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Landscape“

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1. Introduction

This paper deals with representations of Australianness in films, and analyses the way in which certain Australian myths and stereotypes—developed over centuries—have been incorporated into films with the purpose of strengthening Australia’s nationhood and of promoting a certain image abroad.

1.1 Structure

To understand how legends and myths were able to develop, a brief overview of Australia’s history is necessary; this is provided in Chapter 2. Because the paper is not primarily concerned with Aboriginal culture, the historical account begins with the white settlement of Australia. The history of Australia’s indigenous population will only be analysed in terms of their oppression by European settlers.

Chapter 3 examines the concept of national identity, as well as how one developed in Australia. The significance of landscape to this development, as well as the emergence of an Australian type will be discussed.

The next chapter is concerned with the question of what it means to be Australian. The Australian type is strongly linked to the bush, which was, on the one hand, promoted as being the “true” Australia where the bushman and the pioneer were at home, and, on the other hand, was depicted as mysterious and frightening. In addition to discussing the portrayal of the bush in literature and paintings, this section analyses its connection to Australianness.

Chapter 5 will discuss Australian film’s history and includes short analyses of important films from various decades. The 1970s are of particular interest here, as the 70s were a period of renaissance in Australia’s film industry.

Finally, Chapter 6 will discuss four films – *Crocodile Dundee*, “*Crocodile*” *Dundee 2*, *Rabbit Proof Fence*, and *Australia*, which are among the 35 most successful films in Australia. For this analysis, the films are sequenced, and

subsequently, the representation of myths, legends, and attributes associated with Australianness are discussed.

In the conclusion, a non-representative survey shows in how far the images of Australia represented in films corresponds with the image people who have never visited Australia have when they think of the country.

1.2 Research Questions and Hypothesis

The questions that are of importance to this text concern the use and representation of landscape in Australian film. What significance is given to nature? For what purpose? How is the image of the typical Australian connected to the bush myth that was created in the late 19th century? And how are Australians represented in films? Is Australia still a man's country or are women and Aboriginal people presented as equal in more recent films?

As landscape has always played a significant role in the search for national identity in Australia, this text will argue that it is also used in films as a means of identification.

Characters like Mick "Crocodile" Dundee and the Drover in *Australia* are perpetuations of legends like the bushman and the pioneer. The role women play in films is still reminiscent of the role they played in stories of the 1890s. More recent films also deal with Aboriginal history, with focus on reconciliation.

2. A Concise History of Australia

This chapter will give a brief overview of Australia's history. It deals almost exclusively with "white" Australia – i.e. after European settlement started – because the important events which would become the background for the formation of national identity, and which were incorporated into the films discussed in this work, all occurred after Thomas Cook's landing in 1770. Aboriginal history is, of course, not completely neglected, but will be discussed primarily in terms of encounters with white settlers and the impact of European settlement on traditional life. This is not meant to perpetuate the practice of regarding the period before 1778, when European settlement started, as pre-history. A more detailed account of Australia's history would merely be beyond the scope of this paper, and is therefore abbreviated. Furthermore, the discussion of the Aboriginal people includes that of Torres Strait Islanders.

The following concise historical account is intended to provide background information for a better understanding of the myths and legends which are later discussed within the context of their filmed representations. This text is based on the works of historians such as Richard White, Manning Clark, David Day, or Richard Broome, Aboriginal writer Bruce Pascoe, and on information provided on various governmental websites.

2.1 The Beginning

Despite the Aboriginals' former "proprietaryship", for a long time the official history of Australia started in 1770, when Captain James Cook landed on the continent's east coast and claimed it in the name of the monarchy. He believed Australia to be "terra nullius", ignoring the fact that the Aboriginal people had been settled there for thousands of years. In 1788, the First Fleet's commander, Arthur Phillip, claimed governance of the east of Australia, and set a milestone for the subsequent spread of Europeans over the whole continent. The hegemonic history has been questioned since the 1960s and has been rewritten by representatives of various scientific streams like feminism or Aboriginal studies in the following years.

2.1.1 Pre-Convict History

It is assumed that Australia was settled some 60.000 years ago, most probably by people originating from south-east Asia, who lived in the vicinity of the continent. They were semi-nomadic hunter-gatherers, who used dingoes for hunting and tools of stone¹ (see Clark 9). The indigenous population was split into roughly 250 language groups of which only few have survived (see Pascoe 22–23). The Aboriginal people, as they are called now, originally were not a homogenous group, but rather diverse peoples with different languages as well as distinct styles of art. What remains of these groups are now referred to with broad labels based on their location in different regions of Australia, for example, *Kooris* for those living in New South Wales and Victoria, or *Murris* for the Indigenous population of Queensland (see Pascoe 7).

Terra Australis – as it was called at the time when Europeans only suspected the continent's existence – was widely believed to be a counterpart to the northern hemisphere. Already in 150 AD, Ptolemaeus believed that without it, the world would lose its balance and spin off the solar system (see Schaffeld 126–127). Demand for expansion, as well as the belief that the continent was rich in natural deposits, containing gold, spices, and other precious metals, enforced the Europeans' desire to discover the unknown "southland" (see Schaffeld 127).

The Portuguese, who had reached Indonesia in the 1520s, claimed to have discovered Australia, but this has not been proven, and some historians argue that what they found is actually what is nowadays known as Indochina or some other part of south-east Asia (see Day 12). Whatever happened, they did not explore the land on which they had landed, as it appeared to be barren and dry. Thus, the belief in a mysterious land to the south, often referred to as *Terra Australis Incognita*, remained (see Day 12).

Next, the Spanish tried to find the great fabulous southland. During these efforts, they managed to discover the Solomon Islands (see Day 13) as well as

¹ To put it in Clark's unflattering words, which illustrate the former practice of denying Aboriginal people the ability of having developed their own "civilisation": "While the inhabitants of most of Asia [...] progressed from barbarism to civilization, the Aborigines retained their primitive Stone Age culture." (Clark 9)

the New Hebrides group, and passed through the strait that today bears the name of that ship's second in command – Torres (see Clark 11–12).

In 1606, the Dutch bumped into Cape York Peninsula's west coast, finding "that there was no good to be done there!" (qtd. in Clark 12). Even though the Dutch claimed proprietorship after having bumped into Australia's west coast, they did not intend to cultivate the land because despite several voyages into the country, they could not find anything of value. Consequently, they did not think they had found the mysterious land to the south, and continued to search for it farther east. During later expeditions, they discovered Van Diemen's Land (today Tasmania) without realising it was an island. The Dutch also arrived on the west coasts of two islands of New Zealand, which appeared to them to be unpleasant, as the Maori attacked the explorers (see Clark 12).

In the late 17th century, Englishman William Dampier sailed to the north-west coast of Australia, which was then called New Holland, later describing it as a lifeless place occupied by "the miserablest people in the world" whom he described as "setting aside their humane shape, they differ but little from brutes" (qtd. in Clark 13). Dampier's perception of the indigenous people of Australia pervaded until it was challenged by the myth of the noble savage in the second half of the 18th century (see White 3, 10). However, this more positive image of the Aboriginal people did not prevent the European settlers from killing the indigenous population in the frontier wars² (see *Digression: Dispossession of Aboriginal people*).

By the 18th century, the British were the only ones still looking for the great land, motivated by the mentality of the Enlightenment as well as scientific research. In 1786, Captain James Cook was ordered to explore the Pacific. He discovered the "noble savages" of Tahiti, circumnavigated both islands of New Zealand, and then decided to sail back to England via the east coast of New Holland, which turned out to be a decision of major importance (see Clark 14).

² Frances Peter-Littles discusses the paradoxical meanings of „noble“ and „savage“ and examines the question „why Europeans were able to revere or wish to preserve the noble while despising and hoping to destroy the savage“ (Peter-Littles) in great detail in his essay „Nobles and savages‘ on television“

On April 20th, 1770 the crew aboard the *Endeavour* first sighted Australia. Cook proceeded to sail up the east coast, carefully charting it without spending time closely examining the countryside. However, his experience of the land was very different from Dampier's descriptions. Cook and the botanist Joseph Banks described it as fertile, having found tall eucalyptus trees. On this voyage, they arrived at Botany Bay, which reinforced their perception of Australia as being made up of fertile soil. This led to his decision to take possession of the land under the name of New South Wales (see Clark 14; Wolf 6).

Cook and his crew also made contact with the Aboriginal people, but their attempts to establish friendly relations failed. From his observations, Cook was convinced that they were nomadic and lived in a pure state of nature. The indigenous people seemed to be happier than Europeans, living without the superfluities of western civilisation and in accordance with the land, which provided them with everything they needed (see Clark 15).

Although Cook agreed with Dampier with regards to Australia being unfit for commerce, his depiction of Australia was more positive than that of Cook's predecessors. His interest was more scientific than commercial, and although he agreed with Dampier that Australia was uninteresting from a purely economic point of view, he found its flora and fauna to be fascinating (see White 6). Of the Aboriginal people, whom he observed from a scientific standpoint, Cook said:

They may appear to some to be the most wretched people upon earth: but in reality they are far more happier than we Europeans [...] they seem'd to set not value upon anything we gave them nor would they ever part with any thing of their own for any one article we could offer them this in my opinion argues that they think themselves provided with all the necessarys of Life and that they have no superfluities (qtd. in Clark 15).

This description led to a new characterization of Australia's indigenous population: while some still viewed Aboriginal people as brutes, others began to idealise them as "noble savages" (see White 10). Despite his findings, Cook was convinced that he had not yet found the mysterious southland, and even indicated that it might not exist. His opinion did not change after a second expedition in 1774 (see Clark 15; Schaffeld 127).

After the search for Terra Australis was given up after Cook's second voyage, what remained of the idea of this great southland was the name "Australia", given to the continent in 1814. Matthew Flinders suggested the name in reminiscence of the long search for the fabled land once called Terra Australis Incognita (see Schaffeld 127).

2.1.2 Convict History

Britain's discovery of Australia coincided with a time of liberal revolution in both Europe and North America (see Schaffeld 127). In 1779, Sir Joseph Banks, who had been aboard the Endeavour, suggested Australia as location for a new penal colony. Before the United States of America gained independence, British convicts had been transported to the southern colonies in America (see Clark 16).

On January 20th, 1788, the First Fleet, comprised of eleven vessels under the command of Captain Arthur Phillip, landed at Botany Bay. They searched desperately for the promising land Cook and his companions had spoken of (see Clark 20), but, finding only dry land, Phillip decided to travel further north, where he found Port Jackson, providing the settlers with fresh water and the promised fertile soil. On January 26th, 1788, Phillip, who would later become the first governor of the new British territory New South Wales, raised the British Flag at Sydney Cove (see Clark 20).

The Eora, the Aboriginal people who originally lived on the foreshore that would become Sydney, were confused by the arrival of the British and the strange equipment they brought with them. For them, the British were barbaric, as they landed without permission and offered no respect. As the Eora wanted to assert their ownership of the resources and the land, they took fish out of British nets and sampled metal tools (see Broome 16). From the beginning, the encounters were rather antagonistic, as the Eora tried to defend their land (see Broome 17).

As the first food harvests failed, the new settlement depended on supplies from their old home. According to Clark, the harvests failed because of

the convicts' "aversion to labour [and n]either the fear of the lash, nor the promise of emancipation, nor special indulgences, overcame this innate aversion of labour" (Clark 23). British attempts to convince the Aboriginal people to abandon their "savage" life became part of the British civilisation effort in Australia, but this also failed. Rather than assimilating to British ways, the Aborigines were appalled by the whites, and, in turn, the Europeans were dismayed by the Aboriginal way of life (see Broome 17; Clark 33).

Phillips soon concluded that if the new colony was to prosper, the help of free settlers was needed. These settlers were given land on which the convicts worked (see Clark 24; Schaffeld 128). Convicts who proved themselves worthy were also given land, and were able to become their own masters after their sentences ended (see Clark 24; Schaffeld 129). Convicts who misbehaved faced hard punishments such as floggings of up to 1,000 lashes (see Clark 28)!

In September 1791, the first Irish convicts arrived in Australia, and brought Catholicism and disdain for everything British with them (see Clark 30). In December 1792, Phillips left New South Wales; the settlement being now administered by senior army officer Major Francis Grose (see Clark 24). From 1802 to 1803, Matthew Flinders and George Bass, who had already charted the coast south of Sydney, circumnavigated Australia, proving that New Holland and New South Wales were not divided by a sea (see Clark 29). At this time, the settlements in Sydney and Parramatta (a suburb of Sydney) expanded, Norfolk Island was occupied, and coal was discovered in Newcastle (see Clark 29). While the French started exploring the south coast of Australia, the British increased efforts to settle Port Jackson and Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania) in order to prevent any French settlements (see Clark 29).

In the belief that more land was needed to feed the ever-increasing numbers of people arriving in Sydney, Gregory Blaxland, William Lawson and William Charles Wentworth were given permission by governor Lachlan Macquarie to find a way to cross the Blue Mountains in 1813. After 21 days, they reached the heights of Mount Blaxland, from where they could see boundless grassland (see "Crossing the Blue Mountains"). This expedition was the first of many subsequent expeditions into the Australian interior (see Schaffeld 131).

At the same time, Governor Lachlan Macquarie decided that the colony required schools for Aboriginal children, with the purpose of “civilizing” them (see Clark 41). The new colony had become economically successful, and the Catholic Church was permitted as a second religion, in addition to the Anglican Church (see Schaffeld 129). In later years, the goal of civilising Aboriginal children was enforced by removing them from their families (see Digression: “Dispossession of Aboriginal people”). More and more, the settlements in New South Wales and Van Diemen’s Land were expanding, and no longer served their original purpose as destinations for the punishment of British convicts (see Clark 45; Schaffeld 129).

Eventually, Native-borns started to differ from their British ancestors in appearance, behaviour, and language. English observers described them as: “tall in person, slender of limb, and fair in complexion. They were capable of great feats of physical strength but were somewhat ungainly in their movements. By temperament they were quick to anger, though not vindictive towards those who provoked them. In speech most of them copied the flash or giddy language of their convict parents; in addition, they were developing a distinctive pronunciation of their own” (Clark 46).

These people believed that as the convicts had built the settlement, it rightfully belonged to them and their descendants. Free settlers and immigrants were regarded as foreigners (see Clark 46). This hostile attitude was furthered by the fact that the government no longer granted land to emancipists, but rather favoured immigrants in the distribution of land (see Clark 53, 55).

Regardless of this xenophobia, an increasing number of British subjects who wanted to leave Great Britain chose to immigrate to New South Wales. This raised the question of whether transportation to Australia was a suitable means of punishment. Hence, from 1823 onwards, and after changes in convict policy, it was proposed that New South Wales be treated as a British colony, no longer as a penitentiary for convicts (see Clark 50; Schaffeld 128).

In the mid 19th century, large protests against transportation took place, which led to the prohibition of transportation to any part of the colony in New South Wales as of 1 October 1850 (see Turnbull). Out of the dispute between

squatters and the opponents of the use of convict labour, the wish for self-government arose (see Clark 99). In 1851, the anti-transportation league was formed, whose aim was to prevent the establishment of English prisons or penal settlements in Australia (see Clark 99). As their flag the league chose the Southern Cross, which is now a part of the Australian flag.

The last shipment of convicts arrived in Western Australia in 1868. Approximately 162,000 convicts were transported to Australia on 806 ships during the period of transportation (see “Convicts and British colonies in Australia”). The extent to which the discovery of gold influenced the abolition of penal transportation to Australia will be discussed in the next chapter.

2.2 The Gold Rush

In January 1851, an Australian man named E. H. Hargraves returned to Sydney from the Californian goldfields intending to find gold in Australia. After some preparations, he did indeed discover gold in New South Wales where he expected it to be. On May 15th, 1851, the *Sydney Morning Herald* announced his discovery, thus initiating the Australian gold rush (see Clark 105).

In August of the same year, a rich field was discovered at Ballarat near Melbourne, Victoria. As before in New South Wales, workers deserted their employment in the hope of finding gold, nearly emptying the cities of men. However, a digger's life was hard; by December, the majority had returned to their homes and jobs (see Clark 105).

Soon, some diggers realised that finding gold was matter of pure chance, and those remaining on the fields were said to be idiots. However, those who were well equipped and tenacious very often were successful. They were not necessarily intelligent or well-educated, but muscles were worth a lot. Conditions on the fields were primitive, with poor cooking possibilities and housing (see Clark 106).

By the end of 1851, the news that gold had been found in Australia had spread around the world (see Clark 108). This initiated discussions of whether it was wise to continue the transportation of convicts, which was still taking place

in all parts of Australia, except for New South Wales. In his chapter on the discovery of gold in Australia, Clark quotes the British Secretary of State of 1851:

It would appear a solecism to convey offenders, at the public expense, with the intention of at no distant time setting them free, to the immediate vicinity of those very gold fields which thousands of honest labourers are in vain trying to reach (qtd. in Clark 108-109).

Hence, the discovery of gold was the final reason for the cessation of the transportation of convicts to any part of eastern Australia (see Clark 109)³.

2.2.1 Towards Liberalisation

White argues, “the discovery of gold had enormous social and economic effects on Australia” (White 36). Contemporary observers noticed the effect the life on the goldfields had on social values, saying that aristocratic feelings were dissolved (see Clark 109, 111). The values of equality and mateship – important to the men on the fields – were put into larger contexts and contrasted with the inequality and political privilege in contemporary society (see Clark 111). Stomp orators on the goldfields focussed on how cruelly the police treated people who could not afford mining licences. With these speeches, a tradition of hatred for the authorities was enforced. To this was added a feeling of grievance about the lack of political rights and the lack of any opportunity to acquire land (see Clark 111). The State Library of New South Wales claims on its webpage that, “the diggers’ defiance and open disdain of authority contributed to the formation of a uniquely Australian national identity” (“Eureka! The Rush for Gold”).

A rather infamous characteristic of Australian society springs from the fear the diggers had of the Chinese. Chinese people were accused of immorality as a result of the lack of women among them (of 24,062 Chinese working on the fields in Victoria in 1861, only six were women), and of taking their wealth to China (see Clark 115). The reason behind this accusation was the lowering of the price of labour (see Clark 115). Subsequently, the parliaments of New South Wales and Victoria both restricted Chinese

³ In 1868, the last convicts arrived in Western Australia. Approximately 10,000 convicts were transported between 1850 and 1868 (Clark 109).

immigration. Even though this racism disagreed with the ideal of mateship, in other ways the emerging egalitarian tendencies were further strengthened (see Clark 116–117).

2.2.2. Eureka Stockade – the Turning Point

In 1854, Victoria's new Governor Hotham decided to check diggers' mining licences twice a week. As a result of this law enforcement, tensions rapidly escalated. In October 1854, the hatred finally unfolded when a digger was murdered by a group of men, including a local publican who was a friend of the local magistrate, who was therefore not prosecuted or punished. The diggers believed that this was an act of corruption and bribery, and set fire to the publican's hotel (see Clark 112–113).

Soon after, the diggers formed the Ballarat Reform League under the leadership of Irishman Peter Lalor⁴ (see Clark 114; Schaffeld 133), whose members not only protested against mining licences, but also demanded voting rights and other steps that marked the start of Australia's democratisation process. However, the government did not reply to their claims. When the Reform League met again on 29 November, the diggers burnt their licences. This also marked the first occasion that the Southern Cross flag was displayed (see Clark 113; Wells).

On the next day they met again and constructed the famous stockade. But the Reform League still did not reach their goals and most diggers left the stockade after some days. Eventually only 150 men remained, who were then dislodged or killed by the government's troops (see Clark 113).

Even though the Eureka stockade was not successful, it became well known and served as inspiration in other fights for diggers' rights (see Clark 114).

Around 1900, poets wrote of Eureka as the starting point for all democratic achievements since that time. Henry Lawson wrote:

⁴ Years after the stockade he became a conservative politician in the Victorian legislative assembly (see Clark 114, Schaffeld 133).

But not in vain those diggers died. Their comrades may rejoice
 For o'er the voice of tyranny is heard the people's voice;
 It says: 'Reform your rotten law, the diggers' wrongs make right,
 Or else with them, our brothers now, we'll gather to the fight.' ('Eureka',
 Lawson qtd. in Clark 115).

Today the stockade is seen as being "a key element in the development of Australian identity and Australian democracy" ("Eureka Stockade").

2.3 Federation

In the aftermath of the diggers' rebellion, the democratic trend did not subside, and in the discussion about a possible change to the constitution, two rival camps developed. William C. Wentworth aimed at increasing the "squattocracy"'s power, while Henry Parkes (the "Father of Federation") aspired to a responsible government with the same rights for all citizens, not just the upper classes (see Schaffeld 133). Between 1855 and 1859, all Australian colonies except for Western Australia enacted their own constitutional laws, which granted them sovereignty in all matters that did not affect the Empire's interests (see Schaffeld 134).

At the end of the century, preparations for the foundation of a federation were made. Before the colonies could be united, all electors were able to vote for whether or not they wanted their colony to join the federation. Hence, even after the Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act 1900 had passed both houses of the British parliament, it was uncertain that all six colonies would be part of this Commonwealth. Western Australia was the last colony to vote on 31 July 1900⁵ (see Clark 167). Eventually, on 1 January 1901, the Commonwealth of Australia was proclaimed in Centennial Park, Sydney (see Clark 171). As the cities of Sydney and Melbourne could not come to an agreement about which was to become the new capital of the federation, they decided to name the city of Canberra as the capital city (see Clark 179; Schaffeld 135).

⁵ For exact details see "Documenting a Democracy. Commonwealth Constitution Act 1900 (UK)." *Museum of Australian Democracy*. 10 June 2012. <http://foundingdocs.gov.au/item-sdid-82.html>

2.3.1 “White Australia” Policy

The “One Man One Vote” regulation that granted voting rights to electors was implemented separately in each colony at different times, but carried the same restrictions in every case: women and Aboriginal people were excluded. The Australian xenophobia that had become apparent during the gold rush now grew and paved the way for the “White Australia” policy that would persist in the Commonwealth of Australia (see Schaffeld 134).

The cornerstone of this policy was the Immigration Restriction Act of 1901, which was in line with Australian nationalism and steps to restrict non-European immigration that had been taken since the period of the gold rush (see Schaffeld 134). After its implementation, immigrants had to pass a test if officers asked them to. Hence, “any person who 'when asked to do so by an officer fails to write out at dictation and sign in the presence of the officer, a passage of 50 words in length in a European language directed by the officer“ (“Documenting a Democracy. Immigration Restriction Act 1901”) could be denied entry or deported. Obviously, as any European language could be chosen, the majority of the people tested failed. Not only newly arriving immigrants, but also any person who had immigrated within the past five years could be tested (see Clark 177). This act was enforced until 1958 (see “Immigration Restriction Act 1901”).

Digression: Dispossession of Aboriginal People

A point that has to be made here is that the “White Australia” policy was in accordance with a process that had started long before: the act of child removal and the dispossession and killing of Aboriginal people.

When Europeans arrived at Australia, they believed in the “Great Chain of Being”, meaning that it was assumed that every plant and animal had a slot at this chain. It started with the lowest forms of life and ended with white man. Aboriginal people were considered as the missing link between the monkey and man (see White 8). As they were considered inferior to the European

intruders, their society's destruction was not seen as problematic to the white man.

