, ‘ethnicity’ requires those cultural symbols and meanings constituting a collective identity system to be clearly delineated (Taylor 1419)12. Tangible items of cultural heritage such as the Anzac military uniform, cricket bats and balls, and prisoner-of-war camps can all be filmed; their intangible cultural symbolic meanings are relatively clear in the context of the story and the historical world developed in a

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12 The turn to ‘ethnicity’ in Australia during the 1980s meant turning way from ‘race’. *Race* changed in public discourse from a quasi-scientific concept which brought together biological similarities, cultural behaviour, and social hierarchies – as in the idea of the superiority of the white races which underlay the white Australia policy of the century from about 1865 (P. Bell, *Multicultural Australia* 2). *Race* became a term which, by the 1990s, was, and usually still is, generally used as merely a descriptive differentiator of physically distinguished social groups (P. Bell, *Multicultural Australia* 2). *Ethnicity* developed as an alternative concept based on an egalitarian and non-judgemental interpretation of culture as a social process (P. Bell, *Multicultural Australia* 2). Since ethnicity is a social process and a social construction, then ethnicity (like culture) changes over time and from place-to-place.
miniseries. But could these same items be redeployed to symbolically represent an Australian *ethnicity* or even a collective identity? This problematic goes some way to help explain why this thesis focuses on ‘cultural heritage’ more than it does ‘ethnic heritage’, although there is considerable overlap between the two.

An emergent Australian new world *hybrid cultural identity* would be the product of cultures and heritages intertwining in a new settler nation. This emergent cultural identity, as an *unexceptional* feature of Australian society, is manifested in various ways in each of the case study miniseries. The normalisation of Australia’s intertwined cultural heritages (and its associated collective cultural memory) emphasised the unexceptionalism of Australia as a new world society, even though it was a society still coming to terms with a diversity of cultural heritages.

The *unexceptionalism* of Australia’s hybrid national identity found its way into other miniseries over the 1980s. For example, the miniseries *Waterfront* (broadcast on the Ten Network in 1984) emphasised the unexceptionalism of Australians of Italian descent speaking Italian in their Australian homeland. This 6-hour drama televisually interpreted the Melbourne waterside workers’ strike of the late 1920s. In their commentary on the miniseries, Jakubowicz et al (*Making Italians* 110) acknowledge *Waterfront* as being an important attempt to dramatize Italians in Australia: while the protagonists of *Waterfront* are mostly Anglo-Australian, the miniseries does include a major subplot about Italian migrants who were used as strike-breakers. English subtitles were used for the Italian-speaking scenes.13

Considering Australia as a new world society encourages an appreciation of those miniseries that created heritage stories interpreting and representing aspects of Australia’s past in ways facilitating the incorporation of the outsider, and the outsider's culture and heritage, into the nation’s collective cultural heritage and cultural memory. This reshaping of Australian culture is possible because *all* cultures are social constructions and therefore are inventions. Famously, Hobsbawm (13) argued that national culture is an invention, and a “comparatively recent historical innovation” at that. Storytellers regularly intervene in inventing and maintaining a community’s evolving public culture.

While all cultures are an invention, they also have a lineage and a history, and therefore a heritage. Through heritage storytelling, miniseries connected the past to the present and, through their

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13 The screenplay for *Waterfront* was subsequently published as a novel, compiled by Sue McKinnon. It presented a sympathetic view of the Italian characters and their cultural heritage, though ‘from the outside’ (Jakubowicz et al, *Making Italians* 110).
interventions into public culture, they chart the cultural continuity behind Australia’s quest for a national identity. However, as Anthony Smith (*National Identities*) observes, and as this chapter has sought to establish, national identities and histories are never just mere fictions or mere inventions; nor can any past be appropriated since “[t]raditions, myths, history, and symbols must all grow out of the existing living memories and beliefs of the people who are to compose the nation. Their popular resonance will be greater the more continuous with the living past they are shown to be” (Smith, *National Identities* 359).

**Conclusion**

While no Australian historical miniseries has attained the cultural status or aesthetic significance *Roots* acquired in its home territory, nevertheless many high rating Australian historical miniseries by Kennedy Miller, Generation Films, and other Australian production houses made noteworthy contributions to Australian public culture. At the same time, they contributed to innovations in the form of the *Australian* historical miniseries.

As with *Roots*, many Australian historical miniseries created stories as interpretations of the past that were, as Huyssen (*Present Pasts: Urban* 35) argues in relation to monumentality, a “blending of history, myth, and the monumental”. They blended history, myth, and the monumental, in sometimes equal measure, and in ways that have much in common with heritage storytelling. The consequences and impact of this storytelling on Australia’s public culture and cultural memory have been very real.

The Kennedy Miller production house in the 1980s – with George Miller as producer and Terry Hayes as scriptwriter – always regarded themselves as storytellers (Cunningham, *Kennedy-Miller* 183). From the 1980s until the present day, George Miller has espoused the importance of storytelling as a tool of Australian nation building, as an opportunity to directly intervene in Australian public culture, and as a means of developing the nation’s cultural memories and memorial culture.

When multiculturalism is married to the notion of Australia as a new world society, multiculturalism seems to contribute to the nation’s collective cultural heritage, and to a potentially utopian future. At a more practical level, the integration of multiculturalism with a new world approach indicates such integration *did* reduce narrative tensions in historical miniseries. The
process of incorporation and accommodation reduces the cultural tensions that might otherwise be more prominent in the stories told in these miniseries. The *renouvellement* and *rapprochement* approaches central to the cultural interpretive frameworks of the case study miniseries attempted to achieve incorporation and accommodation; yet incorporation and accommodation can also expose new or unexpected tensions. Tensions evident in the evolving heritage of a new world society will appear in that society’s public culture.

Blending heritage perspectives into the interdisciplinary approach adopted in this thesis accepts that cultural tensions evident in the heritage stories told in miniseries may result in ambiguous and contradictory storytelling. Regardless of these tensions, ambiguities, or contradictions, Huyssen’s concept of public culture carves out a theoretical space in which to conduct an interdisciplinary assessment of the miniseries. The concept of public culture can be assimilated into Huyssen’s own approach to monumentality. These concepts, in combination with the notion of televisuality developed by Caldwell, the work of film and television scholars, the heritage sector’s framework for assessing heritage value, and the insights provided by Heritage Studies, feature in the examination of the case study miniseries. With this in mind, a consideration of the heritage value and cultural significance of the seven case study miniseries can now be undertaken. *Bodyline* (1984), *Cowra Breakout* (1984), *Anzacs* (1985), *The Dunera Boys* (1985), *Vietnam* (1987), *The Leaving of Liverpool* (1992), and *Bordertown* (1995) are discussed in the ensuing chapters.
Chapter 5

**RENOUVELLEMENT AND AUTHENTICITY:**
The Consensus Heritage Narratives of *Anzacs, Bodyline, and The Dunera Boys*

**Introduction**

*Anzacs* (1985), *Bodyline* (1984), and *The Dunera Boys* (1985) were broadcast on Australian television at a time when miniseries production had reached its peak, and when audiences were most engaged by the potential of the miniseries form. The *renouvellement* approaches of each miniseries influenced the way these stories reconciled and accommodated cultural and ethnic differences inside an expanded social and cultural polity.

As noted in the first part of the thesis, productions telling a heritage story need identifiable themes to facilitate audience engagement. While *Anzacs, Bodyline, and The Dunera Boys* tell different heritage stories, they all thematically foreground ‘endurance’ as being a particularly Australian cultural trait. This theme connects the Australian experiences of various cultural and ethnic groups. While what has to be endured is singular to each group, they all commonly endure adversity, betrayal, and suffering at the hands of greater powers and indifferent authority.

The theme of ‘endurance’ has been an ongoing one in Australian cultural history and public culture. It is closely associated with the Australian experience of convictism, war, the vagaries of settlement (particularly drought and floods, capricious markets, and the Depression); and it has generated social types such as ‘the battler’, a figure who makes do amidst economic and social adversity (Hirst). ‘Endurance’, therefore, became a common theme in many of the consensus heritage narratives of 1980s miniseries. Take *Eureka Stockade* (1984): in this miniseries endurance binds miners of diverse European and American cultural backgrounds (Langer). Through their shared adversity and their resulting (albeit ultimately doomed) collective action, the miners begin the process of developing a distinct Australian identity and forming genuinely democratic institutions.

In different though related ways, each of *Anzacs, Bodyline, and Dunera Boys* re-interpret and reformulate Australian cultural identity as one forged out of composite populations in which older and newer Australians of British- and Continental-European ancestries mingle. Crucially, the
process of ‘becoming Australian’ is extended beyond the British to immigrants of minority Jewish, Irish, German, and other European backgrounds. The heritage of Australians with British backgrounds is still represented, but they are now developing an Australian heritage: as they intermingle and accommodate people from diverse backgrounds they join with these people in the process of becoming culturally Australian.

The focus in each miniseries is on a different key moment of the national story – the Anzac legend of World War One (Anzacs), the Bodyline cricket test series of 1932-33 (Bodyline), and non-English speaking migration just after World War Two (The Dunera Boys). The various renouvellement approaches in each series contribute to a national conversation by integrating the national types of the battler, the digger, the cricketer, and the refugee. These types were revised and updated without substantially altering the ideologies underpinning them (Hirst 174-176). What it meant to be an ‘Australian’ was associated with loyalties forged and tested in war; with the cultural values promoted by sport as a national unifier; and with experiences of refugees and other migrants as they reshaped their old identities in a new land. In each series, the experience and recognition of adversity and suffering, and the identification of a common cause, brings individuals and groups together. Different communities come into closer cultural proximity through their ability to endure.

Themes based on endurance were calibrated to meet the new circumstances of 1980s Australia. This was a period where government policies on multiculturalism were refined, where issues surrounding an impending Bicentenary were never far from the Australian media, and where debates about immigration and refugees were a constant. In addition, Australia’s place in the world was being scrutinised and re-evaluated. That themes of endurance tap into debates and issues prominent in the 1980s should come as no surprise because, as McArthur points out, no matter what period history-writing or historical drama is ostensibly dealing with, “in reality it is providing the ideological needs of the present (McArthur 7-8).

Interpreting and representing the past as heritage in these miniseries required a certain amount of invention. Conceptualising miniseries producers to be heritage interpreters explains why they were less concerned with historical accuracy than with authentically representing and adequately exploring their heritage themes. For example, in the Anzacs miniseries, the long-established Anzac legend is updated to accommodate notions of cultural diversity and multicultural tolerance while still being respectful to the myths and legends of nation building. While the Australian battalions of the Great War were not the more fully fledged multicultural platoons they became over 1980s, they are still represented in the Anzacs miniseries as being socially, culturally, and ethnically diverse.
The experience and contribution from soldiers born outside of the country (‘new chums’) is endorsed through their decision to fight for and identify with their new nation.

As outlined in earlier chapters of Part A, *renouvellement* approaches retell stories in ways that update these stories without challenging their basic heritage status, settings, and functions. This chapter considers how interpretations and representations of endurance (and related themes of betrayal and injustice) are worked through in each miniseries to provide thematic and narrative coherence. At the same time, each series supports an overarching consensus heritage narrative. The chapter ends by reflecting upon the importance of characters and their characterisation in the uptake and acceptance of these narrative interpretations.

**Renouvellement and Consensus**

In addition to the broader public debates over the nature of Australian cultural heritage that were brought into sharp relief by the circumstances and conduct of the Bicentenary, there were other social processes underway that were re-imagining Australia’s heritage. These processes provide a broader context for the production of the three miniseries. In particular, in the first half of the 1980s an officially sanctioned multicultural agenda promoted social and cultural diversity and tolerance as central to definitions of what it meant to be ‘an Australian’. Multicultural-inspired developments in the content of miniseries were part of a remarkable explosion of interest in multiculturalism over the 1980s by the Australian media (for example, in books, documentaries, television series, feature films, magazine articles, and news stories). New and updated heritage institutions, including museums and heritage sites, were also engaged in adopting a multicultural approach when interpreting aspects of Australia’s past as contributing to the nation’s collective cultural heritage. Multiculturalism became a marker of a fairer and more open and accommodating Australian society (Ashton 381).

Australia’s history, cultural heritage, popular memory, and national identity were open to re-invention over the 1980s and well into the 1990s. The miniseries examined in this chapter – in common with new takes on history, museology, and public politics – facilitated incremental and gradual accommodation of previously excluded groups so they could become a part of Australia’s collective national story. As Ashton (382) points out, the concern was to “express a more inclusive narrative of the nation”; to commemorate “a wider number of communities and people,” and to
promote the “memories [of those] who ha[d] been officially identified as having contributed to Australia’s ‘national development’”.

The different takes on heritage imagined in *Anzacs*, *The Dunera Boys*, and *Bodyline* are the result of creative practices where the filmmakers deliberately and purposefully integrated new interpretations of Australian history with older established interpretations of that history already known to Australian audiences. The producers of these miniseries interpreted aspects of Australian history through the lens of multiculturalism. The heritage imagined – an amalgam of existing, reinterpreted, and invented traditions and histories – is one that sanctions the political and cultural traditions of migrants and their descendants and, consequently, maps well onto notions of a popular multiculturalism and a new separate and assertive Australian outlook that is both worldly and cosmopolitan.1

The consensus narrative of the *Anzacs* miniseries is centred on the premise that a ‘proto-multicultural’ Anzac platoon made up of culturally and ethnically diverse members go into the Great War to defend Australia’s honour more than to defend the British Empire. This re-interpretation of an Anzac platoon replaces the earlier Anglo-Saxon type associated with the Anzac legend when it was first established by C.W. Bean (Cochrane 9). The ‘Digger’ is now represented in the miniseries as an amalgamation of types, where cultural and ethnic differences are recognizable and accommodated. For example, having a German-Australian as an Australian Anzac was a provocation, perhaps even an ideological provocation. Nevertheless, the basic principles of the Anzac myth and legend are re-affirmed in the miniseries: the German-Australian Anzac is assimilated into the Anzac legend without substantially altering it. Indeed he is significant because his ethnicity does not get in the way of his being accepted and recognized as an Australian despite the enemy being Germany. Australia’s contemporary experiences with cultural and social diversity are in this way shown not to preclude a continuation of the consensual qualities of the Anzac myth. At the same time, the productive management of cultural diversity over the course of the series contributes to the evolution and emergence of a culturally-distinct Australian identity.

For its part, *The Dunera Boys* enacts its own consensus narrative through an exemplary story of ‘new migrants’. In this case the eponymous ‘Boys’ are initially misidentified as ‘enemy aliens’ and

1 Particularly notable in *Anzacs* and *The Dunera Boys* is the nature of the imagination the filmmakers bring to their productions. To create ‘new’ heritage traditions and experiences, both miniseries re-interpret some of the past experiences (the history) of ‘older’ Australians with British ancestry as well as those of ‘newer’ Australians with non-British European backgrounds. This ‘new’ composite heritage is combined with elements from already-known histories and heritage traditions of these communities, again selected by miniseries producers. In *Bodyline*, ‘older’ Australians are associated with the British Empire, while ‘newer’ Australians are no longer beholden to that Empire.
discriminated against by bureaucrats and politicians. The skills and capacities of the ‘Boys’ initially go unrecognized, although many of them achieve later acceptance when they decide to adopt Australia as their new homeland. So comprehensive was this revision that public estimation of this (and other) European migrant groups was such that migrants became an esteemed part of Australian culture, and essential to the Australian story (Adams, *Don’t Forget*).

*The Dunera Boys* tells the story of Jewish refugees who, fleeing from Nazi Germany and Austria, arrive in Britain but are mistakenly interned by British authorities as ‘enemy aliens’. They are then transported to Australia on board the ship *Dunera*. In Australia, they are imprisoned in a camp outside of Hay, New South Wales. A reasonable summary of the miniseries is provided by the curators of the 1987 Jewish Film Festival in San Francisco, who wrote that the miniseries was based on the true wartime story of 2,500 Jewish refugees mistaken for Nazi spies and transported on the British ship *Dunera* to Australia during World War II. Interned in the remote, broiling outback, the Dunera Boys, as they were called, set up an orchestra, political parties, a university, and a cafe. The ensemble acting in the film here is superlative. Most notably, Academy Award nominee Bob Hoskins rages in ‘kosher cockney’ as a London East End fishmonger picked up in error .... The Australians are not very good at internment camps (lacking both racism and efficiency), but their bumbling leads to tragic consequences. The pressures of camp life intensify as top-level government and army conferences are conducted with anti-Semitism and high absurdity. (San Francisco Jewish Film Festival)

This miniseries suggests that the European cosmopolitanism of the refugees is a forerunner to official multiculturalist policies in 1980s Australia. The friendly relationships the ‘Boys’ establish with their Australian guards naturalises the decision many Dunera Boys take on release to not only serve in the Australian army but to later settle in Australia at the end of the War. Their European cosmopolitanism then becomes a significant cultural gift the ‘Boys’ bequeath to Australia and to Australians.

While Australia’s multicultural heritage is an identifiable feature of both *Anzacs* and *The Dunera Boys*, it is not part of *Bodyline*’s cultural politics. *Bodyline*’s approach is to take a cosmopolitanism developed from within the British Empire and to construct a consensus heritage narrative premised on Australia’s initial faith in and then betrayal by the Empire. An international game of cricket – the ‘game of empire’ – becomes an allegory of Australian endurance and independence of mind and spirit. In a reversal, the Australian cricketers during the 1932-33 England-Australia cricket series are interpreted as standing for the higher moral values of ‘fair play’ and ‘sportsmanship’ once associated with the more positive virtues of Britain and its Empire. Though defeated, the Australians are shown to be the true inheritors of the higher moral values of the Empire. In 2005
George Miller, reflecting on the Bodyline miniseries, claimed that it “was a kind of war of independence through cricket” (Idato, *Culture*). Australians affirm their cultural differences from the British by enduring the dishonourable tactics employed by the English cricket team. As the Australian cricketers (and through them the Australian people) come to endure and accept defeat, they achieve a loftier moral victory. What connects Bodyline to the other two miniseries is its international conversation about and deliberations on imperial cosmopolitanism and its cultural values. In addition, Bodyline’s representation of the values associated with good sportsmanship asserts that a positive national identity and culture can be formed through sport.

The English cricket team under the captaincy of Douglas Jardine (a child of Empire) takes into the cricket test series an attitude of winning-at-all-costs, regardless of the ‘special relationship’ between England and Australia existing under the ‘old’ Empire. The drama revolves around the on-field tactics employed by the English cricket team against the Australians and in particular against Australia’s star batsman, Donald Bradman. The English adopt a style of bowling aimed at the body; this became known as ‘bodyline’. Bodyline was a violent tactic, designed to physically intimidate Australian batsmen (particularly Bradman). The miniseries shows the Australian cricketers opting not to retaliate by adopting the tactic themselves. The controversy over the bodyline tactic within the English team is foregrounded with Jardine contrasted not only with Pelham Warner, the aristocratic ‘loser’, but also with the Anglo-Indian Nawab of Pataudi.

Although Jardine is the more developed character, the character of Donald Bradman is the pivot for the consensus narrative in the miniseries. The renouvellement approach in the series re-asserts the mythologies surrounding Bradman to provide the production with its necessary authenticity. In fact, it was so successful in doing so that Brett Hutchins – during a radio interview on Bradman (*Challenging the Bradman Myth*) – claimed the miniseries contributed to the re-mythologising of Bradman for a new generation. Bradman continues to be regarded as the man who personifies not only a prodigious natural talent but the notion of Australian endurance and fair play in sport.

In Anzacs, Bodyline, and The Dunera Boys there is a particular playing out of ‘defeat’ and a recasting of the terms under which particular kinds of ‘victory’ may be interpreted as having been achieved. Although each miniseries provides moments of heritage-as-provocation, these are

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2 According to Sissons and Stoddart (5), the term originated in a telegraphic shorthand for ‘line of the body’.

3 It has been observed that ‘the real historical Bradman’ is to be found in the writings of his contemporary Jack Fingleton (Hutchins). But the mythic Bradman is the one presented in the miniseries. Alternative or counter discourses such as those based on the Fingleton and O'Reilly versions of Bradman, have been marginalised.
designed to develop particular narrative arcs and to facilitate resolution and consensus in the concluding sequences of each series. In *Anzacs*, for instance, the heritage-as-provocation anti-war theme of an imperial war destroying the lives and mutilating the bodies of young Australians coalesces in a coming-of-age saga. This is a saga in which the only recourse available to the soldiers and to the nation in the bitter circumstances of the Great War was to survive, to endure the war’s deprivations and, above all, to be there for each other. Indeed much of the drama in *Anzacs* revolves around how men of differing ethnic, cultural, and social backgrounds fighting at Gallipoli and then in the trenches of France build strong bonds of solidarity. Although they endure the defeat of the Gallipoli campaign, to be followed up by later ‘victories’ on the Western Front, the real victory is consistently shown to be the solidarity forged among the Australian soldiers themselves.

In a similar fashion in the *Bodyline* miniseries – even though the series includes the stages leading up the 1932-33 Cricket Test and to Australia’s eventual defeat – what is remembered and admired by the Kennedy Miller production team who made the series is the stoic resistance of the Australian cricketers. In the *Dunera Boys* miniseries the negative consequences of British and then Australian misrecognition are progressively overcome by the ‘Boys’ enduring what needs to be endured. Although the ‘Boys’ are predominantly European Jews, their capacity for enduring hardship with decency, humour, and courage is recognized and admired by their Australian guards, many of who served as Anzacs in World War One.

What the Anzac legend and the experiences of the Dunera Boys have in common is the nobility that comes from enduring and surviving an ordeal. This was brought out in a speech delivered in 2000 by Clive Kessler (a professor of sociology at the University of New South Wales) at the National Maritime Museum at Darling Harbour in Sydney. Addressing a ceremony marking the 60th anniversary of the *Dunera*’s journey, Kessler characterised an ‘authentic Australian’ as a person who, regardless of ethnicity or cultural background, has the ability to “cop what the world offers” while “mak[ing] the best of it” (Kessler).4 Kessler went on to observe that these recurring themes in the story of Australia were fully evident in the Dunera story: “It is a story of difficulties faced and not always overcome, and of refusing along the way to be daunted or defeated by bad luck, bad weather, or bad people, especially bad politicians” (Kessler).

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4 It has sometimes been observed that Australians have reserved a special place for conflicts which result in defeat and loss. In 1984, O’Grady suggested that in working through moments of defeat, Australia was developing something “valuable and precious”. O’Grady continues: “It is curious and touching that Australians so far have perceived some of their greatest moments of honour as arising from defeat. They are intelligent and wise enough to know that they have won something more valuable and precious, a knowledge of self and truth that their victors know nothing about, and never will” (O’Grady).
Kessler then went on to proclaim that “[o]ur story as Australians is a story threaded from a thousand little Gallipolis: of defeats endured and turned into victories, victories of human spirit nourished by humour and irony as well as patience and courage” (Kessler). Enduring “a thousand little Gallipolis” is essentially a conservative interpretation of defeat as ennobling. It finds its central expression in the consensus heritage narratives of Dunera Boys and Bodyline.

The consensus heritage narratives in all three miniseries reposition and reinterpret key moments in Australia’s history as the nation’s shared heritage. As well as highlighting cultural similarities, these miniseries identify cultural differences. Cultural differentiation is as much about establishing cultural boundaries between groups as it is about cultural distance or proximity. This notion is explored further in the next section.

Cultural Differentiation

Chris Berry’s work on the construction of Australian national identity is helpful when exploring Australia’s evolving cultural heritage over the 1980s. Berry (41-46) argues that there have been a number of national identities forged in Australia. Like many other theorists and writers theorising national identity, he draws upon Benedict Anderson’s contention that ‘the nation’ is not a natural entity, but one that has to ‘imagined’ and deliberately invented (Anderson). For Berry, the first identity developed in Australia over the duration of its British occupation was one based on identification with Britain as the ‘mother country’ (Berry 41-46). For the purposes of this chapter, this first and now largely historical identity can be conceptualised as a ‘British imperial identity’. It is this identity that is rejected and resisted by the Anzac troops in Anzacs, and by the Australian cricketers and their Australian supporters in Bodyline. Berry goes on to argue that having rejected a British imperial identity, Australia then constructed a second national identity, a “purpose-built Angloceltic tradition” founded on the Anzac legend (Berry 41-46).

Both these identities are played out in the Anzacs miniseries. Close identification with Britain is represented most clearly in the character of Sir Rupert Barrington, while an emerging Angloceltic identity is represented by Rupert’s son Martin. But Martin Barrington goes one step further when he accepts a German Australian as a brother soldier and a fellow Anzac. This suggests a third identity is at work in Anzacs: the miniseries allows for and predicts the formation of a complex multi-ethnic identity that would be the forerunner of multiculturalism.
This third identity does not figure in Berry’s theorisations as he sees the notion of ‘multicultural identities’ as inherently unable of being incorporated into a project of *national* identity since it is plural rather than unitary in its intent (Berry 44). Berry is not here being a critic of multiculturalism *per se*. Rather he regards ‘cosmopolitan multiculturalism’ as a non-national identity which is a better alternative to national identities of any kind. However, the contention advanced in this chapter is that the miniseries indicate there *can* be a multicultural *national* identity particularly if it is one closely associated with what O’Regan (*Australian National Cinema*) has called a ‘new world society’.

Indeed the consensus heritage narratives of *Anzacs*, *Bodyline*, and *The Dunera Boys* are predicated on 1980s Australian audiences understanding and endorsing the representation of a national identity based on multiculturalism and cultural diversity. While acknowledging Langer’s admonition that caution needs to be exercised when making broad assertions about the relationship between social and cultural change and television programs (Langer 264), nonetheless each miniseries can be historically and culturally contextualised as a *1980s production*. Therefore it can be acknowledged that official multiculturalism had some degree of impact on 1980s historical miniseries at a time when, as Langer suggests, Australia was reconstituting its “core of myths and cultural reference points” in the lead up to the Australian Bicentenary (Langer 264). This was possible because Australia, as a new society in the making, could more readily incorporate the outsider, and the outsider's culture and heritage, into Australia’s collective cultural heritage and cultural memory (see O’Regan, *Australian National Cinema* 323).

It is significant that *Anzacs*, *Bodyline*, and *The Dunera Boys* recuperate and refashion the nation’s symbols, myths, and stories in the light of contemporary ideological needs. The producers of these miniseries were not, however, representing the formation of a new Australian *ethnic* identity. Rather, each series developed a *renouvellement* approach interpreting Australian culture as originating and evolving from the collective history of Australia’s distinct ethnic and cultural groups. What was being formed was an interlinked or combined identity constituted by a number of ethnicities and cultures. Individual miniseries do not have to be mined too deeply to find composite identities as being integral to their consensus heritage narratives: the ‘multicultural’ Anzac platoon; the Angloceltic Australian cricket team that upholds the virtues of imperial cosmopolitanism; and the European cosmopolitanism of the Dunera Boys.

The cultural range of the Anzac battalion is shown to be significant. At the Broadmeadows Army Camp the newly enlisted men are on parade with each giving a brief history of their backgrounds.
These men speak with a variety of European accents (including Danish accents), and various English regional accents. Also present are ‘originating Australians’: the son of selectors (Dick Baker), an itinerant worker (Pat Cleary, played by Paul Hogan), an idealistic youth represented by Roly Collins, and a squatter’s son who has ‘divorced himself’ from the British: Martin Barrington (Mayer 64). Culturally differentiated, the Anzac platoon contains not only these Australians of various classes, regions, and backgrounds but also an Englishman who has worked in the outback for the past six years, and a German winegrower from the Western District. The cultural differences in the battalion are gradually bridged by egalitarianism and mateship, resulting in greater cultural proximity developing between the men. Initial markers of cultural division and ethnic difference are progressively overcome as the Anzacs bond as a functional fighting unit prepared to defend each other and their nation.

The ‘new’ non-imperial Angloceltic Australia that develops is one where the son of a rich man (Martin Barrington) can be good friends with fellow-soldiers of Irish and working class backgrounds. It is a land where men from all classes and cultural backgrounds can become ‘mates’. A relatively harmonious Anglocelticism as a ‘happy’ union is indicated as being the precursor or model of an equally magnanimous multicultural formation that emerges over the course of the miniseries.

A notable instance of a composite identity is that of the character Kaiser in the *Anzacs* miniseries. As noted earlier, the German-Australian character of Wilhelm Schmidt, who is known as Kaiser, is culturally differentiated; yet he is still assimilated into the Anzac tradition. As a 1985 re-interpretation of the Anzac legend and its associated cultural heritage, *Anzacs* proposes this heritage can be kept alive for future generations by extending myth and tradition to incorporate ‘multicultural’ Australian soldiers and, in the years following the Vietnam War, even to those who Australians have fought against.

The creation of the Kaiser character is a *renouvellement* strategy that builds on and enhances earlier tenets of the Anzac legend in which Australians were seen to be naturally good soldiers because of their Anglo-Saxon heritage (Cochrane). But in 1980s Australia, attributing the superior military

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As Cochrane points out, Charles (C.W.) Bean had found the martial spirit of Australians in this Anglo-Saxon heritage such that:

Australians were great soldiers long before Gallipoli, which merely proved his point and confirmed it for the nation. Anzac qualities were in the blood. Bean thought that the strength, independence, and innovativeness of Australians were ancient Anglo-Saxon qualities reincarnated by the up-country environment in the colonies and by seafaring on the vast Australian coast. In *Flagships Three* (1913) he traced Australian ancestry back to an “Anglo-Saxon race of sea folk,” to “wild strains of Viking blood that poured into England in the dark ages ... [dots sic] And it is the blood of these people that made Australia” (quoted in Cochrane).
skills of the Anzacs to their ‘Anglo-Saxon’ heritage would be difficult to sell to viewers of multiple ancestries, with a sizeable proportion of the Australian population born outside the country. It was therefore crucial for the Anzacs miniseries to establish a consensus heritage narrative that represented cultural diversity as well as social and ethnic difference. At the same time, the series indicates that such differences do not preclude loyalty and devotion to Australia. The ‘culturally diverse platoon’ motif accords with Mayer’s contention that what counts in post-Federation Australia (Australia became a Federation in 1901) is not necessarily birth but the shaping influence of the country (Mayer 64). Real Australians, then, are egalitarian, indicating national identity to be a process of personal decision and election.6 That Australians from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds are able to overcome their cultural differences to work together was yet another way of narratively showing the differences between Australia and a class-divided Britain.

In a similar fashion, although culturally differentiated and demarcated from their Australian guards, the Dunera Boys are drawn into closer cultural proximity with the guards as they interact with each other. The European cosmopolitanism of the Dunera Boys, presented as the antithesis of Australian parochialism at the outset of the miniseries, ends up being an ordinary part of the Australian world. On the other hand, the bodyline tactic in the Bodyline miniseries becomes a narrative of injustice and treachery, where those who were once culturally proximate become more distant through the betrayal of ideals and tradition.

Some important social and political issues that feature in Australia’s history over the first half of the twentieth century, such as sectarianism and British-Irish and Scottish conflict, are not issues any of the miniseries choose to foreground.7 Many Australian viewers in the mid-1980s may well have been old enough to have personal memories of the sectarian divide that existed between Australian Catholics and Protestants well into the 1960s. But this sectarianism had mostly disappeared by the 1980s, when the miniseries were made. For many younger Australians watching the series at that time, sectarianism was no longer a part of their personal memory or of their personal life histories.

Australia’s relationship with Britain and the nature of the imperial bond that once linked the two countries are central issues in each miniseries. The Anzacs miniseries continues the Anzac legend in

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6 The relationship between the rich squatter Rupert Barrington and his son Martin is represented as a clash between, on the one hand, a British imperial and colonial identity, and, on the other hand, a new Australian identity based on a cooperative Angloceltic alliance capable of accommodating multicultural elements.

7 In Ireland, Irish-Catholic opinion was divided over the Great War and support for Britain. In some quarters in Ireland, opinion against the War and against Britain was so strong that it led to the Easter Uprising of 1916. There were many Irish in Australia prior to the outbreak of the Great War. The Australian Irish population was by no means unified in its support for Britain in ‘their’ war against Germany. The miniseries downplays these historical divisions.
which British military leadership is represented as being incompetent and even vindictive. This anti-British sentiment is in keeping with “the paradoxical tendency [in the years after Australia federated] to define Australian identity as sharply distinct from British traditions” (Stewart). Indeed it could be argued that the enemy in the miniseries is not so much the Germans who are impersonal figures on the other side of the trench, as it is the British staff officers. By denigrating the British officer class, the Anzac soldiers culturally distance themselves from a British imperial identity while retaining an everyday solidarity with the British soldiers (who are presumably equally and disastrously subject to the same officers and officer-classes). In this way Britishers serving in the Australian military are readily able to become Anzacs and anti-Britishness is shown to be a form of anti-establishment and anti-government sentiment.8

It certainly was the case that some commentators writing in the mid-1980s felt that it was difficult for Anzacs to sustain a cultural divide between the Australians and the British over the duration of the miniseries. Mayer, for example, felt that “[w]hile there may be a good deal of ‘truth’ in such a portrayal”, it is “hard to maintain such an intensity of indignation, based on a simple, polarised world view of ‘us’ and ‘them’, over ten hours of viewing” Mayer (64). For Mayer, these attentions give way before another attention and theme: this is the determination of the miniseries to celebrate mateship as a uniquely Australian trait, one that “remains sacrosanct throughout” the miniseries. The miniseries ends with a

   final sequence of images – a dissolve from a bugler playing the ‘Last Post’ at a commemoration back in Australia to the barbed wire and the red poppies growing wild on the Somme today – and reiterates the dominant theme: the violation of innocence. (Mayer 64)

Mayer’s interpretation that a theme of ‘the violation of innocence’ is developed in the series as its predominant motif fits well with endurance as a central and structuring element of the consensus heritage narrative of the series. The Anzacs miniseries consistently points to the enormous sacrifices the Anzac platoon had to make over the course of the entire war, and not just at Gallipoli.

Bodyline (1984) also interrogates the imperial bonds connecting Australia and Britain. Sissons and Stoddart (30) note that a recurrent theme in Australian cricket literature until at least the Second

8 In this way, a solidarity of sorts is forged between the ordinary Australian and British soldiers. Similar stories of incompetence of the British officer class were told in Britain, stories premised on the same cavalier sense of treating soldiers as cannon fodder, where similar class-riven stories established a potentially unbridgeable divide between the working class foot soldiers and the upper class officers. It is just that in the Australian context this gets registered as Australian troops whose fate is being determined by foreign British officers.
World War was that cricket provided an imperial bond between Australia and Britain. As Murray points out, Edith’s voice-over narration in the miniseries unambiguously makes connections between cricket and Empire, between imperial honour and betrayal, and between the cultural distance that develops between Australia (the former colony) and Britain (the mother country). Murray also contends that Empire, history, and the clash of once-related but now opposing cultures are essential for the narrative of the series:

The intelligently written words, spoken [by Edith, Jardine’s girlfriend] with measured calm by [actress] Mitchell, illuminate the perspectives [of the miniseries] – Empire, history, opposed cultures – within which the singular things being seen and heard are to be located. Certainly, in the early episodes, it is the commentary more than anything else that establishes the implications of the impending, almost predestined clash between England’s Jardine and Australia’s Bradman. More than just sporting matters are at issue; more than sporting history is in the making. (Murray 331).

The ties connecting Australians to the mother country were more than just cultural and ethnic; cricket was the game of a cosmopolitan British Empire and it linked the Australian colonies – and then from 1901 the newly-formed states of the Australian Federation – to Britain and to other British colonies and protectorates. The power of cricket as a tool of Empire is clear in Proyect’s assertion that “[t]hose ‘who only cricket know’ forget that cricket (both a legacy of British imperialism and a means of resistance against it) [was] an instrument of power, political ideology, and social transformation” (Proyect). This association between cricket and Empire is one noted by Australian writers. Hutchins for example, points out that Australia’s national identity begins to develop in the nineteenth century with sport and, in particular, with cricket (Hutchins). Cricket is used by colonial Australians to keep intact the cultural link to England as well as to differentiate themselves as colonials from the mother country (Hutchins).

The ‘old’ British Empire was cosmopolitan in the sense that many of its non-British and ethnically non-European subjects also identified themselves as subjects of the Empire. In particular, Markovits argues that the British-Indian colonial encounter provided opportunities for a cosmopolitanism within the context of Empire (C. Markovits). Bodyline registers this Anglo-Indian cosmopolitanism at two distinct levels. First, there is Douglas Jardine, the captain of the English Cricket Team who was born in 1900 in Bombay, British India, and was therefore a ‘Son of the Raj’. Some of the imperial privileges enjoyed by the young Douglas Jardine are clearly indicated in the opening

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9 As Melleuish (12) further notes, Australians in the early 20th century prided themselves as being a British nation, and took pride in their Imperial inheritance: “Australians were not forced to be British; they simply wanted to be British.”
In contrast to the small group of privileged white British officials and their children (like Jardine), these ethnically Indian sons and daughters of the Raj had difficulties thriving in a British Empire – this is registered in *Bodyline* where principled criticism and fair play within the English team is substantially carried by the Nawab who, despite his good form as a test batsman, withdraws from the team in protest at the bodyline tactics (Williamson). Like the Australians, the Nawab becomes the bearer of the decent British value of fair play and a custodian of the higher imperial values of cricket. His deliberate breaking away from the English (or ‘British’) team favours broader values.  
Even though cricket was the ‘game of Empire’ it is shown to alienate as much as bring together cultures and peoples. In contrast to the Nawab’s sense of imperial honour, Douglas Jardine’s dishonourable tactics strain the imperial bonds with Australia and India.

Through sport, Australians could culturally differentiate themselves from Britain. Historically, as Hutchins points out, until the Bodyline test series in the early 1930s, Australia only had the Anzacs declaring an Australian national identity to the world (Hutchins). As Terry Hayes, a producer on the Kennedy Miller production of *Bodyline* suggested before the miniseries was broadcast, “Bodyline [the test series] was about rough and ready colonials [in Australia] showing the Boys from the Mother Country that they were in reality far better sportsmen and gentlemen than their Imperial teachers” (O’Grady).  

At the same time, the *Bodyline* miniseries emphasises the many

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10 Jardine had little time for the Nawab of Pataudi. When the Nawab refused to take his place in the Bodyline leg-side field, Jardine turned and sneered: “Ah, I see His Highness is a conscientious objector.” Despite a hundred on debut in the first Test, the Nawab was dropped after the second Test and never returned. “I am told he has his good points,” the Nawab said towards the end of the tour. “In three months I have yet to see them” (Williamson).

11 According to Lex Marinos, one of *Bodyline’s* writers and directors, “[i]n the bodyline series you had the aristocrats from England who played like convicts while the Australian team played the game the way it was meant to be played. It showed us how we wanted to be seen” (quoted in Bolton).
continuities between Australia and Britain – for one thing, Jardine’s principal weapon, strike bowler Harold Larwood, subsequently migrated to Australia and is shown to get on well with the Australians he meets.

While cultural distance between the Australians and the English was emphasised, cultural differences within the Australian cricket team were de-emphasised. Just as in Anzacs, the Bodyline miniseries makes little of Protestant-Catholic sectarianism. It was indeed the case that in the early 1930s a Protestant ascendancy in Australia ran cricket as a sports expression of the British Empire (Hutchins). This led to considerable tension in successive Australian cricket teams between their Catholic and Protestant members (Hutchins). Referring back to Berry’s categories of Australian identity, Bodyline represents Australian cricketers as being a united and cooperative Angloceltic team, upholding tolerance and endurance as an Australian virtue. After the Second World War, post-war migration programs bringing Europeans to Australia made ethnic difference rather than religion the major cultural and social fault-line in Australia. As a result, representations of sectarianism would not have resonated with large sections of a mid-1980s Australian television audience. This is an important instance where aspects of the historical record are de-emphasised (or ‘managed’) in favour of others.

Another hurdle the makers of the Bodyline miniseries had to overcome was to capture and keep the attention of Australian viewers with little interest in or cultural attachment to cricket. These viewers needed to connect with the representations of cricket so central to the themes of the miniseries. In this respect, although some Australian reviewers “decried the production’s use of Edith’s voice over as a commentary device, characterising it as something of a Kennedy Miller cliché” (Murray 331), her voice over had a very practical function. Through Edith’s cricket education, the miniseries was able to explain basic game rules while pointing out the game’s intangible aspects for the uninitiated. Carl Schultz, one of the directors on the miniseries, would claim that the “early episodes fill in the social and sporting background prior to the bodyline controversy”, with explanations of “the finer details [of cricket provided] by using Jardine’s girl friend who starts off knowing, like myself, nothing about the game” (quoted in Mitchell). Schulz, born in 1939 in Hungary, had no knowledge of

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12 As evidence of an Australian team divided on sectarian lines, Fraser claims that the promotion of Bradman to the captaincy and as national selector in 1936 “almost led to mutiny by the team’s ‘Irish’ Catholics, who included luminaries Fingleton, O’Reilly, and Stan McCabe. Four were disciplined by the [Australian Cricket] board of control” (Fraser, Don Bradman). Many claimed Bradman was a staunch monarchist and a Freemason. He was even accused of being anti-Catholic, a charge he denied (Fraser, Don Bradman).

13 Another is when Bradman is shown as a precursor to the contemporary professional sportsman seeking to get a better deal for fellow cricketers so that they can make an adequate living from the sport, and to set up their post-cricket future.

14 He left Budapest for England with his brother during the uprising of 1956, and then migrated to Australia in 1958. In Australia, Schulz worked in Australian television as a cameraman and then as a director.
cricket and had to learn its rules to direct series episodes. The voice over device was a response to the problems people like Schulz and “a non-specialist audience” would have in “watching a series based on a fundamental cricket technicality” (Schulz, quoted in Mitchell).

Schultz’s story is exemplary at two distinct levels. Not only does he represent the viewer uninterested with cricket who, through engaging with the story of the Bodyline test series, becomes both instructed and interested in the game. He also represents those ethnically and culturally diverse viewers for whom cricket is not ‘their game’ and whose parents would not have been in Australia at the time. Their background and their family’s time in Australia need not preclude their involvement and engagement with the Australian characters in the miniseries. In this way, Bodyline (again like Anzacs) develops a consensus heritage narrative that demarcates cultural boundaries while also facilitating cultural incorporation and accommodation. Anzacs establishes who ‘we’ are, while Bodyline indicates who ‘they’ are.

Interpreting and representing Australians enduring British-perpetuated injustices is intrinsic to both the Anzacs and Bodyline miniseries. The Dunera Boys is somewhat different. There are hardly any grounds provided in the series to suggest that British and the Australian governments were any different in their prejudices towards the Dunera detainees (Porush and Jona xi-xii). Dunera Boys reconstructs a period in Australia’s World War Two history when an alien group (‘them’) come to be accepted by and then integrated within the larger Australian host community (‘they’ become ‘us). Like a previous and founding convict transportation for which no large hopes were held out for those transported, the Dunera Boys who remained in Australia exceeded every expectation held for them. Their story became a part of the collective narrative of the Australian nation (Porush and Jona xi-xii). Created by producer Bob Weis and director-screenwriter Ben Lewin, The Dunera Boys miniseries ends with the detainees’ release and entry into wider Australian society. This suggests that the pattern of accommodation, adaptation, and acceptance evident in the camp was capable of being repeated in other spheres of Australian life by other ‘outsider’ cultural and ethnic groups.

The Dunera Boys’ Jewishness is significant here as ‘the Jew’ is often represented as the archetypical cosmopolitan. But until The Dunera Boys miniseries, Australian Jews had not been closely associated with Australian images and archetypes even though, as Freiberg points out, “[t]he most famous Australian military commander of World War One [General John Monash]15] and the first Australian born Governor General [Sir Isaac Alfred Isaacs, in office 1921–1923, born 1855 in

15 Born 1865 in Melbourne, dying there in 1931. His parents were both German Jews who originally spelt their name as Monasch.
Melbourne] were both Jews” (Freiberg). The depiction of European Jews in the miniseries is largely respectful, as was the situation with the ‘real’ Dunera boys. This respect has much to do with the way the Australian guards treated their detainees, and the work of a group of Melbournians who lobbied – ultimately successfully – for their release. However, as the miniseries indicates, this respect did not extend to Australian politicians or to the Australian Government of the day who made it clear that Australia was acting only as custodians of the Dunera internees for the duration of the war (Pearl; Freiberg).

The miniseries generally concentrates on the interactions of prisoners and their guards in and around the Hay, New South Wales, prisoner-of-war camp. The Australian guards first think the Dunera Boys are Italian prisoners. Soon they realise the detainees are ‘refugees’ from Nazi Germany and Austria. Even then, it takes some time for them to work out that their prisoners are indeed Jewish. Colonel Barry, who is in charge of the Hay camp, initially concludes “these people are ‘freaks’”. He arrives at this judgement not only because of their appearance, language, and religious practices; but also due to the illogicality of interning European cosmopolitans in an isolated location. For former Dunera detainees like Guttman (2000), the miniseries “succeeded in showing the incongruity of the experience” – of having sophisticated European men imprisoned in outback Australia. Here were these “Viennese coffeehouse types playing chess and drinking their Kaffee mit Schlag in the Australian desert, while the Australian soldiers watch uncomprehendingly”.

Despite their cultural differences, the detainees and their guards find common ground. They come to recognise their comparable histories. This assists the ‘Boys’ as they adapt to camp life and establish working relationships and friendships with their Australian guards. Indeed the guards are shown to be educated and enriched through their encounter with the ‘Boys’, foreshadowing the many other Australians who were later – and in many cases Australians were literally – educated and enriched through their encounter with the ‘Boys’. The Australians who grudgingly gift the Dunera Boys their freedom are shown to be the principal recipients of the gift of their presence inside the country.

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16 Freiberg suggests there are wider, post-War cultural factors that might have come into play to explain this limited televisual realisation prior to The Dunera Boys: In the post-war post-Auschwitz era, non-Jewish writers and artists in Australia have been understandably hesitant or reluctant to represent Jews and Jewish issues, because of the sensitivity of the Jewish community, if not their own sensitivity, to the politics of representation. Jewish artists and writers too have to negotiate a minefield if they represent Jews and Jewish issues: the community is only too quick to attack them if their images of Jews are not ‘positive’. (Freiberg)
For a miniseries like *The Dunera Boys* to develop its consensus heritage narrative, the past and its legacy needed to be recreated and represented authentically. It was desirable for the incongruity of life in the camp to be as televisually authentic as possible. This meant mixing fact with fiction was appropriate as long as this contributed to the overall theme and authenticity of the miniseries. Since the experiences represented in *The Dunera Boys* – like the experiences represented in *Anzacs* and *Bodyline* – were inspired by historical events whose outcomes were known, adding fictional events and characters could not substantially alter the outcome of historical events. An integral part of the pleasure *Anzacs, Bodyline*, and *The Dunera Boys* offered audiences was due to their ‘authentic’ recreation and reproduction of the past. On this stage – in these historical worlds – heritage stories could be told.

**Integrity and Authenticity**

Verisimilitude in a miniseries provides it with an ‘authenticity of orientation’. It is evident in the historical worlds that re-created the settings and milieu of the time, in the circumstances in which events occur, and in the characters themselves. Televisual and narrative styles further contribute to authenticity. As Hughes (67) notes in relation to American historical films, such markers of authenticity do more than just allow audiences to take pleasure in an appropriate representation of the material culture of the historical period in which the story is set. Verisimilitude in production design creates an authentic historical world: a “plausible and convincing ‘stage’” on which heritage performances can be enacted in an “uncontroversial and uncontentious” way (Hughes 67; and see Jones 146). As heritage performance theory observes, audiences should perceive a performance – in this case a miniseries – as authentic for it to possess integrity as a communication. Therefore, this section considers authenticity and integrity in relation to production design and staging, television style, pre-production research, and the generic qualities of melodrama.

A staged performance brings together authentic characters and locations. In the first part of the thesis the observation was made that audiences look for ‘signs’ to evaluate the authenticity of a heritage-inspired staged performance. These signs “construct notions of place, reality and truth that [audiences] feel comfortable with” (Kidd 25). Key to perceptions of the staged authenticity of a miniseries is an appropriate location. However, sequences in a television (or film) production are inevitably shot in places other than where the events originally took place. This displacement from one place to another need not, however, result in superficiality when ‘staging’ heritage (see MacCannell; Chhabra, Healy and Sills 715). Convincing scenes set in the French countryside in the
Anzacs miniseries were filmed near Daylesford in Victoria, while an acceptable facsimile of the camp in Hay was constructed for The Dunera Boys (as the original camp had been dismantled at the end of World War Two). In both cases, an authentic heritage experience was achieved through artful production design. Bodyline also employed a particular televisual style to encourage a sense of familiarity in a mid-1980s Australian audience used to watching cricket games on television. Techniques such as the moving camera, close-ups, and slow motion were employed, replicating developments in the televising of cricket on Australian television over the 1980s.

Because the creators of all three miniseries strived for a fundamental ‘truth to the actual’, these series have been likened to docudramas. While they are not documentaries, both Bodyline and The Dunera Boys employ some docudramatic techniques, basing many scenes, characters, and incidents on the recreation and representation of actual events and people. As is the case with docudramas, each historical miniseries was the result of extensive pre-production research. This historical research was then cited in publicity and promotion campaigns to signal the authenticity and integrity of each series.

Like many war films, the Anzacs miniseries imagines, recreates, and represents the experiences of a platoon of soldiers on the front. Mary MacDonald, a journalist covering the miniseries, notes that the Anzacs series built a story “around just one of the 60 battalions which saw service on the Western Front”: this was the Victorian 8th Battalion (MacDonald). The producer (Geoff Burrowes) and researchers on the miniseries (John Dixon and Patsy Adam-Smith, with Dixon also being a director) researched the 8th Battalion extensively. They talked to survivors and obtained the war diary of a soldier that gave a day-to-day account of the unit from 1914 to 1918. The choice of the 8th Battalion was deliberate because it could represent the whole Australian Imperial Force (the AIF). It contained men from both rural Victoria and from the city, and “it was in the war from beginning to end” (MacDonald).

Similarly, the Kennedy Miller creative team on Bodyline went to considerable lengths to establish their cricketing credentials to further perceptions that the representation of the 1932-33 test series (to become known as the Bodyline Test Series) was an authoritative televisual account.\(^{17}\) The Bodyline Test Series had been the major Australian media event of its day, so newspaper coverage (including photographs and cartoons) and newsreels provided a voluminous amount of material (Sissons and Stoddart 24-25). Much of this material was still available in the 1980s. To encourage

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\(^{17}\) Coleman (16) provides some insight into the way cricket enthusiasts and historians were viewing the miniseries when screened in the mid-1980s: “Picking historical nits in the series has become the favourite pastime of cricketing nits in the past few days.”
the production team in their efforts of achieving authenticity and integrity, they studied the newsreel footage and listed to radio broadcasts.

Contemporary heritage theory accepts that to tell a heritage story and stage a performance, the inclusion of fictional events and people may be necessary for contemporary audiences to accept the story and performance as being authentic. The inclusion of on-field sledging (verbally abusing members of the opposing team) in the Bodyline miniseries is one such fiction. According to Harold Larwood, the opening fast bowler for the English test team and around whose bowling the bodyline tactic was developed, no such sledging occurred and (in his opinion) its inclusion detracted from the authenticity of the miniseries. Nevertheless, sledging resonated with a 1980s Australian audience at a time when televised cricket games were being commercialised, and where on-field sledging could be picked up by microphones. Over the 1980s, sledging became the norm for Australian cricket teams. Indeed Australian audiences found sledging to be entertaining (Perkins). In addition, representations of sledging in the miniseries functioned televisually and narratively to emphasise the cultural distance that was developing between Australia and Britain as a result of what was happening on-field.

As well as such fictions, the Bodyline miniseries recreated infamous events in order to lend the production even greater authenticity and integrity. Often these events were based on reported moments of Australian humour which, according to Australian popular memory, occurred at the cricket games. This humour again connects to notions that there were discernable cultural differences between the British and the Australians.

For their part, the producers of Dunera Boys undertook a generalised interpretation of the remembered experiences of the Dunera detainees. The resulting story took liberties with characters and with their characterisations. Nevertheless, much of what actually happened to the Dunera Boys on their arrival in Sydney and on their journey to Hay is well-documented and found its way into

18 Born 1904 in Nottinghamshire, England; died 1995 in Randwick NSW, aged 90.
19 Larwood in a 1984 interview claimed that contrary to the miniseries “[t]here wasn’t the ill-feeling and swearing on the field in 1932 that the film [the miniseries] claims ... I was good friends with most of the Australians on that tour ... It was Jack Fingleton who sponsored me here as a migrant” (Perkins).
20 With the advent of World Series Cricket the camera and microphone come closer to the game to heighten the drama of on-field play. The microphone picked up what the cricketers were saying to each other and to members of the opposing team.
21 The ill feeling the Australian crowd possessed for the English cricketers is borne out by an interjection from the famous Sydney Cricket Ground (SCG) hill barracker, Yabba. Jardine, at the crease, was brushing insects away from his face when Yabba bellowed: “Leave our bloody flies alone” (Walsh, Bodyline). This kind of ‘barracking’ (as it was known) seems to have been typical of Australian cricket crowds and continues to this day. Other famous lines were “which of you bastards called this bastard a bastard?” It is obviously funny and it also tends to resonate with very old notions of the differences between the British and the Australians.
the series. With much official documentation on the ship voyage still not released at the time of the *Dunera Boys* miniseries (Pearl v) greater issue could be taken with the representation of the voyage of the *Dunera* at it sailed from England to Australia. Although the series mainly concentrates on the experiences of the Dunera detainees and their Australian military guards in the camp, the producers included some rendition of the ‘hell trip’ that brought the ‘Boys’ to Australia, since the voyage was considered an essential part of the Dunera Boys’ story (Pearl).