This understanding of the world was replaced by Darwin's evolutionary theory, which was then transformed into Social Darwinism – a misapplication of Darwin's theory that justified the oppression of the Aboriginal people and of other native groups in the British colonies (see White 69). "Natural selection demanded that people battled each other, as well as nature. Extermination of the weaker [Aboriginal people] was automatic and inexorable" (Glover 82). Hence, as hegemonic beliefs indicated that the inferior race of people was doomed to extinction, everything that took place during the frontier wars happened in accordance with natural selection (see Glover 83).

However, as the Aboriginal population did not disappear, new steps had to be taken. In the attempt to keep (or rather make) the continent "white", the government in Victoria, and later in other colonies/states, passed the Aboriginal Protection Act in 1869 ("Aboriginal Protection Act 1869 (Vic)"). This act allowed the colony to control the Indigenous population's lives regarding marriage, residence, employment etc. This essentially forced Aboriginal people to leave their land and subsequently live on reserves. In 1886, a further act enabled Victoria's government to remove the children of mixed descent – so-called "half-castes" – from the reserves in order to integrate them into white society. The idea behind this was that Aboriginality could be "bred out" and would eventually peter out ("Aboriginal Protection Act 1869 (Vic)"). This was in accordance with social Darwinism, the ideology that assumed that the weaker group (in this case, the indigenous people) would die out due to social progress brought about by the stronger group (see Glover 84).

In New South Wales, the Board for the Protection of Aborigines was given the right to remove Aboriginal children to "such care and control as it thinks best" (qtd. in Pascoe 92) in 1915. In Queensland, the "Aboriginals Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act" of 1897 was officially passed in order to protect the Indigenous population from Opium. In fact, the act controlled the Aboriginal people of Queensland – the state with the highest number of surviving Indigenous people – and served as a model for similar acts in Western Australia (1905), the Northern Territory (1910), and South Australia

(1911) (“Aboriginals Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act 1897 (Qld)”).

How much the practice of child removal devastated Aboriginal peoples’ lives is suggested by recollections of affected people like Hilda Muir:

When that good old horse took me away from Borroloola on the long journey to Darwin, it changed my life forever... I stopped being an Aboriginal girl and became a half-caste girl. From someone who’d had so much, I was now someone who had nothing, with no past and an unknown future. (qtd. in Pascoe 94)

The Christian Church also played an important role in this scheme, as many of the removed children (later known as the “Stolen Generation”) were brought to missions. Depending on the place, their treatment in both the missions and on the reserves, where the adult Indigenous population was forced to live, was either marked by friendliness or cruelty (see Pascoe 95).

In 1939, the idea of biological absorption was abandoned and replaced by a policy of assimilation (see Pascoe 106). As the opposition to this grew in the 1960s, new policies had to be developed. Eventually, Gough Whitlam ended assimilation in favour of policies aimed at integration (see Pascoe 107).

2.4 Australia at War

Although Australian soldiers have fought in many wars over the years, only four of them will be discussed in greater detail below, as these appear to be the most important with regards to films: the First World War, the first war in which Australia participated as a nation; the Second World War, as well as the Korean and Vietnam Wars. The last two will be discussed in light of anti-communist policy and examined in terms of how far debates about Australia’s participation prepared the ground for the Whitlam-government, which made the film revival of the 1970s possible.

Leutenecker (183) argues that with its participation in wars, the new country was aiming to develop a feeling of nationhood: the Australian convict history was to be overcome by demonstrating to the world how brave the Australians were. One of the first wars in which the Australians’ worthiness was

to be proved was the Boer War (1899–1902). British soldiers were even seen as inferior to the Australian troops, who were “fitter, easier to train, and showed more initiative” (White 79).

2.4.1 The Great War

At the outbreak of the First World War, there was no doubt that Australia would support Great Britain. The young nation had two ambitions: to prove its loyalty towards the mother country, and prove – once again – that they were a brave nation able to fight. Despite the former aversion to Great Britain and the large number of citizens of Irish descent, there was no question about fighting with the mother country. The birth of the nation was imminent (see Leutenecker 185).

So great was the country’s enthusiasm that not even the fiercest critics would have guessed that of Britain’s colonies, Australia would suffer the biggest loss of human lives in relation to its number of citizens (see Schaffeld 136). Most of the men recruited –there was no compulsory military service – were first sent to a training camp in Egypt. After four and a half months, the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) were transferred to the Gallipoli peninsula, Turkey, together with troops from France and Britain (see Clark 184). What followed was a huge massacre – on both the allied and the Turkish sides. After just the first day, about 2,000 Australians had died or been wounded. The biggest success, as the Australian War Memorial website puts it, was “the evacuation of the troops on 19–20 December under cover of a comprehensive deception operation” (“Gallipoli”).

According to the numbers of the Australian Government’s Department for Veteran’s Affairs, 8,709 Australians and 2,721 New Zealanders died at Gallipoli. What one must keep in mind regarding the mystification of this battle (ANZAC Day is still celebrated every year on 25 April) and how the events of war are displayed in films, is the fact that nearly three times as many British soldiers (21,255) died in the course of action at Gallipoli. Their wounded men outnumbered the Australians’ as well, with 52,230 British soldiers wounded, compared to 24,193 ANZAC soldiers (“The Gallipoli Campaign”).

Australian historians have enforced the feeling of the Australian people having been deceived by the British for a long time, neglecting the number of casualties and historical facts - Australian losses were the highest in relation to the number of citizens, but not the highest in total number of losses (see Leutenecker 185).

However, Gallipoli as well as the whole First World War can both be said to have contributed to the rise of the feeling of nationhood. As the Australians recognised that Great Britain had other aims, the states felt more connected to one another, and nationalism displaced the feeling of being obliged to the British Empire. The “diggers” – the soldiers who fought at war – became the new icon of national consciousness (see Leutenecker 185; Schaffeld 136).

2.4.2 Second World War

On September 3rd, 1939, Australia entered the Second World War, after Germany invaded Poland. Prime Minister Robert Gordon Menzies – “a man who believed the British to be the paragons of civilization” (Clark 207) – declared that as Great Britain had declared war upon Germany, Australia was at war as well.

The Australian rejection of the British Empire after the First World War had long since yielded to cultural and economic dependence on Great Britain (see Leutenecker 186). The difference between the Second World War and the First was that now the Australian continent was under direct threat of an attack by the Japanese.

In August 1941, Menzies was persuaded to resign. In the following months, the Labor Party took over the government and decided to change tactics by regarding British support as less important than that of other nations (see Leutenecker 187). As the Japanese forces approached the northern coast of Australia, and Britain declared that they wanted to beat Hitler first, Australia had to search for new allies in their war against Japan. So, the United States became the new protecting power of Australia. In the hopes of preventing

fighting on home soil, the strategy of “forward defence” was pursued – without success; Japan bombed Darwin and Broome (see Clark 211; Leutenecker 187).

What remained – in diplomatic terms - after the Second World War, were strengthened ties between Australian and the United States (see Leutenecker 187).

2.4.3 The Wars in Korea and Vietnam

From 1945 to 1949, Joseph Benedict Chifley, of the Labor Party, was Australia’s Prime Minister. During his time in office, Australia encouraged migration from all over Europe, and the Australian National University of Canberra was founded. In 1949, the Labor government floundered on the question of how to react towards communism. The party lost the election in 1949, and the new (and old) Liberal Prime Minister was the omnipresent Menzies, who was most definitely against communism. Hence, Australia fought on the side of the United States in the Korean War, but also recognized that education was the key for a communism-free world (see Clark 283–284). Australia developed the Colombo Plan for the achievement of both political stability and economic progress. Together with Canada, Ceylon (Sri Lanka), India, Pakistan, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom, Australia invested money in the education of southeast Asians: experts were sent to Asia and Asian people were given grants to study at Australian universities (see Clark 222).

Menzies was not only pro-American; he was first and foremost an Anglophile and eager to prove his loyalty to the British crown. His faith in British institutions and British civilisation never ceased. However, Australia’s cultural and economic dependence on Great Britain declined as the nation’s self-confidence increased. This was encouraged by the high standard of living, and expressed by the demand for Australian primary products (see Clark 225).

Only poets, novelists, and painters questioned this materialistic way of life, and were convinced that “only the destruction of bourgeois society could liberate the creative gifts of the people” (see Clark 226).

In the Vietnam War, Australia was once more forced to prove where they stood between capitalism and communism. By the mid 1950s Menzies had sent troops to south-east Asia who were there to fight against communist terrorists (see Clark 227). In 1964, the Prime Minister introduced a selective system of conscription for military service, and those who were selected could be sent overseas for two years. In 1965, Australian troops were sent to Vietnam, which was heavily opposed by the Labor Party, who were sceptical of the “forward defence” strategy. Only few people supported this protest, as Clark describes it dramatically, “it seemed as if the whole continent was to be brought under the influence of bourgeois society” (228).

2.5 Fresh Wind

In 1966 Menzies retired. The new Liberal leader was Harold Holt, who not only continued his predecessor’s anti-communist policy, but also enforced it, and became famous for his enthusiasm for American policy, which he expressed with the phrase “All the way with L.B.J.” (President Lyndon B. Johnson) (see Schaffeld 139).

In 1967, Australians started to question his policy. The Labor Party - with its new leader Gough Whitlam - began to be taken more seriously – their voices of dissent now being heard louder and louder (see Clark 229).

In December 1967, Holt was reported missing, believed drowned. At this time, the Vietnam War was generally perceived as destroying Australia’s values and people with left-leaning politics in particular protested against this war, which they considered senseless (see Wolf 19; Schaffeld 139). Hence, its end was a great relief.

Throughout the 1960s, the whole “Australian way of life” and its values were questioned by the younger generation. They felt a need for change⁶ (see White 167–169). As a result, the Labor Party was able to win votes, and on 2 December 1972, the reformer and democrat Whitlam was elected Prime Minister. His three great aims were “to promote equality, to involve the

⁶ For further discussion see Chapter 3

Australian people in the decision-making processes, and to liberate the talents and uplift the horizons of the Australian people” (see Clark 240).

Whitlam wanted to reform the educational and health care systems, which he regarded as premises for the establishment of the equality of all citizens. He granted land rights to Aboriginal people, abolished the selective military service, and ended Australia’s role as a colonial power (see Wolf 20–21; Schaffeld 140). Furthermore, he strongly advocated for and financed the arts. For example, he supported Australian literature and painters. In 1973, Patrick White, an Australian author, was the first Australian to be awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature, which initiated a boom of films with nationalist content (see Wolf 21).

The “White Australia” policy was now abandoned. An increasing number of Asian immigrants came to Australia and enriched the Australian culture with their own traditions (see Leutenecker 189). Whitlam was the patron of the national cultural life, but his government was dissolved in 1975 because of unfortunate declines in the economy. Even though he could not be blamed entirely, as the Senate was conservative and blocked all efforts to support the economy, he was forced to abandon his position. Afterwards, the situation became worse, and the rich became richer while the poor lost more and more money (see Wolf 21–22).

The 1970s and 1980s saw the fading importance of the monarchy. In 1984, Australia got its own national anthem. Slowly, Australians became proud of being a multicultural society, and no longer tried to construct their culture as one made up of citizens of Anglo-Celtic descent (see Wolf 22). However, the picture the government painted was idealised, and the concept of multiculturalism in these years differs from what it denotes now, as migrants then were still supposed to adopt an Australian way of life (see Tampke 151).

2.6 The 1990s to Present Day

In 1992, the High Court of Australia recognized the legal concept of native title in Australia with the Mabo case, thus declaring the previous legal

concept of “terra nullius” (which had implied that before white settlement started, the land had had no possessors) to be invalid. In the following year, the government passed the Native Title Act, a law that gave land back where native titles existed (see Broome 235–240).

Since 1998, Australia has celebrated National Sorry Day, which recognizes the removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders children from their families and the dispossession of the Indigenous population (see Broome 278).

The end of the 1990s saw a revival of racism during John Howard’s time in office, as his government only wanted British immigrants (see Wolf 24). Pauline Hanson in particular, a candidate of the Liberal party, became infamous for her racist ideas. Even though she was kicked out of the party, Howard sympathised with her ideas (see Wolf 24). Other aspects which marked the Howard administration were the denial of the “stolen generation” and the demand for the re-establishment of assimilation, as well as his refusal to apologise to the Aboriginal people (see Broome 278)⁷ and to join the demonstration in May 2000, on which occasion more than 200,000 Australians walked across the Harbour Bridge to express their support for the Indigenous people’s demands for redemption (see Wolf 25).

The 1990s also saw a rise in Islamophobia. Hence, after the attack on The World Trade Centre on 11 September 2001, Australia joined the “War on Terror” (see Wolf 25).

⁷ It took until 2008 for an Australian Prime Minister (Kevin Rudd) to apologize to the Aboriginal people (Pascoe 126).

3. National Identity

At the very beginning of this chapter, a question has to be answered: What is a nation? Benedict Anderson claims that a nation “is an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign” (6). It is constituted of people who share a set of values, and while they might be divided in terms of religion, ethnicity, etc., they are nonetheless connected and part of the nation. As a nation is too big for each citizen to meet each of their fellow citizens, the idea of communion they believe in can only be imagined. It is imagined in its community because despite the fact that inequalities occur, each member thinks of the nation as a horizontal relationship with their fellow members. Anderson argues that the willingness of so many people to die for their “nation” in wars is proof for this claim (7).

Communication technologies like print and, in later years, film and other media have helped connect people. Although these media also enable cross-national communities, they first and foremost create national ties, and “the nation remains perhaps the most important wellspring of group identity” (Castan 227). People who are members of this group feel connected by a certain set of shared characteristics and/or values and still continue their lives as individuals (see Castan 226–227).

A less pluralistic account of the nation describes it as “a social formation which is built on the real foundations of the occupation of a bounded territory by a people who are both unified and singular because of ethnocultural and/or language, and/or religious unity” (Castan 225). Members of the nation share a common past and are distinct from other groups. This understanding of what a nation is “may be called European nationalism” (Castan 226).

For the discussion of Australia’s sense of nation, Castan argues that if an Australian national community were based on the first concept described here, it would be a pluralistic and multicultural community. Within this nation, no group or ideology could become superior to the others, because every nationalistic tendency would be levelled out by multiculturalism (228).

Interestingly, for a variety of reasons, Australia has felt more British at some stages in history than others, which made it difficult for its citizens to

develop a sense of community. However, as the Australian population consists not merely of people of British descent but is a mixture of various ethnicities, an Australian community could develop embedded in its multicultural context (see Castan 229).

Wolf argues that since any national identity is constructed by its members and is not a given entity, the question is not whether the image of the country is wrong or right. Rather, it is a question of the image's function and the interests it represents (see Wolf 36). In the following sections, Australia's often controversial representation will be discussed, along with the development of national sentiment and the parts played by literature and film, respectively, in the process of defining what Australia is and what it has the potential to be.

3.1 Australia's Image

Australia's white history had already started long before it was actually discovered by the Europeans. In the minds of the people, the continent existed as the mythical "Great Southland", or "Terra Australis Incognita", thought to contain fertile soil and gold. It was a great disappointment when neither of these were found by the first Europeans who landed on Australia's coasts. Accordingly, the first descriptions of the continent presented it in a negative light: "The land was barren and fly-pestered; the water was brackish if any could be found; the trees were stunted and bore no fruit; and the animals that might provide food were not plentiful" (White 2). Obviously, the image of Australia changed dramatically from the lauded "Southland" to the unwelcoming continent, inhabited by "the miserablest people in the world" (White 2), with whom Europeans could not trade goods and who could not be used as labourers.

This image did not change until Captain James Cook sailed to Australia in 1770. Cook was less interested in commerce than in science, and his passengers included two astronomers, two naturalists, two professional artists, and a scientific assistant (see White 5). When the party returned to England, the voyage's scientific purpose had been fulfilled. With the reception of their findings in Britain, Australia's image had to be redefined, as it was full of "vast

riches” (White 6), at least from a scientific point of view. Not only the image changed: Cook’s discoveries also had an effect on the concept of the chain of being⁸.

The first settlers in Australia were a group of individuals who had to develop a national community into which they could integrate (see Platz 280). What is striking about this is that from the beginning of European settlement, writers’ descriptions and definitions of ‘Australia’ have been connected to the environment (see Turner, “Studying Australian Culture” 5). The unique Australian flora and fauna, including the platypus, the marsupials, Ayers Rock, and many more, offered a large number of reference points for the creation of a national identity (see Wolf 36). This use of nature as a source for the creation of identity will be further discussed in Chapter 4.

For those interested in the building of an Australian nation the ‘national type’ was formed as a response to the landscape. For others (especially academics), Australia was simply inferior to Britain and the national type was not worth being analysed. This proved an influential opinion, and, as Turner explains: “As a consequence, the academic study of Australian culture took quite some time to establish itself, lagging well behind the popular constructions of a national identity” (Turner, “Studying Australian Culture” 5).

Platz explains the relationship between the search for a national identity and the environment in anthropological terms (see Platz 264). In this approach, humans are defined as possessing the ability not only to integrate into a new environment, but also to actively adapt it according to their needs, so that familiar structures can be applied to the strange environment. In this self-constructed culture, humans live together and share their wants and needs, but remain individuals. Before this culture is created, they cannot feel at home (see Platz 265). But not only settlers in the bush had problems making themselves familiar with the new and often bewildering flora and fauna. In the cities, too, life was difficult. Despite great efforts to mimic the British lifestyle, the lack of monuments denoted the lack of culture (see Platz 269). The absence of the familiar culture and the uncertainty this caused would be felt over the next centuries, identifiable in Australian literary texts: “thrust as it were into a cultural

⁸ see Chapter 2, Digression

vacuum, without the support of a sanctioned tradition, [the literary artist's] central task became that of authenticating his own uncertain self in an unfamiliar world" (Heseltine 2). Platz argues that this is the reason these 'young' nations like Australia, the United States, or Canada, focus on the future, and eagerly anticipate events taking place in the world. As they have no past to draw on, they have to write history in what lies in the future (for example with taking part in wars or the with contributing to the invention of new technology etc.) (see Platz 266).

Another reason for Australia's extreme focus on the future can be seen in the fact that few people arrived there deliberately. Most of the first European settlers⁹ were convicts who were deported to a land that the British depicted as Hell on Earth. Botany Bay became "a weapon in the control of the working-class crime in Britain" (White 20). The remembrance of these years was often blocked from people's memories (and in later years it was revived in stories, which related to this topic from a different angle and highlighted the injustice of the system and the oppression by the British) (see Platz 267). These formative years of nation building are discussed in the following sections.

3.2 The Convict Experience

Even before transportation began, Britain was eager to establish a negative depiction of Australia in people's minds. The threat of transportation became a powerful means of deterring crime (see Platz 267).

Contemporary reports from convicts prove that being transported to Australia was an unpleasant experience. Those sent to Australia were tortured both physically and mentally, and death was often the only solution to their miserable situation (cf. Baker). Because of the circumstances of their arrival there, none of the first Europeans arriving in Australia were eager to develop a sense of national identity (see Wolf 37).

Meanwhile, back in England, the middle-class feared the returning convicts who all carried "the Botany Bay stigma" (White 20). Charles Dickens

⁹ "Settlers" always connotes European settlers

deals with this fear in his novel *Great Expectations*, in which the ex-convict Magwitch is never able to shed his convict-image.

According to Dalrymple, a feeling that developed and can still be found is vulnerability. He argues that the experiences of the first people who arrived in Australia, their consciousness of being few in number, in addition to their being easy prey to Britain's enemies were all factors which left early Australians with a sense of vulnerability (see Dalrymple 6).

Hughes illustrates that even in the 20th century, Australia's convict history was a problem for upper-middle-class Australians: "None wanted to have convict ancestors, and few could be perfectly sure that some felon did not perch like a crow in their family tree. Fifty years ago, convict ancestry was a stain to be hidden" (Hughes 158).

On the other hand, working people and people of Irish descent treated their pasts differently, turning their memories into stories of bushrangers, and idealising their ancestors as the founders of mateship (see Hughes 158).

In folklore, these convicts were people of the lower classes punished for crimes that they had committed out of despair, such as stealing bread to avoid starvation. However, as McQueen shows in his article on convicts, less than one per cent of those transported were poachers, and approximately three per cent were sentenced for political reasons. "Indeed, the majority came from the professional criminal elements in the major cities" (McQueen 45).

3.3 Free Settlers and Mediocrity

The next settlers to arrive in Australia after the convicts were a mixture of those who had fled starvation in Britain and Ireland, and members of the middle-class who left with the aim of supporting the new settlement (see Platz 267).

Event though these immigrants were free settlers, the British regarded them as inferior in social status, influenced by the belief that the convicts' depravity was not only passed to the next generations, but also that it was

contagious. Regardless of whether immigrants came deliberately or not, or of their social class, they all were seen as infected by the depravity of New South Wales. For the people of 19th century England, “to be Australian, whether convict, native-born or free settler, was to be tainted with the brutality and depravity of the convict system” (White 23). The understandable result of this was a low image of Australia.

At the same time, those in positions of power who needed convicts for the work on their stations promoted a more positive image of Australia, and did not agree with allegations about the settlement’s immorality. Also native-borns and capitalists who wanted to attract free settlers opposed this negative image (see White 25). One example can be found in William C. Wentworth¹⁰, a native-born Australian, who was proud to be Australian and expressed this in his poem “Australasia” (see Platz 272; White 25).

Literature supported the more positive view of Australia’s future. The convicts themselves were portrayed as morally inferior, but authors like Wentworth and Allan Cunningham doubted that this would be inherited by the following generations. Native-born Australians of convict descent longed for a new identity, but first they had to dispose of the immoral image the continent had.

In the 1830s, these people started to feel Australian. They talked, behaved, and dressed differently from the newly arriving immigrants (see Wolf 38). Through their influence, the image of Australia changed once again, and soon even the convicts were perceived in a better way. A revealing example of the dominant thinking during this period can be found in a quote by the historian

¹⁰ William C. Wentworth was the son of the convict Catherine Crowley and Dr. D’Arcy Wentworth. He was not only an explorer (together with William Lawson and Gregory Blaxland he crossed the Blue Mountains in 1813), but also an author, landowner, lawyer and politician. In 1819, he published the book *A Statistical, Historical, and Political Description of the Colony of New South Wales and Its Dependent Settlements in Van Diemen’s Land, With a Particular Enumeration of the Advantages Which These Colonies Offer for Emigration and Their Superiority in Many Respects Over Those Possessed by the United States of America*, which contributed to the encouragement of migration. Wentworth was an emancipist, committed to equal political rights for ex-convicts and smaller free settlers, free press, trial by jury, self-government, etc. in the weekly newspaper *Australian*, which he founded together with lawyer Dr. Robert Wardell. He was Vice President of the Australian Patriotic Association and was elected to the Council in 1843. After the end of transportation, the democratic party’s major aim was the breaking up of the squatters’ dominance. As Wentworth was a landowner, he sided with the Conservative Party representing the squatters’ interests (cf. Persse).

Arnold Wood, who asked: “Is it not clearly a fact that the atrocious criminals remained in England, while their victims, innocent and manly, founded the Australian democracy?” (qtd. in White 27).

This change in perception happened gradually. Australia was no longer considered a land of depravity, but became rather a place of interest for emigrants, “a paradise for those to whom Britain offered nothing” (White 36). Unsurprisingly, the number of new immigrants exploded during the gold rush in the 1850s. This and the tales of returners made it difficult for Britain to enforce the deterrent function that Australia and the threat of transportation held in the people’s minds (see White 30).