The televisual recreation and re-enactment of the voyage of the *Dunera* works sufficiently well to give an indication of what it might have been like although, according to some detainees, the indignities and deprivations shown were underplayed. Depicting the trip also provides the series with a narrative contrast between the anti-Semitic British officers on board the *Dunera*, and the friendly and decent Australian guards the ‘Boys’ encounter at Hay. Contrasting the anti-Semitism of the British sailors with the decency of the Australian guards highlights the importance of character interpretation and representation in communicating the *renouvellement* approach taken by this miniseries. Authentic characters – whether based on real people, on a combination of real people in a composite character, or as an entirely fictional character – are integral for the authenticity of a heritage performance. Through characters, audiences come to understand why events occur the way they do (Lukács).

In a similar fashion the creators of *Anzacs* softened the militaristic and masculinist nature of the Anzac legend so it could appeal to a wider cross-section of viewers. They did so by inserting a strong female character, Kate Baker. In this male melodrama Kate, a nurse, is assertive and non-subservient – a character created for a 1980s audience, in particular a female audience, as well as being a nod to the strong feminist movement in Australia at the time of broadcast. Kate is connected to the Anzac legend as a nurse and through her romantic relations with Martin Barrington and, after his death, through her friendship with Roly Collins. But Kate still does not grasp the importance of the war even when Roly Collins, one of its survivors, attempts to explain it to her.

In *Bodyline*, Douglas Jardine as played by Hugo Weaving is a psychologically complex character. His win-at-all-costs mentality is located by the Kennedy Miller production team to have been the result of his background and experiences as a privileged son of the Raj. Born an only child, his

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22 There are verbal testimonies from the detainees themselves, as well as evidence from the ship’s crew, that attests to the brutality of the British officers, and the miserable and degrading conditions the detainees suffered (Guttmann).

23 Basing his observations on the work of György Lukács the theorist of the historical novel, de Groot (182) claims that the historical text is constantly calling attention to itself as a construct but the reader happily forgets this.
character is marked by independence and aloofness (Sissons and Stoddart 8). At a narrative level, Edith’s commentary in the miniseries essentialises the on-field encounter between the English and Australian crickets as being an encounter between two men – Jardine and Bradman – and their different values and orientations. Although the Jardine character has more dimensionality to it than the Bradman character, they are both metonymic. Carl Schultz claimed “the stories of the characters go back a lot further ... [W]e are telling the audience that Jardine’s story starts from the time he left India – the place that shaped and moulded him” (quoted in Bolton). As Bicknell also argues, the Kennedy Miller team established the underlying reason for the emotion-charged encounter between the two men to be in their respective the backgrounds, and this became the focus of the miniseries (Bicknell). At a more general level, the clash between the two men and their respective cricket teams is, as Sissons and Stoddart (141) point out, “the first major ‘sport and politics’ crisis in modern times”.

As portrayed by actor Gary Sweet, the televisual version of Bradman is a very masculine type. By contrast, Jardine is the intellectual of the two. Nevertheless, the legend of the ‘real’ Don Bradman being the archetypal Australian ‘masculine’ hero (reproduced in the Bodyline miniseries) has been challenged by his teammates who watched the miniseries when it was being broadcast in Australia. Bradman was not the larrikin Australian cricketing ‘mate’ of myth and legend. He did not drink, smoke, or gamble. He “even read good literature” (Sissons). Later he became a stockbroker. In many ways, the factual Bradman did not fit in with the theme of the miniseries.

The renouvellement approach in The Dunera Boys similarly turns on representations of two ‘outsider’ detainees: Morris (Morrie) Mendellsohn, the Cockney Jew born in England, and a German non-Jewish detainee named Tropp. Both characters, though fictional, afford audiences different points-of-view on the Dunera experience, and facilitate audience engagement with the lives of the Jewish detainees. Mendellsohn is simultaneously an English and an Australian type. He acts as a bridge for audiences between the familiar and the unfamiliar. As Freiberg has observed, Mendellsohn represents many of the defining characteristics of the ‘typical Australian’ – anti-authoritarianism, skill at improvisation, a fondness for booze and betting, disrespect for the pretensions of class and culture, and respect for evaders of the law (Freiberg). Mendellsohn has the

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24 A member of the Australian cricket team during the 1932-33 cricket test series, Bill O’Reilly, objected to the Kennedy Miller’s decision to focus on the two characters of Douglas Jardine and Don Bradman. Newspaper reports in 1984 claimed that “Bill O’Reilly has been watching the television series Bodyline with increasing irritation” (Sydney Morning Herald. 3).

25 Ken Fraser claimed that two of his test colleagues, journalists Jack Fingleton and Bill ‘Tiger’ O’Reilly, dogged him with published criticism. He did not socialise with the team, and preferred at one stage to stay in a separate hotel. “Not a man's man in any shape or form,” wrote O'Reilly, who also flayed Bradman for being rattled in the famous bodyline series of 1932-1933 (Fraser, Don Bradman).
same larrikin attributes associated with the Pat Cleary character in *Anzacs*; in turn, Cleary’s typically Australian ‘larrikin’ characteristics are similar to those of the Jewish Cockney world from which Mendellsohn originates.

Tropp likewise provides another ‘insider/outsider’ vantage point on the Jewish experience. He provides a non-Jewish aspect on the European cosmopolitanism of the Jewish detainees. Before seeking refuge in England, the Nazis appropriated Tropp as a poster-boy for the ‘Aryan Race’. Similarly the Jews misrecognise him and his anti-Nazism when they ask him why he has not tried to escape from the Hay camp. They assume he is a German soldier and therefore has an obligation to attempt an escape. Tropp helps establish the politics of the miniseries. It is Nazism and the German political leadership that are the problems; it is not the German people or the ordinary German soldier. In addition, at many times in the miniseries, Tropp becomes integral to its melodrama.

Melodrama is employed in all three productions to underwrite their consensus heritage narratives and themes. Since almost all the characters in these miniseries are male, even with the inclusion of Kate in *Anzacs* and Edith in *Bodyline*, they remain ‘male melodramas’ as are most films and television shows about war and combat. The *Anzacs* miniseries remains faithful to the Anzac legend and is in keeping with other male warrior hero myths and legends that are part of the broader heritage of European peoples. The enemy is not the German soldier or the German Army per se. In one scene the Anzacs share their rations with German prisoners-of-war. In another, when Kaiser (the German-Australian Anzac) encounters a dying German on the battlefield at Broodseinde Ridge (in October 1917), he comforts him in his last moments – one warrior to another.

*Bodyline* shares in this warrior myth as the cricketers conduct metaphorical battle on the cricket pitch. Reviewing the miniseries Suellen O’Grady pointed out that it was a male-centred melodrama, and that the series had close affinities with war narratives in general (O’Grady). In addition, as Hutchins observes in relation to the bodyline story, this is a story that gets told in ways very similar to the Anzac myth:

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26 Tropp (played by Steven Vidler) is introduced early in the miniseries and appears intermittently throughout. In the beginning of the miniseries, Tropp is in a British cafe. Blond and blue-eyed, he is not anti-Semitic. He talks to violinist Alexander Englehardt (played by Joseph Spano) who thinks he has seen Tropp in a photo with Goebbels. Tropp just says he has come to hear Englehardt play. Tropp may also be a homosexual. While the creators do hint at his homosexuality (and homosexuals were in real danger during the Nazi regime) nothing further is made of this. But as a homosexual Tropp – like the Jews – is also a victim of misrecognition.

27 Tropp is initially rounded up with other German-speaking aliens in London and put onboard the *Dunera*. Over the duration of the miniseries, through word and action, he takes their side. He is no threat to either the Jewish men inside the Hay camp, or to the Australian guards.
[Bodyline is] talk[ed] about [as] a comprehensive moral victory, facing up to injustice, despite the fact of comprehensive defeat on the field, be it the battlefield or the sporting field. And that notion of sport and war being inseparable in many ways. (*Challenging the Bradman Myth*)

Even at the time it was broadcast, the war analogy connected the *Bodyline* miniseries with the Anzac precedent (Moran, *Australia*).  

The Mendellsohn character in *Dunera Boys* also provides the humour in the miniseries. But in the closing stages of the miniseries, this humour turns dark: Mendellsohn is shot by an Australian guard. His death is not at all expected and, according to the Australians in charge of the camp, it was unnecessary. Narratively, Mendellsohn’s melodramatic death serves to provide the miniseries with a certain integrity. But in reality it is a fiction: no Dunera detainee at the Hay camp was shot by Australian military guards. This fiction serves to provide a memorable and melodramatic conclusion to the production. When the miniseries is recalled, it is likely to be in the context of acknowledging the performance of the actor (Bob Hoskins) who played Mendellsohn and the nature of his final death scene.

This kind of melodrama contributes to the integrity and emotional authenticity of each miniseries. In addition, melodrama is necessary for the development of various *renouvellement* approaches in each production. Not all reviewers appreciated the inclusion of melodrama in this way. For instance, some reviewers of *Bodyline* – especially British reviewers – found its melodramatic qualities problematic. The British reviewer Peter Ackroyd of *The Times* called it “crude soap opera rather than historical reconstruction”, finding that “Bradman, Jardine and Co. could not bear the weight of national and social significance dropped on them from a great height” (quoted in Stevens). In the *Bodyline* miniseries, the major theme of choosing to endure intimidation rather than to retaliate is clearly scripted into the dialogue. This was so much the case that one Australian reviewer took exception with characters stopping to make melodramatic speeches about the virtues of such endurance (Murray 333).  

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28  There were some commentators and reviewers at the time *Bodyline* was screened on Australian television who wondered how a mid-1980s Australian audience would empathise with or interpret an early 1930s national crisis over a game of cricket (Walsh 55).

29  Murray (333) felt that “[t]here are ... a few too many declamatory speeches put in to the actors’ mouths”. Murray goes on to comment that “... the death-bed address of Lord Harris, a couple of homilies lodged with Bradman and particularly the ‘Us Aussie Battlers’ sermon by Vic Richardson (Michael O’Neill) to his team-mates sit rather uneasily with the generally quiet, naturalistic writing and direction that marks the series” (Murray 333).
The notion of ‘war as male melodrama’ is also picked up in the Bodyline miniseries. As Gray (25) observes, the ‘good versus evil’ element “developed by the publicity for the miniseries ... compared the Test Series as being tantamount to a war between England and Australia”. The opposition between batsman and bowler in the cricket series is in many ways both allegorical and metaphorical: Proyect argues that “[t]he opposition of batsman and bowler serves as a metonym for the broader antagonism between not only coloniser and colonised, but between leader and led, between nation and individual” (Proyect).

At the end of the Anzacs miniseries, two different sorts of ‘non-Anzac’ types – a pacifist priest, Reverend George Lonsdale, and the mothers of the soldiers who have gone off to war – come together in a Remembrance Ceremony held around a Cenotaph recently constructed to honour the memory of the Anzacs. This is both a dramatic and melodramatic sequence. During the Great War, many Australians of Irish background opposed Australia’s entry into the war, while Australian women more generally were opposed to sending their sons off to fight; conscription was rejected in two referenda. In his final speech Lonsdale employs a dramatic-melodramatic device: he throws away his prepared speech to speak from the heart. He talks about how the surviving men have experienced something which is beyond the understanding of those who have not fought.

The emotionalism of many sequences in Anzacs was established by employing this kind of heightened melodrama. It is through such melodrama that the series restores to contemporary (1980s) television audiences some of the emotional investment that went into the many Cenotaphs and war memorials built after the end of the Great War. The Cenotaph, a tangible object with intangible qualities, lends itself to these reworkings. Such cenotaphs – both in reality and as a narrative device in the miniseries – bridge the historical and cultural distance between a past war, and its continuing legacy and relevance in the present. Writing about such monuments of the Great War in Canada, Osborne suggests these monuments are collectively and individually monuments to a war that “reflected the nation's response to an important nation-building enterprise” (Osborne). The miniseries itself is – like the Cenotaph – a memorial and a monument to the memory of the Anzacs.

The three miniseries examined in this chapter have been perceived by many Australian critics to be authentic interpretations and representations of historical events, and are therefore fitting memorials. It was noted earlier in this chapter that the 1984 Bodyline miniseries is considered by scholars such as Hutchins to have confirmed the Bradman legend for Australian audiences in the

30 By choosing Lonsdale to launch the Cenotaph it could become not so much a political memorial but a community memorial honouring the dead and their memory, with the living now coming to terms with their grief.
last quarter of the twentieth century (Hutchins). Similarly, the Dunera Boys miniseries continues to recall the Dunera experience as a ‘migrant experience’ and as an Australian ‘success story’ (Adams, Don’t Forget). Each in its own way is an allegory of endurance, survival, and achievement in the face of some injustice. The experience of the Dunera internees continues to be raised in debates about refugees wanting to enter Australia, especially those refugees who – like the Dunera Boys – arrive on boats (Adams, Don’t Forget). This comparison has not been without controversy, and it has been resisted in recent years by some of the Dunera survivors themselves (AJN, Editorial).

The Dunera Boys miniseries also indicates how many former ‘enemy aliens’ became respected citizens of Australia after the Second World War, and came to be regarded as crucial to Australia’s national story. Therefore, when in September 2002 the town of Hay opened a museum and memorial – a heritage interpretive centre that interpreted the experience of the Hay Prisoner of War and Internment Camp – the Dunera Boys and their experiences were centrally represented (Remembering the Dunera Boys).

Conclusion

Each miniseries connects its themes of endurance to a humanistic tolerance. If enduring adversity is a national virtue doing so with tolerance is its predominant modality. All three historical miniseries paradoxically valorise deference to authority on the part of its central characters – they are each ‘battlers’ who make the best of the circumstances in which they find themselves in. They work with and around injustices committed against them. But while they may seek redress and change, they accept the ‘umpire’s verdict’ or government actions and policies that have placed them in their predicament.

Alongside endurance, tolerance is affirmed as part of Australia’s heritage and culture in a number of ways: tolerance was essential to notions of Australian multiculturalism developed in the 1980s. Tolerance finds expression in the Anzac platoon, and it is also foundational to the Dunera experience. Tolerance, a positive virtue attributed to a British imperial cosmopolitanism, is shown to be very much part of the makeup of Australian cricketers and of the Nawab. However, while tolerance permits different cultural groups to live alongside each other, and it is certainly better than

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31 Because many of them were highly successful in their post-war lives in Australia, they have become points of reference for both Jewish and non-Jewish people alike as model refugees. While the Dunera experience points towards the value to Australia of accepting ‘refugees’ from elsewhere, it also can serve to indicate that some refugees and refugee groups are more ‘valuable’ than others.
intolerance, it does not guarantee equality (Curthoys 35). Official multiculturalism as it was articulated in the 1980s, with its policy of tolerance towards cultural and ethnic groups, was essentially a conservative and non-confrontational response to cultural diversity (Ang, *Intertwining Histories*).

After their bodyline-led victory in Australia, the English cricket team adopted the bodyline tactic in India. The Indians saw no honour in choosing to endure the bodyline tactic. Consequently, using bodyline in India results in Indians rioting in the streets, and the tactic was then abandoned by the English. These events are represented at the end of the *Bodyline* miniseries with newsreel footage taken at the time of Indians rioting at cricket matches. In comparison to this Indian reaction to bodyline, the Australian response is a very muted and conservative one. It is this Australian response that is promoted by Kennedy Miller, the creators of the *Bodyline* miniseries. The newsreel footage endorses Australian objections as well as the rightness of the Australians’ muted and principled response. When the miniseries finally ends with Edith’s voice over proclaiming the British and Australians placed their cricketing differences aside to fight together in the Second World War, the consensus heritage narrative of the miniseries is complete.

At the end of *The Dunera Boys*, just as the Dunera detainees are released from the Hay camp, Japanese prisoners-of-war are shown arriving and entering the camp. Australia’s experience with Japanese prisoners-of-war would not be as benign as its encounter with the Dunera detainees. *The Cowra Breakout* miniseries discussed in the next chapter explores this difference. Instead of a conservative *renouvellement* approach of the kind found in the miniseries examined in this chapter, a more provocative *rapprochement* approach was adopted in both *The Cowra Breakout* and *Vietnam* miniseries. In these two miniseries, cross-cultural logics rather than cultural convergence are normalised. Irreducible differences are pointed to and are seen as having to be accommodated by Australia and Australians.
Chapter 6

RAPPROCHEMENT AND INTERPRETATION:
Humanist-Inspired Heritage Themes in The Cowra Breakout and Vietnam

Introduction

The Cowra Breakout (1984) and Vietnam (1987) are both Kennedy Miller miniseries using rapprochement strategies to provide challenging re-interpretations and representations of Australians at war in Asia – with Japan and Vietnam respectively. In both series Australians are shown to be engaging with Asians in Asia and in Australia. Crossing cultural and heritage divides as a way of transcending the bitterness associated with war and conflict is central to both miniseries. While the Kennedy Miller production team did not articulate a formal humanist manifesto, the theme of building bridges between individuals based on their shared humanity is a discernable project in both productions.

These two miniseries were part of an impressive array of miniseries produced by Kennedy Miller between 1983 and 1989. Others include: The Dismissal (1983), Bodyline (1984), The Dirtwater Dynasty (1988), and Bangkok Hilton (1989). Each achieved a high public profile. At the time of its broadcast, for instance, Vietnam was hailed as the highpoint of 1980s Australian miniseries with the production team commended for mastering and extending the Australian historical miniseries. The success of Vietnam surprised “even confident Ten executives” (P. McGregor, Kennedy Miller). In all but the last of its miniseries, history provided Kennedy Miller with a useable past as history was very much mined as ‘a resource’ to “support a case or assert a social claim” (Tonkin 1). In using history this way, the Kennedy Miller team was adopting an approach similar to that used by heritage practitioners when undertaking heritage interpretations.

These miniseries tend to represent individuals from very different cultural backgrounds in sometimes extreme ethnic, cultural, and social divides and circumstances. It often – but not always (The Dismissal is the exception) – involves individuals reaching across these divides to communicate with and, over time, to respect each other. The producers, directors, and scriptwriters who were part of the Kennedy Miller collective, forged what could be called ‘the Kennedy Miller worldview’ and subscribed to its underlying humanism. In this context, the rapprochement
strategies developed for *Cowra Breakout* and *Vietnam* espouse this worldview and its humanist perspective. In these and other Kennedy Miller productions, there is a tendency to represent incorporation and accommodation of an outsider as being achieved “through the journey of the individual or family or the transformation of the broader community” (see O’Regan, *Australian National Cinema* 323). At a more general level, the nation and its people need to take steps to reconcile with their past and its dissonant heritage, so as to begin a necessary process of transformation. When this is represented in a Kennedy Miller miniseries, as it is in the *Vietnam* miniseries, Australian popular history is re-provisioned in ways that “border . . . on myth” (R. Oliver, *Dynasty Downunder*).

The Kennedy Miller ensemble shared the 1980s urge to re-write and interrogate Australian history. As O’Regan (*Enchantment*) points out when reviewing *Vietnam*: the “[p]articular conditions of the 1980s and [the] broader traditions of Australian cultural production” had an impact in each miniseries. Both *Cowra Breakout* and *Vietnam* challenged popular memories of Australia’s conduct during times of war. Of the two series, *Cowra* with its uncompromising attention to the Japanese perspective proved to be the most challenging for Australian audiences.

Both these miniseries develop sustained arguments to explain why the historically-verifiable events they depict occurred. Arguments about the past and about the nature of Australian cultural heritage are consequently central in both miniseries. *Cowra* deals with circumstances leading up to, during, and following the mass escape of Japanese prisoners from the prisoner-of-war camp outside of Cowra (in New South Wales) towards the end of the Second World War. In this escape many unarmed escapees were massacred by their Australian military guards while all other escapees were recaptured. The Kennedy Miller team took a critical distance from the ‘traditional’ view that a miniseries about a wartime prisoner-of-war camp would have to show Australian POWs as being the victims of barbarous Japanese jailers. Instead, the *Cowra* miniseries, as a deliberate provocation, represented the Japanese as the unnecessary victims of Australian mismanagement and cultural incomprehension.

According to the Kennedy Miller argument, Australians were responsible for a slaughter that could have been avoided had Australian military authorities sought to understand the culture and heritage of their Japanese prisoners. *Cowra*’s narrative centres on a (fictional) friendship and a developing cross-cultural understanding between an Australian prison guard (Stan Davidson) and one of the Japanese prisoners (Junji Hyashi). Junji becomes Stan’s guide on a journey of reconciliation and transformation as Stan comes to understand and value Japanese culture. Stan’s transformation
contrasts sharply with the cultural insensitivity and ignorance, born of cultural insularity, of the other Australian guards and even of his wife and friends.

The Vietnam miniseries argues that both the Vietnamese and Australian people were victims of an American and Australian political leadership interested in winning elections. Once Australian troops enter Vietnam, they have great difficulty in understanding the Vietnamese people and the Vietnamese situation. However, individual Australian soldiers do try to make friends with the Vietnamese. Australian soldier Phil Goddard comes to care about a Vietnamese woman, Lien; while Phil’s close friend and fellow soldier Laurie Fellows develops a similar concern for Le. When Le arrives in Australia at the end of the war as a refugee, she resumes her relationship with Laurie. The couple marry and settle into life in suburban Australia.

One third of the Vietnam series is set in Vietnam while the remainder has an Australian setting. The Australian sequences are concerned with the personal turmoils surrounding four members of an emblematic Australian family, the Goddards (B. McGregor). The social divisions that opened up in Australian society over Australia’s involvement in Vietnam are mapped onto this family. The primary narrative arc of the miniseries is concerned with the circumstances and means by which these social divisions and social breakdowns might be healed (P. McGregor, Kennedy Miller 7; P. McGregor, Cultural Battles 45).

Public disputes developed around both miniseries over their representations of ‘facts’ and the use of fictional and fictionalised material; this was particularly so in the case with Cowra Breakout. These public controversies are important because of what they reveal about the willingness or intransigence of some groups in Australia to accommodate non-traditional re-interpretations of the nation’s cultural heritage. When (re)interpreting events from Australia’s past as heritage, the Kennedy Miller production team acted as heritage interpreters.

Those who interpret the past, whether they be historians, heritage professionals, the makers of miniseries, or anyone else with an interest in history, sometimes discern a pattern in past events. Finding and interpreting this pattern can give events meaning and significance, thereby helping to explain them. The practice of producing patterns like this is called ‘colligation’ by philosophers of history. Colligation (introduced in the second chapter) interprets past events and ideas in a particular way, making connections between events so as to give them a particular meaning in hindsight (Ritter 52).
When colligation is applied to explain and find an association between past events, the whole is more important than the sum of its parts. To understand and interpret how the parts fit into the whole, they have to be contextualised, and this comes from knowing how things turned out. This is where the element of hindsight comes in: because the outcome of past events is already known, events can be interpreted in ways that enable them to fit into and explain this outcome. One form of colligation is to explain and interpret ideas and events as being part of an overall plan – such as part of one country’s plan to control the territory and politics of another country. Colligation can also explain ideas and events that do not constitute a plan but simply a set of values and principles. Ideas and events can be colligated by reference to generalised values associated, with for example, ‘the Renaissance’, ‘the Enlightenment’, or ‘Romanticism’ (Ritter 52).¹

As an imaginative and creative process, interpreting past events through colligation is very similar to how heritage interpreters often establish patterns when developing narratives to interpret and explain the unfolding and outcomes of events. Kennedy Miller also interpreted the past in this way, but went further than just colligating historical events: they initiated a process that could be called creative colligation. Creative colligation is very much a part of the heritage imagination of Kennedy Miller. As well as the colligation of verifiable and factual instances, Kennedy Miller manufactured fictional events and then colligated fictional ‘events’ alongside factual incidents. As an example: although Australian military guards oversaw Japanese prisoners-of-war, it was never possible for an Australian military guard to develop a close personal relationship with a Japanese prisoner during the Second World War.

The concept of creative colligation is introduced in this chapter because Kennedy Miller deliberately and systematically developed arguments in their miniseries and in media statements about them. These arguments were based on particular interpretations of factual and fictional events brought together to explain why certain historically verifiable outcomes came about. Cowra Breakout and Vietnam became vehicles for the delivery of a number of hypotheses. In Cowra, the Kennedy Miller team interpreted selected factual events and additional fictional incidents to demonstrate why the Cowra breakout (a historically verifiable occurrence) came about and how it could have been prevented. Vietnam advances arguments why the social and cultural disruptions during the Vietnam War period could have been alleviated.

¹ The general definition of colligation is to tie, group together, bind, or unite. Isolated facts can be brought together through an explanation of hypothesis. However, the concept of ‘colligation’ was introduced into the philosophy of history by W.H. Walsh (1942, 1960; see Ritter 52).
Since the two miniseries examined in this chapter are creative interpretations of past events, Kennedy Miller were able to move beyond the ‘facts’, colligating both fact and fiction to develop generalised thematic interpretations. The outcome of the Cowra miniseries still remains the breakout, an outcome that accords with history (with ‘historical fact’); while the outcome of Vietnam remains Australia’s involvement in Vietnam, withdrawal, and defeat. The Kennedy Miller approach to creatively colligating events – be they factual or fictional – is essential for the rapprochement strategies developed in each miniseries.

Through their pre-production research for both miniseries, Kennedy Miller found that Australians in positions of authority – such as military leaders and politicians – did not attempt to reach out across cultural and heritage divides. This prevented the Australian leadership from appreciating the core humanity of ordinary Japanese and Vietnamese people. If, however, they had achieved a cross-cultural understanding, a Japanese breakout might have been avoided, and (decades later) Australians might not have found themselves fighting the Vietnamese.

Appreciating the core humanity of individuals is fundamental to the humanist worldview developed by Kennedy Miller. This worldview is therefore central to the heritage imagination discernible through the narrative themes and in the historical worlds of both miniseries. The Kennedy Miller take is that individuals from different cultures and heritages need to be reconciled with each other as a necessary first step in transforming relationships. Cross-cultural communication at a person-to-person level begins the process of overcoming war’s legacy of mistrust and enmity. Both miniseries represent the working through of personal relationships between selected individuals who are representative of their different cultures and heritages. However, Kennedy Miller demonstrates an awareness of and sensitivity to only some aspects of Japanese and Vietnamese culture and heritage. In addition, only a partial cross-cultural understanding is achieved between Australians and Japanese in Cowra Breakout and with the Vietnamese in Vietnam.

One predictable outcome of war and conflict is that there are victims. While disputes may arise over who the actual victims are, there will always be victims. As well as developing a rapprochement strategy based on establishing a core humanity between individuals from all sides of a conflict, the two miniseries suggest that once a war is over, ordinary people (civilians as well as former soldiers) will find they share a common experience of being victims to circumstances beyond their control. Although the nature of each individual’s and group’s victimhood in times of war is different, the experience of being a victim is universal. The tradition of Australians being ‘victims’ is a long one, and ties in with earlier discussion of the nobility of enduring adversity.
The form of the miniseries allowed the Kennedy Miller collective a broad canvas on which to weave their humanist-inspired *rapprochement* strategies and to creatively colligate events. The miniseries form permitted narrativising the lives of different individuals coming to terms with their history. In both *Cowra* and *Vietnam* individual Australians find themselves on journeys of self-discovery, undergo trials, and then achieve a reconciliation which transforms them. Stan Davidson, for instance, undertakes just such a journey and is transformed by the end of the *Cowra* miniseries. *Vietnam* links the trials and eventual reconciliation and transformation of Phil Goddard to the wider trajectories of all four members of the Goddard family, and to Australian society generally. This wider theme of social and cultural transformation is not present in the *Cowra* series.

A multiperspectivist approach also underpins and complicates the identification of ‘the victims’ in each miniseries. Again, this is graphically illustrated in *Cowra* where an Australian guard and his Japanese prisoner are victims to circumstances not of their making. Multiperspectivism is complicated in the *Vietnam* miniseries as it is based on the four narrative trajectories of the Goddards. In *Cowra*, prisoner Junji Hyashi provides audiences with a critical Japanese vantage point on his fellow Japanese prisoners-of-war, and on their susceptibility to mass mobilisation by unscrupulous Japanese provocateurs. There is some indication of how these provocateurs play on Japanese cultural norms and values to ferment discontent and precipitate a suicidal breakout. Conversely, Stan Davidson’s increasingly enlightened behaviour provides the audience with a degree of insight into the failure of the other Australian guards to make similar efforts to understand the Japanese. Except for Stan, the Japanese remain throughout the series Australia’s unknown and despised Other.

The reconciliation and transformation achieved by Stan Davidson and Phil Goddard points to 1980s Australia increasing cultural engagement with Asians at home and in Asia itself. These are cross-cultural encounters. The friendship Stan and Junji create, and the relationship Phil and Laurie initiate with the Vietnamese women are cross-cultural rather than multicultural relationships. Although some commentators discerned a ‘multicultural’ sensitivity in both miniseries (S. Cunningham, *Kennedy-Miller*), generally speaking the two productions are best regarded as encouraging cross-cultural engagements between Australians and Asians. Nonetheless, Australia’s multicultural agenda of the 1980s did encourage a greater awareness of different cultures and peoples. Only in the *Vietnam* miniseries are multicultural relationships represented: the relationship between the Hungarian Australian Serge and his girlfriend Megan Goddard; and the marriage between Le (a Vietnamese refugee) and her husband Laurie (an Australian Vietnam War veteran).
Genuine multicultural bonds between Australians of various ethnicities are achievable within Australia, when individuals are living permanently beside and with each other.

While Australia was developing its intra-national multicultural agenda over the 1980s, it was also looking beyond its northern shores to East and Southeast Asia. When disputing the appropriateness and accuracy of the fictions in Cowra – although some similar concerns were expressed in relation to Vietnam – Kennedy Miller’s critics needed to tread carefully around issues that could potentially promote anti-Asian sentiment in an era when Australia was increasing its economic, political, and cultural ties with Asia. They also needed to negotiate a stance with respect to war, particularly Asian wars, since all the major parties to these wars were determined to put the region’s near continuous wars since the 1930s behind them. Kennedy Miller expected some of their interpretations and representations to be controversial. This was to be expected from productions that were ambitious and challenging in both their scope and intent. To appreciate just how ambitious they were is revealed by examining the ‘epic’ qualities of these series.

**Epic Television**

The term ‘epic’ has often been employed to signal just how ambitious and impressive Kennedy Miller miniseries were in their overall conceptual design, scope, argumentation, and delivery. Their ambition and their ‘epic imagination’ are indicated by their multiperspectivist narrative approach, their emphasis on visual authenticity and similitude, the inclusion of cinematically-designed sequences, the selective deployment of docudramatic techniques, and the sensitive insights into selected aspects of Japanese or Vietnamese culture and heritage. Commenting on The Cowra Breakout, journalist and critic Suellen O'Grady points towards the value of this epic approach:

> The triumph of all their productions, including The Cowra Breakout, is their positive character. And, by that, I do not mean their optimism, but rather their steadfast intent which never loses track of its objective. They do not content themselves with merely delineating those issues. Instead they opt for the epic approach, exploring them in an historical and social context, which is then carefully unravelled. (O'Grady)

Multiperspectivism is facilitated by the form of the miniseries itself. This point was noted by many commentators when the Vietnam miniseries was broadcast. After watching the first night’s episode, Glover wrote that: “With Vietnam we have a subject with enough weight to carry 10 hours of television. More importantly, it is a subject which lends itself to side-angles, to an interweaving of separate story strands – a problem for a film; a boon for a miniseries” (Glover, Vietnam).
Japanese and Vietnamese perspectives are included in the respective miniseries. The Vietnamese are endowed with complex personality and motivation in *Vietnam*, while the Japanese perspective is given equal weight and psychological complexity in *Cowra Breakout*. The *Cowra* miniseries starts out in the jungles of New Guinea and then ends in the Cowra prison camp. It is in this camp that Australians and Japanese come into close daily contact with each other. Sworn enemies on the battlefield, Stan Davidson and Junji Hyashi, much to their mutual surprise, find themselves in the prison camp – Stan as a guard, and Junji his prisoner. As Glover notes, “[t]he story starts out being told entirely from the Australian point-of-view and it’s only when the audience has been teased so much by the so-called inhumanity of the Japanese – by their craziness, by their manic behaviour – that the camera looks into the Japanese compound” (Glover, *Long Night*). Then, according to co-director and co-scriptwriter Phil Noyce,

> [b]y that time, we hope our audience will be desperate to know what’s going on in these guys’ minds and hearts. Have they got hearts? Are they human? So just when the audience are asking those questions, and asking for them to be answered, we start very slowly to provide an answer. (quoted in Glover, *Long Night*)

And the answer to this question is provided through the character of ‘Junji’, who becomes the audience’s guide in the *Cowra* miniseries. However, the multiple perspectives in the *Vietnam* miniseries do not include as central a Vietnamese character since this miniseries is concerned with the narrative trajectories of each member of the Australian Goddard family.² It is when a Vietnamese character impacts on the narrative trajectory of a Goddard that the audience gains some awareness of the Vietnamese point-of-view.

In the *Vietnam* miniseries, since Phil Goddard and Laurie Fellows are soldiers they do not become involved with the politics of the war; as soldiers they follow orders and do the bidding of their country’s political masters. It is left to other members of Phil Goddard’s family to deal with, for example, the politics at a Federal government level of Australia’s engagement in Vietnam (through Phil’s father, a Canberra bureaucrat), or with the Australian anti-conscription movement (though Phil’s sister Megan). However, the miniseries still includes Vietnamese characters and they provide some insight into Vietnamese perspectives.

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² *Douglas Goddard*, the father, is a senior Canberra advisor and public servant to the Prime Minister. He is conservative Australia, and initially supports Australia’s engagement in Vietnam. *Evelyn Goddard*, the mother whose marriage disintegrates. *Phil Goddard*, the son, is conscripted and serves in Vietnam. On his first tour of duty, he comes to believe in the war but finds himself alienated from the Australia he left behind. During his second tour of duty his Vietnam experiences change his personality. *Megan Goddard* – played by Nicole Kidman – Phil’s sister, is younger than Phil. She drops out of school; a sixties flower child, she becomes involved with a draft resister, Serge, and with the anti-war movement.
Some events already on the public record – through audio recordings, memoirs, diaries, and other tangible traces of the past – are open to fictionalisation. The docudramatic qualities of both miniseries allow for ‘facts’, including fictional and fictionalised ‘facts’, to be creatively colligated. While the Cowra miniseries was being filmed, controversy over some fictional and fictionalised characters was already developing (Morris). Even so, fictionalisation of ‘facts’ was considered to be an appropriate strategy to deliver to audiences the ‘bigger heritage picture’ as imagined by Kennedy Miller.

Docudrama techniques are more in evidence in the Vietnam than in the Cowra miniseries. In the Vietnam miniseries, dramatic reconstruction is interwoven both diegetically and non-diegetically with archival footage, lending credence to the representative claims of the fiction (Bertrand, Bicentennial). However, while archival material is not as foregrounded in The Cowra Breakout there is still reference to primary source material with its New Guinea footage of Allied and Japanese forces fighting each other under extreme conditions. This footage references film shot for the celebrated and Oscar winning wartime newsreel, Kokoda Front Line! (filmed in 1942, with Damien Parer as director and cameraman and produced by the Australian newsreel company Cinesound). Cowra’s creative team was advised by Kokoda’s producer, Ken G. Hall, who contributed to the visual similitude and power of scenes recreating fighting in the mud and jungles of New Guinea.

In both miniseries, docudrama elements work with rapprochement strategies to further Kennedy Miller’s approach to heritage storytelling. This approach foregrounds appropriateness more than accuracy. As heritage theorists and interpreters (amongst others) point out, the meanings assigned to historical ‘facts’ are always subject to interpretation. Of the two miniseries, Cowra again reveals itself to be the most contentious. As James Cunningham points out, The Cowra Breakout starts with “a more or less straightforward fictional account” of Australians at war, then goes to Cowra to relate “a true story about Japanese [prisoners-of-war] whose war might, conventionally, be supposed to be over” (J. Cunningham).

The full story of what happened at Cowra was not revealed until well over 30 years after the breakout. At the time it was described as “one of the most bizarre and least understood episodes in the bitter history of the Pacific War” (Carling-Rogers, Big). The silence about the breakout ensured that while the story was on the public record it lacked both explanation and a public face. Consequently, this provided the room for the Kennedy Miller team to interpret a number of events...
(through creative colligation) that were associated with the breakout to explain incidents such as Japanese hanging themselves to avoid recapture. The *Cowra* miniseries could then become its authoritative and authentic description. This monumental dimension to the production and the responsibility this entailed was not lost on its producers.

Kennedy Miller team sought to provide a narrative image of – and thereby to explain – why the Japanese escaped, and why so many of them were killed by their Australian guards. However, while Kennedy Miller looked at already-published material on the breakout, Phil Noyce (co-director and co-scriptwriter) stated that most of the material which had already been written *interpreting* the incident was ignored by the production team. Instead, Kennedy Miller conducted their own research in Japan although they found that once in Japan, the surviving Cowra prisoners did not want to be interviewed (Day).³

The bare facts of the breakout are known. At 2 am, on the moonlit morning of 5th August 1944, more than 1,100 Japanese prisoners-of-war stormed out of their enclosure and attempted to seize the Vickers machine guns from their Australian guards watching over them (Day). In the ensuing bloodbath 231 (Dwyer) / 234 (Carr-Gregg) Japanese died, four Australians were stabbed or bludgeoned to death, many Japanese and four Australians were wounded, and 334 prisoners escaped (Dwyer). However, the Japanese who escaped went out of their way not to harm any Australian civilian (H. Clarke, 74).⁴

There have been a number of reasons put forward for the escape. Carr-Gregg suggests the main ‘official’ reasons were

> an attempt to seek death, which derived largely from the cultural conditioning of the prisoners; a planned escape, which would be in keeping with the behaviour expected from prisoners-of-war, regardless of their nationality; and a spontaneous response to the order of transfer, which might have been engendered by facets of the Japanese personality structure and value orientation. (Carr-Gregg 196)

These hypotheses are, to various degrees, reproduced in the *Cowra* miniseries.

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³ Several refused to talk “because they had never acknowledged . . . the shame of their capture, even to their families” (Day). It did not matter to many of the escapees what approach was going to be taken in the miniseries as a number had given false identities on their capture. It had been the Imperial Japanese army code that a man should not live to experience the shame of capture, always remembering the honour of his family” (Duy).

⁴ It took nine days of intensive searching by teams of police, soldiers, and local farmers, before all the escapees were rounded up (Dwyer, 1985; Carr-Gregg, 64). But a number of Japanese decided not to leave their huts to participate in the escape: “50 [Japanese . . .] broke into the compound of the Japanese officers and remained in the officers’ huts until the next morning (Carr-Gregg 74). Of the hundreds of Japanese who died, 30 or 40 committed suicide.
Turning to the *Vietnam* miniseries, its epic sweep covers a volatile period in Australian social and political history. The narrative begins in November 1964, when the conservative Menzies Liberal government introduces conscription, just before Australian combat troops are committed to Vietnam (in April 1965). With the commitment of Australian troops the Vietnam War becomes “a war of slogans” in Australia (Molloy). The United States and its Australian ally go into Vietnam ostensibly to stop Communism from spreading from one neighbouring Southeast Asian country to the next: the so-called ‘Domino Theory’. The series concludes in December 1972, when the newly-elected Labor Prime Minister Gough Whitlam ends Australia's commitment to the war and releases draft resisters.

While interpreting and representing politics at a national level is not of consequence in *The Cowra Breakout*, it is central to *Vietnam*. The nature of these political struggles and their social and cultural ramifications on Australian society require time to tease out. In addition to representations of combat in Vietnam, the political intrigues in Canberra with their ensuing Australian public opposition contribute to the epic sweep of the series. When considering *Vietnam*, O’Regan (*Enchantment*) sees the miniseries acquiring its “epic dimension through [the . . .] provision of historical and verisimilitudinal contexts”.

In contrast, the period of historical time covered in the *Cowra* miniseries is more concentrated. Even though historical time in *Cowra* is abbreviated, two major events are represented and recreated: the fighting in the New Guinea jungles and the breakout itself. In comparison to the total viewing time, the breakout sequences are short and occur at the very end of the production. But, as James Cunningham notes, in a drama it is “quite acceptable” to build a 10 hour television production around this event given its focus on an inexplicable incident happening after the Japanese defeat that brought an end to the Second World War (J. Cunningham).

Close attention to verisimilitude was paid in both miniseries. The authenticity of the historical worlds actualized in both miniseries is evident in sets and locations, with such authenticity deemed to be necessary so as not to distract audiences – and to prepare them for the revisionist interpretations of each series. Since there was nothing much left of the original Cowra camp itself except “battered foundations”, the Kennedy Miller production crew used the Singleton Army Base.

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5 The Vietnam War can be viewed in the larger context of the Cold War (1947-1989) between the United States and the Communist Party-controlled Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (the USSR). The Domino Theory seemed to many Australian politicians sufficient justification for intervening in South Vietnam, itself on the brink of turning Communist. From 1948 to 1972, anti-communism was very strong in Australia among ordinary Australians.
north of Sydney (Carling-Rogers, Cowra; Day). This location gave the miniseries a greater visual authenticity than would have been provided by shooting in Cowra itself (Carling-Rogers, Cowra; Day). Just as importantly, this verisimilitude supported Kennedy Miller’s contention that the Japanese were victims. Within the confines of the Cowra camp, relationships and conflicts simmer between the Japanese prisoners and their Australian guards, while differences emerge on both the Japanese and Australian sides.

The visual authenticity and the attention to production design on the sets of both miniseries were enhanced by the cinematic style employed in particular scenes and sequences. As outlined in the first chapter, cinematic style goes beyond shooting a television show on film to include enhanced visual spectacle, high-production values, and feature-style cinematography (Caldwell, Televisuality 5). Since this increases the cost of production, cinematic style is used judiciously in both Cowra and Vietnam: it contributes to the visual power of Cowra’s jungle and breakout sequences with the visual authenticity of the breakout sequences praised by critics. A similar style is used in the combat engagement scenes filmed in Vietnam.

Cinematically-influenced sequences further Kennedy Miller’s rapprochement approach to storytelling. As dramatically illustrated in the first episode of Cowra, the New Guinea jungle sequences depict the life-and-death struggle of combat, and the brutal experience and folly of jungle warfare. Australian soldier Stan Davidson tries to kill his now disarmed Japanese prisoner, Junji Hyashi. In the fight for survival that ensues, the humanity of both is debased. But these scenes, though relatively brief, were also entertaining to watch: as one commentator noted, “[a]s usual with Kennedy Miller product, the chief delight comes from a number of set-pieces – graphic, consciously cinematic scenes which one almost suspects have been conceived before the storyline” (Glover, Long Night). Other commentators and critics were impressed by the accuracy of Cowra’s breakout scenes. Semmler was one critic who thought “[t]he culminating breakout scenes are spectacularly and splendidly staged as a television spectacle” (Semmler).

Kennedy Miller intended the Vietnam miniseries to be a memorial for Australians, whether soldiers in Vietnam or civilians at home, whose lives were forever changed as a result of the War. The Kennedy Miller team felt it was essential scenes and sequences set in Vietnam appeared authentic to Australian Vietnam War veterans. The approval of Australia’s Vietnam War veterans was important because Kennedy Miller wanted their sacrifices honoured. Authenticity was necessary to provide viewers with an insight into some of the horrors of fighting experienced by Australian soldiers when on patrol, as graphically actualized when an Australian soldier has his foot blown off
by a landmine. Claims were made that the authenticity and power of the Vietnam sequences filmed in Thailand were furthered by employing the same Thai crew “who worked on the award-winning film, *The Killing Fields*” (B. McGregor), a Hollywood production based on the Vietnam War and the murderous Cambodian regime of Pol Pot. This suggests an awareness by commentators that Australians were watching Hollywood Vietnam War films.

The Kennedy Miller production team also thought it necessary that Australian Vietnam War veterans be satisfied with the visual authenticity of the village set. The Kennedy Miller crew constructed “a mini-replica” of the type of village built by Australians for the Vietnamese (B. McGregor). The authenticity of this Vietnamese village was important for the overall thematic concerns of the miniseries. In press comments made in 1986, co-producer and co-scriptwriter Terry Hayes claimed that the village was “the metaphor for Vietnam”. It was also a metaphor for the Australian experience in Vietnam. The new village was constructed by the Australians to deprive the Viet Cong of sanctuary (B. McGregor). According to Hayes, during their time serving in Vietnam, Australians created such villages for the Vietnamese because once the original village “becomes a Viet Cong base [the . . .] Australian troops burn it down and move the people to a new village. But the new village becomes more and more like a concentration camp” (Hayes quoted in Breen, *National Mythology*, 174).

As well as Australian Vietnam veterans, there was another segment of the Australian audience who had first-hand knowledge of such villages – the Vietnamese refugees who had settled in Australia after the end of the war and who had painful memories of their time in similar villages. These viewers (and the Vietnamese extras employed by Kennedy Miller) authenticated the village set. Pauline Chan, who played the role of Lien and was herself a Vietnamese refugee, was reported to have declared the look of the recreated Vietnamese village was authentic (B. McGregor).  

The visual power and cinematic intensity of Vietnam-based scenes and sequences contrast sharply with the more mundane and slower-paced sequences set in the corridors and offices of power in Canberra. Importantly, these were also authentically recreated as considerable effort went into authenticating Australian-based sequences (O’Regan *Enchantment*). The Kennedy Miller production team argued that some degree of politics had to be included to convey to Australian audiences the epic nature of the political struggles underway over Australia’s involvement in

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6 Pauline Chan’s reactions were reported in the media where it was claimed she responded to an “ambience . . . so real [that] it occasionally throws Vietnamese actress Pauline Chan, who plays the lead [Vietnamese] female role” (B. McGregor). Chan contended that the first draft of the script was almost completely from the Australian point-of-view. She suggested the Kennedy Miller team look a bit more behind, or inside, the doors of the village to bring the village alive (P. McGregor, *Cultural Battles*; P. McGregor, *Kennedy Miller*).
Vietnam. Politics could not be ignored. Australians needed to learn from the Vietnam War experience so that they would not find themselves becoming victim to such politics in the future (see B. McGregor; P. McGregor, Cultural Battles; P. McGregor, Kennedy Miller). This was part of the worldview shared by all members of the Kennedy Miller collective.

The Kennedy Miller Worldview

The Kennedy Miller team interpreted events from a particular worldview informed by a humanist perspective that seemed to be shared by members of the creative team. One key component of this worldview is that even if ordinary people choose (or are forced to take) sides during times of conflict, they remain victims of circumstances beyond their control. Therefore, regardless of what side they find themselves on, during times of conflict ordinary men, women, and children have their ‘victimhood’ in common.

Support for the view that ordinary people have a shared victimhood during war comes from co-producer Terry Hayes. While filming the Vietnam miniseries, Hayes claimed to have formulated a theory about Australia’s engagement in the Vietnam conflict. His theory was based on ordinary Vietnamese who (like Australians) find themselves victims of events. This theory was encapsulated as follows:

[T]he Americans were out there blowing up everything that moved and the Viet Cong were executing village headmen to show they meant business. ... Sooner or later, it was pretty hard to stay neutral. This is the story of our village, wanting to do what most people want, to live their lives and how events conspired to force them to take sides. Some chose the VC [Viet Cong], some the US. (quoted in B. McGregor)

Yet despite being victims of conflicts not of their making, Kennedy Miller represents the possibility of individuals being able to cross cultural divides even during times of war. Connections and communication are possible between ordinary Australians and Japanese in periods of extreme and deadly conflict, and between Australians and Vietnamese during a fractious, contentious, and socially divisive civil war. Once personal relationships are created, recognition of a shared humanity can follow, eventually leading to reconciliation, resolution, and transformation.

While making both miniseries, Kennedy Miller communicated tenets of their worldview to the actors during production workshops. Workshopping also had practical outcomes. Although the Kennedy Miller worldview did not change during workshopping, script elements such as dialogue
could be altered; this occurred, for example, with the Cowra miniseries. Junichi Ishida who played Junji, claimed that Kennedy Miller changed Japanese dialogue as a result of the workshopping process (McNamara). Kennedy Miller first began their workshopping system for its film and television productions with The Dismissal (their 1983 miniseries based on the 1975 dismissal of Prime Minister Gough Whitlam by the Governor-General, John Kerr).

Workshopping sessions provided opportunities for Australian and Japanese actors in Cowra and Australian and Vietnamese actors in Vietnam to question the Kennedy Miller team about their particular take on the events being filmed, about the dialogue and staging of events, as well to seek explanations about elements of each other’s culture (Day).⁷ At the same time, the culture and heritage of the Japanese and Vietnamese were communicated to Australian actors (Day). When commenting on the Cowra workshops, Australian and Japanese actors claimed they came to understand something of the Kennedy Miller worldview (McNamara).

As fundamental to this worldview is the notion that a ‘clash of cultures’ needs to be avoided in the future, and that Australians need to make the effort to overcome barriers separating people as a result of differences in culture, heritage, and history. Kennedy Miller purposefully interpret events in both miniseries to emphasise the ‘clash of cultures’ theme between Australians and Asians, although the outcome of such a clash is represented more violently in Cowra Breakout. The ‘clash of cultures’ theme in Cowra was noted by many commentators: “To Australians, it was futile and suicidal; to the POWs it was an attempt to salvage shattered pride in death. For both it was the culmination of a tragic clash of cultures” (Carling-Rogers, Big).

There is factual material – evidence – that, on occasion, Australians crossed cultural divides to establish relationships with wartime enemies from European countries. In the Second World War, Australians befriended many Italian and German prisoners who were also interned in the Cowra camp, but billeted in separate sections. The original Cowra camp had been built by the Australian Army in June 1941 for Italian and German prisoners-of-war captured by or who surrendered to Allied forces in the Middle East (H. Clarke 30). Relations between the Italians and the German POWs and their Australian guards were amicable, and this is represented in the miniseries. Australian guards (as well as civilians) become friends particularly with the Italian prisoners, with some Australians even making the effort to learn Italian.

⁷ The entire cast of Cowra, Japanese and Australian, were in workshops, “for 12 hours a day for two weeks under tutors” (Day). Both the young Australian and Japanese actors had to be tutored for their roles though military advisors, as well as a heavy reliance “on old propaganda films from both sides” (Day).
Like the Australians, the Italians shared a general European belief that there was no shame in surrendering, while the Japanese were taught – the miniseries indicates they were indoctrinated – to believe otherwise. Nevertheless, for co-director Noyce, this did not excuse the Australians from trying to understand Japanese culture and its values (Carling-Rogers, *Big*). Although the Italians and the Germans shared a European cultural heritage with the Australians, through the evidence of the Stan-Junji friendship the Kennedy Miller team could argue that not sharing a cultural heritage with the Japanese should not have prevented Australians from attempting to build similar relationships with their Japanese prisoners.

The *Vietnam* miniseries did represent some aspects of Vietnamese history and culture and of the country’s near continuous history of foreign invasion. With this dissonant heritage behind them, the Vietnamese people were not likely to warm to Australian soldiers – yet another invading force – herding them into guarded villages, no matter how well these villages might have been constructed. Even so, cross-cultural encounters between Australian soldiers and the Vietnamese do begin in these villages.

Initially, Australian intervention in Vietnam is interpreted – at least on the part of the Australian soldiers – as an attempt to help. Phil Goddard expresses the hope that the new village would be a good opportunity to get to know some of the Vietnamese people. Consequently Phil cannot understand why Lien (the Vietnamese woman he comes to care about) is not grateful for his help. Laurie, Phil’s friend, comments that there is “Just this barrier; it's always there”. Another Australian soldier responds: “Between us and the whole Vietnamese people”.

Cross-cultural engagement occurs at the level of individual characters, and it is through these characters – not only the main characters, but also key supporting characters – that an audience gains some insight into the Kennedy Miller worldview. Individuals from apparently opposing heritages and cultures are shown to be capable of change and transformation. After their cross-cultural encounter in Vietnam, Australian-Vietnamese cultural barriers are bridged by the end of the miniseries when Le (Lien’s friend) and Australian Vietnam War veteran Laurie Fellows marry. Although Laurie is now disabled, Le and Laurie establish a respectful and loving family relationship. This is now a ‘multicultural’ union that can only happen in Australia.