In the 1830s and 1840s, a romantic vision of Australia prevailed, in which the country was portrayed as a kind of “extension of rural England” (White 34), providing people with opportunities to gain wealth, as well as enough food – a prospect which was especially attractive to the Irish, who experienced the Great Famine of the 1840s). Australia was depicted as a “workingman’s paradise” and even though workers in Australian factories were also exploited, when compared to England conditions were said to be better (see White 42).

Works such as Samuel Sidney’s *The Three Colonies of Australia* encouraged this image:

AUSTRALIA— New South Wales— Botany Bay— these are the names under which, within the memory of men of middle age, a great island-continent at the antipodes has been explored, settled, and advanced from the condition of a mere gaol, or sink on which our surplus felony Avas poured — a sheepwalk tended by nomadic burglars — to be the wealthiest offset of the British crown — a land of promise for the adventurous — a home of peace and independence for the industrious — an El Dorado and an Arcadia combined, where the hardest and the easiest best-paid employments are to be found, where every striving man who rears a race of industrious children may sit under the shadow of his own vine and his own fig-tree — not without work, but with little care — living on his own land, looking down the valleys to his herds — towards the hills to his flocks, amid the humming of bees, which know no winter (Sidney 17).

In every respect, Australia was presented as the counterpart to industrialised Britain, where the lower classes were exploited, and the air was polluted (see White 34). As life in Australian cities did not differ so far from life in European cities, writers like Henry Lawson and A.B. Paterson promoted the

uniqueness of Australia's outback in their stories, and, in the 1880s, painters of the Heidelberg School used impressions of the bush and of life in the outback for their paintings (see Wolf 38), glorifying it as the new and real Australia (see White 98). Although poets and painters had worked on the Australian landscape before, this generation, consisting mostly of Australian-borns, claimed to be the first people to see it from the Australian perspective, and therefore the only ones who were able to portray the country correctly (see White 108).

This is also the time in which the dichotomy of bush vs. city, with all its implication, has its beginnings, as well as the time when the image of Australia as a rural society with equal chances for every man was created (see White 34). In their paintings and stories, the Australian artists of this period created an idealised world into which they incorporated their own bohemian values. White mentions that "most chose the bush as an imaginative refuge" (102). This is especially interesting as these writers and painters who promoted the bush as real Australia (good examples are Henry Lawson or A.B. Paterson) lived in cities and only occasionally visited the outback to gather writing material (see White 97–98).

Australia's image among those not interested in emigration remained generally negative: the bourgeois society believed that social or economical failure was the fault of the individual and that the system could not be blamed (see White 37). According to this belief, Australia was portrayed as "the dustbin of the unwanted and unsuccessful" (Hobsbawm, qtd. in White 38). As intellectuals shared this view, it is not surprising that academic discourse held Australia and anything to do with its nationhood in low esteem (see Turner, "Studying Australian Culture" 5) and accused it of lacking aristocratic excellence, which in turn condemned the Australian society to mediocrity. Even the works of Australian writers and painters were not taken seriously since new societies like Australia "lacked the aristocratic elite which made great art and literature possible" (White 56; for further discussion on disrespect for Australian culture see Chapter 3.4).

The other side blamed the system for individuals' personal failures and depicted Australia as a haven for those who had been ruined by British society (see White 38). However, the predominant representation of Australia was that

it accommodated second-rate people, and that its society was inferior to that of the British (see White 40). Interestingly, this belief could also be found in Australia, where it was used to maintain the myth of equality: “in a land of promise where all white men were equal, success and failure were the result of individual character” (White 44). Only few actually had the chance to benefit from the working situation in Australia; women, children, Aboriginal people, and the Chinese were excluded from these rights from the beginning. Nevertheless, the image of the “workingman’s paradise” prevailed (see White 45-46).

Despite the more positive image that should have developed over the next decades, the collective feeling of inferiority – the cultural cringe – that was the result of the disregard from those who remained in Europe could not be overcome for a long time (see Wolf 37). In the following section, this inferiority complex will be further discussed.

3.4 A New Britain or Another America?

As demonstrated above, any approach to Australian national identity is necessarily influenced by its position vis a vis Britain throughout most of the 19th century. Until the foundation of the federation in 1901, Australia was not a sovereign country, but a continent consisting of six different and often rival colonies, united only in their allegiance to Britain (see White 63). Platz argues that even after 1901, Australia was not completely sovereign, but remained heavily dependent on Britain and British values. So strong was the old country’s influence that W. K. Hancock classified Australians as “independent Australian Britons” (Hancock, qtd. in Platz 282).

However, the development of some kind of common sense of identity had begun with the belief in an Australian type a couple of years before 1901 that remained influential well into the 1950s (see White 64).

Accordingly, in the late 19th century, as of approximately 1880 (see Platz 280), Australians put a lot of effort into emphasising the difference between their culture and that of the mother country as part of the search for their own

national identity (see White 47). This “national contest against the British” continued over the centuries, and “Australian narratives routinely pit an Australian working class hero against a British aristocratic system to produce a nationalist response” (Turner, *Making it National* 48). The “Australian vs. British” conflict has had long-lasting effects: although the tradition of defining Australia as opposed to Britain is said to be outdated, it still occurs in current debate, and is “operated as a means of making sense of Australian events, characters and stories” (Turner, *Making it National* 51).

Icons such as the bushman and the pioneer were also put forward in the search for the typical Australian, and were each portrayed as representative of Australia’s national character. This is the starting point of a problem that many former colonies have to face, namely, that of separating themselves from the colonial culture and of defining their own. An Australian inferiority complex can be seen as having arisen from this contrast, and the “cultural cringe” has still not been fully overcome, as the following discussion will show.

The new societies of former colonies – the United States, Canada, Australia, etc., – were considered to be politically advanced, but at the same time, inferior to Britain and Europe because they were new and democratic (White 56). However, to the new societies, in turn, Britain and Europe could be regarded as places full of poverty and exploitation of the working class (see White 48).

Australia’s relationship with the United States was important in the development of an Australian national identity in that the U.S. was regarded as a role model by ‘young’ nations. It was the first of the British colonies to gain independence, and it was believed by European scholars of that time that all of the other colonies would take the same road. To European minds, America was in complete opposition to the “old world”, and all the other colonies were somewhere in the middle. This way of looking at the former colonies implied that Australia could not have an independent identity, but would finally develop into another America or another Britain (see White 49–50).

The anticipation that Australia would mimic America was especially important in political terms. When the issue of democracy arose in the 1840s,

Australia was once again compared with America - the discussion being heavily influenced by Alexis de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* (see White 53). Although it was widely accepted that all nations were moving towards equality, democracy still carried with it the fear of mob-rule (see White 53–54).

During the Australian gold rush, the American and Australian democracies were finally no longer equated since the lynch law that ruled on the Californian gold fields was not adopted in Australia. This fact was attributed to the influence of the large British population and its good manners (see White 55–56).

It took until the 20th century for the dominance of British culture to gradually diminish, a process that was strongly influenced by Australians of Irish, Welsh, and Scottish descent, who despised everything British. Out of this wish for a completely different society, the desire for an Australian national identity was born. Many characteristics of the Australian type have their roots in the Irish rejection of hierarchy and authority. This population group held tight to their values and characteristics attributed to the Irish – for example their affinity to drinks or their generosity – became characteristics also associated with Australian people (see Wolf 49–50). However, particularly in the 1960s, Anglophilia was a widespread phenomenon, the best example being Prime Minister Robert Menzies.

An important consequence of the years of reduced British influence was the rise of protectionism. This phenomenon started in the late 19th century, when Australian-born poets and painters demanded protection from the works of foreign writers and artists (they wanted their works to be favoured and claimed that only Australian-borns were capable of writing about the land). Their demands were answered by the implementation of the protection laws (see Chapter 2). In the 1920s, the world around Australia was considered evil and “only Australia with her British inheritance was safe” (White 144). This was questioned in the 1930s: “Isolation from Europe had been seen in the 1920s as a virtue, protecting Australia from the decadence, war and morbidity of Europe [...] By the late 1930s, many thought isolation had led to Australia's backwardness, insularity and lack of sophistication” (White 144–145). This change in perception, in addition to the depression of the 1930s, shattered

Australia's self-confidence, leaving the nation with the bitter feeling of being isolated (see White 145).

In the following years, it was not only in the interest of Australian industrialists to encourage a more confident image of Australia; the United States, competing with Britain for trade, profited as well, as they "were intent on breaking into the empire trade arrangements so favourable to Britain" (White 150). Despite the turn towards openness, the policy of protectionism continued for a long time, as intellectuals continued to rely on it (see Chapter 5).

3.5 Ward and his Contemporaries

Until the middle of the 20th century, British disdain for Australian culture prevented intellectuals from exploring its society; until the 1930s the continent's history was not even taught at Australian universities (see Wolf 49).

When the study of Australia's culture finally began in the 1950s, it was the national character of the 1890s that was analysed, and as a result of this attention, the image was further instilled in people's minds as to what the typical Australian was (see Turner, "Studying Australian Culture" 6). An important example of a work written in this tradition is Russel Ward's *Australian Legend*: "Ward's work is notable as the point where the two disciplinary traditions [historical and literary studies] converge, most clearly in its extensive use of literary material as historical evidence" (Turner, "Studying Australian Culture" 7–8).

Instead of analysing historical facts, these historians drew on literary works, for example those of Henry Lawson, for their analysis. Lawson's stories, as well as those of his contemporaries, were concerned with mateship, the outback experience, and convict history (Heseltine 7) – the majority of protagonists were white men living in the outback. For Ward and like-minded contemporaries, Australia's national identity (and not identities) definitely existed (Turner, "Studying Australian Culture" 10), and "their academic nationalism paralleled the literary nationalism of the 1890s" (White 154).

The legacy of this way of thinking can still be felt when looking at the results of a study conducted in 2003: in the study conducted with 1,242 students between the ages of ten to 18 in Queensland in 2003, the participants had to rate how much they agreed with given items such as Well-being, Democracy, Uniqueness and diversity of environment etc. The results showed that especially children of the second and later generations strongly identified with Australia, with the identity factor Democracy receiving most agreement (see Purdie).

3.6 The Australian Way of Life

Despite the celebration of a national type in Ward's work, this idea was gradually replaced by the concept of an "Australian way of life" from the 1940s on. During the years of the Cold War, the importance of racial purity was reduced: instead of promoting the "White Australia" policy, people of various countries could now immigrate to Australia, but they were expected to assimilate – the same expectation was held of Australia's aboriginal population. It is important to note, however, that this way of life – *not* ways of life – was never clearly defined, hence, immigrants could always be accused of not having properly assimilated, and could be discriminated against as a result of this failing (see White 160). Additionally, the immigration of Asian people was kept to a minimum until the official end of the "White Australia" policy in 1973 (see Tampke 148).

A major aspect of the Australian way of life concerned the image to which it was closely related: "Australia as a sophisticated, urban, industrialised, consumer society" (White 161). While the concept of the Australian type was measured against the stereotypical British, the Australian way of life was connected to and measured against the United States' society (see White 162).

It took until the 1960s for the first rebellion against the concept of "the Australian way of life" as well as the suburban lifestyle it was associated with. Youth culture of the time identified it "with an older generation which, in the view of their children, had sold out to consumerism" (White 168). It was also criticised

for being sexist and racist, leading to demands for integration instead of assimilation.

3.7 Rewriting National Identity and History

It took until the 1970s for the discourse about Australia's identity to change, and for questions to arise about how Australia was represented internationally, and to what effect. This was also a period of revival for Australian film, and "it was not surprising that much attention was directed to the relation between Australian film and Australian culture. The politics of representation [...] dominate Australian film and (to a lesser extend) television criticism and history throughout the 1970s and early 1980s" (Turner, "Studying Australian Culture" 14). In addition to the media, multiculturalism, Aboriginal people, and feminism are now central aspects of contemporary cultural studies (see Platz 264).

The "new nationalism" that came with Prime Minister Gough Whitlam's election in the 1970s was related to intellectuals (see Platz 284) and the revival of Australia's cultural life. Even though films and drama portrayed the worst of Australia's features – for example, the poor treatment of Aboriginal people – they were absorbed by the "new nationalism and applauded for their Australianness" (White 170).

In this context, one must not forget that the 1970s were a period of recession, leading to a crisis that led to some escapist tendencies. One characteristic of escapism is the uncritical use of media to flee from reality (see Platz 279) – hence it can be argued that the rise of film at the time was also – at least partly – the result of escapism. The government in turn used the media to influence Australians¹¹ (see Platz 280).

Turner argues that the nationalism of this time was anything but "new"; rather it was a revival of the values celebrated in the 1890s. "The Australian it celebrated [...] was most often very familiar: the cheeky, resourceful larrikin who

¹¹ "Die Medien tragen somit entscheidend zu einer ökonomischen Instrumentalisierung der australischen Nation bei, indem sie zugleich die Entpolitisierung des zum Konsumenten umfunktionierten Bürgers nachhaltig fördern" (Platz 280).

populates Henry Lawson's stories and who was enshrined in the 'national type' in the work of Russel Ward" (Turner, *Making it National* 5).

The new part of this revived rather than new nationalism was that Aboriginal people and other ethnicities were no longer excluded from it, but, at least officially, accepted as part of the multicultural society (see Platz 285) – although one must still consider that racial prejudice had and has still not been overcome. Actually, Turner claims that the 1980s saw a "revival of rural-nationalist mythologies, reclaiming the experiences of those in the country towns or on the lands as fundamental the [the Australian] national character" (Turner, *Making it National* 9). This nationalism represents a single type and is consequently very rigid. It took until the 1990s for the nation to finally question the old concept of the Australian character and to demand new forms of representation. The voices of criticism that challenged the old tradition came from the fields of feminism and multiculturalism, as well as from the Aboriginal people (see Turner, *Making it National* 7).

4. What does it mean to be Australian?

In his book *The Australian Legend* – which is in many other respects out of date – Ward (1) argues that national character is neither inherited, nor completely invented. It rather springs from a group's past experience and from how they think they are supposed to behave. This is a crucial point in the discussion of the formation of culture in a former colony like Australia: unlike Britain and other European countries with a well-documented history, “young” nations like the United States or Australia do not have this background – to be more precise: their white past is short, and the long history of the indigenous people is ignored¹².

The typical Australian was represented in the “outback employees, the semi-nomadic drovers, shepherds, shearers, bullock-drivers, stockmen, boundary-riders, station-hands, and others of the pastoral industry” (Ward 2). Obviously, this description not only ignores the fact that the majority of Australians live in cities and do not conform to this stereotype in any way, it also excludes women, Aboriginal people, and people of non-Anglo-Celtic descent.

4.1 The Australian Bush – adored and despised

As discussed in Chapter 3, Australia's landscape – or the meanings people attributed to it – was important in the search for a national identity in Australia. Any new immigrant to Australia had to come to terms with their new environment and its ‘antipodian’ character, and Australian writers searched for a new identity based on their experience with and ideas about the bush (see Stilz

¹² When the first white settlers arrived in Australia, it was by no means “terra nullius” as the Europeans claimed. Approximately 300,000 Aborigines lived on the continent when Captain Cook's ship landed at Australia in 1788. The Indigenous population had lived there for more than 50,000 years, during which these semi-nomadic hunter-gatherers adapted to Australia's environment. The Aboriginal people were composed of approximately 500 different tribes, each living in a distinct territory and each of them speaking different dialects. They had a very special relationship to their land, which was shaped by their religion. According to their belief their ancestors created every single rock, tree, etc. during the so-called Dreamtime (the time in which the world was created) who now lived in the objects they had made. As the Aborigines did not consider the land to belong to them, but believed that they were part of nature, it was easy for the Europeans to claim the land rights for themselves, who had a totally different understanding of nature and did not understand that even though the Aboriginal people did not possess it, they still had the right to live on it. It took until the 1980s, 1990s until the legal concept of native title was accepted (see Broome 13–25, 235–237).

139). The bush became the “central image against which the Australian character measures himself” (Schaffer 52).

For a long time unexplored, the Australian bush was perceived as both mysterious and fascinating (see Platz 289). Other than in European and American films of the past decades – but comparable to “Heimatfilme” and Westerns – nature also plays an essential part in Australian productions (see Chapter 5). It offers possibilities for the creation of a national identity because Australia’s nature is unique and completely different from Europe (see Wolf 59) in so many ways: its red earth, rocks like Uluru, or the marsupials. Then there is the fertile soil in the Hunter Valley (NSW), while on the other hand, the inner part is mostly desert. In the north, the dry soil ceases where the rain forests of tropical Australia start. On the coasts are beautiful (and often crowded) beaches that are integrated into the cities; a few kilometres inland, the sight of mountains allows people to forget that Australia is a mostly flat continent. However varied these features are, they have one important point in common: the majority of them are outside of the cities, and therefore part of the bush (see Wolf 58), which is a prominent symbol in Australian life, literature and film. This patriotically idealised interior of Australia is said to be the ‘true’ Australia (see Wimmer, *Australian Film* 78–79). Francis Adams, an English journalist who migrated to Australia, wrote: “The Bush is the heart of the country, the real Australian Australia” (qtd. in Schaffer 52). Australia’s untouched nature – later romanticised in countless stories and used as setting for heroic stories of ‘real’ Australians – was regarded as Australian, while everything that had to do with cities was disregarded and dismissed as either a mere continuation of Britain’s culture or places of immorality (see Chapter 4.1.1). This interpretation of landscape had a major effect on the understanding of Australia’s identity and was perpetuated in films (see discussion of landscape in film in Chapter 5).

The fascination of the bush has less to do with its geographical features; it is rather a mental construct that has been transformed into legends and myths influencing people’s perceptions. In Australia’s cultural history, it is even important enough to be written with a capital B by authors like Marcus Clarke and Henry Lawson (see Platz 289). These writers insisted on writing “Bush” in order to highlight its importance and “make the rural interior a focus of

Australian ideals” (Davison 191). A careful look at their writings reveals “the connection between their increasingly dismal view of the city and the rise of the bush ideal” (Davison 199). The bush as an “anti-type of the city” (Davison 200) became more important in literature in the 1890s – a time of unemployment, overcrowding and class conflict in Sydney (see Davison 200).

The bush-myth was promoted in the bush ballads of Lawson, A. B. Paterson, and their contemporaries in particular. The bush was the setting for stories about the first settlers, their struggle to live in its harsh environment, and in this setting writers could develop the image of the typical Australian who then presented the nation (see Wolf 59).

The characteristics promoted in their stories are listed by Platz, who claims that the bush is:

- 1) a place where people had to work hard for their survival, for which they were highly regarded by their fellow citizens;
- 2) an inhospitable environment, where people had to be able to rely on each other to survive. Because of the lack of hierarchical structures and economic inequalities in the bush, this interaction was characterised by equality and freedom. This is the basis for the development of the social idea of mateship and the egalitarian spirit;
- 3) the home of the bushman and the pioneer, and thus influenced their sense of morals in that they had to adapt to their hostile surroundings;
- 4) a mental background for the formation of the Australian nation since the 1880s, when it was used by intellectuals to justify their construct of the state;
- 5) a locus for the projection of spiritual and emotional needs (see Platz 289–290).

*The Bulletin*¹³ published these stories, like “The Babies in the Bush” (Lawson), and therefore made sure that it was recognised by a broad audience.

¹³ Founded in 1880, the Sydney *Bulletin* is now Australia’s longest-running magazine. At the time when its first issues were published, it distinguished itself from other newspapers in that it had no British influence, but was exclusively concerned with Australian topics and published works of Australian authors. Soon it was called the “bushman’s bible” and connected urban and rural Australian communities. Until the 1960s, the *Bulletin*’s motto was “Australia for the White Men”, and scholars like Sylvia Lawson described it, inter alia, as racist and masculine (see Wotherspoon).

In any of the stories of the late 19th century, the bush is not only the place of action, but also constitutes a dominant thematic category (see Platz 290).

Living in the outback was presented as un-European and, therefore, it provided a chance to create a unique identity. Additionally, bush communities were said to create a society without hierarchies, based on the fact that they needed each other in order to survive in the hostile environment. Qualities like egalitarianism, freedom, brotherhood (not sisterhood!), and independence were associated with life in the outback. Art and literature preferred to depict this as the “true” Australia, as being the heart of the nation, unspoiled by any European influences (see Wimmer, *Australian Film* 80, 89).

Despite these stories, it would be false to claim that the bush is only associated with positive characteristics. On the contrary, the Australians’ relationship to the bush is full of contradictions. On the one hand, it is promoted as a place of virtue, while on the other, it is feared and despised for its dryness and harshness. This situation prompted Wimmer to write: “In no other country in the world do we find such an intense love-hate relationship between the people and their land” (Wimmer, *Australian Film* 78). In the following section, this ambiguous relationship with nature and its counterpart – cities – will be analysed.

4.1.1 The City-Bush-Conflict

One striking thing that must be emphasized is the paradox that urban people, and not those from rural areas created the bush-myth. The claim that “the history of Australia is the history of its cities” (Gaile Reekie qtd. in Platz 291) is surely true, yet the bush is still regarded as the “true Australia” and has continued to give meaning to the Australian way of life since the late 19th century (see Wimmer, *Australian Film* 79). In Australian films of the 1970s, especially in the numerous Period Films, this function was confirmed (see Chapter 5).

The bush is not only un-European, but also the opposite of cities, which were perceived as places of moral inferiority and corruption (see Platz 291).

The dichotomy of bush vs. city stands for virtue vs. vice and also masculinity vs. femininity. From the romanticising of the outback as an ideal place and the condemnation of the cities, a number of binary opposites have developed, which Wimmer (*Australian Film*) enumerates:

bush	city
nature	culture
men	not-men
genuine Aussie	British/foreigner/Jew/Asian
working class	upper class
simplicity	duplicity
honesty	deviousness
hard work	soft job
modesty	luxury
asceticism	debauchery
chastity	immorality
natural law	codified (city) law
instinct	behavioural straitjacket
re-birth	eventual oblivion

(Wimmer, *Australian Film* 79-80)

The roots of the clear-cut borderlines between these pairs lie in European Romanticism and its view of nature as nurturing and caring mother. When the first settlers came to the new continent, they expected to find fertile soil where they could grow the same grain as in Britain (see Wimmer, *Australian Film* 80). Even before white settlement in Australia commenced, the continent had been circumnavigated, giving people an idea of its sheer size. This in turn raised hopes for having found a place with limitless grazing land. (see Wimmer, *Australian Film* 90). However, for the first 24 years after the arrival of the First Fleet, all new arrivals were stuck in Sydney, with its barren earth, as they could not pass through the Blue Mountains, part of the Great Dividing Range. In 1813, they managed to cross them¹⁴.

Behind the mountains the European settlers found what they had expected: a vast fertile land. At the time, they were sure that Australia was the lost paradise that they had believed it to be, but they would soon discover that this impression was false. Despite this mistake, however, some farmers – or, to

¹⁴ Official credit for crossing them was given to Gregory Blaxland, William Lawson and William Charles Wentworth. Visitors are still informed about the dangerous expedition and how the first street up the mountains was built by 50 convicts who, after finishing the road, were reprieved) (see “Crossing the Great Dividing Range – surveying an ancient land”)

use the Australian term, squatters – became rich (and were later known as the squattocracy), which encouraged the British press to idealise Australia as a country where everybody had the chance to make money (see Chapter 3.3).

Köster argues that in poetry, landscape was presented in three distinct ways at this 19th century: “the patriotic glorification of the young colony that centres on the cultivated land around Sydney and uses a neoclassical style, the pastoral vision of the Bathurst Plains which justifies Australian nature in terms of models from classical and biblical antiquity and the purely descriptive poems which show first signs of emancipation from English models but soon degenerate into a trivial evocation of romantic melancholy with a number of set landscape elements“ (Köster 122).

British writers and painters who returned to Europe from Australia did not describe what they had actually seen, but what they had wanted to see. Köster explains this by saying that when confronted with a new situation, people try to give meaning to it by comparing it with past experiences and trying to classify the new situation in accordance with previously known structures. Hence, visitors to Australia represented the land according to their previous expectations and assumptions, trying to come to terms with the new circumstances (see Köster 13).

Wimmer asserts that whenever these first settlers wrote about their desire to explore Australia in their diaries, their language was full of sexual connotations and the landscape was presented as the female other against the bushman (see Wimmer, *Australian Film* 81, or Schaffer 52). For example, explorers desperately wanted to overcome the hostile land and penetrate its soft interior (see Wimmer, *Australian Film* 81). In writing and in painting, Australia was portrayed as a virginal continent that was waiting to be possessed (see Schaffer 60).

While Australia was idealised by artists, the first settlers had to realise that its nature was by no means “virginal”, but harsh, which subsequently led to the characterization of nature as a capricious whore. After an unsuccessful expedition, Charles Stuart, an early explorer, wrote: “A veil hung over Central Australia that could neither be pierced or raised. Girt around by deserts, it

almost appeared as if Nature had intentionally closed itself upon civilized man, that she might have one domain on earth's wide field over which the savage might roam in freedom" (Stuart qtd. in Schaffer 60). Even the animals were very different, with mammals laying eggs and others carrying their babies in their pouches. The first conserved platypus brought to London was believed to be a bad joke. A zoologist accused the Navy Captain who delivered it of having glued a duck's bill to a type of a large rat. Only when Sir Joseph Banks, who was the leading zoologist of that time, travelled to Australia and saw the animal himself were Britons assured that the platypus really existed (see Wimmer, *Australian Film* 81).

To the extent that British society was amused by the uncommon flora and fauna, the settlers were not. Seeds would not grow, and long periods of drought were followed by heavy rainfalls, flooding the land. Nevertheless, the new settlers still hoped to find an Arcadian Paradise in Australia's centre (see Wimmer, *Australian Film* 81).

Undoubtedly, it was traumatising for the settlers when they realised that nature was not welcoming. Rather than being a nurturing mother, nature was soon regarded as an unloving mother as well as an unloved woman who lacked femininity. The outback lost its magical attributes and turned into a deadly and frightening entity. It was especially uncanny as nature killed even virtuous and brave men. Wimmer argues that the root of the misogyny in Australian society lies in this perception of the land (*Australian Film* 82). In addition to the presentation of nature as a fickle female beast, 'mates' compensated for this lack of nature's supportiveness. They listened to and helped one another – once again excluding women from any close interpersonal relationship (see Chapter 4.3.3).

Many stories of explorers getting lost in the outback or reappearing after many months circulated at that time. Explorers who vanished during their trips were celebrated in ballads (see Wolf 59)¹⁵. Nature, the "castrating witch [...] would allow the explorer to penetrate up to a point, and would then swallow the intruder" (Wimmer, *Australian Film* 82). This image highlights the powerful position ascribed to the Australian landscape (see Schaffer 52).

¹⁵ The exploitation of the topic „being lost“ in films will be discussed in Chapter 5

Legends about (white) people being lost in the bush mirror white Australians' relationship to the landscape. Even though their disappearances had no mystical explanation – and were rather mostly due to lack of knowledge about the bush – in the stories of the 18th century, these disappearances were regarded as mysterious, and it was said that the bush had swallowed them (see Wolf 59–60).

From his analysis of the songs and stories of Australia, Wimmer draws the conclusion that “[i]f there is a collective Ur-Angst in the Australian psyche, it is that of being eaten by step-mother earth. Myths, as we know, are indicators of our cultural wishes and fears; it was a stepmother that sent Hansel and Gretel into the wild woods, where they were almost eaten by another and more wicked female” (Wimmer, *Australian Film* 83).

Even though the bush is perceived as dangerous, gloomy, and hostile, cities, with all their comfort, are portrayed as evil places. Given the very negative connotations attributed to nature, it stands to follow that civilization should have positive associations. Houses should contribute to feelings of safety and satisfaction, and the suburbs should be the locus of happiness. However, in the formation of national identity, as well as in literature and film, the fact that the majority of Australians actually lived in urban space played little role. After the Second World War, fiction demonised not only cities, but also suburbs, depicting it as “sub-urban”, linking them to “sub-human” (see Wimmer, *Australian Film* 91–92).

The paradoxical relationship Australians had to nature can thus be explained by remembering that even though nature was sometimes perceived as a harsh and deceitful mother, it still was no place for women, but rather a masculine space: “The pre-eminent meaning encoded in the nationalist myth of the land-as-woman is that of a harsh, cruel, threatening, fickle, castrating mother. She is dangerous, non-nurturing and not to be trusted. This is ‘no place for a woman’!” (Schaffer 62).

Even though Australia's nature was perceived as harsh, it was nonetheless a place of self-fulfilment and virtue. To put it in Wimmer's words: “A solution to this paradox is possible if we argue that the approval of a traditional

perception need not be based on the inherent qualities of the perception. All that is needed is a binary that leaves you with no choice [...] That era [the 1890s] saw a sharp decline of the economy, resulting in wage cuts, widespread unemployment and poverty [...] The crisis had been triggered by a similar downturn in the British economy, and Britain was representative of, as well as represented by, banks, factories, trading companies, in short: city culture“ (Wimmer, *Australian Film* 94).

This means that people were simply disappointed by city society and therefore turned their interest to the countryside, which supposedly was not consumed by economical interests. The dangers of the bush were forgotten in favour of the “non-cultural” life. Nature was never the place it was imagined to be, but, frustrated with the colonial society, Australians readily accepted the idealisation of the bush in novels (see Wimmer, *Australian Film* 94). Writers like Lawson and Paterson created a past free of social inequalities. If Britain and its convict system were seen as source of evil, and cities were perceived as British, it is no wonder that the bush was glorified as a foil to urban centres (see Hirst 216).

4.2 The Typical Australian

As discussed in Chapter 3, the search for an Australian identity started early on in Australia’s white history. This was complemented by the belief in the existence of national types at the end of the 19th century, which were associated with various stereotypical features (see White 64): “This concept of national types fitted snugly into the nineteenth-century intellectual landscape, a central feature of liberal, national and racial ideology, It was a product of an obsession for categorisation” (White 64). The idea of the existence of national types was connected to the spread of nationalism in Europe, where the idea of nations replaced the old concepts of monarchies (see White 65). White explains why the development of a national type was of importance for nations: firstly, presumptions about the citizens’ character helped define what a nation was; secondly, it could be used as an explanation for the state of being. Similar to the idea that poverty was the individual’s fault, and that neither societal nor

hierarchical structures could be blamed (see Chapter 3), certain types were superior to others, and inferior types simply had to accept their positions (see White 65). In Australia, this concept was used to classify Aboriginal people and convicts, both seen as being in morally detestable positions (see White 66). The idea of the great chain of being was subsequently abandoned in favour of Charles Darwin's evolution theory, which was transformed into Social Darwinism. According to this theory, the Australian type was the fitter who would eventually displace the weaker groups (see Chapter 2, Digression).

An important question that arose with the new concept was whether the British type would degenerate or improve when introduced to a new setting. Unsurprisingly, English scientists believed that the Australian version of the former British type was inferior to their own position (see White 66–68). For some, the reason for this decline was Australia's hot climate (see White 70).

For Australians, on the other hand, it was beyond doubt that the Australian type would be successful in the future. This would be achieved, it was thought, by active discrimination against non-Anglo Saxon immigrants: "As long as racial purity was maintained, as long as only the noblest racial strain was permitted to flourish in Australian soil, then the future of the Australian branch of the British race was secure" (White 71). Whereas critics regarded the Australian sun as a negative influence, advocates of the new type thought the weather made this progress possible (see White 75).

Proof of the progress of the Australian type was found in Australian victories over England in cricket, although the ultimate test for a nation's success was war. Clearly, Australians were eager to demonstrate their abilities (see White 72; Chapter 2.4). Of how much importance the anticipation in wars for creating a national identity as well as a national type was for Australia is shown by Ward, and his explanation of one of the reasons for the prominence of bushrangers in Australia: "No doubt bushrangers came to occupy such a prominent place in Australian legend partly because, in the [19th] century, Australia took part in no great wars, and thus there were no colourful military figures to serve, as they tend to do in other countries, as symbols of nationalist sentiment" (Ward 135).

Consequently, there are three primary versions of the “typical Australian”: the coming Australian, the bushman, and the pioneer/squatter. These major representatives of the Australian national character as it was imagined for a long time will be the point of interest in the following sections.

4.2.1 The Coming Australian

As mentioned above, based on Charles Darwin’s evolution theory, Australians developed the idea that the British race had the potential to experience an evolutionary bound in the rough Australian environment (see Platz 286). Australia was the perfect place to promote natural selection – only the fittest would survive. Distinct from the effeminate British, then, the future belonged to the tough Australian. While there was disagreement about his looks and other aspects of the typical Australian, some characteristics were commonly accepted and considered as distinctively Aussie. These were “independence, manliness, a fondness for sport, egalitarianism, a dislike of mental effort, self-confidence, a certain disrespect for authority” (White 76–77). White points out that the characteristics associated with this type were less typical Australian, and more typical descriptions used by older generations when talking about the younger generations (see White 77).

The first time the so-called ‘coming type’ (representing the typical Australian) could display its abilities was the Boer War, in which Australian soldiers were said to have performed extremely well (see White 79).

In the Great War, the digger, as the Australian soldiers who fought in this war were called, was “seen as the fulfilment of all the hopes that had been invested in ‘The Coming Man’, the ideal expression of the Australian ‘type’” (White 125).

The image of this coming Australian favoured the White Australian Policy, denying Aboriginal people and non-Anglo-Saxons the chance to prove that they were also “fit” by declaring the Anglo-Saxon as the only race able to suitably adapt to the Australian environment (see Platz 287).

4.2.2 The Bushman

Ward argues that the Australian identity is strongly linked to the early history and people who lived in the bush. These first settlers were portrayed as typical Australians because they were admired for their ability to survive in the inhospitable Australian environment (see Wolf 51). Ward explains that in the nation's collective memory the bushman's legend is easily remembered and therefore especially qualified for describing the typical Australian: "According to the myth, the bushman is a practical man, rough and ready in his manners and quick to decry any appearance of affectation in others. He is a great improviser, ever willing 'to have a go' at anything, but willing too to be content with a task done in a way that is 'near enough'. Though capable of great exertion in an emergency, he normally feels no impulse to work hard without good cause. He swears hard and consistently, gambles heavily and often, and drinks deeply on occasions" (Ward 1–2). Other characteristics associated with him are an egalitarian attitude and contempt for authority (see Ward 2).

According to Ward, the bushman's prestige was greater than that of the townsman in the 19th century and the romanticised way of portraying his life is reminiscent of the "noble savage" in the 18th century (see Ward 5).

After publishing his text, Ward was criticised for supporting the idea that the true Australian was a bushman, and for using insufficient sources. While he treats the topic of the "typical Australian" as if it was a real entity, Schaffer explains that the "'real' Australian is a national type. He does not exist [...] Yet, his existence is made to seem real through its representation in films, advertisements, political speeches, news reports, historical constructions and the like" (Schaffer 8–9). No matter how unrepresentative the bushman legend might be, it still prevails in people's minds (see Wolf 52).

Originally, the Australian legend was formed by the living conditions in the colony. The (ex-) convicts were bush workers and became new men, who were then presented as real Australians. Their ability to survive in the harsh environment of the bush emphasised the bush's mythical element (see Wolf 52).

Hence, even though the typical Australian lives on the coast, life in the bush was and is regarded as attractive life. The distinctive way of living spread from the first colonies New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania) very rapidly. Witnesses were surprised that even in the remotest areas settlers spoke with an Australian accent, which was largely convict-derived (see Ward 8).

The bushman legend is less a fact than a product of urban people, who romanticised and idealised the way of life in the bush. It is a story and not to be understood literally. The bushman is not constructed to represent the typical Australian citizen, but is rather a figure that upholds Australian values and represents the Australian character. Through this, it became easier for the young Australian nation to distinguish itself from their British roots (see Platz 291).

The bushman legend completely excludes Aboriginal people, women, new settlers, and people living in the cities. The role of women as the bushmen's wives was often replaced by the bushman's mate, as they preferred the wealthier squatters (see Wolf 52).

4.1.3 The Pioneer

Bushmen cannot be discussed without considering their employers. The pioneer, called "squatter" in and after the late 1830s in Australian slang, has referred to the opposite of the bushman since 1890. Before that time, bushmen and pioneers were the same type of people – those who came to the outback to work there (see Platz 288).

Pioneers, by today's definition, are the people – male and female – who settled the land and who were regarded as important for the foundation of the Australian nation. In comparison with the half-nomadic bushmen, they actually settled down and lived with their families and station hands. While the bushman is associated with physical and mental flexibility, the pioneer embodies the sedentary lifestyle and the economic use of the landscape (see Wolf 53). Note however that before they acquired their heroic image in the 1890s, pioneers

were simply the first immigrants to Australia, no matter where they lived and worked (see Hirst 206).

Pioneers maintained the qualities associated with their British ancestors: they were regarded as virtuous, brave, economical, hard working and settled. Their virtuous conservatism stood in sharp moral contrast to the bushman's independence and liberal way of living (see Platz 288).

Ward claims that newly arrived immigrants preferred life in the cities to life in the harsh and unwelcoming bush, where they would have to work hard and live isolated: "It seems that outback conditions exercised a kind of natural selection upon the human material. The qualities favouring successful assimilation were adaptability, toughness, endurance, activity and loyalty to one's fellows, just those traits already noticed as being typical of the convict and currency elements of the population" (Ward 76).

Wolf explains the reason some people preferred life in the bush to cities in different words. She says that educated people in particular refused to live outside of the urban areas, while the uneducated continued to settle the bush, hence, its inhabitants consisting mainly of the lower class (see Wolf 53).

The bushman and the pioneer myths are very similar in many respects. It was not the first generation of Australian settlers, but the following, that transformed their lives into heroic stories, portraying them as people who did not work for themselves, but for the following generations. The depiction of their lives has been romanticised, and the period has since been idealised and referred to as the "golden age" (see Wolf 53–54).

A principle strongly linked to the pioneer myth is egalitarianism. It did not matter whether individuals were rich or poor; everyone had the same aims. Furthermore, they were proud of their brave women who survived in the bush (see Wolf 54). Nevertheless, the bush was not regarded as a place for women in the stories of the 19th century. Rather, the "landscape provide[d] a feminine other against which the bushman-as-hero [was] constructed" (Schaffer 52). Only later was the work women did in the pioneering days valued (see Wolf 54).

Both the bushman and the pioneer were idealised by literature and portrayed as national heroes. Hence, it can be argued that literature and stories like Paterson's "The Man from Snowy River and Other Verses" – regarded as the Bushman's Bible – is the place of birth of these legends (see Wolf 54).

Australian literature is rather unsure about who counts as a pioneer. Were explorers the true pioneers? The same question can be asked about the first settlers, missionaries, traders, etc. (see Wolf 54). In many poems, echoes of the Pioneer-myth can be found. It evolved out of poets' wish to give their land a history they could be proud of. Because of Australia's inglorious past as a convict colony, its historians sought an honourable history. In their construction of the country's past, they mention pioneers rather than convicts, and everything the pioneers did is presented in a positive light (see Hughes 158).

4.2.4 Women's Roles in the Bush

Even though emancipists and rich settlers despised each other on principle, they shared the belief that self-improvement was only possible through hard work. To ensure their economic success, these two groups joined forces when they saw their legal rights endangered (see McQueen 46).

Ward, who relied on texts from the 19th century for his text, and seemingly adopted the old-fashioned and misogynist view of women, makes it very clear which role women played in the relationship between workers and employers: "At least in the earliest pioneering stage, before the squatter's wife arrived to define more rigidly the barrier between 'the house' and 'the huts', conditions forced a certain degree of understanding between the occupants of both" (Ward 4). Hence, they were presented as cause of trouble and were regarded as the source of disputes between squatters and station hands.

Apart from this role as the originator of social unease, women played a minor role in stories of the 19th century. Consider, for example, Henry Lawson's short story "The Drover's Wife", telling the story of a woman and her four children after whom she has to look alone while her husband is away, making a living as a drover. The bush's dangers are represented by a snake that hides

under the house and threatens the lives of the family members. While she waits for the snake to turn up again, she remembers former adventures and with this gives an account of life in the bush (fighting fires, floods, loneliness, etc.) Although the drover's wife finally kills the snake and manages to survive in the outback, she still is not important enough to be given a name, and is only referred to as the wife of somebody who is not even present.

4.2.5 The Bushranger

The first bushrangers were runaway convicts (see McQueen 53) who, after the gold rush, robbed gold transports and banks. Ward writes that in the 19th century, bushrangers were perceived as national heroes. People liked them because they ignored the police's authority (see Ward 145). In contrast, McQueen states that as rowdies who stole from small farmers, they were originally detested by people, and that it is only because of the romanticised pictures presented in stories, which were "particularly keen in their suppression of brutality and murderousness" (McQueen 54), that these people could become popular. In light of their cold-blooded murders, R.B. Walker might be right with his statement that "public sympathy for the bushrangers can also be easily confused with the fear they aroused" (qtd. in McQueen 54).

The most popular bushranger was Ned Kelly, who was praised in the same way as Robin Hood. Kelly had Irish roots and thus despised everything British – an important feature for an Australian hero (for further discussion see Chapter 5).

4.3 Typical Australian Attributes

Of course attributes can never be said to belong to a single nation, but it is still interesting to look at the characteristics that make up the typical Australian presented in the section above. Wolf claims that the most important aspects of Australian society are the pub (often called hotel), sports, gaming, ANZAC-day, etc. (see Wolf 41). Visiting pubs and drinking alcohol – mostly beer – is part of many Australians' lives. According to Wolf, pubs can be called one's

“home away from home” (Wolf 42). Another important meeting place is the sports club, where people meet not only to drink, but also for gambling and betting (see Wolf 42). In the following sections, some of the more prominent aspects of Australian society will be discussed.

4.3.1. The ANZAC-Myth

The myth about the ANZACS (Australian and New Zealand Army Corps) has its roots in World War I, a war in which the Australians participated – initially with great enthusiasm, as the war was seen as great chance to prove Australia’s “national unity and greatness” (Alomes and Jones 163). Another reason why the Australians took part was that despite the aversion to Britain, Australia still had a close connection to its mother country. In this case, this meant that if Britain was at war, Australia would follow (see Leutenecker 185).

The Diggers, as the soldiers fighting in the Great War were often called, were glorified like the bushmen had once been. “The ANZAC soldiers qualities were strongly connected to the bushman’s characteristics: imaginativeness, initiative, courage, perseverance, and, most important, mateship” (Wolf 57).

The digger myth was constructed by war correspondent C. E. W. Bean, who claimed that the brave Australian soldiers performed exceptionally well in the war. After the disastrous battle of Gallipoli, where nearly 9,000 Australian soldiers died, the day of the arrival of the ANZAC troops (25 April) was dubbed ANZAC Day and has been celebrated since 1916 to commemorate the battle and the soldiers (see Alomes and Jones 172). As Britain was blamed for this catastrophe, Australians became even more hostile toward their mother country (see Wolf 58).

4.3.2 Anti-British Attitude and the Irish Influence

Negative behaviour like snobbery and self-praise are despised in Australian society, and associated with the “pommies” – the Australian derogatory term for British people (see Wolf 48). For a long time, the British did

not take Australia seriously, but Australians were still loyal to the crown and their society was influenced by British culture. The inferiority complex that resulted from the British disrespect, as well as their convict past, is expressed in the term “cultural cringe” (see Chapter 3.4).

Additionally, the Irish, Scottish and Welsh convicts despised British society in their own right. Approximately one out of five convicts was tried in Ireland; hence, they were large in number (see Hughes 163). Their rejection of British values influenced not only the development of Australian values like egalitarianism, collectivism and mateship, but also the anti-British attitude (see Wolf 49).

4.3.3 Mateship

Mateship is a typical Australian value that stands for equality and loyalty. It denotes more than simple friendship between men and can only be understood in the Australian context (see Platz 292). The term mateship is implicitly connected to Australia as a penal colony because the first European convicts who came to the continent had to rely on each other and help each other in order to guarantee their survival in the unwelcoming new environment. It is associated with bushmen, and excludes not only women and Aboriginal people, but also pioneers or pastoralists, who regarded the land from an economic standpoint (see Wolf 46; Schaffer 101). “The bushman imagines the land as harsh, raw [...] Mateship is his refuge” (Schaffer 101).

The concept of “mateship” became popular during the time of the debate on Australia’s national identity in the late 19th century. It denoted two ideas: on the one hand, in the literature of the time, it referred to the personal relationship between bushmen; on the other hand, it denoted class solidarity (see Platz 293).

According to Ward, the legendary tradition of mateship developed in Australia’s early days, when convicts learned to help each other and to trust in one another. The conditions in the outback are said to have fostered the development of characteristics later regarded as typically Australian: “Take, for

example, the strongly egalitarian sentiment of group solidarity and loyalty, which was perhaps the most marked of all convict traits. This was recognized as the prime distinguishing mark of outback workers fifty years before Lawson and others wrote so much about mateship” (Ward 77).

McQueen strongly disagrees with this statement and even claims that from what Ward wrote about convicts and their character traits, “we must conclude that Ward knows little about the convicts and that he misinterprets the little he does know” (McQueen 45). He presents the convicts in quite another light and gives examples of convicts who stole from each other and were not loyal at all (see McQueen 50).

One question that must be asked about the concept of mateship, and which has been discussed in more recent publications, is whether or not the exclusion and absence of women may have fostered homosexuality (see Platz 292).

The modern version of mateship is associated with drinking and chauvinism. Women are again “the other” in that they are now portrayed as those who want to imprison men at home rather than allow them to go for a drink with friends (see Wolf 46). Friendships between men are regarded as more valuable than those between men and women: “whether linked with homosexuality or not, male friendship is rather more highly valued than male-female friendship, and women are less important as friends and companions in Australian society than they are in many overseas countries” (Craig McGregor qtd. in Platz 294).

4.3.4 Egalitarianism

Equality between people is one of the characteristics on which the national image of Australia is based. Officially, the principle that “Jack is as good as his master” is still valid. Snobbery is associated with Britain and thus not tolerated in Australian society (see Wolf 47). This official statement refers to the fact that Australian society is not more (nor less) equal than other Western societies. Despite informal interaction, class hierarchy is a matter of fact,

although the strong Australian middle class cannot be compared to European middle classes, but rather to a working class with money when it comes to behaviour and attitudes (see Wolf 47).