The docudrama elements in each series contribute to character development and permit an exploration of character motivations. As O’Regan (*Enchantment*) notes, *Vietnam* was “able to keep
its ‘realist’ and ‘docudrama’ effects whilst not downplaying psychological motivation [of the characters] nor flattening out events and characters”. It also helps audiences appreciate character motivations if they understand the words of scripted dialogue the characters speak. In both miniseries Asians are able to speak English (with an appropriate accent). It is indeed fortuitous that Asians speak English, since this enables them to communicate with Australian characters (and the Australian audience). This overcomes Australians having to learn Japanese or Vietnamese. While this has narrative and thematic benefits, Asians speaking to Australians in English also encouraged Australian viewers to continue watching the miniseries.8

In the *Vietnam* miniseries, the two principal Vietnamese characters – the women Lien and Le – are also able to speak English. However, since many sequences in the miniseries are set in the country of Vietnam itself, Lien, Le, and other Vietnamese characters do get the opportunity to speak to each other in Vietnamese with subtitled English translations placed on-screen. The contrivance for Junji’s ability to speak English in *Cowra* is that before becoming a soldier, he was a teacher of English in Hiroshima. This enables him to communicate with Stan in the Cowra camp, and enables the viewer to engage with his emotions and feelings. At the end of the miniseries, although Junji writes in his diary in Japanese, his thoughts while writing are expressed as a voiceover spoken in English (in his own voice and accent). However, it should be noted that the Japanese in *Cowra* do speak in their native tongue (with on-screen English subtitles) with about thirty per cent of the dialogue in the series spoken in Japanese (Day). Again, this was for thematic reasons: when the Kennedy Miller team released details of the *Cowra* miniseries to the Australian media, it was made clear by Noyce the series would be interpreting the breakout as much from Japanese as from an Australian perspective (Noyce in Glover, *Long Night*).

What audiences learn from Asians able to communicate their thoughts and feelings to Australian soldiers is the nature of their victimhood. In the *Vietnam* miniseries, the Australian soldiers and the Vietnamese women are victims of a war not of their creation. Phil Goddard on his tour of duty in Vietnam falls in love with Lien and then subsequently feels betrayed by her when it is revealed she is the ‘enemy’ (the Viet Cong). Pauline Chan, who played Lien, maintained that the miniseries attempts to show “why her character Lien eventually joined the Viet Cong” (B. McGregor). At the end of the miniseries Le tries to explain to Phil why Lien became a Viet Cong. When he does come to some understanding, Phil breaks down and weeps.9 He could not previously understand the

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8 According to Phil Noyce (in Glover, *Long Night*), it was never Kennedy Miller’s intention for the Australian audience “to tune in and suddenly be bombarded with subtitled Japanese . . . It’s a very gradual process and takes a number of hours before we’re finally privy to the hearts and minds of the Japanese” (Noyce in Glover, *Long Night*).

9 The miniseries represents Phil Goddard’s mental deterioration as being the result of his apparent betrayal by the
Vietnamese because he could not understand Lien. According to the logic of the *Vietnam* miniseries, Lien did what she did for a number of reasons: unfortunate circumstances, Vietnam’s history of foreign invasion and the dissonant heritage this bestows on the Vietnamese people, and a lack of cross-cultural understanding between Australians and Vietnamese.

In particular, the *Vietnam* miniseries colligates events to support the conclusion that Australia entered into the war as a result of the conniving machinations of politicians. In the series, politics and politicians are central to the story; they are responsible for the suffering and victimhood of ordinary people. Conservative Australian Liberal governments are presented as “conniving to develop their paranoid, yellow peril, forward-defence strategy, based on kicking-the-communist-can” (P. McGregor, *Kennedy Miller* 39; and P. McGregor, *Cultural Battles* 46-47). The producers adopted ‘do not trust politicians’ as a structuring generalised theme.

The *Cowra Breakout* miniseries is clearly structured around the tribulations of Stan and Junji. While engaged in hand-to-hand combat in a take-no-prisoners war conducted in a nameless New Guinea jungle, Stan and Junji behave brutishly. After their descent into an emotional and spiritual abyss, they are subsequently remade in Australia. As O’Grady notes, when the two former combatants find themselves in the Cowra camp, "[b]oth are bereft of the ideals they once lived by". O’Grady concludes that “[t]heir mutual respect and recognition of the other’s spiritual wasteland would have meant a friendship in any other time and country” (O’Grady).

The fictional character of Australian guard Stan Davidson was inspired by an Australian guard at Cowra, Jock Weir (Day). But Weir was never friends with any Japanese prisoner-of-war. Indeed such a relationship at that time was just not possible. The character of Junji Hyashi had no basis in any factual Japanese prisoner. The Stan-Junji friendship was consequently criticised for being pure fiction. As a friendship borne out of severe enmity it was deemed to be improbable and was criticised as such (Hooks; Semmler). However, the (fictional) friendship serves to interpret events and the morality of Australia’s wartime conflict with Japan as not being clear-cut.

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10 Kennedy Miller researchers talked to Jock Weir, and he became one of three military advisors on the miniseries. Weir’s experiences gave the Kennedy Miller team the major outline for their plot. Weir fought the Japanese at Buna (in New Guinea) and was later assigned to the Cowra POW camp as an intelligence officer (Day).

11 When evaluating *The Cowra Breakout* in general, and the Stan-Junji friendship in particular, Hooks maintained that “[i]n the presentation of drama, viewers can be asked to suspend disbelief only so far. For no matter how much we would like to rewrite history, a fidelity to prevailing attitudes of the time should be maintained in spirit as well as fact” (Hooks). Semmler (1985) also finds this friendship to be “[a]ll a bit rich” (Semmler).
A contingent view of morality and ethical behaviour became a feature of the Kennedy Miller worldview, and was outlined by *Cowra* co-director and co-scriptwriter Phillip Noyce. While undertaking pre-production research for *Cowra*, Noyce and the Kennedy Miller research team were in Japan for more than two years (Morris). While in that country, Noyce claims to have developed an understanding that morality was different from culture to culture:

To Christian ethics ... the Japanese did things we would describe as atrocities. To the Japanese morality, they weren’t. For instance, if a Japanese is going to kill himself when he is captured, he doesn’t believe it is morally wrong to kill his own captive because that, surely, is what his captive wants. (Noyce quoted in Day)

Yet the Japanese escapees did follow a code of conduct: after the breakout, the miniseries shows the escapees adhering to a code of not harming Australian civilians, which was the case when the actual incident took place (H. Clarke 74).

The Kennedy Miller worldview holds that it is not enough for people to understand they share a core humanity, or that they have a victimhood in common, or that morality is different from culture to culture; rather these are part of the universal heritage of all people. How these universal attributes influence the choices and decisions made by individuals is the true test of their personal honour and integrity. Individuals who have personal honour in common are capable of bridging cultural barriers. Both *Cowra Breakout* and *Vietnam* represent the ability to cross cultural barriers as being related to aspects of personal honour. O’Grady explains that this is in keeping with Kennedy Miller’s previous television productions of

*The Dismissal, Bodyline,* and the *Mad Max* series of films, ... [Kennedy Miller] have always emphasised the value of maintaining personal honour at whatever cost, the tempering of naiveté by brutish reality, and the survival of some sort of ideals in the bleakest of times and battles. (O’Grady)

There are characters in both miniseries who possess both personal honour and integrity, and are therefore able to transcend barriers of culture, heritage, and history; but they often suffer greatly as a result. In both cases this character is an Asian: Junji in *The Cowra Breakout* is shot to death by Australian troops; and Le in the *Vietnam* miniseries is raped and brutalised by American GIs.

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12 If they were captured or they surrendered the Japanese “expected and even wanted to be executed” (Noyce, in Carling-Rogers, *Big*). The problem was that, with so many Allied soldiers being held by the Japanese, the Australian and other Allied authorities were wary of stories of maltreatment of Japanese POWs getting out, “[s]o they treated the Japanese POWs fairly well – and compounded the shame they felt” (Noyce in Carling-Rogers, *Big*).
Junji is marked as a vulnerable person who should be helped rather than pursued. The portrayal of Australian soldiers shooting Junji in cold blood at the end of the miniseries mirrors Stan’s attempt to kill and leave Junji for dead in the jungle in the opening sequences of the first episode. But over a period of time, while they are both in Cowra, Stan has come to understand Junji. The audience has also come to identify with Junji and to recognise his personal honour and integrity. His shooting is therefore scripted to enable Australian audiences to identify with a fallen hero (MacLennan, *Australia* 30). His death is certainly a murder, and possibly a war crime. The shooting also serves to dissipate the traditional sense of moral outrage against the Japanese that many Australians felt as a result of the Pacific campaign during the Second World War (MacLennan, *Australia* 30).

In the *Vietnam* miniseries American troops rape the Vietnamese woman Le, and cut off part of her ear. This rape becomes metonymic of an ‘America-as-villain’ theme. Unsurprisingly, the Kennedy Miller production team were defensive about this sequence. At the end of the miniseries, Le reflects on her rape when she tells Phil Goddard about it, and declares she was raped by soldiers but it does not matter who the soldiers were. Though she goes on to identify her attackers as American, she dismisses this as irrelevant as it could have been soldiers from any military force or nation. Le’s comment is a forceful moral statement. She is the one violated, and violated grossly, but she forgives and comes to a certain sort of peace as a result of the perspective she takes. This outlook provided opportunities for Australian viewers to identify with her.

She is the narrative image of the Vietnamese refugee, a person with a personal honour and integrity who has suffered greatly (at Allied rather than Viet Cong hands – although the latter was more likely for the refugees who fled from Vietnam). Having suffered a great deal, Le should be respected and accommodated. By the end of the miniseries, she is able to place her traumatic violation behind her. As a refugee who has settled in Australia, she is ready for a new life and has moved forward to have a loving relationship with Laurie. This allows her a certain nobility as a

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13 Under the terms of the 1929 Third Geneva Convention (Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners-of-war), ratified by Australia but not by Japan.

14 For co-producer Terry Hayes the *Cowra* miniseries was never going to provide an account of Japanese war atrocities (McNamara, 1985) although “We certainly see enough of the internal dynamic and cultural values of the Japanese in *Cowra* to know that their militarist attitudes and Samurai values would make them insensitive, arrogant, and cruel jailors in prison camps run by the Japanese military in Asia and the Pacific” (McNamara).

15 The rape scene became a problem in a number of ways. According to media reports, when Thai officials were made aware of how American soldiers were to be scripted in the rape scene, the Thais refused them permission to have the scene filmed on their soil (B. McGregor). The rape was later edited out of the miniseries before it was shown in the United States.

16 Even if in the *Vietnam* miniseries rape scene was a one-off incident, it is still presented as a war crime committed by United States military forces. Therefore, in this context, “it matters a great deal who raped Le” (MacLennan, *Cultural* 64).
survivor and as a moral person. Indeed, as a Vietnamese refugee in Australia, she will make an ideal citizen and become one of ‘us’. It is worth remembering that public debate surrounding the *Vietnam* miniseries, its ratings success, and critical praise lauding it as a significant achievement in Australian television, were framed in terms of conceptualising the series as ‘our story’ with Le becoming evidently part of the Australian story.

**Re-Imagining the Past**

Unlike Le and Stan, many Australians were not prepared to put the past behind them and move forward. Both *Cowra Breakout* and *Vietnam* were cognisant of contending Australian public memories of the two wars: the Second World War with its Pacific campaign; and the Vietnam War. The presence of strong and insistent popular memory and public discourses on both these wars undoubtedly structured how Australian viewers responded to each series, although these responses were anticipated by the Kennedy Miller production team.

While *The Cowra Breakout* is silent on the Japanese treatment of Australian prisoners-of-war – there was, arguably, already enough of this on the public record for it to be taken for granted – the miniseries spells out the terms of Australian treatment of Japanese prisoners. It is variously seen as complacent, incompetent, and lacking in cultural sensitivity and cross-cultural understanding. Yet in Australian popular memory, the Japanese treatment of Allied (including Australian) prisoners-of-war who surrendered to Japanese forces is still considered to be both barbaric and inhuman. Australians share this estimation with many in the Asian countries whose combatants and civilians suffered even more under the Japanese.

This popular memory of Japanese treatment of Australian prisoners ensured that Australian audiences approached the depiction of Australia’s military treatment of the Japanese with a heightened sensitivity. It certainly encouraged viewers and commentators to compare the treatment of prisoners-of-war on both sides, and to comment on the deep cultural divide evident in how each side treated their prisoners (MacLennan, *Australia*; Carr-Gregg; H. Clarke; Dwyer). When the *Cowra* miniseries colligates events to explain why Japanese prisoners wanted to escape, and how they then became the victims of their Australian military guards, this displaces “attention away from Changi prison [and the Burma railroad] and thus is a reminder to Australians that they too have a past that they might not be so proud of” (MacLennan, *Australia* 29).
Although the Vietnam War ended for Australia in 1972, memories of the conflict were still fresh in the minds of many Australians when the Vietnam miniseries was screened in 1987. In addition, by the time the Vietnam series was broadcast on Australian television, public memories of the Vietnam War were becoming heavily mediated through popular Hollywood culture in Australia as much as in the United States. Many Australians were watching Hollywood movies about Americans fighting in Vietnam. In the United States, cinematic (Hollywood) mediations of the Vietnam War were becoming prominent through films such as Apocalypse Now (1979), Good Morning, Vietnam (1987), Hanoi Hilton (1987), Casualties of War (1989), and Born on the Fourth of July (1989). The Vietnam War was also the subject of two American television shows: Tour of Duty (CBS, 1987–1990) and China Beach (ABC, 1988–1991). This war and combat film sub-genre never developed in Australia.

In contrast, the 1979 feature film The Odd Angry Shot and the ‘other’ Vietnam War miniseries Sword of Honour in 1986, were not combat film sub-genres but rather films designed to consider the impact of the war on the Australian men who fought and on their families. This meant Australian popular memory of the nation’s Vietnam War experiences was open to mediations from other forms of Australian popular culture – such as popular history, documentaries, and news reports – rather than by films. Nevertheless, since Vietnam War films and television shows from the United States were shown in Australia, American popular memory and representations of the American Vietnam veteran had some impact on Australian popular memory as well – with Sword of Honour explicitly narrativising the ‘troubled’ Vietnam vet requiring community support and understanding.

The Vietnam veteran in many Hollywood films is a troubled man, and a causality of the war (Sturken, Tangled Memories). Interpretations and representations of the Vietnam War vet as victim also came to be applied by Australians to their Vietnam War veterans. This is indicated by the figure of the disturbed Vietnam vet in both Vietnam and another Australian miniseries based on Vietnam, Sword of Honour. In these two miniseries, Australian Vietnam War vets need to come back from the difficult psychological and socially marginalised places they find themselves in. Nevertheless, these series did respect the experiences of the Australian soldiers who fought in Vietnam, while staying true to a general anti-war message.

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17 As Sturken (Tangled Memories 86) points out in the American context, narratives about the Vietnam War experience – such as those represented in popular Hollywood films – “weave themselves into the experiences and memories of those who took part in the [Vietnam] war and those who remember viewing news coverage of it”.
There was a perception by some Australians that *Cowra Breakout* disrespected and dishonoured the memory of Australian soldiers. At the time of its first screening there were protests from Australian groups unhappy with how the Australian guards were depicted. One supporting character in *Cowra* attracted particular condemnation. Graham Stewart from the Cowra branch of the Returned and Services League of Australia (the RSL) took particular exception to a scene in which a character called MacDonald is represented as being a coward, and who is killed by the escaping Japanese after the breakout (McNamara). According to Stewart, this scene “reflects poorly on the memory of an Australian lieutenant [also called MacDonald] who was killed during the [actual] escape” (McNamara).

For reasons of narrative development, fictionalising the ‘real’ MacDonald was deemed necessary by Kennedy Miller. It was not intended as a deliberate deception. This fictionalisation is defensible as a heritage interpretation, where it was less a matter of getting the precise details of the incident right and more about pointing towards a larger, more general truth. Stan Davidson knows the truth about (the fictionalised) MacDonald; at the start of the miniseries, Stan witnessed MacDonald’s running away when confronted by the Japanese enemy in the New Guinea jungles. According to Semmler, the Kennedy Miller writers effectively exploited “the simmering conflict [that grows] between Davidson and MacDonald” in the Cowra camp (Semmler).

The miniseries establishes the villainy and incompetence of some Australian soldiers and some Japanese soldiers. In the series, MacDonald has his fictional Japanese counterpart, Shimoyama. At the same time as the Stan Davidson-MacDonald rift is developing, a parallel rift opens between a new Japanese arrival – Shimoyama – and Junji Hyashi. Kennedy Miller makes the most out of this tension between the Japanese (Semmler). Shimoyama stirs his fellow prisoners to revolt and to “die a glorious death”, arguing successfully against Junji Hyashi, who is for life and a future. Just as in the *Vietnam* miniseries, there are heroes and villains on both sides.

In an effort to neutralise Australian popular memory hostile to negative representations of the Australian soldier, *Cowra’s* co-producer Terry Hayes countered by universalising the experience of being a soldier:

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Cowra’s fictionalises the Australian soldier Lieutenant MacDonald. He is represented as cowardly, incompetent, and brutal. According to Steward, this denigrated the Anzac spirit while doing an injustice to the real Lieutenant Edward MacDonald, who did not commit any of the actions represented in the miniseries. In the miniseries, MacDonald survives a Japanese ambush in New Guinea by running away from battle. Later he is promoted and decorated for bravery and is sent to Cowra as an administrative officer, now a captain with an ill-gotten Military Cross, even though he had run and hidden from the enemy. In one scene at Cowra, he is shown being brutal towards a vulnerable Japanese prisoner.
In every army you get good and bad soldiers. They must have been afraid at times, they would have gone troppo [mad] if they didn’t feel anything, but they kept on and that made them extraordinary. In most instances they acquitted themselves well, but they weren’t all heroes. We are trying to show the Australians and the Japanese in some totality. (Hayes quoted in McNamara)

In this interview for the Australian media, Hayes also pointed out that “[e]ach side did terrible things to the other. We could have made a series that reinforced the legend of the bronzed Anzac, but we wanted to show them all – Japanese and Australians – as humans with all the permutations” (quoted in McNamara). Humanising characters from both sides of a conflict is also evident in the Vietnam miniseries.

According to Vietnam’s co-director Chris Noonan, the televisual style and structure of the Vietnam miniseries deliberately “look[ed] beyond the surface of enemies and goodies – beyond good and bad, right and wrong. . . . We’re telling the stories of people, of individuals” (quoted in Glover, Vietnam). Lead actress in the Vietnam series, Pauline Chan, continued this line of thought when she claimed “[t]here was cruelty and nastiness from both sides. You can’t say one is evil and the other good. The truth is the truth” (quoted in B. McGregor). In addition, Noonan explained that in the Vietnam miniseries, “[w]e’re not portraying the Viet Cong as bold, glorious, or ideologically-sound . . . There is no shortage of injustices shown by them” (quoted in B. McGregor).

With Australia’s Vietnam veterans finally being ‘welcomed home’ in 1987, it is unlikely Kennedy Miller would have contemplated representing a possible war crime committed by Australian forces even though, according to the logic of the miniseries, this could have occurred. Given revelations about war crimes committed by American troops against Vietnamese civilians, such as the 1968 My Lai massacre (officially an ‘incident’), it was less problematic in the Australian context to indicate that it was the Americans who had committed war crimes. Nevertheless, there was acknowledgement that Kennedy Miller's Vietnam was important “in resuscitating this issue [of war crimes] – though the text is by no means consistent” on this (P. McGregor, Kennedy Miller 39; P. McGregor, Cultural Battles 48).

The Vietnam miniseries had an additional complication: part of the Australian audience for the series included South Vietnamese refugees. Large numbers of Vietnamese settled in Australia after the Vietnam War, while this did not happen with the Japanese at the end of the Second World War. At the time the miniseries was first broadcast, Vietnamese refugees voiced their concerns. Therefore, even if it remains in the background, any post-Vietnam War re-engagement with Australia’s Vietnam wartime experiences inevitably raises the issue of the thousands of refugees
from South Vietnam who came to Australia over the 1970s and 1980s, and who were largely opposed to and victims of the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese (Curthoys, *Vietnam* 131). As Vietnamese refugees became part of the social and cultural fabric of Australia, their experiences in the War were gradually integrated into the cultural memory, collective story, and heritage of the Australian nation.

**Reconciliation and Transformation**

In both miniseries a constructive engagement with Australia’s Asian Others is sought at the level of a common recognition of a shared human condition. This is a more universal appeal, although in Kennedy Miller estimations, it still contributes to Australia’s national story. Both miniseries also articulated, and in doing so supported, a position being developed in 1980s Australia by policy makers, intellectuals, and ethnic community spokespersons where cultural differences and similarities could be simultaneously acknowledged. The two miniseries exemplify this notion: they make room for and accommodate cultural difference between nations and nationals by demonstrating the capacity of honourable individuals to form respectful, and indeed close, cross-cultural friendships and even loving marriages.

The intent of Australia’s domestic multicultural political agenda was to foster greater cultural and ethnic inclusivity, and to end the legacies and remaining vestiges of the White Australia policy – a policy that had historically limited and at times excluded Asian migration. At the same time, Australia was also seeking closer and deeper relations with Asia by forging closer economic and more extensive cultural ties with Asian countries. Even in the *Vietnam* miniseries, with its main concern being the changes taking place in Australian society over the 1960s and 1970s, Australian-Asian cross-cultural encounters are represented. Such representations were made in this miniseries alongside its predominant concern with how a politically and socially divided Australian society could reconcile itself to its now ethnically diverse people and their different cultural heritages.

This *multicultural* aspect of *Vietnam* occurs through two characters: the Hungarian-Australian Serge, and the Vietnamese woman Le once she settles in Australia. Even though Serge and Le function as helpers to facilitate the ongoing journeys of reconciliation and transformation taken by

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19 Although Australia was not the only country to accept Vietnamese refugees in large numbers, the post-War exodus of Indochinese refugees to Australia had a more significant public presence on Australia because of its larger proportional impact than in the United States, Canada, France, or Britain (Board of Studies NSW).
members of the Goddard family, both ensure that a crucial motivator behind this familial reconciliation is Australia’s multicultural character.

Le has already been discussed at some length in this chapter. However, before considering the character of Serge, it should briefly be noted that while the primary focus of the Vietnam miniseries is not on Vietnamese integration into an evolving Australian multicultural society, the series does provide a representation of how the Vietnamese – once in Australia – are contributing to Australia’s collective heritage. It may indeed be the case that, as MacLennan (Cultural 64) suggests, no Vietnamese character is given an opportunity to explain all their sacrifice and heroism. But when, at the end of the miniseries, Le talks to Phil about her rape and about her friend Lien, Australian audiences are provided with some awareness that Vietnamese refugees in Australia not only have another cultural and heritage tradition, but also a story with which all viewers can identify. Kennedy Miller's Vietnam does acknowledge some Vietnamese points-of-view, even if this is not done as extensively as it is for the Japanese in Cowra Breakout (P. McGregor, Kennedy Miller 39; P. McGregor, Cultural Battles, 49). The clash of cultures between Australians and Asians in the Vietnam miniseries is therefore more diffused than in Cowra.

When Le marries Laurie Fellows in Australia their union maps well across the multicultural agenda being developed in the 1980s. Australians, however, are represented as being slow to accommodate Vietnamese migrants and to recognise and value them as people. Le serves to highlight the cultural gap between her Vietnamese wartime experiences and ancestral cultural heritage, and the complacency of her new Australian in-laws and friends who exhibit little understanding and willingness to comprehend. Since large numbers of Japanese – apart from a few Japanese war brides – did not migrate to Australia after the Second World War, the engagement between post-war Australia and Japan remained at the level of economic, business, and political partnerships. This suggests why cultural contacts in the Cowra Breakout series remain as largely cross-cultural rather than multicultural encounters.

Returning to Vietnam: the ‘multicultural’ character of Serge is clearly representative of post-World War Two European migration to Australia. He is introduced early in the miniseries when he is shown

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20 The Vietnam miniseries also provides representations and interpretations of some of the ‘realities’ faced by the Vietnamese – seemingly endless wars in Vietnam, ongoing political and religious persecutions, ethnic cleansings, abject poverty, human degradation, and traumatic cultural shocks (see P. Bell, Remembering).

21 This difference can be seen in the recruiting practices for the miniseries. When Kennedy Miller sought authenticity for its Vietnamese scenes, it called on the large Vietnamese refugee community resident in Australia. While for Cowra, there was no equivalent Japanese migrant community to call upon. Many of the Japanese extras in Cowra were in Australia on working visas (Day) with more extras recruited in Japan. Unlike Vietnam all the main Japanese actors were recruited in Japan.
to be saving money so he can send himself off to the University of Sydney to study economics. His Hungarian father, an engineer before coming to Australia, is ‘ethnically marked’ by his accent. He pronounces his son's name (Serge) as ‘Sur-gay’ whereas the Goddards pronounce it as ‘Surge’. Serge’s father tells Megan Goddard that "Serge is Australian ... I never learned how to be an Australian". After he is introduced at the start of the series to establish Serge’s ethnic heritage, Serge’s father does not appear again.

Although there is an emphasis on Serge’s ethnic background early in the first episode, this is not referred to at any other point in the narrative. Unlike his father, Serge has already been ‘transformed’ into an Australian, just as migration had transformed Australia into a multicultural society. Early in the miniseries, as Megan (Phil’s sister) begins her relationship with Serge, when her father mouths paternalist platitudes about migrants building the country he is rebuked by his daughter. For narrative purposes, Serge is an opponent of conscription. This characterisation of Serge is, in part, based on the experiences of Australian draft resister Michael Matteson (P. McGregor, Kennedy Miller 39). Although Serge is imprisoned for draft resistance, at the end of the miniseries he is released (into the waiting arms of Megan) after the Labor government comes into office in 1972. Present at both the start and end of the miniseries, Serge is integrated into the Goddard family via his on-again, off-again, then on-again relationship with Megan.

The Goddard family’s journey with Serge over the duration of the miniseries – from the outsider known through political platitudes to the insider known as a person and friend – is a metonym for the new multicultural Australia that emerges in the 1980s. At the end of the series, as the partner of Megan, Serge is accepted into the Goddard family. The Vietnam series ends with the re-formation of the Goddard family and, analogously, the reconciliation of an Australia that can now productively come to terms the Vietnam War and its human costs. This is indicative of the principal conflict in the Vietnam miniseries: it is not Australia’s battles in Vietnam itself but a more internal intra-cultural and societal clash of values that is the concern of the series As Peter McGregor writes “[a] fair reading of Kennedy Miller's Vietnam's mythic structure . . . emphasises a reconciliation of the Australian people with each other, and in particular with the Australian Vietnam Veterans” (P. McGregor, Kennedy Miller 40; P. McGregor, Cultural Battles 52).

By staging the growing reconciliation and then friendship between two former sworn enemies, Cowra Breakout was seemingly supporting new levels in Australia-Japan relations. The fictional and improbable wartime friendship between Stan and Junji makes each character representative of “the mythic imperative of coming to grips with former enemies” (Breen, Australian) and coming to
terms with dissonant heritage – both central to the heritage imagination of Kennedy Miller. At a time when Japan was Australia’s largest trading partner and a close ally, this miniseries’ reworking of a difficult past fitted the agenda of the political leadership of both countries to extend and develop closer cross-cultural relations. In this context the Stan-Junji friendship provided an exemplary model for cross-cultural communication between the two countries.