4.3.5 Australian English

The central role that language plays in assuring a nation's identity can be expressed in Anderson's words, who argues that European dynasties used language to assure their power in areas in which their nationality would not legitimize their rule (see Anderson 83). "And this lexicographic revolution in Europe [...] created, and gradually spread, the conviction that languages (in Europe at least) were, so to speak, the personal property of quite specific groups – their daily speakers and readers – and moreover that these groups, imagined as communities, were entitled to their autonomous place in a fraternity of equals" (Anderson 84).

The Australians speak in an accent reminiscent of Cockney English, though its slower pace has led some to say that Australians are too lazy to open their mouths while speaking (see Wolf 40). They have their own vocabulary, which has been enriched by the languages of the Aboriginal people. Many names for places and animals were borrowed from the Indigenous population, for example, kangaroo, wallaby, koala, or bilby. Familiar terms were also transformed: a farm became a station, and cowboys became known as stockmen (see Wolf 41). In addition to creating new words, Australians tend to abbreviate words, and end them with an 'o' or 'y' sound, such as in breakki (Breakfast), barbie (barbecue), or arvo (afternoon) (see Wolf 41).

John Fiske, Bob Hodges, and Graeme Turner argue that this means of differentiation from other English-speaking countries is an important aspect of the Australian identity: "The Australian accent is one of the clearest markers of Australianess" (qtd. in Wolf 40).

4.3.6 Ockerdom

According to the Macquarie Dictionary, the term 'ocker' denotes: "the archetypal, uncultivated Australian working man. A boorish, uncouth chauvinistic Australian. An Australian male displaying qualities considered to be typically Australian, as good humour, helpfulness and resourcefulness" (qtd. in Wolf 44).

The ocker is a certain lifestyle, embodied in a male character that is anti-intellectual, of a working class background, and uses the Australian vernacular. It is a caricature of the worst type of man. Actors like Paul Hogan, or fictional characters like Barry "Bazza" McKenzie are displays of typical ocker characteristics (see Wolf 44).

Ockerdom is strongly connected to bushmen and pioneers, and the characteristics ascribed to these types. The ocker-type also has features in common with the larrikin, although the larrikin is a criminal who lives in cities, while the ocker-type can live anywhere and is not a criminal (which nonetheless does not prevent him from despising authorities) (see Wolf 44).

Women were not totally excluded from this concept, although the female ocker-type is different from the male. She is a person who tries hard to appear cultivated, but due to her petty-bourgeois descent, fails (see Wolf 45). For further discussion see Chapter 5.

4.3.7 Humour

The Australian government's website states that Australian "humour is dry, full of extremes, anti-authoritarian, self-mocking and ironic" ("Australian Humour"). Australians enjoy making jokes in inappropriate situations, which can be both politically incorrect and sexist (see Wolf 45). This special sense of humour can be traced back to the beginning of white settlement, when convicts made fun of their bad situations in order to cope with them (see "Australian Humour").

5. The Australian Film Industry

Film production in Australia began in 1896 and prospered, with a minor slump from the First World War until the 1930s, when the first talkies were produced. From 1928 until the 1960s, Australian film production was minimal, as many talented film-makers migrated to the United States.

With the change of attitude in Australian society in the 1960s, when Australians finally wanted to free themselves of their cultural dependence on overseas powers, interest in national film production started to grow. Film was considered a major tool for representing the nation's past as well as its values, which led to demand for government support of the medium. Australia's film industry experienced a renaissance during the Whitlam administration (1972–1975), which heavily subsidised local film production. In the 1980s, the genres of the preceding decade were abandoned in favour of film's commercialisation. Until the 1990s, representations of Australia were fairly homogenous, presenting it as a man's country. This hegemonic ideology was then finally broken by feminism.

5.1 The Beginning of the 19th Century

Australia's film production has a long history and is even older than Hollywood's. It started in 1896, when the French assistant to the Lumière brothers¹⁶ Maurice Sestier arrived in Australia. He produced a 30-minute documentary of the Melbourne Cup (*Melbourne Cup 1896*) later that year, which is now the oldest surviving Australian film. Earlier in 1896, the American magician Carl Hertz screened the first motion pictures in Australia (see Wimmer, *Australian Film* 15).

In 1897, the Limelight Department of the Salvation Army built the first film studio in Melbourne after having realised the possibilities the new medium held for recruiting new soldiers. In the next few years, thirteen religious propaganda films commissioned by the Salvation Army were produced, which enjoyed great popularity. The best-known propaganda film was *Soldiers of the Cross* (Herbert

¹⁶ Auguste and Luis Lumière are credited the world's first film screening in December 1895.

Booth and Joseph Perry), first screened at the Melbourne Town Hall in September 1900. The film then toured Australia and New Zealand with great success (see Wimmer *Australian Film* 15). For a long time it was thought to be Australia's first feature film. However, it is not a continuous film, but rather a multi-media presentation, combining 13 films with more than 90 metres of length, 200 photographic glass slides, and music by a choir or an orchestra. The whole movie, referred to as 'lecture' by the Salvation Army, is essentially Christian propaganda, depicting Christian martyrdom and including scenes of terrible suffering. Most of the film was lost, with only a few slides depicting Jesus on the cross or people as human torches in Nero's garden surviving (see Pike and Cooper 4–5)¹⁷.

The production of religious films continued until 1910, a time when the medium of film had become too secular for the Salvation Army to be regarded as an appropriate means of conveying their message (see Pike and Cooper 5).

5.2 The Bushranging Genre – early 20th Century

In the beginning of the 20th century, not only religious films, but also Australian film production as a whole declined and a rising number of films were imported from the United States and Great Britain (see Wolf 63).

The Australian film industry was then revived in 1906, when the Tait brothers¹⁸ from Melbourne produced the first film of mentionable length (66 minutes) with an Australian story – *The Story of the Ned Kelly Gang* (Charles Tait) – in which the life of the notorious Australian bushranger Ned Kelly was depicted, representing the police as aggressive. In the clips provided on *australian screen* constable Fitzpatrick is immediately recognisable as the bad guy as he tries to kiss 14-years-old Kate Kelly against her will. Ned, coming out of the Kellies' homestead, first slaps the constable in the face, then shoots him

¹⁷ The homepage of Australia's national film and sound archive provides examples of the surviving scenes. For further details visit: <http://nfsa.gov.au/collection/documents-artefacts/soldiers-cross/>

¹⁸ Charles, John Henry, James Nevin, Edward Joseph, and Sir Frank Samuel, were five of nine children of John Turnbull Tait and his wife Sarah. In 1902, John, Nevin and Frank founded J. & N. Tait, concert promoters. Charles became this company's business director, Edward watched from the sidelines. In 1906, they produced *The Story of the Ned Kelly Gang* together with Millard Johnson and William Gibson (Tait, Charles (1868–1933)).

into the wrist because he wants to defend his sister, and is made hero of the underdogs with this action. In the scene in which police forces besiege the Glenhowan Hotel they are again constructed as immoral and bad characters, as they keep firing at the hotel even though a mother with her children come out of it and could easily be wounded. The impression of the police's indifference towards innocent victims is enforced when a priest who wants to stop them runs in front of their arms and the police still do not stop firing. On the contrary, they even set fire to the hotel. The third scene provided on *australian screen* shows Ned Kelly in full armour, shooting with two guns but finally overpowered by three policemen. It takes them very long to seize the bushranger, which conveys the feeling that even in this hopeless situation, brave Ned, who shows no respect for the authorities, does not give up but tries to keep the spirit of the underdog's hero alive.

The film was not only successful in Australia, but was also exported to England and Ireland. Because Australian authorities feared that the glorification of the Kellys' misdeeds could lead to public disorder, the film was censored and even banned in Victoria (see Wolf 63).

The Story of the Kelly Gang sparked a new genre in Australian film-making, namely that of the bushranging film. Other representatives of this genre are *The Life and Adventures of John Vane, the Notorious Australian Bushranger* (S. A. Fitzgerald, 1910), *Moonlite* (John Gavin, 1910), and numerous films based on Thomas Alexander Browne's (aka Rolfe Boldrewood) novel *Robbery Under Arms*. In this work, the first-person narrator Dick Marston, who was tried for bushranging and sits in jail while writing down his story, remembers his life, how he and his brother Jim became involved in crime when they steal cattle and how they met bushranger Captain Starlight. In the opening lines of the novel, Dick Marston describes himself as

...pretty strong and active [...] it takes a good man to put me on my back, or stand up to me with the gloves, or the naked mauleys. I can ride anything—anything that ever was lapped in horsehide—swim like a musk-duck, and track like a Myall blackfellow. Most things that a man can do I'm up to, and that's all about it“ (Boldrewood Chapter 1).

As of the story's beginning, the audience of this Australian classic knows that Dick Marston is a "typical Australian", strong, masculine and obviously not law-abiding. In the story, Marston uses Australian vernacular, and gives insight into life in the bush in the late 19th century.

Each of these films told the story of a bushranger who treats authority with no respect, hence the accusation that they celebrated the outlaw image (see MacFarlane 6). Another feature they had in common was that they were essentially national. The use of Australian vernacular, the allusion to common myths, and the protagonists who are representatives of the Australian type attracted the audience's attention.

Many of the themes and motifs that would recur in the following decades were first examined and defined at this time (see Pike and Cooper 2). In the 1970s and 1980s in particular, the years of the "New Australian Cinema", these Australian myths were celebrated in films, as will be discussed in Chapter 5.8.

Australian film producers favoured subjects with open-air settings like the gold rush, which dealt with the winners and losers in the search for gold, as well as the envy of those who had no luck. These films also dealt with the mixture of different people and races, and made possible the revival of old racist prejudices against Chinese diggers at the same time as they spotlighted the brave role of the white Australians living on the gold fields. The use of films in this form already gives one an idea of how the new medium was used in later years, when 'typical' Australian landscapes, myths, and legends were incorporated into films, in order to provide them with nationalist backgrounds (see Chapter 5.9.3). However, in these early years, film was not used in the search for national identity, but "was essentially an indigenous cinema, reflecting the producers' direct responses to the Australian audience, without reliance on established models from overseas. The years until the outbreak of war presented perhaps the most acutely 'national' period in Australian cinema" (Pike and Cooper 2).

Other themes were the convict days and, of course, bushranging adventures. Documentaries and historical recordings set in urban places displayed contemporary life, as for example *Street Scenes in Perth, Western*

Australia (1907), while rural dramas romanticised life in the outback, and featured stock characters. All of these latter films were melodramas set in the outback and new interpretations of bushrangers. The audience was extremely fascinated by the stories about the ex-convicts (for example *For the Term of His Natural Life*, Charles MacMahon, 1908¹⁹) and the settlers, and the first film stars were born in these years. For the outdoor settings and in the competition for authenticity, filmmakers sought very remote, sometimes nearly inaccessible settings (examples: *The Squatter's Daughter*, 1911; *The Bells*, 1911; *The Assigned Servant*, 1911) (see Pike and Cooper 2).

Women in films were bush heroines, accomplished horsewomen who combined male and female traits. These characters were happy, but never as independent as men and their greatest pleasure was marriage, which “tamed” these women (see Pike and Cooper 2).

Until 1912, the bushranging genre prospered. The years until the Great War are now called the “golden years”, even though after 1912, the number of films dropped dramatically for several reasons (see Wimmer, *Australian Film* 16). For one, the New South Wales government banned these films, because they were afraid that citizens – especially the young audience – could take the lawless characters in the films as their role models. For the next 30 years, this folklore was banned and replaced by American Western films (see Pike and Cooper 3).

The major reason for the decline of Australia's film production was the struggle of exhibition trades and distribution companies for supremacy on the Australian film market. Early in 1912, a number of film exchanges and theatre-owning companies united their interests in the notorious combine, made up of Australasian films for distribution, equipment and production, and Union Theatres for exhibition (see McFarlane 7; Pike and Cooper 3).

As a result, most independent production units went out of business because the movie theatres had contracts with the combine to screen only Australasian films. As Australasian Films and Union Theatres showed little interest in local productions, films with Australian content were replaced by

¹⁹ No version of this film based on Marcus Clarke's novel survived

those produced in America (see Wolf 64). Even after Hollywood's rise in world cinema, which broke the combine's monopoly, it remained a powerful force for six more decades (see McFarlane 7).

However, Australian filmmakers continued to produce films, and until the First World War, 80 films were produced, the most popular being those about the first settlers, deportation, and convicts (see Wolf 64).

5.3 Film production during the Great War

After the declaration of war against Germany in 1914, the Australian nation desperately wanted to show its strength in the first war they were fighting as an independent nation. The citizens' enthusiasm was reflected in highly patriotic films. These films were supposed to strengthen the Australian self-confidence, the most popular being those linked to the battle in Gallipoli, like Australasian Films' first feature film since 1912 – *Will they Never Come?* (Alfred Rolfe, 1915). It proved so successful that Australasian promptly released a second patriotic film – *The Hero of the Dardanelles* (Alfred Rolfe, 1915), revolving around the landing of the Anzacs at Gaba Tepe. In the beginning of the film, young soldier Will Brown is seen putting on his uniform, preparing to leave for the training camp. A propaganda poster for the Dardanelles indicates where the soldier will finally go. Later, he tries to persuade his friends to join the army forces and puts up a recruiting poster in a bar. Everybody seems to be in a happy mood, except for one stranger who tears off the poster and is expelled from the pub for this action. After his training ended, he is sent to Egypt to do his duty. The last sequence provided on *australian screen* shows the troops' landing at Taba Tepe on the Gallipoli Peninsula. The fate of soldier Will is unknown, as the rest of the film was lost, but it was clearly intended as a propaganda movie, encouraging Australians to do their duty. The scene at the pub presents Will as admirable idol who is congratulated on his bravery by his friends.

But soon the enthusiasm for war, and with it, the popularity of films about war decreased. People were no longer fascinated by the realities of war, but rather sought escapism. Beaumont Smith sparked interest in rural families with

his comedies revolving around the Hayseeds and the rigours of rural life (see Wolf 65; McFarlane 8). Part of the comedy derives from city-country-contrasts, as for example in *The Hayseeds Come to Sydney* (Beaumont Smith, 1917).

In 1918, Smith produced a completely different film – *Satan in Sydney* – adding racism to the hatred against the Germans, and connecting this deep loathing with anti-Chinese feelings, which had prevailed since the gold rush. In addition to the racist aspect, the old theme of ‘city vs. bush’ was also part of the film, as it was assumed that evil forces could more easily survive in cities than in rural spaces (see Wimmer, *Australian Film* 18). This “obsession with the rural”, as Wimmer puts it (Wimmer, *Australian Film* 18), continued into the years after the First World War, as the depiction of city and bush lives was diversified (see Pike and Cooper 86).

The first feminist feature made in Australia was *The Woman Suffers* (Raymond Longford, 1918), in which the friendship between Joan and Ralph turns into love, and they kiss at a riverbank. But happiness does not last, and Ralph abandons her. Out of despair Joan drowns herself in the very river on the banks of which they first kissed, because she does not want to be a disgrace to her family. Her brother Philip vows revenge and subsequently seduces Marjory, who turns out to be Ralph’s sister. When she gets pregnant, Philip leaves her and now Ralph, who does not know who his sister’s lover is, swears vengeance. When he confronts Phillip, he finds out why his sister was seduced. In this film, men are actors, while women are the passive and have to endure what the male characters’ evil games. The film follows the concept an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, and even though the male actors are the villains, the women have to suffer. It is a man’s land, and a man’s society.

5.4 The Post-War Era

The time between the end of World War I and the coming of film’s sound marked a creative peak in Australia’s film history, with 1928 being the most productive year of this period (see Pike and Cooper 87). Raymond Longford and Franklyn Barrett (both had already been important directors in the years before and during the war) directed numerous films, focusing on bush themes.

All Australian filmmakers of this time suffered from the combine's unwillingness to support local productions. This reluctance was interrupted between 1925 and 1928, when Australasian Films (under the influence of managing director Stuart Frank Doyle²⁰) invested in feature production. However, when 'talkies', which were far more expensive in their production, began to revolutionise the market, the company withdrew from production again (see Pike and Cooper 86).

While the combine could not afford talkies, Hollywood could, and subsequently, American films flooded the Australian market and increasingly weakened the combine's position. Soon, Australian filmmakers claimed that the Americans were suppressing Australian production. In fact, all that Hollywood's growing influence (or rather, dominance, as they controlled 94 per cent of the market (see Wolf 66)) accomplished was to break up the combine's monopoly – with neither the Americans nor the combine being interested in encouraging local production²¹ – but this paved the way for the establishment of a multiplicity of distribution companies.

5.4.1 Australian Directors' Struggle for Existence

As already mentioned, Franklyn Barrett's and Raymond Longford's films are particularly noteworthy, as they were different from other films produced at this time. Longford's films had no historical motifs, but were set in the present and depicted the pioneering spirit as central to Australian society (see Wolf 66). His biggest success was *The Sentimental Bloke* (1919), not only in Australia, but also – despite its local humour and the use of Australian vernacular for the subtitles – in Great Britain. In America, the film was not released, even though many of the subtitles were translated into American slang (see Pike and Cooper 90).

The Sentimental Bloke was based on C. J. Dennis's bestseller verse narrative, originally set in Melbourne, but for the film adapted to working-class

²⁰ Stuart Frank Doyle (1887-1945), cinema owner, radio station owner, company director and manager, film producer, and radio station owner (see Stuart, Frank Doyle)

²¹ One exception being Hercules McIntyre, who signed a contract as exhibitor and publicist with Universal Studios in 1919. He became a major patron of Australian productions. Charles Chauvel, for example, was financially supported by McIntyre.

suburb Woolloomooloo, Sydney. When the Bloke, Bill, a larrikin character, is seized by the police for illegal gambling the scene slightly reminds one of Ned Kelly's seizure, as it takes more than one man to overpower Bill. After he served his sentence he meets his 'ideal tart', Doreen, and decides to give up his life of crime for her. The film offered a realistic representation of city life, expressing the desire for plain realism, with no over-exaggerated emotions and actions (also found, for example, in the river-scenes in *The Woman Suffers*). Although the Bloke changes for Doreen, he does not give up his disregard for authorities. He is a typical Australian male character, even though he does not live in the bush. Bill hates authorities, speaks with a heavy Australian accent, likes gambling, and his freedom, and does only change for Doreen because he wants to do it. If Doreen tried to actively change him, he would not stay with her.

Both Longford and Barrett not only provided realistic depictions of bush themes and landscapes, but also gave a voice to women, like Doreen, who slowly tames her husband, or Lorna Denver in *A Girl From the Bush* (Barrett, 1921), the manager of a sheep station (see McFarlane 9).

In *The Breaking of the Drought* (1920), Barrett is not only concerned with landscape, but also with the city-bush-contrast already found in films such as *Satan in Sydney* or the Hayseed-series. The film²² starts with scenes showing Australia's mountains, tropical Australia and then comes to "Outback Plains upon which Grim Drought has laid its Devastating Hand" (*The Breaking of the Drought*). After this subtitle, pictures of the dry riverbeds and of cracked earth are seen. Most farmers already gave up their fight against the drought, but Jo Galloway, "a fighter who has held off the drought better than many of his neighbours" (*The Breaking of the Drought*) and his family are still on their farm. In order to feed the sheep, his workers cut down trees. While Joe and his wife and daughter have to work hard in the dry outback, son Gilbert lives in Sydney, spending his parent's money together with his mistress Olive. While the family, who has come to Sydney because they need to pay a visit to the bank, hear about Gilbert's theft, he is having fun at the races. When the morally degenerated son realises what he has done, he tries to kill himself, but his virtuous sister (not spoiled by the evil city) prevents him from doing this. Finally,

²² Some of the information is taken from Wimmer's, and Pike and Cooper's discussions, as australia screen only provides three sequences of this film.

Olive is strangled by her pimp, who then jumps out of the window, the Galloway's neighbour lends money to them, and Gilbert wants to go back to the farm, but gets caught in a bushfire. The Galloway's neighbour is again the rescuer, finds Gilbert and brings him to the station where he arrives just as it begins to rain.

Although these directors' works were successful with audiences, they could hardly make a living from their productions. The only independent producer who could make a living from film production was Beaumont Smith, whose productions were screened by the combine (see Pike and Cooper 86)

In the mid-1920s, the growing dissatisfaction and despair of Australia's producers about the Australian film industry's unequal collaboration with America's put the government under considerable pressure. Not only directors, but also actors and many newspapers and journals teamed up with moral guardians (who were concerned about the American influence on Australian morals) and demanded more Australian content on screen (see Wimmer, *Australian Film* 23).

From 1925 on, the government reacted to the protests of the film community with some fifty films known under the general title of *Know Your Own Country* (see Pike and Cooper 87). Under the direction of Bert Ives, the series was not only intended to inform Australians about their country, but also to be sold abroad with the aim of promoting Australia's trade and immigration. However, this did not suffice to content the protestors. The call for an official inquiry became stronger and led to the creation of a Royal Commission which was supposed to investigate "the structure and practices of the industry, and the suitability of existing legislation relating to film censorship, taxation, import duties and film quotas" (see Pike and Cooper 87).

The most important recommendation of the Royal Commission was the introduction of a film quota, according to which 15 per cent of all feature films screened would have had to be not American. However, the quota legislation was never passed, partly because the States were not prepared to hand over their film power to Canberra, where the quota would have been put into practice, and partly because nobody was prepared to challenge the Australian

theatre companies or the American distributor, which had great economic power (see Wimmer, *Australian Film* 23).

The Royal Commission's failure resulted in the complete breakdown of Australian film production. While 1928 was the most productive feature film year of the decade, production soon ceased due to the technological and financial requirements of sound. According to Pike and Cooper (148), in 1929, only one Australian feature film was produced (*The Kingdom of Twilight*, Alexander MacDonald)²³.

5.5 The Coming of Sound

The 1930s were overshadowed by the Great Depression. People sought comfort and with films they found the possibility of escaping their harsh reality. Nationalism was not a big issue in films of that time (see Pike and Cooper 150). Examples of films produced in this time are the continuation of the "Hayseed" series, Charles Chauvel's *In the Wake of the Bounty* (see Chapter 5.5.3), or comedies like Frank W. Thring's *His Royal Highness*, in which stagehand Tommy Dodds dreams he is king of Betonia. Even though he is king, he does not behave in a very royal way, dances and tells stories about pig farms. As he is a real Australian, he does not forget his mates (he refuses to meet the ministers before his best mate is with him) and when he is bored, he tries to engage his footmen in playing cards ("His Royal Highness").

The 1920s had already seen Australia's first attempts at sound films. In 1930, some Australian filmmakers attempted to transform their silent films into part-talkies, such as Paulette McDonagh's *The Cheaters* (1930). As the production of talkies was expensive, only studios with high capital survived (see Pike and Cooper 150).

²³ note: Literature on film production in 1929 is contradictory. Pike and Cooper (148) enlist *The Kingdom of Twilight* as the only Australian feature film of this year, even though it was never released in Australia. McFarlane claims that Gerald M. Hayle's *Tiger Island* was the only feature film in 1929, which was, in fact, released in 1930. In his book *Australian Film* Wimmer argues that no single Australian feature film was produced in Australia in 1929 (see 23), which corresponds with the information on the website *Australia Screen*.

The benefits which non-English speaking countries experienced at the beginning of the production of sound films had no impact on Australia's film production, as Australian film makers failed to use their chance to produce films which featured the Australian accent. For example, while French and German filmmakers made their films more appealing to native audiences by using their own language, Australia was swamped by American productions (see Wolf 67), which were linguistically indistinct from Australia's own.

Three filmmakers from the 1930s are of particular note; they will be introduced in the following sections.

5.5.1 Frank W. Thring and Efftee Film Productions

The first commercially successful sound feature was an Efftee-production (*Diggers*, 1931), for which filmmaker and Efftee²⁴-founder Frank W. Thring borrowed equipment from the United States (see McFarlane 11). Before Thring launched his film production program, he was the managing director of Hoyts until September 1930. He then sold his controlling interest to the American Fox Film Corporation and set up Efftee Film Production in Melbourne (see Pike and Cooper 155).

Diggers begins with a comic scene: the two soldiers Chic and Joe are in hospital, because they were slightly wounded in a battle. As they do not want to go back too soon, they pretend to be ill. But an English soldier – Fatty – who lies in the bed next to Chic, does the same and steals Chic's excuse, who pretends to be paralysed. When an English officer comes in to identify malingerers, Chic and Joe play tricks on the soldier and the officer. In the next scene the officer tries to find out whether Chic, who now pretends to be deaf, and Joe are lying, too. After finding out that Joe actually is a malingerer, the officer decides that Chic "is the only genuine case". The film has more scenes in which the Australian characters make fun of English soldiers. The film ends with a tragic episode introducing a new soldier and his French girlfriend. While hearing the song "Mademoiselle from Armetières", the audience sees scenes from war and gets to know that this soldier dies. Screenplayer Pat Hanny was

²⁴ The name 'Efftee' was derived from Frank Thring's initials, F.T.

very dissatisfied with Thring's decision to let the film end with this scene, as originally it should have started with a comic episode, followed by this tragic part, and the hospital episode was intended to be the last part (see Pike and Cooper 154–155). Both Chic and Joe display typical Australian characteristics: they are witty, but they are underdogs who try to trick the British authorities. They are comical characters who represent the “easy-going” lifestyle of Australia. The death of the soldier in the film's last part stands in sharp contrast to the first parts and reminds the audience that Australians are also brave soldiers who have already demonstrated their skills in the Great War.

In contrast to the two other producers who will be discussed later on, Thring did not try to imitate Hollywood conventions, but rather used film as a means of recording stage productions (see Pike and Cooper 150). Efftee stopped production in 1936, when Thring died at the age of 53. In these short years, Efftee produced seven feature films, nine shorts, and several stage productions, the most notable being *Collits' Inn* (1934) (see “Thring, Francis Williams (Frank) (1882–1936)”).

5.5.2 Ken G. Hall and Cinesound Productions

In 1932, Stuart Doyle, by this time managing director of the combine, established Cinesound Productions as a subsidiary of Greater Union (formerly Australasian Films-Union Theatres combine), which became the most profitable production venture in Australia. Ken G. Hall – formerly Stuart Doyle's personal assistant – proved successful as Cinesound's ambitious manager, and provided theatres with a steady stream of feature productions (see Pike and Cooper 150).

Hall directed 15 feature films, giving audiences what they wanted while at the same time operating as a skilful businessman. McFarlane even claims that “Hall's period as head of Cinesound from 1932-56 saw Australia's nearest approach to a production company on American lines” (McFarlane 11). Cinesound not only produced films, but also provided other producers with skilled staff. The company had three studios (two in Sydney, one in Melbourne) and produced film stars like Jocelyn Howarth and Shirley Ann Richards.

Cinesound's actresses became popular enough to work in Hollywood and, conversely, the studio also attracted Hollywood stars (see Pike and Cooper 150).

Cinesound's first production was *On Our Selection* (1932), based on a then 20-year-old stage play. Raymond Longford had already screened his version of the story in 1920, but Hall's interpretation was very different and did not mimic Longford's naturalism. It was enormously successful at the box-office in Australia (in England it was released as *Down on the Farm*, but audiences were not attracted by the story) (see Pike and Cooper 157–158).

On Our Selection is the story of 'selector' Dad Rudd, who cannot pay the bill for the land he leased from squatter John Carey. Carey therefore wants Rudd to leave the land and says he will break his spirit. Rudd gives a speech in which he declares that despite many bad things that happened (droughts, floods, etc.) his spirit never broke – and Carey will not be able to do this either. This strongly appealed to the audiences of the 1930s, who still suffered from the Depression. The next episode provided on *australian screen* is an example of bush comedy and features slapstick elements. Even though Hall's version of Steele Rudd's stories about Dad Rudd is more farcical than the earlier film by Longford, it has an earnest message: face adversities (like the Depression) with perseverance and optimism.

Production at Cinesound stopped at the beginning of the Second World War, when feature film production ceased, and was not renewed after the war (see Pike and Cooper 150).

5.5.3 Charles Chauvel

Like Hall and other contemporaries, Chauvel's productions showed Hollywood orientation (see Pike and Cooper 150). According to Wolf, he produced films with which Australian people could identify. His main themes were simplicity, frankness, and patriotism, and he was very engaged in the process of creating a nation and a national self-definition (see Wolf 68). In

1956, he was the first producer to give a leading role to Aboriginal people²⁵ (see Wimmer, *Australian Film* 26).

Chauvel's first talkie was *In the Wake of the Bounty* (1933), a blend of documentary and dramatic historical reconstruction. The film was about the mutiny on the *Bounty* in 1789 and the mutineers' fates on Tahiti and Pitcairn Island. Charles combined studio scenes with documentary elements shot at Pitcairn and this film was the first in a series of travel adventures (see Pike and Cooper 161). During and after World War II, his success story continued, which will be discussed in the following chapters.

5.6 The Second World War and the Decline of Feature Production

With the beginning of World War II, feature film production virtually came to a halt. Film production now focused on newsreel and propaganda films, the content of which was controlled and coordinated by the Film Division, created by the Department of Information in 1940 (see Pike and Cooper 188; Wimmer, *Australian Film* 24).

Before the onset of the war, the government of New South Wales had legislated the first effective measure for the financial support of feature films. Four films were granted subsidies in 1940: Cinesound's *Dad Rudd, M.P.*, and Chauvel's *Forty Thousand Horsemen*, which would be his major breakthrough (see Pike and Cooper, 188). With this film, Chauvel was the first to benefit from the war. It is a World War I epic about the ANZAC-heroes' work in the Sinai Desert that was supposed to improve morale and increase recruitment in Australia. *Forty Thousand Horsemen* was not only successful in Australia, but also overseas, where it created an image of the Australian 'digger' as being a brave fighter. *Forty Thousand Horsemen*, as well as Chauvel's second wartime feature (*The Rats of Tobruk*, 1944), were bursting with national pride and masculinity (see Pike and Cooper 188).

One of the lead actors in *Forty Thousand Horsemen* was Chips Rafferty, who, after having played minor roles in two Cinesound productions, now made

²⁵ *Jedda* (1955). For discussion see chapter 5.7

his first major appearance (see Pike and Cooper 191–193). In this film, as well as in *The Overlanders* (Harry Watt, 1946), he embodied the characteristics that were regarded as essentially Australian. He represented typical national characteristics (heavy drinking, lack of respect for authorities, optimism, sincerity in friendship, etc.) not only on screen, but in real life, and soon became identified with the stereotypical Australian male (see Pike and Cooper 194); as McFarlane puts it, Chips Rafferty was the “icon of lean, laconic Australian-ness” (McFarlane 13). Rafferty also starred in *The Rats of Tobruk*, in which Chauvel highlighted the importance of comradeship and emphasised that Australian soldiers help each other, but are also capable to fight alone, which is strongly connected to the busman myth.

As no government department could produce propaganda in sufficient quantity, they had to cooperate with private film companies and directors like Cinesound or Chauvel Productions. As propaganda goals were loosely defined, directors like Hall and Chauvel were given creative freedom and rose to the occasion (see Pike and Cooper 188).

The most notable documentary produced during World War II is Damien Parer’s wartime documentary *Kokoda Front Line* (1942) about the war in New Guinea, for which he was awarded a Hollywood Academy Award for best documentary in 1943 (see Pike and Cooper 189).

5.7 Low Ebb between 1946 and 1966

After the end of the war, feature production did not recover. Additionally, from 1949 to 1966, Premier Menzies, who showed little to no interest in the arts and entertainment, governed Australia and contributed to the decline of native film production in Australia. Later, Australian sociologists summed up this era as “the boring 50s”, which, as Wimmer claims, “was in no small measure earned by the government’s total disregard for an indigenous, creative film industry” (Wimmer 27).

5.7.1 Foreign Productions

The majority of films were made either by American or British companies. The difference between them was that Americans used Australia as merely an exotic background for their dramas, which may as well have been made in the U.S., as the films' content did not refer to Australian culture at all. American films were not interested in exploring the Australian character in any way (see Pike and Cooper 200). Not even the casts were Australian: American filmmakers employed American stars like Fred Astaire, Ava Gardner, Deborah Kerr, etc. Many of their films were produced merely because after the war, capital was frozen in Australia, which they now intended to use (see Pike and Cooper 200). *The Kangaroo Kid* (1950), a B-western, was the first post-war film of this sort (see McFarlane 14).

The British, on the other hand, wanted to set up a permanent unit in Australia – although they failed in this attempt. However, they did show interest in Australia, which was reflected in British productions. Their films had the purpose of telling British audiences about the filmmakers' experiences down-under. The British advantage was that they could explore the Australian character from an outsider's perspective, which gave them a certain degree of objectivity and made it possible for them to go further than Australian filmmakers (see Pike and Cooper 200; McFarlane 15).

An example of a British film is *The Overlanders* (1944) by Harry Watt. His career in Australia started in 1944 when he was sent there as a correspondent after the Australian government asked Britain for help in improving the portrayal of the Australian war effort in British propaganda. For his first feature film, he chose a story about a gigantic cattle drive across Australia, which took place in 1942. 85,000 cattle were driven from Kimberly in the north of Western Australia to central Queensland, because Australians feared a Japanese invasion in the west, and wanted to remove the food supply from Japan's reach. In the film, Watt focused on the characters of the men who undertook this challenge, and engaged actors from Aboriginal, white Australian, British, and Scottish backgrounds (see McFarlane, Mayer, Bertrand 372). The Australian Bushmen's manners, vocabulary, and attitudes were indeed accurately portrayed. Further, Watt did not only focus on men, but also included a female character, Mary

Parsons, who takes part in the drive and is depicted as an equal member of the team, and also her sister and mother belong to the group. Another fact to be mentioned is that one of the drovers is an Aboriginal man, who also is a full member. In the third clip provided on *australian screen*, Mary and this man are of major importance, as they save the cattle from falling off a cliff ("The Overlanders").

5.7.2 Local Productions

Despite the efforts of a handful of Australian filmmakers to keep native feature production alive, it virtually came to a halt in the 1950s. Cinesound completely ceased production, and, after its parent company, Greater Unions, abandoned plans to expand the studio's facilities, it shrank to a small newsreel and documentary operation (see Pike and Cooper 200).

The impact of television on the film market in the 1950s was another obstacle for filmmakers. Television productions were mostly American at that time. However, it also offered new possibilities, like the production of series and television-films (which were mostly American productions). The only notable involvement of Australian producers in this context is linked to the Australian government's restricted broadcasting of foreign advertisement on television (advertisements shown in Australia had to be produced by Australians). Directors who would later become famous, such as Peter Weir or Fred Schepisi, worked in this field (see Turner 140–141). In 1947, Greater Union's controlling interests were sold to a British company, which, of course, promoted its own films rather than Australian productions (see Pike and Cooper 200).

Charles Chauvel's last feature film *Jedda* (1955) is notable in this context for two reasons. Firstly, it was the first Australian feature film shot in colour²⁶. Additionally, for the first time, two full-blooded Aboriginal people were given the leading roles and not portrayed as animal-like, but rather as human beings with feelings.

²⁶ According to Pike and Cooper, *Jedda* was the first feature in colour. However, according to *australian screen* the first colour feature was *The Queen in Australia* (1954), a feature that is constructed like a documentary ("The Queen in Australia").

Jedda is of Aboriginal descent, but was raised by white squatters as their own child. As a teenage girl, she becomes increasingly attracted by the Aboriginal people who work at the station, but is torn between her upbringing and her wish to experience her ancestors' culture. When the full-blooded Aboriginal Marbuck arrives at the station, she is fascinated by him. One night, he finally lures her away with a song and kidnaps her. He soon finds that he cannot stay with his tribe, as his marriage to Jedda is not accepted. What follows is a hunt across the desert, which ends in Jedda and Marbuck's death.

The spectacular settings Chauvel chose for the second part of the film (after Jedda's abduction) attracted both local and overseas audiences, though it was severely reduced in the British and American versions. Today the film is regarded as patronising, and as portraying the Aboriginal culture incorrectly in many ways. However, in the 1950s it was courageous to produce such a film, as the audience was not generally interested in Aboriginal people (see Wimmer, *Australian Film* 26).

5.7.3 The Vincent Report and the late 1960s

In the 1960s, Australian scholars, students, filmmakers and writers wanted to free themselves from the cultural cringe still prevailing in their society which they saw as stagnant, and described as "puritanical, backward and conservative" (Wolf 71). These people demanded an independent culture, including an autonomous film industry, and stood up against Australia's postcolonial dependence on the United States and Great Britain (see Wolf 71; Chapter 3.4). The 1960s saw a re-focussing on national values and their own past, and the urge to answer the question who and what kind of nation they were was increasingly posed. It did not suffice anymore to produce films in cooperation with overseas companies. Australia needed a national film industry. Their aim was a free Australian film production because they thought this to be the key to the creation of a national self-image. The movement did not intend to defend Australian culture, but to develop it further (see McFarlane 20).

In 1962, the Vincent Report (named after Senator Vincent who had also lamented the decline of the film industry) on the impact of foreign influences

was published. It requested that the government react to the supremacy of foreign film companies because creative Australians were being forced to move to the U.S. if they wanted to be successful, due to the lack of support they were getting in Australia (see Wolf 71). However, Premier Menzies refused to react and ignored the report completely (see Wimmer, *Australian Film* 28).

Although the report was ignored, it fostered determination to revive the Australian film industry. Students who would go on to become well-known producers, for example Bruce Beresford and Richard Brennan, produced underground-films, and through this, developed the basis for a new, independent film scene. These works were concerned with nationalist issues and their films' successes proved that independent Australian films were worthy of support (see Wolf 72; for further discussion see chapter 5.8).

To sum up, Australian film-production had reached an all-time low between the end of the Second World War and the late 1960s and would not recover until the 1970s.

5.8 The Film Revival

The late 1960s witnessed a revival of the film industry and of Australian life in general. During Premier Menzies' time, Australia heavily relied on British and US-American productions. McFarlane concludes that this "dependence was only a minor symptom of broader cultural dependence in the light of which many older Australians still thought of England as 'home' (Menzies' own Anglophilia was legendary) and still doubted Australia's capacity to produce art works of world stature" (McFarlane 19). However, at the end of his time in government, people started to protest against Australia's cultural dependence and called for an indigenous film-industry louder than ever before. The arguments for an indigenous film industry were reinforced by "an increasingly powerful nationalist mythology that came to see film as the most desirable medium for projecting an image of the new confidence and maturity seen to mark contemporary Australian culture and society" (Turner 141).

McFarlane discusses how influential film can actually be, and claims that images of a nation are felt in its cultural artefacts. By constant repetition, the images become a myth, which finally becomes a reality in the national consciousness. These images include characteristics associated with the typical Australian, such as manliness, mateship, anti-authoritarianism, and a fondness for the outback. “Because of their high level of iconicity and their widespread dispersion, films, more powerfully and endemically than, say, novels, are remarkably influential in shaping and rendering the images which encapsulate the national life” (McFarlane 47).

5.8.1 First Governmental Steps

After Premier Menzies’ retirement, the industry did not immediately recover. His successor Harold Holt wanted to increase Australia’s commitment in the Vietnam War and therefore strengthen ties with America. Nevertheless, in 1967, he set up the Australian Council for the Arts (ACA). Film was now regarded as part in the arts (see McFarlane 21).

An important step for the indigenous film industry was Tim Burstall and Patrick Ryan’s foundation of the first Australian film company without involvement from abroad. Later, Albie Thoms founded “Ubu Films”, a distributing company that made Australian productions possible. A small intellectual circle developed the base for the film revival at this time. At the end of the 1960s, the government had to decide whether to ignore their efforts, or to support indigenous film (see Wolf 72–73).

Premier John Gorton, Holt’s successor, was interested in the filmmakers’ urgings. Assistance was then primarily directed towards production, and financial problems in distribution and exhibition started to ease when these branches were drawn into production (see Pike and Cooper 234). From this point on, Australian film started its revival – induced by subsidies and investments – and the era of the “New Australian Cinema” began.

In 1969 the Gorton government announced a three-part programme of assistance to the film industry and guaranteed funds for:

1. an investment corporation to assist the financing of feature films and television programmes,
2. a national film and television school, and
3. an 'experimental film' fund to facilitate the making of 16 mm low-budget films and to encourage new film-makers.

(see Pike and Cooper 234)

The AFDC's first major investment was *The Adventures of Barry McKenzie* (Bruce Beresford, 1972) (see Chapter 5.9.1). In 1975, the AFDC was re-established as the Australian Film Commission (AFC) and given wider powers (see discussion on the Tariff Board).

There were also many film subsidies during Prime Minister Gough Whitlam's years, as he was a strong advocate of the arts. After decades of conservative governance, the election of the Labour Party brought fresh hope to the film industry. Whitlam intended to strengthen Australia's weak national identity through films and to foreground nationalistic portrayals of a collective Australian character (see Wolf 73).

Not only the Australian national government, but also state governments became involved in feature production. The Dunstan government in South Australia was the first to create a film corporation, and supported highly successful films like *Picnic at Hanging Rock* (Peter Weir, 1975) (see Chapter 5.9.2) or *Sunday Too Far Away* (Ken Hannam, 1975). This in turn encouraged other states to follow South Australia's example. Victoria set up the Victorian Film Corporation (now Victorian Film) in 1977, while New South Wales set up an interim film commission in 1977. Among the films in which the latter invested were *Newsfront* (Phillip Noyce, 1978) and *My Brilliant Career* (Gillian Armstrong, 1979), which was awarded with the Golden Globe for Best Foreign Film and nominated for the Academy Award for Best Costume Design (see Pike and Cooper 234; McFarlane 25).

In late 1972, when the battle lines between production, on the one hand, and distribution and exhibition, on the other, were drawn, the Tariff Board inquiry was appointed, which was concerned with problems of production,

exhibition and distribution of Australian film. More than 100 witnesses appeared before the Tariff Board's inquiry, who attacked the AFDC's reasons of selecting films for financial support. Another point of criticism was the film trade's lack of interest in local productions. It still focused on profits from exhibition and distribution rather than making local films available to a broad audience (see McFarlane 23).

As a consequence, distribution and exhibition companies started to fund Australian films: "With the threat of government action hanging over them, the chains needed to prove that they were not inimical to Australian products" (O'Regan, "Ocker" 80–81).

The situation for filmmakers eased after production started to exhibit films without the help of regular distributors. In addition to the threat of governmental involvement after the Tariff Board inquiry, the financial success of John B. Murray's light-hearted sexual comedy *The Naked Bunyip*, which he exhibited himself instead of working with a distributor, was highly encouraging for other producers. Hence, in 1971, Tim Burstall followed Murray's example with his film *Stork* (the importance of which for the ocker genre will be discussed later). After six successful weeks, distribution was arranged by Roadshow Distributors, a local theatre chain, which would soon become involved in production in turn. It invested heavily in Hexagon Productions (first production in 1973: *Alvin Purple* by Tim Burstall) (see McFarlane 23). The only government involvement in the production of *Alvin Purple* was a short-term loan from the AFDC; the rest of the budget was fully covered by Hexagon Productions. Greater Union Organization also became involved in local features, like *Stone* (Sandy Harbutt, 1974) and *The Man from Hong Kong* (Brian Trenchard Smith, 1975) (see Pike and Cooper 274).

Exhibition and distribution's involvement in production not only eased long-standing structural problems, but additionally, together with the individual states' film-funding bodies, enabled greater diversity of themes and funding (see McFarlane 23).

5.8.2 The Australian Film Commission (AFC)

In 1975, the Australian Film Commission (AFC) was set up and replaced the AFDC. It was one of the Tariff Board's proposals to create an Australian film authority instead of the AFDC, which was heavily criticised for supporting films based on economic rather than of aesthetic value. However, this aspect did not really change (see Wolf 78).

As the AFC covered most of the expenses of filmmaking, and was involved in the majority of the most notable films, it had a high degree of influence on which films were made.

Not only the government's bodies, but also various corporations for the support of films favoured films with nationalist themes, as well as productions that presented Australia in a positive light (see Wolf 78–80).

The main criterion for subsidies from the AFDC and later from the AFC in principal was that the film had to have a significant Australian content. The problem that arose from this was that producers henceforth had to define what constituted "significant Australian content". In its decision, the AFC included the subject matter of the film, the places where the film was made, the places of residence of all people taking part in the film (including authors, musical composers, actors and technicians), the source of money with which the film was to be produced, etc. In 1973, the conditions were refined even further: at least 70 per cent of the artistic personnel and at least 90 per cent of the technical personnel had to be Australian residents (see Wolf 75–76).

With these definitions, films were prepared to boost a new positive self-image of Australia. The Australian audience was given the opportunity to be proud of its nation, its past and, due to films based on Australian literature, their culture and art – and with this the government hoped to increase Australians' self-respect (see Wolf 76). The film industry indeed succeeded (at least financially) with their nationalist formula as the audience demonstrated a preference for local products (see Pike and Cooper 234).

The urge to promote 'Australianness' in films can be explained by keeping in mind that the 'nation' is a mental construct (see Chapter 3), and that, like other ideological constructs, it can only be proliferated if it manages to maintain its hegemony. Representations of the nation vary, with different texts and films representing them in different ways. Because some of these may threaten the status quo, cultural institutions can constrict their variety. Obviously, this included not only films produced in Australia, but also applied to foreign productions in particular (see Turner 136). "If we understand our world (or our nation) through its representations, foreign control of the major media of representation does threaten the coherence of the individual's understanding of that world (or nation)" (Turner 137).

Despite the successes of the film industry within Australia, the local market would have been too small to make significant profits. In fact, the industry's losses were severe: 70 per cent of films failed to recover their costs (see Pike and Cooper 235).

Encouraged by the euphoria at home, Australian filmmakers promoted their productions abroad, especially in Europe with the hope of compensating for their losses as well as gaining international recognition. The marketing branch of the AFC's branches specialised on promoting films overseas and focused on the Cannes Film Festival (see McFarlane 26).

When Peter Weir showed *The Car That Ate Paris* at Cannes in 1974, he promoted his film by driving through Cannes in a Volkswagen that was fitted out with plastic spikes. Despite his efforts, the film was not successful, neither in Australia nor elsewhere. A real breakthrough at Cannes, however, was Ken Hannam's *Sunday Too Far Away* (1975), which initiated a new responsiveness to Australian films (see McFarlane 28)

In 1975, the Whitlam government fell out of power and the industry feared the loss of its financial support. Even though Whitlam's successor, Malcolm Fraser, did not continue to support the film industry with the same enthusiasm, production did not come to a halt. The conditions for filmmaking had already changed, and even exhibitors were willing to show Australian films as they had proven themselves to be successful crowd pullers.