The 1980s was a period when Australia had an unequal economic relationship with Japan, where Japan was seen to dominate (P. Bell, Multicultural xii). This created a level of Australian antipathy towards the Japanese that had to be taken into account by Kennedy Miller while making The Cowra Breakout miniseries. Further, this resentment was supported by a history, the legacy of bitter Australian wartime experiences with Imperial Japanese Forces in the Pacific. Kennedy Miller sought to diffuse this resentment by challenging the conventional ‘good Australian versus bad Japanese’ dichotomy persistent since the Second World War. Cowra uses Junji to take Stan “on a journey from being a naive young Australian through the horrors of war, through intense hatred for the Japanese, to a recognition of their humanity and fundamental decency” (MacLennan, Australia 30). If Junji’s life had to be sacrificed in order for Stan to achieve revelation and transformation, then so be it.

Conclusion

In both productions, an Australian soldier is changed and transformed through his encounter and reconciliation with the Asian Other.22 Stan Davidson in Cowra Breakout and Phil Goddard in Vietnam undertake journeys which change and transform them. The extended form of the miniseries allows audiences to travel with these protagonists as they work themselves back from extreme places and states of mind. Both exhibit a deep sense of betrayal, alienation, and estrangement from the core beliefs of their culture and heritage. And both achieve a personal reconciliation with their culture and heritage through cross-cultural dialogue and understanding, and the healing of social divisions.

Interpreting the past through creative interpretive frameworks based on rapprochement strategies, Cowra Breakout and Vietnam both propose that the psychic and physical wounds carried by various Australian and Asian characters can be healed through appropriate forms of cross-cultural

22 Both the Australian and Japanese characters are presented as each group’s Other in the Cowra miniseries, to the extent that Kennedy Miller deliberately kept the Australian and Japanese actors apart in rehearsals only coming together on the set.
understanding. According to co-director Phil Noyce, the *Cowra* miniseries “is the story of two cultures who go to war against each other, Australians and Japanese, knowing very little about each other, and the series tries to show – tried to allow the audience to see – how tragedy could have been avoided if we knew more about each other” (quoted in Glover, *Long Night*). To encourage a healing process to begin, trusting relationships between individuals need to be established.

Although Cowra remains a small town in New South Wales, its townspeople have achieved their own version of *rapprochement* with the Japanese and the wartime breakout; the breakout long had been memorialised in the town. In 2004, the 60th anniversary of the breakout was commemorated at two significant landmarks in Cowra: its Japanese War Cemetery – the only one to be preserved in Australia – and its Japanese Garden and Cultural Centre (Hewitt).

This chapter’s examination of *The Cowra Breakout* and *Vietnam* highlights some of the difficulties encountered when interpreting and representing the cultures and heritages of Asians from within a traditional Australian cultural framework. As has been observed in this chapter, the Kennedy Miller production house deliberately broke with this tradition. Because of their challenging and often provocative re-interpretations of Australian heritage and history, both *Cowra* and *Vietnam* necessitated *rapprochement* approaches.

By the time the 1980s drew to a close, and with the start of a new decade, Australian historical miniseries were being created within a public culture where respect for the heritages and experiences of cultural and ethnic communities was now expected nationally – as well as internationally. In a period where cultural moorings had moved, a more internationally-oriented heritage storytelling seemed to be required. This sets the stage for the two 1990s miniseries examined in the next chapter: *The Leaving of Liverpool* and *Bordertown*.

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23 The Japanese soldiers in Cowra are positioned as victims of both Australia and of their own country. The final scenes in Cowra that culminate in Junji’s death expose the injustices heaped on the Japanese prisoners by Australia – that so many prisoners died at Cowra, that their prison (and graves) were in ruins for years following the end of the Second World War. The final indignity awaiting the prisoners is the unfairness shown them by their own country when many Japanese prisoners-of-war were not given recognition (and hence sympathy and compensation) due to the Japanese cultural values at that time.
NEGOTIATING AUTHENTICITY:
The Endorsed and Contested Heritage of *The Leaving of Liverpool* and *Bordertown*

Introduction

This chapter is concerned with the impact of controversial public issues and themes for the heritage values and practices of the historical miniseries *The Leaving of Liverpool* (1992) and *Bordertown* (1995). With the same creative team behind each miniseries comparisons made between them in the mid-90s became part of the public debate over the limits of heritage. Though both miniseries were very different in conception and purpose, together they indicate how the form and mode of address of earlier miniseries were modified to extend the creative possibilities offered by the miniseries form in what could be regarded as a mature phase in the development of the Australian historical miniseries. These new ventures into creativity were not without their cost: when it came to interpreting and representing past events as heritage, each miniseries was controversial in a different way. Consequently, the alternative creative styles adopted by each production and the different reception each was afforded makes them ideal objects for consideration as works with heritage value, and worthy of cultural preservation and memorialisation.

The divergent public reactions to each miniseries demonstrates that it is quite possible for significance assessments made by the viewing public to align with the cultural interpretive framework adopted by the miniseries creators. However, at other times there can be a major misalignment between the two. The differing evaluations of heritage value help point out how the sociocultural significance of a miniseries might be assessed independently of its aesthetic appeal and televisual style, and vice versa.

Although both miniseries came from the same creative team (producer Steve Knapman and writers John Alsop and Sue Smith), the cultural interpretive frameworks adopted for each were very dissimilar. By the early 1990s, consensus had been reached that Australian stories inspired by migrant perspectives and history needed to be respectful of that experience in particular ways. There was now an acceptance that the heritages of different cultural groups had contributed to Australia’s culture and history. With this consensus now firmly established, increasing attention
was paid to darker aspects of Australia’s history. This required a modification of the *renouvellement* and *rapprochement* approaches developed for the miniseries examined in the previous two chapters.

In the 1990s, it was possible to interpret the dissonant heritage of one cultural group as being the dissonant heritage of all groups forming the Australian national polity. A *renouvellement* strategy based on representing the *victimhood* of child migrants was successful in *Leaving of Liverpool*. In conjunction with this redefined *renouvellement* approach, *Leaving* utilised a *rapprochement* strategy that universalised the experience of victimhood so all Australians could identify with the plight of the child victims.

These *renouvellement* and *rapprochement* strategies were brought together in *Leaving of Liverpool* through a cultural interpretive framework with a firm foundation in social realism. This framework won the acceptance of Australian audiences and critics, with the miniseries being publically endorsed and praised. However, when the creators of *Leaving of Liverpool* turned their hand to interpreting and representing a different kind of migrant experience in *Bordertown*, they adopted a cultural interpretive framework with a magical realist overlay that perplexed and confounded audiences and critics alike. Despite their differences in orientation and public reception, both *Leaving of Liverpool* and *Bordertown* were swept up in broader public culture debates underway in Australia from the mid-1980s and well into 1990s over migration and multiculturalism.

While both miniseries extended the *renouvellement* and *rapprochement* strategies of earlier 1980s miniseries, evaluating their differing cultural interpretive frameworks turns on considerations of their style – social realism or magical realism. Therefore, this chapter considers *Leaving of Liverpool*’s social realist style and its contribution to an ‘authentic’ representation of the treatment children received during and after they were transported from Britain to Australia. An examination of *Bordertown* considers the intent behind adapting a magic realist style to interpret and represent the lives of refugees and displaced persons housed in an Australian migrant camp.

The public importance of migrant experiences and histories at this time was attested to by the continuous publication of memoirs, collections of oral histories and personal testimonies, exhibitions, and the building of museums dedicated to the migrant experience (particularly the Migration Museum in Adelaide in 1986, and the Immigration Museum established in Melbourne in 1998).1 It was the norm for most Australian films and television programs on migrant heritage

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1 In 2011 this museum staged an international exhibition on the operation of the child migration scheme between Britain and its dominions of Canada, Australia, and New Zealand.
since the 1980s to be social realist productions. In film and television, social realism in Australia
tended to follow the British example and emphasise verisimilitude and content, as well as a 'surface
realism' of place and landscape inhabited by characters, suggesting a direct link between place and
person (Lay 21-22). Often there is a critical edge to social realism, with social commentary on the
plight of the disadvantaged. The preference of content over style might be considered 'naturalism'
by some (Lay 21). Social realism’s reliance on direct and sourced testimony is shared across various
media, although the medium has an impact on the 'form' of social realism (Lay 20). As early as
1984, Sophia Turkiewicz’s feature film *Silver City* had cinematically interpreted the experiences of
Polish migrants in Australian resettlement camps immediately following the Second World War.
This provided a screen template for a popular cultural history from below. The film is also
indicative of larger cultural, social, and political concerns in Australian public culture over the
1980s and 1990s.2

Regardless of how migrants arrived in Australia, film and television productions and related
publications and exhibits have respected migrant experiences. This attests to the importance placed
on the sensitivities associated with post-War migrant experiences, just as it points to an Australian
public culture being reshaped by multiculturalism. The public endorsement of the migrant and the
migration experience as being intrinsic to Australia’s socio-cultural history and formations also
required Australians come to terms with some of the darker contours of that migration, such as the
mistreatment of migrants and the racism directed towards them. The indifference, xenophobia, and
incomprehension of many sections of the Australian population towards migrants came under
scrutiny.

The ‘story of Australia’ as being a society evolving from migrants and their descendants had
become highly politicised through public recognition that these were ‘stories of migration’. This
encouraged recognition that some of these stories had darker elements. When the experience of
migration is interpreted so as to identify ‘victims’, then there is also a need to identify the
‘victimisers’. *Leaving of Liverpool* was praised for its representations of victims and their
victimisers while *Bordertown* never achieved this level of commendation.

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2 Diane Armstrong published *Mosaic: A Chronicle of Five Generations* in 1998 about her Polish Jewish family history
leading into and subsequent upon the Holocaust in Australia, the United States, and Europe. She followed this up in 2005 with a book
charting the trajectory in Australia and New Zealand of those who had shared the migration boat to Australia with her in *Voyage of
Their Life*. In 2007 Raimond Gaita published *Romulus, My Father* about his family’s post-war flight to Australia from Yugoslavia
and the difficulties associated with beginning a new life in Australia.
The creators of both miniseries also had to contend with expectations held by the Australian television and film industry, as well as by Australian audiences, that *Australian* historical miniseries should offer interpretations of the national story not covered in earlier miniseries. Generally speaking, each new historical miniseries over the 1980s and 1990s tended to interpret and represent new material about the past, with its authenticity being closely connected with perceptions of it tilling new ground. *The Leaving of Liverpool* is a classic case in point. It was inspired by material not covered previously in a miniseries. It was lauded for providing an authentic and often historically verifiable interpretation of a particular aspect of Australia’s dissonant heritage, and it represented the predatory exploitation of powerless children in a highly evocative and emotional style.³

However, there had been an earlier feature film set in a refugee camp (*Silver City*, 1984) and a miniseries set in a detention camp (*The Dunera Boys* in 1985). *Bordertown* therefore needed to take its distance from these earlier productions. *Silver City* and *Dunera Boys* had provided respectful treatments and insights into the plight of wartime European displaced persons, with their cultural interpretive frameworks supported by a social realist-naturalist style of storytelling. They also prepared the way for public discussion about the experiences of those displaced Europeans arriving in Australia after the War. Such discussions included an increasing awareness of the difficulties these migrants faced when negotiating a new country and a new language; when dealing with the trauma of war, displacement, and an accompanying sense of loss; and when confronted with the discrimination they initially endured in Australia as ‘new Australians’. *Bordertown* ostensibly represented some similar issues, but it broke away from the previous and predominant social realist moorings to present its story.

Therefore, the two miniseries act as limit cases of different kinds. *The Leaving of Liverpool*’s significance lies in its social realist, historically authenticated and endorsed representation of dissonant heritage. Its often disturbing depiction of a grim, sometimes tragic, and deeply problematic chapter in Australian history moved audiences to seek political redress for the ‘victims’ of child migration. In contrast, *Bordertown*’s claim as a significant cultural production lies primarily in its experimentation with the form of the miniseries as an artistic mode of storytelling. While audiences did not accept that these artistic qualities authenticated the migrant experience, within the terms advanced in this thesis *Bordertown* is still a significant cultural item because of its textual experimentation. As a consequence, it occupies an important place in the broader history of Australian television. It is also significant for the controversy it generated over how the Australian

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³ This exploitation of children is signalled at the start of the miniseries, when both boys and girls are beaten into submission. Their voices are literally silenced before they embark on their journey to Australia. They are shown to be powerless and at the mercy of those in charge.
experience of migrants generally and of the displaced person experience in particular might best be imagined and represented. This combination of artistic innovation and public controversy over representation ensures the miniseries remains worthy of ongoing consideration as a significant cultural artefact.

_The Leaving of Liverpool_, for its part, continues to be valued as a miniseries that did everything expected of a consciousness-raising ‘issues’ production. Based on the testimony of survivors, it revealed the contentious administration of child migrant schemes by both British and Australian authorities. Given the harrowing nature of the testimony provided by many child migrants, the creators of _Leaving of Liverpool_ felt obliged to both respect this testimony and do justice to the traumas experienced by the children. Steve Knapman, the producer of the miniseries, acknowledged it to be such a “miserable story” that it needed to be made in a social realist style: it “was a piece of history that couldn't be told any other way” (Williams, _Migrants_).

The endorsement of _Leaving of Liverpool_ contrasts strongly with the ambivalence, derision, and contestation accompanying _Bordertown_’s broadcast. Although it represented the post-War migrant experiences of displaced European refugees in a migrant camp, its creators never intended the series to be an historical look at what life was like for new arrivals in Australia before being settled in towns around the country. Rather, it was intended to be “a drama about a group of people who happen to be gathered together” in a strange place (Williams, _Migrants_). The series therefore would be a collection of quirky stories set in a relatively ‘closed village’ more than being a representative multicultural narrative. Sue Smith, one of _Bordertown_’s scriptwriters, clearly indicated this when she claimed the miniseries was “not the ABC’s ‘multicultural statement’” (Freeman, _Bordertown_). Consequently it was possible to develop a cultural interpretive framework that accommodated peculiar characters and their interactions in a liminal and isolated setting in the outback where fantastic events could happen.

The creators of _Bordertown_ were deliberately experimenting with the form and style of the miniseries. Magical realism, very unusual for an Australian miniseries of the time, was not that unusual in a wider international context. While this point is developed later in this chapter, it is important to note here that even though _Bordertown_’s production strategy and creative interpretive framework was opposite to that of _Leaving of Liverpool_, the public responses to _Bordertown_ were structured according to the terms, norms, and circumstances that were very much a part of _Leaving_’s production and public reception. Thus the treatment of the migrant experience in
*Bordertown* was regarded as being insufficiently respectful to the migrants and to their experience of dislocation and distress.

*Leaving of Liverpool* was designed to impact on the lives of people in Australia and the United Kingdom. The miniseries was a coproduction between the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) and the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). This combination of partners ensured that its issues and public implications were explored thoroughly in both Australia and the United Kingdom. Each country’s public broadcaster used its considerable resources to cross-promote the series through a steady stream of news and current affairs stories on the topic of and issues associated with child migration (Child Migration Trust; Fink). Accordingly, when the series was broadcast, it would function as a vehicle to increase public awareness about the extent and character of the child migration scheme to Australia. Public controversy over the issues it raised ensured the series would be regarded as a significant, even monumental, achievement.

Public testimony recorded prior to and after the broadcast of the miniseries authenticated its often confronting depictions of young children being abused by both agencies and individuals. Its status as a consciousness-raising exercise was confirmed when the weight of the miniseries and public survivor testimony forced political leaders in Australia and the United Kingdom to condemn the suffering many children endured under the child migration scheme. Agencies involved in child migration felt the need to offer public apologies and to compensate the victims.

The miniseries interprets the abuse of the children as being the result of both British and Australian governments failing to adequately supervise, investigate complaints, or monitor the institutions the children were placed in. Controversially, however, the creators of the miniseries chose to emphasise survivor testimony that directed attention towards the abusive conduct of a Roman Catholic religious order, the Christian Brothers. The Christian Brothers were responsible for the education of young migrant (mostly Catholic) boys and for their upbringing and housing in boarding farm schools. *Leaving of Liverpool* unequivocally showed members of the Brothers as horrendously violating the innocence of their charges.

Given *Leaving’s* public reception, it was a reasonable expectation of audiences that *Bordertown* could likewise be judged as credible on the basis of similar televisual representations of ‘victims’. These representations and the televisual techniques and style used to create them had authenticated and endorsed the published testimony behind much of *Leaving’s* interpretations of the child migrant experience. In being not similarly bound to already-published testimony, *Bordertown* was
somewhat at odds with prevailing expectations that its televisual representations of life inside a migrant camp should have the endorsement of migrants and support agencies. These expectations and assumptions stem from the ‘protocols of authenticity’ that had developed around both miniseries in advance of their screening.

Each miniseries ventured different claims on authenticity: historically verifiable authenticity in *The Leaving of Liverpool* and artistic authenticity in *Bordertown*. At a particular point in time within a given community, judgements are made about what are regarded to be ‘authentic’ interpretations and representations of past events. Some interpretations and representations will be endorsed for their authenticity, while others will be contested. Taken together, these endorsements and disapprovals map out the ‘protocols’ for evaluating authenticity; in this case, the ‘protocols’ provide a means of evaluating the authenticity of how the past is actualized in a historical miniseries. The public endorsement of *The Leaving of Liverpool* was due to the miniseries meeting these ‘protocols’, while the poor audience response towards *Bordertown* was largely due to this miniseries going beyond such ‘protocols’. To appreciate the influence of these protocols on both miniseries, the first step is to outline the nature of the endorsed (historical) authenticity of *The Leaving of Liverpool*, and compare it to the contested (artistic) authenticity of *Bordertown*.

**Historical Authenticity and Artistic Authenticity**

*The Leaving of Liverpool* and *Bordertown* mark out the boundaries of acceptable interpretations and representations of the past held by Australians in the first half of the 1990s. Cultural artefacts, and heritage performances and displays, appear to be authentic to audiences not because they are inherently so, but because their genuineness is constructed by beliefs, perspectives, or powers (Wang; Reisinger and Steiner).

*The Leaving of Liverpool* operated on two levels of authenticity: as an authentic cultural artefact and as a cultural work authenticating the content of the series by referencing historically verifiable material. This material was then authentically ‘translated’ to the screen – authentically actualized (a concept introduced in Chapter Two) – though a social realist style and naturalist form of television production. The verifiable authenticity of much that is represented in *Leaving of Liverpool* affirmed the traumatic experiences and suffering of children transported to Australia. The plight of the child migrants was already on the public record prior to making the miniseries. Claims made and represented in *Leaving of Liverpool* fitted this public record and amplified it.
Bordertown did not seek to represent, let alone authenticate, traumas associated with being a Displaced Person in a new land on the other side of the world. Working with a different history and a different set of entailments to the earlier 1992 Leaving of Liverpool, the 1995 Bordertown miniseries sought a new angle and interpretive framework to imagine the migrant camp experience. Co-writer John Alsop’s justification for Bordertown’s creative team adopting magic realism was that they thought it would heighten rather than diminish ‘naturalist television’, while still offering some generalised interpretations of the migrant experience. In the end, the miniseries did – unintentionally – provoke awareness of the distress and anguish of the migrant experience as a result of public criticism.

The Leaving of Liverpool is a history from below, telling a story that had been omitted for decades from Australia’s official history, but once told was endorsed by public testimony and private research. Given that the traumatic testimony of child migrants was the inspiration for the miniseries, the production necessarily became part of a larger tapestry of stories and activism revealing the injustices associated with the child migration scheme. The creators of The Leaving of Liverpool based their miniseries on the research undertaken by Margaret Humphreys, then a social worker from Nottingham in England. She raised concerns about the impact on the children and their families of child migration to Australia during the post-war period. Her concerns developed into a campaign waged in both Australian and Britain, a campaign taken up by the media in both countries. The Australian and British media developed a keen interest in the issue of government-sanctioned child migration through television documentaries, books, petitions, and other media forms. The miniseries clearly augmented this public debate providing it with a narrative image. Consequently, the miniseries was created and then broadcast in a climate of high emotion and intense political dispute generated by groups such as the Child Migrants Trust.

There were other media texts on the subject. A television documentary Lost Children of the Empire was broadcast in 1989 in Australia and the United Kingdom. A 1990 book with the same title included a brief historical account of child migration as well as an oral history. Lost Children of the Empire in both media was the direct inspiration for 1992’s Leaving of Liverpool miniseries (Fink 858 & Child Migrants Trust). Margaret Humphrey’s association with and endorsement of the miniseries enhanced perceptions of it being an authoritative and authentic dramatic representation

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4 Humphreys was contacted in 1986 by a former child migrant looking for information about her family. As a result, during the late 1980s and early 1990s, Humphreys spent considerable time in Australia meeting former child migrants and recording their experiences. She founded the Child Migrants Trust, writing about her experiences of working with some of Britain’s child migrants and lobbying on their behalf in her book Empty Cradles (published in 1994). Humphreys was determined “to lift the lid on one of the most appalling and shameful pieces of recent British and Australian history” (quoted in Fink 858).
and interpretation of the traumas of child migration (Fink 857). Thus when Leaving of Liverpool did screen, claims of suffering and abuse made by former child-migrants were no longer a matter of dispute. The child migrants were already in the process of being perceived as victims of a system that separated siblings from each other, and in many cases from their parents. The child migrants were becoming known as another ‘stolen generation’ since the children did not ask to be ‘saved’ or to be sent to the other side of the world (Fink 862). Their plight would be compared to the ‘stolen generation’ of Aboriginal children separated from their parents as a result of policies and initiatives of Australian religious groups, politicians, and bureaucrats.

Once in Australia, many of the British children (like their Aboriginal counterparts) lived in geographical and social isolation, leaving them unprepared to integrate effectively into adult life and into society at large (UK Department of Health 1998, quoted in Fink 859). The experiences and often painful memories of being a child migrant were endorsed through public acceptance that “vulnerable children were not adequately safeguarded from abuse, deception, and ill treatment during their childhood or provided with adequate explanations or services as adults” (Child Migrants Trust Ch.2).

The Leaving of Liverpool initially positions both the British authorities and the children of working-class Irish Catholics who had settled in England in an earlier generation, within a discourse of British imperialism. The miniseries represents the scheme as the transportation of these children in order further the ‘White’ colonisation of the Empire’s dominions. Children transported to Australia under the child migration scheme were literally thought of by Australian politicians at the time as “bricks for Empire building”. These children would strengthen Australia's traditional close ties with the Empire or, more specifically, with the United Kingdom (Child Migrants Trust Ch.2). But by the 1980s, the White Australia policy had become scandalous; it was now a stain on Australia’s history and was a part of the nation’s dissonant heritage.

The creators of Leaving of Liverpool necessarily had to maintain the position taken by the Child Migrants Trust: “Australia should not have used [these] unaccompanied, vulnerable children to boost its population and economy in the post-war period. Australia should not have asked and the United Kingdom should not have agreed to send child migrants” (Child Migrants Trust Ch.2). Child migration schemes were rationalised as attempts to ‘save’ children from their poor and

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5 Cunningham and Miller (142) deliberately make thematic links between the ‘forced’ migration of these children and its “parallels . . . [with] the originating acts of British colonialism and its accompanying convict ‘export’ [to Australia, parallels that] are impossible to miss” (142). This is suggestive of how the miniseries tapped into and could be seen as a more contemporary reworking of Australia’s founding convict settlement story.
impoverished backgrounds (Fink). The children, many of them Catholic, were transported to Australia from their homes in British urban environments. Many of the boys ended up in outback Western Australia. In this context *Leaving of Liverpool* counted its human cost, this time for vulnerable British and Irish children.

Interestingly, the idea for a *Bordertown* miniseries developed while research was being conducted for *The Leaving of Liverpool*. John Alsop had suggested to fellow writer Sue Smith that they could make a show based in a migrant camp (Williams, *Migrants*). This idea developed into a creative undertaking that, when it was viewed on television, attracted immediate attention. Following the broadcast of *Bordertown* in Australia, Freeman (*Bordertown*) claimed that, “the most startling difference” in *Bordertown* compared to earlier work by Sue Smith and John Alsop (*The Leaving of Liverpool* and *Brides of Christ*) “is the glittering touches of Latin Americanesque ‘magical realism’ that have crept into this outback migrant camp” (Freeman, *Bordertown*). A rationale provided by the creators of *Bordertown* was they thought magic realism would ramp up the story in both its intensity and audience engagement, According to Alsop,

> [t]he magical element was a way of sparkle-arkle-arkling up the basic story ... The magic is really a way of getting inside people’s heads, their way of seeing or an external visualisation of the way they are feeling about something. It also allowed us to do things you cannot normally do on television. We were clawing back some of the techniques used in cinema and theatre, like soliloquies and fairly long speeches. The visual element, or magical element, is a visual accompaniment to what is being said. So the magic papers over the joins between normal naturalist television and the heightened stuff”. (quoted in Freeman, *Bordertown*)

While Steve Knapman, the producer on both *Leaving of Liverpool* and *Bordertown*, realised that some ethnic groups and communities living in Australia would find the televisual style of *Bordertown* inappropriate and inaccessible, he regarded a social realist style as not being important for this production in the way it had been for *Leaving* (Williams, *Migrants*). Clearly, *Bordertown* was an artistic experiment, and those involved with its creation saw it as such. Ken Cameron, a director on *Bordertown*, claimed at the time that it was “quite unique. You can't compare it to anything we've ever done before in Australia. You have to compare it to the European models” (Williams, *Migrants*). For Knapman, the style of *Bordertown* was more important than the historical veracity of its content. Just as clearly, assumptions were being made about the willingness of Australian audiences to accept artistic experimentation in a television drama.

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6 *Brides of Christ* documented changes in Catholicism over the 1960s; the miniseries adopted a social realist style (Bertrand, *Borders* 191).
However, despite the media statements made by Bordertown’s creative team, the producers and ABC publicity may have inadvertently contributed to expectations that Bordertown would be similar in conception and execution to the earlier Leaving of Liverpool by not sufficiently referring to Bordertown’s differences. The ABC publicity machine promoted Bordertown on the basis that it was the work of the same creative team that had produced two successful earlier productions: Brides of Christ in 1991 and The Leaving of Liverpool in 1992. Just prior to ABC television broadcasting the first episode of Bordertown (on October 4, 1995), it was promoted as “a 10-part drama series from the creators of Brides of Christ and The Leaving of Liverpool” (Freeman, Bordertown).  