5.9 Genres of the 1970s

Like the AFDC before it, the AFC selected the films it would support. It was supposed to support culturally sophisticated films that contributed to the development of a national identity. Films of this sort were, for example, *Picnic at Hanging Rock*, or *My Brilliant Career*. They belonged to the Period film genre, also dubbed “AFC-genre”, which was intellectually more demanding than the ocker comedies, for example, and helped to foster a national identity by showing that Australia had its own history. The unique Australian landscape was used as setting, which would become a typical feature of Australian films.

The AFDC’s first success – *The Adventures of Barry McKenzies* – was such an ocker comedy, of which the AFC was ashamed after the production of this genre had ceased.

5.9.1 The Australian “Ocker”

In the early 1970s, the most successful films were comedies celebrating cliché Australian qualities like their love of beer or ambivalent relationship to Great Britain (see Wolf 81). The ocker genre was the first successful film genre in the 1970s. The term “ocker” can have both positive and negative meanings. Depending on its context, it can denote either an Australian who is good humoured and helpful, or it can refer to a chauvinistic alcohol-loving male misogynist (see Wimmer, *Australian Film* 29). The genre undeniably reflects the Australians’ love for the underdog.

In their discussion of *The Adventures of Barry McKenzie* Pike and Cooper provide a definition of how “ockerism” was understood in the films of the 1970s: “anti-intellectual, xenophobic, obsessed with beer and sex, but never capable of relating positively with women, using a vernacular of prodigious vulgarity and inventiveness, and totally oblivious of anything beyond his (Barry McKenzie’s) own narrow conception of the order of things” (265).

The Adventures of Barry McKenzie was a highly successful ocker comedy at the box offices, in which the Australian “Bazza” McKenzie (Barry Crocker) travels to England with his aunt Edna (Barry Humphries), and has to

deal with comically presented problems arising out of culturally-based misunderstandings. The Australian and English characters are portrayed in very stereotypical ways, for example at a ball at which a “pommie” named Raymond constantly insults Barry for his Australianess, who, in turn, is happy when he finds other Australians in the back room where they drink beer and sing. Barry’s aunt Edna is the typical female “ocker” character, as she tries to appear cultivated, but she is too frank and fails in her attempt.

The ocker-image is connected to a certain Australian stereotype related to earlier figures like the bushman and the pioneer. Like them, the ocker-type has no respect for authority and rejects middle-class values. The typical ocker man is embodied in Barry McKenzie, Alvin Purple, or also, to a certain extent, in Mick “Crocodile” Dundee.

In “ocker” films, women were usually only represented as objects towards which chauvinistic behaviour is directed. An example of an ocker female is a woman who desperately tries to appear cultivated, but due to her working-class background has never learned how to behave well and fails in her attempt (see Wolf 45), like Barry McKenzie’s aunt Edna.

The term “ocker” in this form emerged in the New Wave theatre of the 1960s, where philistinism coupled with male hedonism (see Wimmer 29). As some of the playwrights became scriptwriters, the genre soon also became popular for films. The probably most “cross-over” author to mention in this context is David Williamson, who became famous through Betty Burstall’s company, the theatre group *La Mama*. On stage, the genre offered the possibility for Australian actors to play Australian characters and not American or British ones. The use of the Australian vernacular and dialect was part of a national reaction against the former colonial power (see Wolf 81).

Betty Burstall’s husband, Tim Burstall, was the first Australian film maker to receive substantial government subsidy for his film *2000 Weeks*, which referred to the time period during which Australian film’s were not supported financially. Australian critics hated the film, as well as the local audiences. Even though the film became successful in Europe, Burstall abandoned serious film genres (2000 weeks belonged to them) and turned to exploitative sex

comedies. His first ocker film was *Stork* (1971) – an adaptation of William’s play *The Coming of Stork*. It became a runaway success at the box offices, which led him to continue to produce such films. In 1972, he produced and directed *Alvin Purple*, another highly successful film. Also in 1972, Burse Beresford (director) and Philip Adams (producer) launched *The Adventures of Barry McKenzie*.

Within a few years, the genre declined for several reasons. Many public figures (politicians, clergymen, academic critics etc.) protested against the manner in which these films presented Australia and its culture to the world. Wimmer discusses various factors that brought along the genre’s decline. One of the more recently established opinions is that Australian film critics did not perceive themselves as wardens of culture, but rather as wardens of cultural respectability (see Wimmer, *Australian Film* 31). An example would be Brian McFarlane, who discusses the ocker genre under the Headline “nudges and titters”, a subchapter of his discussion of the relationship between men and women in Australian films. In McFarlane’s opinion, romantic love is more or less avoided in Australian films and, if sexual and emotional life is presented, it can be done in seven different ways. One of these is “Sex has been made the subject for raucous comedy and for soft-porn enterprises” (McFarlane 112), by which he means the ocker film. He condemns it as the “most lamenting surfacings” of the relationship between the sexes. This category is made of “the appalling bunch of sex comedies and the still worse soft-porn ventures” which must not be expected to be funny and in which “sex is the recurring subject of a witless, numbing jokiness” (McFarlane 122). The final deathblow to the genre is his summary, in which he describes the ocker films as “witless, sexist, and shoddy, catering to the lowest and commonest of denominators.” According to McFarlane, they are the “underbelly” of Australia’s national cinema, and he deeply regrets that these “wretched films” find an audience (see McFarlane 123).

A non-Australian with the same opinion is Eva Maria Schwing, who, in her discussion of Barry McKenzie and the ocker genre, describes the ocker as complacent, intolerant, racist, bigoted, ignorant, uneducated and operating a

double standard. This philistinism includes ‘to seem more than there is (Schwing, 258, my translation).

Another argument against the governmental support of ocker films was the fact that they actually made a profit, prompting critics to ask why they were being given public subsidies. Critics even attacked Whitlam personally for his support of this genre (see Wimmer 31). The critics’ views were not ultimately responsible for the genre’s demise, but rather the “‘discourse’ of negativity [...] the discourse taking place in papers, policy statements, public debates, even parliamentary enquiries” (Wimmer, *Australian Film* 32). Eventually, the AFI and the AFDC had to withdraw their financial support.

5.9.2 The Period Film

This genre is characterised by a strong focus on nostalgic nationalism and the urge to explore the Australian national identity through films. Additionally, Australia experienced “the ‘emancipatory’ need to find ‘high art’ in a national cinema” (Wimmer 34).

Films included in this genre commonly focused on the atmosphere and representation of scenic landscapes rather than action (see Wimmer, *Australian Film* 37). McFarlane claims that, even though diverse in other aspects, these films were “overtly concerned to present and examine the myths and realities of Australian life” (McFarlane 39). In the hope of attracting local and international audiences, filmmakers balanced the presentation of Australia’s past and culture with exotic backgrounds (see McFarlane 39). In some cases, these films were even more successful overseas and influenced the perception of Australia abroad (see Wolf 82).

Recurring themes in Australian period films include the mystical power of nature, the ‘digger mythology’ (eg. in *Galipolli* and other war films), and the presentation of Australians as victims of foreign powers (eg. *Phar Lap*) (see Wimmer, *Australian Film* 37–39). Period films offered the chance to show the world that white Australia indeed had a national past, which needed to be recognised (see Wolf 82).

The most successful period film was Peter Weir's *Picnic at Hanging Rock* (1975), which opens with filming the two icons that symbolise the opposing forces in the film: Hanging Rock stands for nature, and Appleyard College for culture. The college girls and their teachers go for a picnic at Hanging Rock. Before they leave, they put on their Victorian clothes (the film is set in 1900), which highlights the contrast between the bush and the girls who were educated according to Victorian ideals. Four of the girls, among them Miranda, who is compared to a Botticelli angel by her French teacher, decide to explore the rock. Miranda and two of the girls put off their shoes and stockings while climbing up, only Edith keeps them on. Up on the rock, they fall asleep and when waking up, all girls except for Edith seem to be hypnotised by the rock and vanish in a gap. After three days, one of them is found, but she does not remember what happened. Miranda and the other girl do not appear again, but were "eaten" by the bush, which of course evokes the Australian fear of being lost in the bush.

To emphasise the rock's importance, it very often is filmed from below, letting it appear even higher and more powerful. Many of the scenes in the films remind of paintings, depicting the Australian landscape in the same romanticised way in which the Heidelberg school presented it (see Chapter 3). The girls, who are intruders, simply vanish when they want to explore the mysterious rock and do not stay with their group. This suggests that even though the landscape is not aggressive, it is dangerous for white people.

Following the enormous success of *Picnic at Hanging Rock*, many more films dealing with Australia's past were produced with help from the AFC's financial support. This patronage of the period genre inspired the nickname "AFC Genre" (see Wimmer, *Australian Film* 37).

5.9.3 The Use of the Australian Landscape in Films

As discussed in Chapter 4.1, the Australian's relationship to nature is complex and must be analysed in the light of European romanticism and the search for national identity. Film as a means of self-definition was of course also concerned with this issue and explored the Australian landscape in its own way.

Part of the obsession with the rural might be explained in terms of a “collective guilt complex” (Wimmer, *Australian Film* 176): Because more and more Australians live along the coasts of their country, and abandon the interior that has, for decades, been presented as “the real Australia”, they are ashamed and experience a mixture of nostalgia and curiosity as they explore the outback’s facets (see Wimmer, *Australian Film* 176).

The film industry’s obsession with landscape started with *Walkabout* and *Wake in Fright* (both 1971); *Picnic at Hanging Rock* followed in 1976. Each of these films presented nature as both stunningly beautiful and, at the same time, life-threatening. McFarlane argues that directors, just like poets in the 19th century, have seemingly felt obliged to respond to the – often hostile – landscape. In films like *Picnic at Hanging Rock* (and also in *Crocodile Dundee*), it is not only used as a picturesque backdrop, but is also made an integral part of the films’ actions. The characters do not only live in a certain environment, but actually interact with nature (see McFarlane 41–42).

Part of the fascination for nature stems from the threat of being lost in the outback. The film industry soon realised that this topic was a big issue and made it an important theme in many films. *The Back and Beyond* (1954) was one of these, in which two girls try to find their way from their farm through the outback and get lost. Incorporated into the film is the difference between culture (evil, associated with female characters in the film) and bush (associated with the father who searches for his children).

Another example is *Evil Angels* (Fred Schepisi, 1988), based on a true story, in which another collective anxiety is dealt with: a family goes camping near Uluru and a dingo steals their baby out of their tent. As federal forces did not believe the parent’s statement, the mother was found guilty of having murdered her child, and the father was charged as accessory to the murder. Two years later the police stumbled across a piece of the baby’s clothing while investigating another case at Uluru, proving that the mother’s claim was true. Wimmer explains the reason for this miscarriage of justice: “The Australian *Angst* of losing your child or yourself in the bush suddenly took concrete form in Lindy Chamberlain [the mother]. She became the equivalent of a scapegoat,

sacrificed by the tribe to assuage the gods and demons of Australia's collective subconscious" (Wimmer, *Australian Film* 87).

An important issue in the discussion of getting lost in the bush, emphasised by literature and film, is the "fact" that nature is only hostile toward white people, whereas Aboriginal people can survive there (see Ward 201). This is the point at which the Indigenous population comes into action, as they function as "trackers" who can find lost children because of their knowledge of the Australian bush. An example would be the musical film *One Night the Moon* (Rachel Perkins, 2001) in which little Emily climbs out of her window on her parents' station and vanishes. Her father Jim does not want the Aboriginal tracker (Albert) to help him, and tries to find his daughter with the help of white policemen. When they cannot find Emily, her mother Rose secretly asks Albert for help; he finds her, but as his help was rejected, he comes too late. When asked how he found her, he explains that the little girl had followed the moon (*One Night the Moon*).

Films also exploited the city-bush-conflict. How this specific depiction of urban and suburban places is linked to literature is well explained by Franz Kuna: "An experienced viewer of Australian films will soon learn that many of these films are almost obsessive indicators of Australian cultural realities and perceptions. Whilst America, British and much European cinema has tended to take a rather lazy and relaxed view of its potential to express national concerns, Australian cinema is urgently concerned with Australia and Australianness. Many Australian films show an almost 'complete integration of Australian cultural perceptions (and obsessions) into a structured narrative' and they are always firmly anchored in Australian myths, ideologues, landscapes and characters" (Kuna 23).

Kuna draws attention to the fact that films do not always present cultural realities. However, as films depend on the audience's acceptance, there is great social relevance attached to them since they allow a glimpse into what people (including the producers and directors) want to see – as well as how they want to be seen and want their culture and land to be presented to the world. In a number of films, the city-bush-conflict is explored and in the end, the

latter wins over urban spaces and everything they signify (femininity, immorality, etc.) (see Wimmer, *Australian Film* 94).

5.10 The 1980s – The Rise of the Blockbuster

As a result of tax incentives emplaced in the 1980s, feature film production prospered in the 1980s. The introduction of the '10BA' tax regulation allowed a 150% tax deduction on any film investment. Additionally, the budgets for films rose from approximately 1 million to 4 million Australian Dollars (see Wolf 83). The tax concessions led to a privatising of the film industry. States were no longer the key source for funds, and government involvement decreased from 50 per cent to ten to 15 per cent of the production budget. These private investors became the new forces determining which films were to be produced (see O'Regan, "Film" 343), and the AFC lost its position as "The Guardian of Australianess" (Wolf 85). Many of the films produced in this time were made for TV, as the risk for investors was smaller when the film was not intended for release in theatres (see Wimmer, *Australian Film* 44). The production of blockbusters, the new genre of the 1980s, involved large budgets, which were unaffordable for small production companies (see O'Regan, "Film" 357). The major rivals to film were mini-series such *Return to Eden* (1983) or *A Town Like Alice* (1986). Between 1980 and 1986 some fifty mini-series were produced (see O'Regan, "Film" 343).

Although the production of period films continued, the incentives were most often given to blockbusters along with mini-series and documentaries. Indeed, the number of documentaries soared, which led Wimmer to assume that this genre also encourages discourses of national identity (see Wimmer, *Australian Film* 45). Going hand in hand with the diminishing role of the period genre, the importance of features to the search for a national identity ended, and taken-for-granted norms were abandoned in favour of blockbuster production (see O'Regan, "Film" 348).

While the greater diversity encouraged the production of more diverse film-projects, "this sense of diversity was underwritten by a rhetorical shift from discussions in terms of 'types of film' to discussions in terms of industry"

(O'Regan, "Film" 344). Additionally, a change in the perception of the audience took place: producers no longer attempted to invent the audience, but tried to meet its expectations (see O'Regan, "Film" 344), as "the 'real' audience tastes could no longer be ignored [as had been done by period films]" (Wimmer, *Australian Film* 46). This, as well as other changes in cinema markets, led to the production of blockbuster films like *Mad Max 2*²⁷ (George Miller, 1982) or *Crocodile Dundee* (Peter Faimann, 1986), whose success no longer depended on film critics and intellectuals' judgments, but was simply measured by their profitability. "With the change or orientation away from film as cultural policy towards film as commercial industry the critic/bourgeois intellectual was no longer necessary to industry survival" (O'Regan, "Film" 348).

The higher costs involved in the production and release of blockbusters were another factor for the reduced number of films made in a year. Films of this kind were promoted across the media in order to address not only the usual target group of cinemagoers. Blockbusters were "special-event cinema" (O'Regan, "Film" 358) that incorporated elements of different genres and engaged with the 'social imaginary' of the time (see O'Regan, "Film" 385).

The 1980s witnessed once again an increase in foreign influence on the Australian film market and, at the same time, a decreasing focus on nationalism. However, American productions did not flood the market as they had done in the years before the Australian film's revival, and, in turn, Australian productions were now also being recognised on the American market. This resulted in co-productions (e.g. *Crocodile Dundee*), and, despite critics' warnings, the globalisation of the Australian film industry progressed. Consequently, Australian film production declined towards the end of the 1980s (see Wolf 84).

One market that profited from the international success of *Crocodile Dundee* was tourism. In the second half of the 1980s, tourism grew from ten to 30 per cent per year, which can be linked to the film's popularity overseas: "The Australian Tourist board, when investigating the trend, found that *Crocodile*

²⁷ *Mad Max* (1979) was produced before the tax concessions and other changes to the Australian film industry took place and was the first movie that could not be classified as either period, or ocker film. In fact, *Mad Max* added a third genre: the exploitation genre film (see O'Regan, "Film" 349).

Dundee had 'placed Australian on the map', for many of the arriving tourists" (Wimmer, *Australian Film* 47).

5.11 The 1990s and the early 21st Century

In the 1990s, the attempt to restrict Australian film productions to films with Australian content was given up in favour of cooperation with Hollywood. Subsequently, 20th Century Fox and Warner Brothers opened film studios in Sydney and Brisbane, in which some of the most successful Australian films in recent years were produced, including *Babe*, *Matrix* or *Mission Impossible*, (see Wimmer, *Australian Film* 48).

A big issue in the 1990s and the early 21st century was reconciliation. Despite the success of *The Tracker* (Rolf de Heer, 2002), films concerned with Aboriginality are still "box office poison" (Wimmer, *Australian Film* 49). In this film, set in 1922, the Tracker, David Gulpilil, has to find an Aboriginal man, the Fugitive, who was accused of murdering a white woman. Together with three troopers, the Fanatic (their leader), the Follower (a young man who is new to the frontier) and the Veteran, the Aboriginal tracker roams through Australia. On their way, they meet a small group of Aborigines. Although the Fanatic is told that these people do not hide the Fugitive, he nevertheless tortures them together with the Follower, and finally shoots them. The Tracker has to watch this from under a tree, the white men's voices can hardly be heard, as a song with the lyrics "they're my people" is foregrounded. This song comes to an abrupt end when the first shot is fired. Then, the shooting of the innocent Aboriginal people can only be heard, a painting of Aboriginal people being shot is shown instead. While the group's leader shows no remorse and thinks he was right in shooting the indigenous people, who are mere cannibals to him, the young Follower breaks down. How little Aboriginal lives mean to the Fanatic becomes clear when they meet another group of indigenous people whom he simply shoots. This genocide is again displayed by a painting.

The Fanatic's determination to find the Fugitive becomes obvious for the first time after the group's horse that carried the food supplies is hit by a spear and falls off a cliff (again shown as a painting). The Veteran wants to end the

search, but the Fanatic does not want to give up even now that they have no food. When the Veteran is speared by another Aboriginal spear, the Fanatic would have no problems with leaving the dying man behind and at night, he kills him.

In this film, not only landscape plays an important role for the narration, but also, or better foremost, music. “All men choose the part they walk” is said in a song – the Fanatic choose to be a man who disregards life, the Follower turns out to chose quite another way and sides with the Aborigines in the light of injustice (committed by the Fanatic). His uprising against his boss also demonstrates how little white culture and rules it created mean in the outback. And also the Aboriginal people who captured the Fugitive prove their understanding of natural justice when his leg is speared, not for murdering a woman (which he did not), but for raping one.

The Follower’s change of enthusiasm for hunting the Fugitive also is mediated by music. At the beginning, he likes to play on a little guitar, which he burns after the murder of the Aboriginal campers (*The Tracker*).

In contrast to the representation of Australian identity as homogenous in the 1970s, this was no longer the case in the 1990s. Instead, the nation’s uniqueness is said to be found in its multiculturalism, and, consequently, the national identity paradigm was abandoned (see Wimmer, *Australian Film* 64). Films of the last two decades have focused on different ethnicities and sexual orientations, and have eroded the image of Australia as a man’s nation (see Wimmer, *Australian Film* 54). Special credit for this should be given to feminist discourse: “Australian ‘second wave’ feminism [...] was the single most important discourse which eroded the dominant national myths of ‘mateship’ and the male hero” (Wimmer, *Australian Film* 62).

6. Film Analysis

In the following chapter, four Australian films produced between 1986 and 2008 will be analysed in greater detail.

Crocodile Dundee and “*Crocodile*” *Dundee II*, the two most commercially successful Australian productions of the 1980s, are included in this analysis because of both their popularity and the influence they had on Australia’s degree of recognition overseas.

Rabbit Proof Fence is a film about three Aboriginal children who were forcefully removed from their mothers and brought to a mission. This film not only relates to Aboriginal history, but also deals with topics common to many other Australian productions.

Finally, *Australia*, by far the most successful Australian film in 2008, is the most recent film chosen for this discussion. It relates to virtually every aspect discussed in the preceding chapters, from its representations of femininity, to the bushman, to landscape, war, and many other topics.

The Motion Picture Distributors Association of Australia (MPDAA) and the Australian Film Commission have listed Australia’s top 100 box-office successes, which has been headed by *Crocodile Dundee* ever since 1986. The following list is provided as an abbreviated version, in which only the four films analysed for this paper are included.

Rank	Title	Distributor	Release date	Box office (\$)¹
1	Crocodile Dundee	Hoyts	1986	47,707,045
2	Australia	Fox	2008	37,555,757
6	Crocodile Dundee II	Hoyts	1988	24,916,805
32	Crocodile Dundee in Los Angeles (Australia/US)	UIP/Universal	2001	7,759,103
35	Rabbit-Proof Fence	Becker/Ocean	2002	7,562,439

(“Australian Content Box Office”)

6.1 Crocodile Dundee

Director: Peter Faiman

Producer: John Cornell

Screenplay: Paul Hogan, John Cornell, Ken Shadie

Camera: Russell Boyd

Starring: Paul Hogan (Mick Dundee), Linda Kozlowski (Sue Charlton), John Meillon (Walter Reilly)

Year/Place: 1986/Australia

Hated by many critics, but beloved by audiences – *Crocodile Dundee* is still Australia's number one box-office success. With the character of the likeable Mick Dundee, this film revived the bushman myth of the late 19th century and blended it with the ocker of the 1970s. No cliché about Australia and America is left out, and the film derives its humour from the exaggeration of these stereotypes.

6.1.1 The Plot

Sue Charleton is a New York journalist who travels to Australia to meet Mick "Crocodile" Dundee in the Northern Territory. She wants to write a story about how he survived an attack by a crocodile. At Walkabout Creek, where Mick lives, she meets Wally, his "business partner", and other Bushmen.

Mick takes Sue on a walk through the outback. They start in the desert, cross a lake, and arrive at the Australian rain forest. In the outback, Mick scares poachers, they meet an Aboriginal friend who does not live traditionally, and Mick saves Sue's life. This leads to her realization that despite being a tough city-girl, she could not survive in the Australian outback without an experienced bushman.

Slowly the two become attracted to one another, and when their journey is over, Mick comes to New York with Sue. But there he encounters Sue's fiancée, who is a spoilt coward in Mick's eyes. Mick, who is easy to get along with, meets many new people in New York. These people include a transvestite, whom he at first believes to be a woman, prostitutes, whom he believes to be normal girls, and the black chauffeur Gus, who is asked to which tribe he

belongs. Mick “helps” a drug addict, and does not take New York gangsters seriously. He does not understand why people would need a psychiatrist as long as they have mates, sleeps on the floor next to his bed and thinks that New York must be the friendliest place on earth, because seven million people want to live together there. But when Richard proposes to Sue, Mick is disappointed and plans to leave the city to go on a walkabout through the United States.

Sue, who declines Richard’s proposal, finds Mick at a subway station and confesses her love.

6.1.2 Mick J. “Crocodile” Dundee

Mick combines two cliché-types: the typical bushman and the ocker-type. He is suntanned, likes to drink, swears, wears a typical hat, and is a little bit naïve, just like Bazza McKenzie. Mick also values his mates and upholds the spirit of egalitarianism, as whites are as good as Aboriginal people and African-Americans to him. He is anti-intellectual, but he does not display it. He simply is not interested in world politics or their like.