After audiences and critics were unable to establish stylistic connections between Bordertown and the earlier miniseries from the same creative team, public opinion quickly turned against Bordertown, then against its creators, and finally against the ABC itself. Even ‘traditional’ ABC audiences who might have approved of artistic experimentation forsook the miniseries. According to Bertrand, “[t]he traditional ABC high-culture audience, which might have coped with its magic realism, found its tastelessness unacceptable” (Borders 195). Most critics and viewers were on the whole “puzzled and confused by it” (Bertrand, Borders 194). Its artistic achievements went largely unrecognized, save for a handful of positive reviews. Over the duration of its broadcast, Bordertown’s experimentation with form and style provided an easy target for those claiming the producers and the ABC were grossly insensitive to the darker aspects of the migrant experience.

Nevertheless, Bordertown’s magic realist style was not something done ‘out of the blue’: Australian television was in conversation with programming styles and practices from other territories. Internationally, there had been experiments with the form and style of the miniseries. In the United Kingdom there was the precedent of earlier productions such as Pennies From Heaven (1978) and The Singing Detective (1986). Both television shows were notable examples of how the form and style of a miniseries might be adapted and updated. Pennies From Heaven was even set in the Depression, and so was very much about struggle, hardship, and making do, as it was about discrimination. Presumably, the creators of Bordertown felt the ‘imaginative leaps’ in their series would be judged to be just as respectful as the drama and dark fantasy of Pennies From Heaven was respectful of a past it represented as the nation’s heritage despite its unorthodox televisual style. In

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7 Just as they were encouraged to do, there is evidence that audiences did attempt to make their own connections and comparisons between the different productions. Public commentary and feedback also suggests that audiences expected Bordertown to adopt a similar realist style to The Leaving of Liverpool.
this context, *Bordertown’s* creative team were not being self-indulgent; nor were they merely experimenting with form and style on the basis of creating ‘art for art’s sake’.

As noted in this thesis, the ‘authentic’ need not be the same as the ‘real’ – authentically experiencing heritage does not entail subjectively experiencing the past lives of people who once lived; and that history is not the same as heritage. Therefore, creators of cultural works will imagine and create heritage stories in ways that differ from the interpretations made by those who may have experienced the events being represented. In addition, the heritage imagination of creative and artistically-inclined interpreters will result in interpretations and representations of the past that are different from professional historians and researchers. It should be remembered that both textual and filmic reconstructions of history and heritage are always interpretations, representations, and reconstructions (Turner, *Film* 131). Therefore, it is quite plausible that – at least in the early stages of its development – *Bordertown’s* production team did not foresee any problems in adapting a magical realist style to interpret and represent the lives of ordinary people in a miniseries.

In the Australia of the early 1990s, televisual interpretations and representations of the migrant experience and its connections to the nation’s cultural heritage were caught up in a politics of recognition, validation, and precedent. As a result, audiences felt entitled to expect a respectful treatment of the plight of wartime European displaced persons. It was not unreasonable for migrants, particularly those who had passed through the migrant camps, as well as the wider Australian community to make connections between the miniseries and what migrant’s experienced inside these camps. This had been the case with the respectful *Dunera Boys* miniseries. As Philip Adams points out, *Bordertown* had a lineage. He saw it taking up where Ben Lewin’s *The Dunera Boys* left off, “by depicting European manners and emotional extravagances in an arid Australian landscape, playing out the paradox in tin sheds and dusty spaces” (Adams, *Evil Union*). It is not surprising therefore that the visual style of the miniseries was contested on the basis that it did not accord with the testimony of migrants themselves.

Adams was one of the few critics who valued the artistic integrity of the miniseries. He appreciated the series had taken artistic “risks, freely borrowing from Italian opera or the magical realism of Fellini”. But despite being a strong supporter of the series, even Adams wondered if television (not just ABC television) was the place for such risk-taking. *Bordertown*, Philip Adams wrote, “is a curious hybrid, perhaps more appropriate to theatre than to TV” (Adams, *Evil Union*).
The strident negative reception of the miniseries in Australia paradoxically helps establish its ongoing heritage value and cultural significance. As a cultural artefact in its own right, Bordertown’s heritage value lies in a perceived negative – in the alternative way it proposes heritage can be imagined and represented. Bordertown is now a monument to the versatility of the form and style of the historical miniseries. The centrality of testimony to Australian public culture and its monumentalising of the migrant experience suggest why The Leaving of Liverpool is still acclaimed. The success of Leaving points to continuing structural impediments for those who would treat migrant history and the heritage of migrants in the fashion Bordertown did. Assessed according to criteria foregrounding the authenticity of trauma and victimisation, Bordertown will always be a pale successor to Leaving of Liverpool.

The Leaving of Liverpool and Bordertown were conceived, developed, and produced by a production team with a formidable reputation for and commitment to producing successful ‘quality’ Australian drama. Critical responses to Bordertown tended to make connections between ‘quality’ drama, risk-taking in the style of a television show, and the artistic ambitions of miniseries creators. Leaving and Bordertown therefore provide a vantage point on the perceptions held by Australians in the first half of the 1990s about what was ‘quality’ television drama and what were its limits. The miniseries highlight the role the ABC played at this time in promoting ‘quality’ television productions, in taking risks, and in setting new artistic benchmarks.

Quality Drama and ‘Authentic Victimhood’

Among the many virtues attributed to The Leaving of Liverpool was of it being a prime example of high ‘quality’ Australian drama, as well as being a socially virtuous production authentically interpreting and representing the victimisation and brutalisation of child migrants. Its social realist style contributed to perceptions that the miniseries respected the experiences of a powerless and vulnerable group. The ‘quality’ of Bordertown was sought by its creators and the ABC on a different basis: in its artistic and experimental nature as a production.

The ABC took risks with its commissioning of both miniseries: with content in The Leaving of Liverpool and with style in Bordertown. As Australia’s non-commercial publically-funded television network, creativity and the need to produce programming that “inform[s] and entertain[s]” was part of the mandate of the ABC’s 1983 Charter (Australian Govt, ABC Act). Indeed, creativity contributed to perceptions of the ‘quality’ of Australian television drama. Support
for drama on the ABC intensified in 1987 with an initiative launched to increase the levels of Australian television drama on the public broadcaster (ABC, *History*). Costs of producing drama could be reduced by seeking co-production, co-financing, and pre-sale agreements wherever possible (ABC, *Annual Report*). There had always been an expectation by producers that the ABC would carve out a wider creative space for experimentation and risk-taking to signal ‘quality’. By the mid-1990s, even though budget cuts were being imposed on the ABC, the public broadcaster still had a charter to produce ‘quality’ drama, albeit at lower costs. Sue Smith argued that the ABC, as *the* public broadcaster, needed to take artistic risks, which she equated with ‘quality’ television drama (*Williams, Migrants*). This helps explain why *Bordertown*’s production team equated ‘quality’ drama with creative and artistic innovation and risk-taking.

Although the representation of child abuse and its associated trauma in *Leaving of Liverpool* was contentious, it was the artistic flourishes in *Bordertown* that brought into question the role of the ABC in funding experimental television drama with taxpayer money. ‘Art as quality’ was the basis of ABC publicity after broadcasting was underway when it positioned *Bordertown* in a quasi-auteurist fashion by noting the production’s ‘quality parentage’. The ‘auteurist’ line had been signalled in pre-broadcast media reviews and publicity interviews that highlighted the fact that the writers, Sue Smith and John Alsop, had spent many years developing the miniseries (*Williams, Migrants*). In a way that recalls Kennedy Miller’s earlier transition from painstaking historical reconstructions towards a more ‘emotionally’ defined authenticity in the melodrama of *Dirtwater Dynasty* (1988), the producers of *Bordertown* were similarly reworking their creative style, changing and adapting it experimentally as they went along.

With the producers of *Bordertown* understanding themselves to be creators of ‘quality’ television by re-inventing its terms and those of the historical miniseries itself, the issue became not so much whether *Bordertown* was or was not quality television, but rather the very terms of quality itself were questioned. Nevertheless, some reviewers insisted the problem with *Bordertown*’s style was that it hindered audience engagement with characters: “one of the Australian film industry’s top decision-makers” (not named by the journalist writing the article) was quoted as saying: “In the

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8 This might explain why there seemed to be little initial concern at the ABC and amongst its production staff that *Bordertown*’s form and style might alienate large segments of the audience. ABC management might have expected that the creative team that made *The Leaving of Liverpool* and *Brides of Christ* and had previously been so in tune with the public was unlikely to create a miniseries that alienated and offended audiences.

9 It was “written by John Alsop and Sue Smith, who penned *Brides of Christ* and *The Leaving of Liverpool*. Directed by Ken Cameron, one of Australia’s most experienced TV directors, and Ian Gilmour, and it was produced by Steve Knapman, who also produced *The Leaving of Liverpool*” (*Williams, Migrants*).
case of Bordertown we have a very worthy and socially relevant story about an important era in our [nation’s] history. . . . But it’s boring” (quoted in Warnerke).

Bordertown’s stylistic excesses seemed to many that it held migrant experiences up to ridicule. Yet there were a few critics such as Phillip Adams who appreciated this style as being another form and indicator of ‘quality’. Others who appreciated the series felt it extended how Australian history could be interpreted, and how the nation’s heritage could be imagined and depicted. But these critics constituted only one particular (and relatively very small) community of interest. Other much larger Australian audience communities of interest made their own negative assessments of the miniseries. The expectation was that Bordertown needed to acknowledge and respect personal testimony as had earlier ‘quality’ Australian television dramas from the ABC and the commercial stations, and as had been the case with Bordertown’s creative team when it made The Leaving of Liverpool.

Both miniseries were challenging in different ways. Leaving of Liverpool adopted a cultural interpretive framework with a foundation in social realism and used this to signify the ‘quality’ of the miniseries, and to be provocative and challenging. Televisual representations of vulnerable children had to be sensitive to the experience of child migrants while also being critical of the nation building and exclusionary policies underpinning the child migration scheme. As a result, Leaving of Liverpool weakened the more positive and uplifting nation-building narratives of earlier 1980s miniseries.

The story was stark enough. Children were transported from Britain to different corners of the British Empire (and its successor, the British Commonwealth). These ‘white’ children could be used as forced labour to build the edifices of Empire and the private interests of unscrupulous individuals. The opening scenes of Leaving of Liverpool also suggest a sub-theme based on poor Catholics and their position in the myth of Empire. The miniseries indicates that as a ‘victim of Empire’, the resentment one child migrant (Bertie) feels towards the British monarchy at the end of the miniseries is not surprising. Republican zeal is evident in Bertie's transformation from ‘starry-eyed Empire loyalist’ at the start of the series to imprisoned republican, incarcerated in the concluding stages of the series for his attempt to attack the procession of the visiting Queen Elizabeth II on her tour of Australia (Cunningham and Miller 142). The historical backdrop for this particular theme and for the questioning of monarchy was also a public concern in Australia during the first part of the 1990s – as demonstrated by the Australian republican debate and subsequent referendum.
The ratings success of the *Leaving* came as a surprise to many in the Australian television industry (Williams, *Migrants*). It indicates strongly that Australian audiences preferred their victims and victimisers to be clearly demarcated in television drama. While Lily is abused by individual Australian men, it was the victim-victimiser representations of the abuse experienced by the boys that attracted the most attention from viewers and critics. The abusers of the boys are identified as paedophiles belonging to the Christian Brothers. This was plausible given the revelations around the world in this period of systematic abuse of children – in orphanages, boarding schools and the like, by those in religious orders and communities – as the long silence about this kind of abuse, deviancy, and pathology was lifted.

Specific individual victimisers are identified. Abuse is represented as being due to the pathology of these individuals, with this pathology being given free reign by institutional, political, and governance structures which failed the victim. Hence the paradox of this (and other) miniseries in which events and actions are ‘personalised’. In apparently personalising these events and actions they seem at one level to depoliticise them, by turning them into so many individual instances of sadistic cruelty but, at another level, they point to systemic political and institutional failure and neglect where abuse becomes generalised and widespread, with more and more instances of individual sadism and cruelty being revealed.

Of course, not every child migrant was abused, assaulted, and victimised under the child migration scheme. David Hill, Director-General of the ABC at the time of *Bordertown*’s screening, was himself a child migrant and ‘a successful ex-Fairbridge Resident’ (UK Department of Health 1998, quoted in Fink 859). Nevertheless, such success stories were not represented in *Leaving of Liverpool* since it would have blurred the victim-victimiser division structuring the narrative. The creators of the series chose to interpret and represent other facts.

The story of victimhood being told in *Leaving* was further authenticated by public service announcements at the conclusion of the miniseries. These announcements detailed the Australian organisations viewers could contact if they wanted more information about family members or information about support services. Though not part of the narrative proper, the announcements contributed to perceptions of the authenticity and integrity of the story, the implication being that Australia was acknowledging a wrong had been perpetrated on child migrants transported from
England in the 1950s. However, there was little suggestion that Australian governments were accepting responsibility for their own part in the migration scheme.  

Although surviving the deprivations of war was part of Bordertown’s backstory, the miniseries did not identify any victims resulting from a post-War migration scheme that sent displaced persons to Australia to begin a new life. Such a scheme represented another means of populating Australia with Europeans (Sluga 1). But there were no stories of horrendous personal abuse under this scheme as there were with the child migration scheme. Leaving of Liverpool was profoundly connected to the children’s testimonies of victimhood provided by them as adults. But with no testimonies from migrants who went through the resettlement camps that they suffered physical abuse, the creators of Bordertown did not need to find ‘victims’.

Most Displaced Persons brought to Australia from Europe after the Second World War were housed in camps (also called ‘resettlement’ or ‘reception’ camps) like Bonegilla, outside Albury in New South Wales. During the period of official multiculturalism in the 1980s, the role of such camps in shaping the nature of the Australian ‘migrant experience’ was being underplayed and even forgotten as an embarrassment (Sluga x). As Sluga (x) has observed, the period in which Bonegilla operated was a part of the assimilationist period of Australia’s immigration history when migrants were expected to adapt to Australia’s language, culture, and customs by shedding their own cultural heritage. By the end of the 1980s, “from the perspective of a new decade of immigration policy ‘enlightened’ by the tenets of multiculturalism”, it became impossible not to be critical of Bonegilla (Sluga xi).

The grounds for such criticism centre more on the nature of the accommodation and the loss of personal privacy rather than on allegations of physical or mental abuse.  

It would not have crossed the minds of Australian politicians and bureaucrats that in their planning and regimentation, the camps might have had “insidious overtones” for some migrants (Sluga x). This is suggestive of insensitivity and indifference (even incompetence) rather than of systemic and calculated mistreatment. Accordingly, Bordertown’s production team felt they had greater creative freedom to

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10 Indeed, the British government was to be more forthcoming with help and assistance than the Australian government, especially during the conservative government period under Prime Minister John Howard. It was not until November 2009 that the Labor Government (under Prime Minister Kevin Rudd), and the Opposition Leader issued a joint public apology to the child migrants living in Australia, now either middle aged or elderly.

11 In Bonegilla, as Sluga (7) points out, while conditions were similar for migrants and staff:

… in the first few years accommodation for migrants was on a dormitory basis. Different national groups were housed in separate blocks and within these blocks women and men, wives and husbands were segregated. The huts contained no internal facilities, nor any furniture except camp beds. The migrants set up crude blanket partitioning and placed their luggage between the beds, arranging them like altars, to provide a sense of privacy and personal space (7).
develop a distinctive cultural interpretive framework very different from the one they employed in *Leaving of Liverpool*.

Even so, given the climate generated by official multiculturalism in the first half of the 1990s there was an expectation that representations of ethnic and cultural groups would be respectful. While there were no victims in *Bordertown* in the same way as there were victims in *Leaving of Liverpool*, many migrants who went through the migrant camps contested *Bordertown*, claiming the miniseries missed an opportunity to represent the trauma and distress of being a Displaced Person in a new country.

One vocal critic of the miniseries was Franca Arena (*The Australian*, Oct.11, 1995); a migrant herself, she would become a prominent New South Wales politician. For a time, she lived in the Bonegilla migrant camp. For Arena and others who made public testimony these migrant camps were lonely places. Arena recalled that Bonegilla had a sign “which nobody had taken down, that said: ‘Bonegilla. A Place of No Hope’” (*Franca Arena in Australia 2000 Years and Beyond*). This testimony, with all its suggested austerity and bleakness, was always going to be at odds with a magical realist take on the migrant experience. Unsurprisingly, Arena also claimed *Bordertown’s* production team “didn't understand how people lived in the camps . . . [and] it makes me understand nothing of the migrant experience”.

There are many communities of interest with a stake in how an event from the past is interpreted and represented as heritage in a re-staging or performance. From a heritage-based perspective, particular communities of interest can establish the initial authenticity of a re-staging or performance, with such claims acknowledged by heritage assessors. These assessors can evaluate a cultural item such as a staging or a performance as possessing an authenticity that is not necessarily recognized by any other community of interest. Nevertheless, contemporary heritage assessors still appreciate that positive audience responses to heritage productions and performances provide an additional level of authenticity. But this additional level of authenticity was not forthcoming for *Bordertown*: within its first three weeks the series was named “the most spectacular flop of the 1995 TV season” (Warneke). When defending *Bordertown’s* televisual style, its creators were aware that Australian audiences held strong views on what can be thought of as ‘protocols of authenticity’. Therefore, at this point it is appropriate to consider what constitutes authenticity by considering various ‘protocols of authenticity’.
Protocols of Authenticity

*The Leaving of Liverpool* and *Bordertown* are, in their own way, both realist productions, although they deploy different kinds of ‘realisms’ – social realism and magical realism respectively. While there are key differences between these two realisms, it is important to note the considerable continuity between them. The two miniseries highlight the following protocols of authenticity: realistic settings and production design; emotional realism and melodrama; audience recognition of trauma and dissonant heritage; narrative as allegory; and respect for the testimonies, memories, and experiences of the traumatised.

Both miniseries use realistic settings and a realist production design to actualize the past. Sets, costumes, décor, locations, and other elements of *mise-en-scène* provide visual authenticity and a period-based verisimilitude. The social realist *Leaving of Liverpool* and the magical realist *Bordertown* share these norms. The historical world of the fictitious migrant camp of Baringa looked ‘in period’; its storyline was set “unequivocally in the past”, and as much attention was paid to production design as had been the case with more traditional historical television miniseries (Bertrand, *Borders* 194). Though fictitious, Baringa was based on real camps, many critics, commentators, and viewers (who included those who went through the camps) made visual connections between the fictitious camp and the real camps. Bonegilla was quickly identified as the most likely model for the production design of Baringa. Adams was one critic who noted how attention to production design contributed significantly to the realist qualities of the miniseries: “*Bordertown* is the archetypal camp for refos. Full of Italians, Balts, and Poles who’ve come to Australia from a war-ravaged Europe” (Adams, *Evil Union*).

In addition to protocols of authenticity based on realistic settings and production design, each miniseries was at pains to visually authenticate incidents that cumulatively mark out the lives of its characters: whether it be the suffering of the children in *The Leaving of Liverpool*, or the excesses of life encountered by migrants in *Bordertown*. Again the difference between the two series was that many incidents in *Leaving* were based on ‘fact’, while many of the incidents that happen to the characters in *Bordertown* have fantasy and fantastic elements to them. Nevertheless, in both

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12 As Bertrand (*Borders* 190) writes, and as the ABC publicity noted, the miniseries was set in a rural migrant hostel called Baringa in the 1950s, “one of those staging camps” where post-war immigrants from Europe waited before being dispersed to work in rural or urban industries which desperately needed their labour in the post-war boom. “There ‘wogs’ and ‘balts’ and ‘dagos’ were transformed into ‘New Australians’, learned to speak English and to abandon – or to disguise – the culture that alienated them from the society they had chosen as their new home” (Bertrand, *Borders* 191).
productions, realistic settings provide an authentic backdrop so as not to distract viewers from character interactions.

Authentic settings and incidents bolster the presentation of the children as victims in Leaving of Liverpool. A case in point is when the tonsils of each child are brutally removed by British doctors on board the ship as it makes its way from Liverpool to Australia. Close-ups of deep red blood on white sheets spread to cover each child's shoulders and neck heighten the dramatic visual tension. In this way the voices of the children are literally silenced while being transported to Australia. They are powerless and at the mercy of those in charge. Bordertown also featured graphic realistic violence in some episodes (such as cutting a sheep’s throat as the prelude to a story arc that ends in a later episode with a woman’s throat being cut). However, as one commentator wryly observed, Bordertown’s visual excessiveness (which included faeces flowing out of blocked toilets and “scenes involving oral sex, animal skinning, corpse packing, and urination”) were not going to appeal to conservative audiences (McLean).

The realist settings in each miniseries provided the stage for melodramatic incidents and encounters. As Ang (Watching) observes, melodrama facilitates emotional engagement by audiences in a television show. It enhances the emotional nature of character interactions and contributes to audience perceptions of the emotional authenticity of on-screen performances (M. Smith 71). Emotional authenticity and melodrama in Leaving of Liverpool uphold the victimhood of the child protagonists, bestowing another form of integrity on the story told in the series. But in Bordertown, emotional authenticity is derived more from the melodrama generated by ‘magical’ elements occurring in a liminal setting. The focus is not on the protagonists as victims but as active agents in an unfolding story set in a weird place where, as in horror and fantasy genres, unexpected things happen. By avoiding styles of social realism, the various narrative arcs in Bordertown rely on strange and quirky characters whose lives interweave, and whose excesses are eventually contained (Bertrand, Borders 195). The removal of Bianca, the albino Italian, from the Baringa community is an example of one such containment:

Bianca, the albino, is one character who [is ...] in-between and ambiguous. Her excessive whiteness is a constant challenge to the concept of racial difference, and this is made still more explicit when she befriends the black women and persuades them to “blacken” her with soot from the campfire in a rebirthing ritual that echoes the women’s business at the birth of a black child. Bianca’s expulsion from the camp and repatriation to Italy is one of the few examples of the containment of the abject within this narrative. (Bertrand, Borders 200)
The melodrama of Bianca’s ejection from the migrant camp helps distance audiences from her plight, and perhaps this prevented audiences coming to terms with her physical difference (Bertrand, *Borders*), let alone having them consider how different people cope with the shock of migration (which is central to *Leaving of Liverpool*). This suggests the next protocol of authenticity that had built up around the Australian historical miniseries: namely, audience expectations were that recognition of the traumas of migration would be provided in a miniseries purporting to be based on the migrant experience.

The stories told by each miniseries have historical incidents as their starting point and backstory. But, while the producers of *Bordertown* acknowledged the need for some accuracy when visually representing a migrant camp and its migrant occupants, this accuracy was not the most crucial aspect of the production (Williams, *Migrants*). Although the series did open up old wounds associated with war, and while it did draw attention to the fractured lives and memories of displaced persons, exploring psychological trauma and distress were not its prime concerns. In a realistic setting, fantasy quickly and continually breaks through. This would have been difficult to do in *Leaving of Liverpool* as it would have meant using the physical and emotional abuse of young vulnerable children as the pretext for a story about something else.

For stories – including heritage stories – based on audience or reader identification with victims, to be regarded as authentic, the audience needs to acknowledge the traumas of the victim. As Markovits points out, the difficulty with representing and recreating the traumatic stories of victims is in picking the right victim for the story. “To have explanatory power, [stories about victims] must get their victims right, that is, they must pick victims who exemplify the faults and perversions of a political [or other] system that led to their victimization in the first place” (I. Markovits). In *Leaving of Liverpool*, the characters of Wilson, Bertie, and Lily were clearly identified as victims as it was through them that audiences could imagine and re-experience the past (Lukács).

In *Leaving*, the systemic abuse of the boys is attributed to particular members of the Christian Brothers order. While the management of specific institutions is represented, and while the overall responsibility of governments and agencies that initiated and supported the child migration scheme can be inferred, there is little insight into the actual politics behind and management of the migration scheme. The on-screen focus is not so much on this politics as it is on the individual perpetrators who belong to the Christian Brothers.
Of the three main characters Wilson – who Bertie has sworn to protect – is clearly a much traumatised victim who tragically drowns while trying to escape from his victimiser, an older Asian boy. Because of his facial features, the Asian boy is an ethnically-identified abuser who persists in tracking down the defenceless and frightened Wilson. The Asian boy is brutal and sadistic, and much taller and stronger than Wilson. As the only Asian boy in the outback community he is coded as 'Other' by his Asian-ness. The head of the Christian Brother community in outback Western Australia uses this older Asian boy to oversee the younger British and Irish boys. It is implied that at least some of the Christian Brothers have had sex with the Asian boy, indicating a cycle of abuse in which the victimiser himself is a victim. The Asian boy decides to become a Christian Brother, thus perpetuating the cycle of abuse in the Order itself. The emotionally-charged death of Wilson is in keeping with observations that a victim’s story is, ideally, an emotional as well as an allegorical story: “[t]he genre mixes analysis with emotions, and the emotions often win. Ideally, a persuasive victim's story would use the fate of its protagonist to exemplify the features of the system that could make that fate happen” (I. Markovits).

Narratives premised on the traumas associated with the migrant experience can also become allegories of the powerless. But *Bordertown* leaves little room to interpret the migrant experience as an allegory of the powerless; it was left to the social realist miniseries *The Leaving of Liverpool* to deliver an allegory of the powerless acceptable to audiences. The allegorical nature of this series is unmistakable when the production ends with Julian Lennon singing his “Working Class Hero”:

> There's room at the top they are telling you still  
> But first you must learn how to smile as you kill  
> If you want to be like the folks on the hill  
> A working class hero is something to be.

The children pay too high a price in being transported to Australia to build a nation.  

By the end of *Leaving of Liverpool*, the two boys remain victims (Wilson has died, this being the only way open to him to escape his victimhood, while Bertie is imprisoned). Lily, by contrast, appears to have a future. She has no intention of remaining a victim. Her character introduces another allegorical narrative: that of the self-making individual. Lily is introduced at the start of the miniseries as a strong-willed character with a fighting spirit and a child with an ability to reason and rationalise. Her mother is similarly strong. She is shown to have placed Lily into the care of others with great difficulty, and is traumatised and guilt-ridden by this. Her mother hoped that Lily would

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13 Cunningham and Miller (142) make thematic links between the ‘forced’ migration of these children and its “parallels . . . [with] the originating acts of British colonialism and its accompanying convict ‘export’ [to Australia, parallels that] are impossible to miss” (142). This is suggestive of how the miniseries tapped into and could be seen as a more contemporary reworking of Australia’s founding convict settlement story.
have a better life in Australia. Lily survives because of the characteristics she shares with her mother: her cynicism, pragmatism, and strong will. At the end of the miniseries, Lily is re-united with her mother in Australia. But Lily’s ‘success’ intensifies the inability of the two boys to escape from their victimhood.

When traumas are represented in Bordertown, in contrast to Leaving, they are largely interpreted as being the result of problems individuals have made for themselves. The magical realist style of Bordertown inhibits recognition that adult Displaced Persons might have been distressed by their migration experience, including the cool and indifferent treatment they receive from Australian officials and workers. Suffering and tragedy in Bordertown are instead accidental, not systemic. On many occasions, suffering is displaced by a character’s own humour, or by the humour attributed to an ethnic stereotype, or as the result of visual humour in a scene or sequence such as a character seeing visions in the tomato patch (which lent weight to the accusation that the miniseries was poking fun at those who went through the migrant camp experience).

The identities of the migrants housed in the fictitious Baringa camp are purposefully essentialised (Bertrand, Borders). As Bertrand points out, “each of the characters starts as a stereotype – not surprisingly, in a narrative concerned with national identity, often a national or racial stereotype” (including Angloceltic stereotypes):

Anal-retentive British schoolteacher Kenneth Pearson is unable to express his love for his only daughter. Joe della Vergine, the Latin lover, seduces and abandons all the pretty women in the camp. Maeve McAloon, the dour Scot, runs the store and post office like a martinet. Dutchman Pieter has rescued his Jewish wife Adrianna from the Nazis and has nightmares about it. Excitable Hungarian Mihaly Bassa spends all his spare time in his garden and protecting his beloved shovel. Dom – the dirty, cheeky and amoral gypsy boy – steals first from Mihaly’s garden and then from a nearby farm. The local Aborigines live in a primitive camp by the river, where the women sit around drinking into the night. (Bertrand, Borders 195)

The production team intentionally created strange, but ethnically identifiable, characters. Consequently, these lead to accusations the characters were “phoney” with the actors playing them adopting “phoney fruit shop accents” (Warneke). However, stereotyping is, in itself, neither authentic nor inauthentic. In different places and at different times, communities and individuals label a stereotype as being authentic or not authentic. Negative viewer and critical responses to the perceived stereotypes in Bordertown suggest stereotyped characters in the series were interpreted by viewers as being disrespectful and – in the political climate of mid-1990s Australia – this was not acceptable.
With no victims in the Baringa camp, trauma and systemic abuse are not issues. As scriptwriter Sue Smith was at pains to point out, it is not a system that is at fault; *Bordertown* is “not an attempt to explore any system or institution of society” (quoted in Freeman, *Bordertown*). Yet even with no victims, Bertrand (*Borders 200*) still believes *Bordertown* to be allegorical, though not necessarily an allegory about the traumas of the migrant experience. Instead, Bertrand contends that ‘postmodernism’ moves the miniseries towards an allegory about the development of a national identity free from British ties. In reaching this conclusion, Bertrand aligns with O'Regan’s conceptualization of Australia as a new world society. Bertrand also contends that the miniseries is an allegory about an evolving national consciousness:

If we read [*Bordertown’s*] . . . narrative as an allegory, we can conclude that the Australian nation does not have to choose between becoming a republic and maintaining the tie with the British motherland. As alternatives within a modernist paradigm, neither now carries finality or certitude, yet from a postmodern perspective both remain viable elements within a complex and evolving national consciousness. (Bertrand, *Borders 200*)

It might be expected that when a miniseries invests in migrant characters, ethnicity would feature prominently. *The Leaving of Liverpool* reveals a modern consciousness of the dark side of Australian nationalism, and the high price paid by various migrant groups (including the ‘Anglocelts’) in forging a new nation and an Australian national identity. However, although there is an early incursion into ethnicity in *Leaving*, ethnicity is quickly bypassed once the abuse of the boys begins. At the beginning of the series, the ethnicity (the ‘Irishness’) of the three protagonists is foregrounded. When Lily's mother leaves her daughter at the orphanage, she tells her daughter: “Don't let on you're Catholic; paddies always get the worst of it”. But the story logic then ensures the ethnicity of the boy victims is identified as being the same as that of the perpetrator Christian Brothers. Catholicism (as represented by members of the Christian Brothers) quickly displaces ethnicity, and it develops into a narrative of powerless *Catholic* boys at the mercy of *Catholic* clerics. In this way the miniseries further complicates the ‘ethnic story’ and distributes responsibility for the day-to-day operation of the child migration scheme among members of the same ethnicity; this marks out a difference from earlier miniseries where authority and responsibility are located in other groups and nationalities.

Ethnicity might also have been expected to be crucial when considering the final protocol of authenticity: respect for the testimonies, memories, and experiences of the traumatised migrant. The creators of *Bordertown* adopt what could be called ‘stylised ethnicities’ as an overtly artistic expressive strategy. It was understood by both the creative team and reviewers that casting actors from non-Angloceltic backgrounds would give the miniseries greater ‘visual’ authenticity.
(Williams, *Strangers*). Even so, an actor from one ethnic background usually ended up playing a character from a different ethnic background. By breaking with the stricture that actors of a non-English speaking background should play an ethnically marked character sharing the same ethnicity, the creators of *Bordertown* experimented (often playfully) with the concept of ethnicity. Such stylised ethnicities made sense when adopting a televisual style that mingled the fantastic with the realistic.

The displacement of ethnicity by the creators of *Leaving of Liverpool* and *Bordertown* stands in contrast to the more sharply defined ethnicities in the 1980s miniseries examined in the previous two chapters. However, since *Bordertown*’s casting and practices cut across the very sensitivities of ethnicity, the series was criticised as disrespectful to the memories of migrants, regardless of their ethnicity. This suggest many critics, as well as the Australian audience generally, were not willing to experiment with magical realist representations of ethnicity. The issue was not the artistic possibilities of stylising ethnicity; the issue was whether such stylisation and casting decisions authenticated the testimonies and experiences of those who went through the migrant camps.

Yet a handful of critics and scholars were prepared to engage with the stylised ethnicities, stereotypical characters, and magical elements in realistic settings, found in *Bordertown*. Indeed, they saw these as facilitating a critique of dominant attitudes towards migrants. In their judgement, the miniseries was not being deliberately deceptive. Bertrand, for example, points out that while published critiques of *Bordertown* noted “the fundamental stereotyping” of characters, they failed to appreciate “their function in critiquing Australian attitudes” (Bertrand, *Borders* 196). If *Bordertown*’s goal was, as Bertrand (Borders 196) contends, to televisually represent “the establishment of a national tribe” where unity is only ever a certain arrangement of cultural and ethnic diversity, then the miniseries could have been interpreted as fitting within and simultaneously critiquing the assimilationist ideology.

The assimilation of migrants was perhaps the most important justification politicians put forward at the time for the creation of migrant camps such as Bonegilla (or the fictional Baringa), with such justifications seemingly anchored in the intermarriage rates of the post-War period, particularly among northern and many central Europeans. Yet while the miniseries represents the symbolic coming together of a nation through intermarriage, the conventional double wedding at the end of

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14 In the miniseries an exiled Russian theatre director was cast as an Italian. Another Russian actor plays a Hungarian: “nearly every nationality under the sun has been recruited to play a character from their own motherland – or from someone else’s” (Williams, *Migrants*). Actor Mitchell Butel did not seem to mind that his character was Italian; Butel was just “pleased to be part of a project about Australia’s ethnic background” (Williams, *Strangers*).
the series is so full of ambivalence\textsuperscript{15} that it suggests at best a shaky union, with many continuing loose ends (Bertrand, \textit{Borders} 200). This is unlike the miniseries examined in Chapter Five, where cultural interpretive frameworks were premised on an emergent Australian identity and where collective cultural heritage was located in characters from diverse cultural backgrounds forging a common identity. \textit{Bordertown}’s recognition of these many and ongoing fundamental cultural differences become the foundation on which to build a workable community. Some differences are reconciled and erased over the course of a narrative, but \textit{Bordertown} insists that other differences remain so that characters have to learn that ‘we’re all different’ and that everyone needs to be more ‘understanding’ and to ‘get along’ (Jenkins). \textit{Bordertown} recognises cultural diversity as always present, and requiring continuous improvisations and work by all.

By contrast the sorts of reconciliation and union possible in \textit{The Leaving of Liverpool} are even more desultory. As Wilson is dead he has no future. Imprisoned for his republican rebelliousness, Bertie has little prospect of being reconciled with either Britain or Australia. Even Lily, for all her strong-will and determination, remains aloof from national events taking place around her. Nevertheless, as this chapter has shown, \textit{The Leaving of Liverpool} was deemed more respectful than \textit{Bordertown} to the memories and experiences of the powerless.

The creators of \textit{Bordertown} gambled that in 1995, Australian viewers were ready for something different from the miniseries form; and that audiences would come to accept an experimental magic realist televisual style as being as authentic as a social realist style.\textsuperscript{16} In a different cultural and national context, \textit{Bordertown}’s televisual style may indeed have provided audiences with an authentic heritage experience. After all, the authenticity of magic realism has long been recognized in stories and forms such as telenovelas from South America (Straubhaar), and this style’s authenticity has been praised by critics who celebrate British television productions such as \textit{Pennies from Heaven} (1978) and \textit{The Singing Detective} (1986). But as Moran (\textit{Images} 208) notes, in the Australian context, when significant historical miniseries put “the common people on the historical stage”, they tend to be thought of in “terms of the classic realist novel” and not in relation to the

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\textsuperscript{15} In her work on \textit{Bordertown}, Bertrand provides us with some insights into how the miniseries used its televisual style to good effect:

[At the end of the miniseries] the double wedding symbolizes the union of post-war British and European immigrants with each other and with earlier immigrants, the ambivalences within the unions suggesting an uncertain future. Marginal groups (Aborigines and gypsies) have returned to the margins, marking potential sources of conflict but remaining for the moment outside national consciousness (Bertrand, \textit{Borders} 200).

\textsuperscript{16} The artistic integrity of at least one episode of \textit{Bordertown} was recognized by the Australian Film and Television industry. In 1994, Julian Pringle won an AFI award for Best Achievement in Direction in Television drama: \textit{Bordertown}, Episode 7; and the Episode 7 won another AFI award in 1994 as co-winner for Best Episode in Television Drama Series: \textit{Bordertown}, Episode 7 (ABC Drama, 2003).
magical realist novels of Gabriel García Márquez or the fabulous story worlds of the telenovela (Straubhaar). Very few critics, academics, and journalists appreciated *Bordertown* as a work of art that could deliver authentic insights into the hopes and fears of migrants.

*Bordertown* is now a largely forgotten miniseries and when it is remembered at all, it is more as a curiosity because of the illustrious subsequent careers of two of its actors – Cate Blanchett and Hugo Weaving. By contrast *The Leaving of Liverpool*, as an ‘issues’ miniseries (child migration, child abuse, and children as victims) continues to be politically significant late into the second decade of the 21st century, where the issues in the miniseries remain of public interest, and are still being interpreted and represented in museum exhibits and feature films.

**Conclusion**

By the 1990s, some historical miniseries had assumed a privileged status in Australian public culture. Miniseries such as *The Leaving of Liverpool* were acclaimed for their televisual representations of significant moments and events in Australian history, even when they exposed some of these to be dissonant heritage. Enacted across a variety of miniseries from the 1980s to the mid-1990s, stories based on the generalised themes of accepting and enduring adversity, failure, and betrayal had been approached through *renouvellement* and *rapprochement* strategies. As demonstrated in the case studies, the historical miniseries proved able to accommodate different ways to imagine heritage including dissonant heritage. But by the early 1990s, after a decade of many (mostly non-case study) productions treading this familiar narrative ground, it was getting harder to come up with innovative takes on by now well-worn themes.

*The Leaving of Liverpool* and *Bordertown* were formed in this crucible. On the one hand, they extended the *renouvellement* and *rapprochement* strategies of earlier 1980s miniseries. While this might result in treading the familiar ground covered in earlier miniseries and where a certain bedrock of cultural and ethical values had come to be assumed, it also involved seeking heightened emotional intensity – as was the case with *The Leaving of Liverpool*. On the other hand, as happened with *Bordertown*, producers could extend the form and style of the historical miniseries in new directions, adopting new orientations to tell stories that imagined heritage in different ways. But such stylistic innovation in heritage storytelling proved difficult for audiences to accept.
Fascination and repulsion have been a continuing dynamic across all the case study miniseries. As Thomas (425) contends, Australian historical miniseries indicate “the vitality and diversity you would expect in a culture that is at once fascinated and repelled by its past, and consequently devotes a great amount of time and money to heritage, commemoration, tradition, and myth”. By the time Leaving of Liverpool and Bordertown were broadcast, provocation had become a major stylistic attribute and expectation of the Australian historical miniseries, even if such productions fascinated or repulsed audiences (often doing both simultaneously) as they engaged in new takes on often old stories in order to imagine and create heritage.
Chapter 8

THE VALUE OF A HERITAGE APPROACH

Introduction

This study has reformulated and extended the terms under which selected Australian historical miniseries from the 1980s and first half of the 1990s can be evaluated by ‘taking heritage seriously’. The thesis has demonstrated that ‘heritage’ is the implied concept behind many reviews and assessments of historical miniseries made by academics, journalists, commentators and, often, by the makers of these productions themselves. Reading a review of the miniseries *Eureka Stockade* (1984) by Adrian Martin through the lens of ‘heritage’ now becomes more revealing:

In a museum-piece history of Australia, the story of the Eureka Stockade of 1854 would dutifully take up its tidy place in the order of exhibits, as a discrete and complete tale alongside Gallipoli and the rest. With Australian historical films and television miniseries alike one frequently has the sense of passing through such a museum, where the frozen *tableaux* are momentarilily animated, returning at the end of the session, to their stuffed condition as historical relics. The only value these mummified moments of Australian history have is as ‘milestones’; they are neat little narratives which when strung together reassure one of a solid national identity that has been formed in leaps and bounds. (Martin, *Eureka Stockade* 131)

Despite Martin’s less than flattering assessment of an Australian historical miniseries, his 1984 review of *Eureka Stockade* does show how such miniseries invite a heritage approach. The historical miniseries can be evaluated for the heritage value of their interpretations of past (‘historical’) events and people through re-enactments, staging, and performances, and for their heritage value as ‘monuments’. They can be assessed for their contributions towards an evolving national identity. They are able to be examined as a televisual mode of experiencing the past as heritage and as opportunities for creating heritage narratives based on a useable past. They can be approached as special event television and as ‘quality’ television productions; as television programs created in a particular form and style; and as work inheriting a tradition derived from Australian historical films. They can be evaluated for how and why they imagined the nation’s cultural history in particular ways. All of these approaches and considerations have featured in this thesis.
Martin’s undeclared expectations are that a historical miniseries should interpret and represent the past through an engaging story that is informative, entertaining, and aesthetically challenging; heritage professionals and theorists would agree with this expectation. However, such professionals and theorists would also assess a cultural ‘object’ such as a miniseries on the basis of its heritage value as much as for its ability to tell an engaging story. They would contend that the heritage value of an object or item such as a miniseries might emerge in the future. On this basis, *Eureka Stockade* would not be so summarily dismissed.

A heritage assessment perspective evaluates a historical miniseries on the basis of how it imaginatively and creatively interprets and represents events associated with Australia’s cultural history as contributing to the collective heritage of the nation. While the makers of the series would not have talked about their work in terms of heritage theory or practice, each case study production – *Bodyline* (1984), *Cowra Breakout* (1984), *Anzacs* (1985), *The Dunera Boys* (1985), *Vietnam* (1987), *The Leaving of Liverpool* (1992), and *Bordertown* (1995) – exhibits a ‘heritage imagination’ where multiculturalism and cultural diversity are imagined as the collective heritage of all Australians. Considering the stories told in these miniseries as having affinities with heritage practice emphasises the creative interpretations and representations of the past better than do approaches adapting explicitly historical protocols.

This thesis has outlined an evaluative and assessment method adapted from the Australian heritage sector. This method encourages a logical and reasoned approach when evaluating how and why the case study miniseries are of heritage value. In the process of creatively interpreting and representing selected events from the past as heritage, the miniseries themselves have been determined to be works of heritage value and therefore of cultural significance.

When film and television scholars in Australia and elsewhere have employed the term and concept of ‘heritage’ in their considerations of historical films and television productions, they have tended not to engage with the relatively new discipline of Heritage Studies and its theorists and practitioners. In contrast, history researchers and scholars such as Samuel and Lowenthal have not only engaged with Heritage Studies, but in many cases contributed to its development. In the process, Historical Studies and Heritage Studies have been enriched, with both disciplines developing greater insight into the nature and practice of interpreting and representing the past. A similar process of enrichment and insight should develop if Film and Television Studies were to likewise engage more systematically with heritage and Heritage Studies. Of course, heritage scholarship and practice would also benefit from such an engagement. As was noted in Chapter
Two, there have been instances when film and television scholars would have benefitted from a more open-ended and generous engagement with heritage scholarship and practice. Instead they have wielded the term ‘heritage’ in ways that do not accord with the how ‘heritage’ has been conceptualized by heritage professionals and theorists. Such was the case with scholars who initiated the British ‘heritage film’ debate.

Adapting approaches and theories from Heritage Studies does not preclude challenging and provocative interpretations of the past; in fact, as the evaluations of the case study miniseries have demonstrated, imagining and interpreting past events as heritage encourages such interpretations. The heritage imagination discoverable in each miniseries turns on the construction of historical worlds to actualize this imagined past in a tangible object (the miniseries). It highlights a relationship with the past that is as much symbolic as it is emotive (De Groot 5). Aspects of Australia’s often contentious past and dissonant heritage were brought to life for contemporary audiences to see and hear on their television screens. By the time *The Leaving of Liverpool* and *Bordertown* were broadcast in the early part of the 1990s, provocation had become a major stylistic attribute of significant Australian historical miniseries.

**Engaging with Heritage: Outcomes of Research**

As a result of engaging with heritage, this study has reached a number of conclusions.

*A heritage imagination was found to be at work in each case study historical miniseries, with this being the principal way that the past was creatively interpreted and represented as heritage.* Whether they are filmmakers, professional historians, heritage interpreters, or anyone else with an interest in a useable past, all exercise their imagination when interpreting historical ‘facts’ about past people and events, and representing these ‘facts’ narratively and visually for contemporary audiences. *A heritage imagination* can be said to be at work when past events are creatively interpreted and represented in the present as heritage though artistic and creative work. However, any interpretation of aspects of the past (including historical ‘facts’) through this kind of artistic and creative activity is necessarily subjective.

In the early of the twentieth century Collingwood (*Historical Imagination*) appreciated that since the past no longer exists, it has to be imagined by people living in the present. The notion of people in the present *imaginatively* interpreting, reconstructing, and representing the past is a valuable
insight. The makers of the case study miniseries imagined both ‘factual’ and ‘fictional’ events from the past. This has much in common with a creative approach to heritage storytelling adopted by contemporary heritage professionals, an approach where fact is mixed with fiction, perhaps even with fantasy. This is where the notion of a ‘heritage imagination’ took its leave from Collingwood’s notion of the ‘historical imagination’ as well as from empiricist historical approaches.

In miniseries like *Cowra Breakout* and *Bordertown*, the ‘facts’ did not stand in the way of a filmmaker imagining and creating heritage. Since imagining the past subjectively and creatively is a feature of the more socially and culturally critical methodologies developed within Heritage Studies, this discipline is conducive for theorising the nature and limits of this ‘imagination’. Heritage theory and practice accepts that as long as professional heritage interpreters do not deliberately deceive an audience, the knowledge about the past they provide is legitimate and authentic. Film and television scholars sometimes need reminding about this.

Adopting a heritage perspective, the thesis has shown that the past is imagined and represented in the present, and that this imagined past is given tangibility by being actualized in an object such as a historical miniseries. These tangible representations and actualizations are delimited and often constrained by the production environment and the practicalities of making a miniseries. The process of making a miniseries, from pre-production financing and research, to production protocols, to when and where the miniseries is to be broadcast, impose professional, industrial, and institutional constrictions on how an imagined past and its historical world are interpreted and presented in a miniseries. These delimitations and constraints confront today’s television producers as much as they did 1980s and 1990s miniseries makers. There are similar professional, industrial, and institutional constraints when curating an exhibition or producing a heritage performance. When evaluating the heritage value of a miniseries, or any other cultural object, item, performance, and so on, the thesis indicated that cultural and political, as well as industrial and institutional, constraints need to be taken into account by professional assessors in order to develop assessment methodologies on a case-by-case basis. This is reflected in the typology of criteria employed to evaluate the heritage value of a miniseries.

*Engaging with heritage is achieved through stories designed to inform, educate, entertain, and engage audiences.* The entertainment functions of a miniseries have close affinities with heritage theory and practice. Like heritage interpreters, filmmakers need to tell stories about the past that inform, educate, and *entertain* their audiences. Even though entertaining audiences means they
need to be engaged, such entertainment and engagement does not preclude provocative storytelling. As one heritage theorist has noted, while creating heritage stories means “engaging audiences” this can still result in “upping the stakes” especially when – as the case study miniseries demonstrated – these stories “engend[er or encourage] ... an understanding of the knottiness of the past” (Kidd 32). Miniseries made for commercial television, like many contemporary heritage exhibitions and performances, have a commercial imperative to engage audiences and viewers. Despite this imperative, or even because of it, heritage stories are often provocative and challenging. As a consequence, the stories themselves may end up being contradictory and inconsistent; but creating heritage is contradictory, often ambiguous, usually inconsistent, and ultimately risky.

*The form and style of the historical miniseries proved to be ideal for imagining and creating heritage during a period of social and cultural change in Australia.* Shaped by the contemporary social and cultural concerns of the day, the case studies illustrate that miniseries makers, through their stories, imagined and interpreted past events in ways designed to engage audiences *emotionally*. As a means of achieving such an emotional engagement, narrative and visual style worked with melodrama to actualize heritage stories about the nation’s multicultural past. By the time *Leaving of Liverpool* and *Bordertown* were broadcast, there had been a decade where many non-case study Australian miniseries had treaded often familiar ground. *Leaving* and *Bordertown* were also able to extend the *renouvellement* and *rapprochement* strategies found in the earlier case study 1980s miniseries.

This thesis supports the focus of television scholars on melodrama as a critical aspect of both long-form finite television serials and the miniseries. The miniseries I have examined here prove Sheehan’s point that melodrama is capable of representing “the characteristic conflicts and choices of an epoch” by embodying them “in the immediate circumstances of [the] concrete lives” of the characters (Sheehan, *Irish Television*). The employment of soap opera techniques (particularly the audience's intense familiarity with its characters) means issues of history and personal responsibility can be portrayed and explored on a number of different narrative levels. It is useful in this context to note that melodrama's popularity has historically coincided with times of intense social and ideological crisis (Joyrich 233) – this was certainly the situation in the period leading up to the 1988 Australian Bicentenary.

*Film and television scholars are likely to find that engaging with heritage theory and practice will be productive.* If film and television scholars engage with heritage theory and practice, then the work of heritage theorists and scholars is likely to open up Film and Television Studies to more
nuanced methodologies developed to assess the heritage value and cultural significance of items such as films and television productions. Heritage assessment approaches consider the relative heritage value of one object compared to another object of a similar kind. But, as the evaluation of the case study miniseries has revealed, these approaches are conditional to a particular time, place, community, and so on. This accords with observations made by heritage scholars Graham and Howard (2) that interpretations will vary depending on the situation of the observer in time and space”. This thesis also supports Graham and Howard’s observation that values are placed upon artefacts (such as a miniseries) or activities by people who view heritage “through a whole series of lenses, the most obvious of which are: nationality; religion; ethnicity; class; wealth; gender; personal history”. The validity of a particular lens is “situationally determined rather than a constant” (2).

The makers of historical miniseries can be thought of as heritage interpreters who interpreted aspects of the past as the cultural heritage of all Australians. In the process of creatively and imaginatively interpreting and representing events and people associated with Australia’s multicultural past, and then developing stories to communicate these interpretations to others, this study demonstrated that miniseries producers acted much like professional heritage interpreters. Bringing a heritage imagination to their creative work, the stories told by these producers displayed approaches to their storytelling that emphasised a desire to inform and educate Australians about their heritage while also entertaining them. The makers of the case study miniseries were as capable as heritage professionals (or professionals in other fields such as popular history) of creating and communicating stories that interpreted past events as the heritage of a community and of a people existing in the present.

In order to ‘take heritage seriously’ a blended interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary methodology is necessary. When researchers investigate historical miniseries or films (or other film and television productions) and evaluate these works for their cultural and social value, their approach has much in common with that taken by professional heritage sector assessors. Film and television researchers, heritage assessors, and other cultural researchers, have adopted interdisciplinary methodologies to assess particular objects, be they films, television shows, or other cultural objects and items. However, to take the ‘heritage’ in a historical miniseries seriously, a blended methodology drawn from the fields of Heritage, History, and Film and Television needs to be developed. This thesis is designed to show the benefits of such an interdisciplinary methodology for Film and Television Studies.
Significant historical miniseries contributed to Australian public culture as a result of their heritage stories. As culturally significant stories, the case study miniseries were influenced by and intervened in Australian public culture over the 1980s and into the first half of the 1990s. The miniseries, as works of public history that told heritage stories, added to the sum of unofficial knowledge about Australia’s past and about the nation’s cultural heritage. While Australians of all ethnicities and cultural backgrounds have a different histories of adversity, failure, and betrayal these miniseries reveal all Australians share a proud heritage of accepting and enduring (if not necessarily overcoming) these adversities, failures, and betrayals.

Selected historical miniseries were identified as being major public interventions into the nation’s public culture, with some miniseries – like Vietnam – assuming a privileged status. Through their stories, the case study miniseries engaged with nation building exercises that reflected upon the many controversial aspects of Australia’s history. This study has validated the contention of Rosenstone (Historical Film), Samuel (Theatres), Sorlin, and other historians and film scholars that filmmakers as much as professional historians are capable of providing insightful interpretations of the past. But the thesis has gone further than this to argue that these interpretations were stories that created heritage while also acknowledging dissonant heritage so that these aspects of the past could be accommodated within the nation’s public culture in order for the nation to move on.

Conclusion

This thesis has established that in the process of creating heritage, each case study miniseries contributed to multiculturalism debates circulating within Australian public culture over the 1980s and into the 1990s. While this has enhanced the heritage value of these miniseries, other miniseries are also likely to be of heritage value. The heritage value of the many Australian historical miniseries made during the 1980s and early 1990s – such as Eureka Stockade – could not be assessed with time and space precluding such assessment. However, the evaluation of the case study miniseries for their cultural and social significance shows how series like Eureka Stockade could be evaluated for their approaches to ‘history work’ through their imaginative constructions of past events, and through their stories interpreting and representing this past as heritage. When reviving the memory of selected historical miniseries in the present, this thesis has underscored the importance of keeping the memory of these cultural artefacts alive. This will hopefully encourage assessments of other Australian historical miniseries to determine their heritage value and cultural significance.
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