Mick grew up with Aboriginal people, and thus has a strong connection with the land. But his naturalness is exaggerated for the film. Even though he is a capable bushman, he nevertheless uses various devices to ease his life. He pretends to shave with his knife although he uses a normal razor, and tells stories about how he killed a crocodile with his knife, although empty cartridge cases lie everywhere around his boat. For the first part of the film, Sue really believes his stories, but then she slowly figures out that these exaggerations are only part of his humour.

That the audience should not take *Crocodile Dundee* seriously is made even more obvious by Wally, who is dressed as if for a safari, and keeps losing his way in the outback.

While Mick is clearly no racist, he is sexist, although not offensively so. He does not believe that a city-girl like Sue can survive in the outback, which is a man’s land. After he saves Sue from the crocodile, she tells him that the

crocodile was going to eat her alive; he simply answers: "Well, I wouldn't hold that against him. Same thought crossed my mind once or twice." But Sue is more to him than just a flirt, and he follows her to New York.

What is made clear here, and also in other scenes, is, that Sue could not survive without Mick. In the beginning of the film, she appears to be a tough businesswoman, but in the outback she has to learn that this is no place for women, emphasising the old Australian ideology according to which the bush is the "female other" against bushmen and pioneers, but women cannot survive in this place alone. Interestingly, Sue cannot even survive in her familiar surroundings: Mick has to defend her against the gangsters and her father's dogs.

In New York, Mick displays another 'typical' Australian character trait: competitiveness. He competes with Richard for Sue's affection. In this fight, Mick represents the underdog. But Mick impresses the journalist with his heroic acts. Not only does he protect her in the outback, he also manages to protect her in New York. When young gangsters try to steal his wallet, he laughs at them, and the Australian hero shows the New Yorkers what a real knife is.

Very often, Mick's abilities as a bushman are exaggerated, and much of the film's humour is derived from this fact. However, his connection to the land is real, which he proves when he hypnotises a buffalo or follows Sue without being seen or heard. The fact that he grew up with Aboriginal people and that Gus, an Afro-American man, becomes his friend shall highlight his strong sense for equality and that he is no racist. Of course, this does not reflect historical facts, as white children did not grow up with Aboriginal people when not even children of mixed descent were allowed to stay with their tribe. As *Crocodile Dundee* was supposed to promote a positive image of Australia overseas, the truth was not dealt with. It was easier to deny the practice of child removal and depict Australians as tolerant.

In a nutshell, Mick is the exaggerated version of the typical Australian. Through his self-irony he makes fun of many old clichés.

6.1.3 The Landscape

The audience gets to see a variety of different Australian landscapes in *Crocodile Dundee*. The story starts in an urban place (Sydney) and proceeds to the small town of Walkabout Creek, situated in a dry part of the Northern Territory. Then Sue and Mick take the audience with them into the rain forest with its exotic trees and animals. The camera takes its time to depict the land, and in scenes when nobody speaks, the audience has the possibility to become aware of Australia's beauty.

Like Aboriginal people, Mick seems to belong to the land. He can move around without fear, and never loses his orientation. Although he has no problem with killing crocodiles, he gets upset when poachers shoot at kangaroos. His special abilities with animals are demonstrated when he hypnotises a buffalo and later, in New York, Sue's father's guard dogs.

6.1.3.1 The City-Bush-Conflict

Australia and the characters connected to it are presented as genuine. Despite the exaggerations in Mick and Wally's stories, they are nevertheless honest characters when it comes to interpersonal relationships. Mick in particular is down-to-earth and has no understanding of superficiality.

In contrast, there is America, and New York City in particular. Sue and Mick are picked up at the airport by Sue's boyfriend, Richard, the embodiment of snobbery and superficiality. Following the old cliché, the city is presented as a morally degenerate place.

Mick tries to apply his way of life to New York society. He does not know what the man at the party is doing with the cocaine and is astonished when Sue tells him why people see psychiatrists, because all he needs are mates.

The contrast between America and Australia is also highlighted through language. Mick continues to speak with a heavy Australian accent when he is in New York and says "g'day" to people on the streets.

6.1.4 Aboriginal Culture

Indigenous culture is presented in a very simplified way, which was often criticised (see Wolf 358). However, when considering how complex Aboriginal society really is, and how light-hearted *Crocodile Dundee* deals with politics (Mick does not care about politics as this is “none of his business”), it is not surprising that this culture is not presented in more depth. Mick tries to explain the difference between possessing land and belonging to it. This was also criticised, as some critics thought that it presented Aboriginal claims in the wrong light.

Neville, the only Aboriginal man to appear in the film, is not a stereotypical Aborigine who lives in the outback. He speaks English, wears jeans and is not particularly fond of the ancient traditions. He seems to be less aboriginal than Mick, as Nev cannot find his way through the bush in the dark without running against an obstacle, and prefers city life to life in bush.

However, in the same way that the representations of white Australians and Americans should not be taken seriously, this representation of Aboriginal people should not be, either.

6.1.5 Reviews

Film critic Roger Ebert made the criticism that *Crocodile Dundee* was more of the same, but not better: “They made this kind of movie better in the 1930s, when audiences were more accustomed to the reliable old story line: aggressive female newspaper reporter from New York tracks down legendary wilderness guide in the Outback, is saved from crocodiles, falls in love, asks living legend to return with her to New York to meet her millionaire daddy and her fiancé, a wimp”.

Kay Schaffer wrote that the image presented in *Crocodile Dundee* is a continuation of the dominant discourse, in which white Australian men are the ideal, while women, Aboriginal people, migrants and homosexuals are the “other” (see Schaffer 11–13).

Fifteen years after its release, film critic James Berardinelli found more flattering words: “*Crocodile Dundee* is a breezy, fun affair – a trifle that is extremely pleasant to sample and leaves no bitter aftertaste. It’s a fantasy that’s part romantic comedy and part fish-out-of-water...”

Despite critics’ negative opinions, the film was not only a success at the box-office. It also had positive effects on tourism, as *Crocodile Dundee* “placed Australia on the map” for many tourists, especially from Europe and Japan (see Wimmer, *Australian Film* 47).

The hype about Australia in the 1980s is reflected by Christopher Null’s words: “In case, dear reader, you are too young to remember the 1980s, you missed the craze over Australia. Men at Work inexplicably became a big band. An Aussie guy named ‘Jocko’ pitched Energizer batteries with the catchphrase ‘Oy!’ The Outback Steakhouse rose to national prominence.”

6.1.6 Conclusion

Crocodile Dundee is an exploitation of clichés about Australia and America. The portrayal of stereotypes is used for comic purposes. The cultural clash between America and Australia adds to this sense of humour. *Crocodile Dundee* was not intended to present Australia as it is, although it seems that many people did not understand this, but rather saw it as an embodiment of Australian qualities (see Wolf 162).

However, it must be regarded critically as it denies the status-quo of the 1980s: the fight for Aboriginal land rights is simplified to a questionable extent and trivialises a sensitive issue.

Mick provides the Australian audience to identify with a character that runs like a thread through Australian stories: the Australian underdog. It does not question ideologies, but perpetuates them and presents Australia as amiable society that is perfectly represented by Mick.

6.2 “Crocodile” Dundee II

Director: John Cornell
Producer: John Cornell
Screenplay: Paul Hogan, Brett Hogan
Camera: Russell Boyd
Starring: Paul Hogan (Mick Dundee), Linda Kozlowski (Sue Charlton), John Meillon (Walter Reilly)
Year/Place: 1988/Australia

6.3.1 The Plot

Mick and Sue live in New York now. The Australian has not yet adjusted to city life. He still goes fishing with dynamite, teaches children to read tracks, and because of his friendly and unpretentious character, everybody likes him.

Everything would be perfect if it were not for Sue's ex-husband, Bob, who has recently photographed Columbian drug dealers shooting someone. Because he can't trust anybody but Sue, he sends the film to her to keep it until he can get to New York. The Columbians then kill Bob and come to New York, because they want to get the film before the police get it. They kidnap Sue and tell Mick not to inform the police. With the help of an American gang, Mick is able to rescue her.

As Mick does not believe that the police will be able to protect them from Rico, who still wants to kill Sue, they return to Australia. There, they hide in the outback, where Mick is able protect both Sue and himself.

Shortly afterwards, the Columbian gangsters follow them to Australia, and take Wally hostage as they want him to work as their tracker. Because of Mick's bushman qualities, he is able to outsmart the gangsters.

6.3.2 Mick the Bushman

In the sequel of *Crocodile Dundee*, Mick remains a bushman. Even now that he lives in the big city of New York, he does not adapt to his new life, but

wears the same clothes, takes his knife with him whenever he leaves the apartment, and has the same naïve view of the world.

His bushman qualities not only help him when he is in the outback, but also come in handy in New York. The policeman who is supposed to follow Mick loses him, because Mick vanishes like an Aboriginal in the bush. He escapes the police a second time when he jumps off his roof terrace, holding tight to a rope. And he is able to free Sue from the gangster's mansion.

In the second half of the film, when the action takes place in the outback, Mick has an advantage over the gangsters because he can remain unseen as long as he wants. Wally even compares him to an Aborigine and says that Mick can perform their (black) magic. He belongs to nature just like Aboriginal people do, can disappear in the bush, and move around without being heard.

Aboriginality is a bigger topic in the second part of the Crocodile Dundee series than in the first film. The ability to survive is associated with uncanny powers Aboriginal people seem to possess. When for example the Aboriginal tracker who is engaged by the Columbians hears that he should search for Mick, he simply vanishes in the bush and leaves the white intruders on their own. And also Mick's "phone call" generates a noise that is frightening for those who are not initiated into life in the bush.

6.3.3 The Landscape

As in the first film, the variety of the Australian landscape is showcased. Again, the adventure starts in Walkabout Creek, set in a dry part of the Northern Territory. Then the action proceeds to the rain forest. Nature is threatening, but only to the foreign intruders. They have to be afraid of crocodiles and snakes, while Mick can move in the bush without danger.

Rico, who has finally had enough of Mick's game, sets fire to the bush, and with this tries to defeat Mick, who is part of nature. But like in the first film, Mick has nothing to fear in the bush, and as nature/Mick is stronger than any foreigner who intrudes into the Australian bush, he wins against the gangsters.

6.3.4 Reviews

In Janet Maslin's opinion, "*Crocodile Dundee II* did not bring any new elements to the action, and has a "touristy tone. There are urban caricatures for Dundee to marvel at, street scenes that would warm the heart of any travel agent, a tour of Bloomingdale's (where Dundee has a brief chance to use his woodsman's skills), and even an official tour guide showing off "the legendary New York City subway."

Desson Howe was also of the opinion that *Crocodile Dundee II* had nothing new to offer: "Paul Hogan has an easy plan: Simply be Mick "Crocodile" Dundee and the rest will follow. The rest is "Crocodile Dundee II," and it doesn't follow so much as drag itself along like an alligator on dry land."

6.3.5 Conclusion

As in *Crocodile Dundee*, Mick, the 'prototypical Australian', embodies the underdog, who finally wins against foreign villains due to his bushman qualities. Again, the film is partly set in New York, and partly in Australia. And again, Mick does not adapt to New York's social conventions, but remains the outback innocent who is likeable because of his unpretentiousness. Another thing these two films have in common is their exploitation of clichés: the drug dealers are Columbian, Japanese tourists hang around in the subway station in the hope of a good photo, and the gangsters really believe that the Aboriginal men guarding them are cannibals. And again, the relationship between white Australians and the indigenous population is presented in a very positive light, racism seemingly does not exist.

6.4 Rabbit Proof Fence

Director: Phillip Noyce

Producer: Phillip Noyce, Christine Olsen, John Winter

Screenplay: Christine Olsen, based on *Follow the Rabbit Proof Fence* by Doris Pilkington

Camera: Christopher Doyle

Starring: Everlyn Sampi (Molly Craig), Tianna Sansbury (Daisy Craig), Laura Monaghan (Gracie), David Gulpilil (Moodoo), Kenneth Branagh (A. O. Neville)

Year/Place: 2002/Australia

Rabbit Proof Fence is a true story, based on the book *Follow the Rabbit Proof Fence* by Molly's (the main character) daughter Doris Pilkington Garimara.

6.4.1 The Plot

The story takes place in Western Australia in the 1930s. Molly, her younger sister Daisy, and their cousin Gracie, live happily together with their mothers and grandmother at Jigalong Depot, Western Australia. The girls' fathers were whites, who were involved in the erection of the rabbit-proof fence that is supposed to keep rabbits off farming land. They moved on a long time ago. The girls' female relatives teach them how to live in the bush and tell them about the ancient traditions and culture. Molly's mum also shows her the so-called spirit bird, which will always protect her. She is a skilled hunter.

In the 1930s, so-called half-caste children, were removed from their families and brought to missions. A. O. Neville, who is legally the guardian of every Aboriginal in Western Australia, decides that Molly, Daisy, and Gracie have to be taken from their Aboriginal mothers and brought to the Moore River Native Settlement.

The Australian government planned to 'breed out' the black colour by mixing Aboriginal people with white Australians. With this, the government hoped to eliminate the Indigenous race. A full-blood Aboriginal woman and white man's child would be a half-caste, who is already fairer. This child would have to marry a white Australian again, and their children would be a

‘quadroon’. To prevent the development of a third race – in addition to whites and the Aboriginals – the government wanted to prevent half-castes from marrying full-blood Aboriginals or other half-castes.

The girls are brought to Moore River, first in a cage on a train, then on a lorry. At the mission, which is 1,200 miles away from Jigalong Depot, a nun welcomes them and brings them to the dormitory – a bungalow in which many girls sleep on cots. This hut is locked during the night; a bucket that has to be emptied every morning serves as a toilet. Molly, Gracie, and Daisy are very frightened and do not even speak to the other children.

In the morning, the girls have to pray before breakfast and are not allowed to speak. When little Daisy talks to her sister in their mother tongue, an Aboriginal man who works as a guard comes to their table and tells them that Aboriginal languages are not allowed: they have to speak English. This is repeated by a nun who scrubs them clean after breakfast.

After this, Mar. Neville visits the mission and wants to see the girls who have fairer skin than the rest. They are believed to be more intelligent than the darker children and are sent to a boarding school. The Chief Protector also looks at Molly, but rejects her, as her skin is too dark.

Next, the girls see what happens to those who try to escape the mission. A girl from their dormitory explains to the new arrivals that whenever a girl runs away, the tracker, Mooloo, is sent to bring them back, and he always succeeds. He is at the mission because his daughter was brought there, too. Once the girl is back, the nuns beat her, and her hair is cut short.

Molly is appalled by what happens at the mission, and says it makes her sick. Despite the punishment threatened for girls who flee, she decides to run away and take Daisy and Gracie with her. When all the other girls are at church, Molly takes the toilet bucket and pretends to bring it to the sinkhole. Daisy comes with her, and after some hesitation, Gracie goes with them, too. Their disappearance is discovered that evening. The tracker is immediately informed, but he loses their tracks when heavy rain sets in. Next morning, Molly lays false tracks to confuse the tracker. She has learned a lot about living in the bush, which makes it possible for her to remain undiscovered. Hence, it is no wonder

that her mother, who knows about her daughter's skills, is not worried when she is told that the children have disappeared.

On their journey, Molly is caught stealing eggs at a farm. Luckily, the station owner's wife does not call the police, but gives the girls food and tells them about the rabbit-proof fence, which is to the east of the farm. Molly knows that if they follow the fence, it will lead them directly to Jigalong Depot, which was also erected on her tribe's land.

Molly's mother assumes that the children will follow the fence and waits there. This idea also comes to Mr Neville, who sends the tracker and a white man to find the girls there. But as the girls are following the wrong fence (in fact, there were three different fences to protect farming land from rabbit plague) at this time, the men do not discover them.

On their way home, they meet several people who help them: among them is Mavis, an Aboriginal housemaid who also was at Moore River as a child. She lets the girls sleep in her cottage, but the station owner discovers them and informs the police. Again, the children are able to escape the authorities and the tracker because of Molly's skills at covering their traces.

Mr Neville does not want to give up the search for the girls, and decides to lay a trap: he spreads rumours about Gracie's mum being in a town near where he suspects the girls to be at the moment. An Aborigine who has read this rumour in the newspaper tells the girls about it when they meet. Although Molly immediately recognises that it may be a trick, Gracie is obsessed with the idea of seeing her mother and wants to take a train to the town. The girls separate, but Molly soon regrets this and decides to follow Gracie to the train station. Just as she and her younger sister arrive in town, the police capture Gracie and take her with them. Now, Molly and Daisy, who are devastated, have to continue without their cousin.

Mr Neville gives up the search for financial reasons, and sends Constable Riggs to Jigalong Depot to await the girls' arrival and simply recapture them there.

Before the girls can get home, they have to cross part of the desert, where no fence has been erected. They nearly die there, but the spirit bird guides their way, and, finally, they arrive at Jigalong Depot. Constable Riggs is already gone, as the Aboriginal women managed to threaten him with a spear and the uncanny sounds of nature, which scared him into leaving.

A text insert informs the viewer about the girls' lives after this journey. Molly had two children, with whom she was forced to return to River Moore. She escaped a second time, and took her younger daughter with her. This child was then taken from her and never seen again. Gracie has since died, but Molly and Daisy still live at Jigalong Depot.

6.4.2 The Landscape

Australia's landscape is omnipresent in the film. Except for the scenes in Mr Neville's office and at Moore River, the film's whole story is set outside. Similar to period films, nature is part of the film for its own sake. Very often, nobody speaks and the story is told by the landscape. The tone of the film is supported by music by Peter Gabriel. Nature is depicted as an unwelcoming place, hot and dry. However, Molly, Daisy, and Gracie are strongly tied to the landscape through their Aboriginal heritage. Thus, they are able to survive in the outback.

A familiar theme included in the film is the contrast between nature and white culture. The girls, who grew up in nature and belong to it to a certain extent, are the underdogs who, despite their inferior position to white Australians, manage to make their way home, while white authorities, associated with Perth and the mission, cannot hold them back. Even the tracker has already been too influenced by white culture to recapture these girls in the outback.

6.4.3 The Tracker

Trackers were people of Aboriginal descent who were forced to help white authorities when they searched for Aboriginal people in the outback. As whites lacked the Indigenous population's knowledge about the land, it was often impossible for them to find people on their own.

The tracker in *Rabbit Proof Fence*, Moodoo, is played by none other than David Gulpili, a popular Aboriginal actor who also appeared in films like *Crocodile Dundee* and *The Tracker*.

As a tracker, Moodoo betrays his ancestry. Instead of resisting white culture, he has become part of the system and accepts the white way as better. However, he did not become a tracker by choice, but was rather extorted by the authorities. As long as he helps find girls who try to flee from Moore River, he is allowed to see his daughter, who is also interned at the mission. That Moodoo belongs to white Australian culture is denoted by his uniform, as well as his acceptance of his fate. Although Moodoo is said to be a very skilled tracker, he is not able to recapture the girls. However, he does not seem unhappy about this. He says that Molly is a very clever girl, and when she and the other girls escape from the farm, he even smiles.

6.4.4 Molly

Molly is the eldest of the three girls, and represents Aboriginal culture. She has already learned a lot about the ancient way of life, which enables her not only to survive in the outback, but also to escape an adult Aboriginal man.

However, she is not only a representative of Indigenous culture, but also serves as a typical Australian, in that she is an underdog. The hegemonic culture perceives her as inferior, and her youth lowers her position even more. Nevertheless, she makes her way, because of her strong will and her lack of respect for authority.

Molly navigates her way home by relying on her instincts, which makes it possible for her to distinguish between people who want to help her and those

who are lying: she trusts the farmer's wife and the bushman who tells her that she is following the wrong fence, but does not believe the words of the Aboriginal man who tells the girls about Gracie's mum's whereabouts. Molly's instincts only fail her once: when she trusts Mavis, the Aboriginal housemaid. Even then, Mavis doesn't put the girls in a dangerous situation on purpose – she just hopes that the girls' presence will prevent her master from raping her as he does every night.

6.4.5 The Stolen Generations

As discussed in Chapter 2, the states' governments passed laws to “protect” Aboriginal people as of 1869. The first law enabling the government to remove children of mixed descent from their families was passed in Victoria in 1886. The other Australian states followed during the next years.

With these Protection Acts the government legalised its strategy to “breed out” the black colour. The idea was that every child of a white and a black parent was a half-caste, if this person was mixed with another white person, their child would be a quadroon and so on. Persons of mixed descent were not allowed to marry full-blood Aborigines, as in the government's opinion, this would be a step backwards.

In an effort not only to erase the dark skin colour of Aboriginal people, but also to destroy their culture, ‘half-castes’ were removed from their families and brought to missions, where they were to be re-educated and taught how to assimilate into white society.

The arrogance of white Australians let them believe that they were not acting in their own interest, but rather helping the Aboriginal people advance to white status. At a time when Social Darwinism was accepted as valid, destroying Aboriginal culture meant that the dominant group (white Australians) would simply replace the weaker one.

Rabbit Proof Fence depicts the immense pain the practice of child removal caused in Aboriginal communities, as well as the government's indifference to their suffering.

6.4.6 A. O. Neville

Chief Protector A. O. Neville serves as the personification of the government's child removal practice. With his talk about the need to protect children from their Aboriginal mothers, and what happens at the missions, he presents the topic from white Australia's point of view. He clearly is not acting out of malice, but rather truly believes what he says. This is not only made obvious by the way he acts, but also by what he says, with comments like "in spite of himself, the native must be helped", or "they must be protected against themselves. If they would only understand what we are trying to do for them."

The fact that Neville's character is played by the British actor Kenneth Branagh adds anti-British feelings to the film. Mr Neville is a stereotypical 'pommy' character, who sticks to the rules, speaks with a British accent, and thinks that he and British culture are better than the Natives.

6.4.7 Reviews

Overall, critics loved the film and praised it in their reviews.

It won numerous awards worldwide, among them the Australian Film Institute Awards for Best Film, Best Original Music Score, and Best Sound (2002), the award for Audience Favourite Feature at Aspen Film Fest (2002) and was nominated for the Best Original Score – Motion Pictures at the Golden Globes (2002).

Jamie Russell from BBC News said: "by highlighting the realities of this hidden genocide (unbelievably, the policy continued until the early 70s), "Rabbit-Proof Fence" stands as a powerful, worthy testimony to the suffering of the stolen generations"

Gary Panton wrote, "the breath-taking scenery spotted along the way by director Philip Noyce makes it a work of outstanding visual beauty, and at times Christine Olsen's screenplay (based on the book by Molly's real-life daughter Doris Pilkington) genuinely tugs on the heart-strings. There's not a lot of

dialogue involved, but the words that are there work well and could have some of the softies among you reaching for the hankies.”

Despite being praised by critics, Molly and Daisy themselves were not particularly satisfied with what they saw. Molly does not regard the film’s story as her own, as it only shows small parts of her real life, and Daisy is unhappy with the way she is represented in the film, i.e. as a little girl who has to be carried by her elder sister for half of the film (Bonus Content on DVD).

6.4.8 Conclusion

Even though the main character in this film – Molly – is an Aboriginal girl, she is simultaneously representative of the typical Australian. She is the underdog, fighting against injustice, and paying no respect to authorities. Her Australianness is enforced by the fact that she stands up to British authority.

This film also proves that landscape is still a strong motif in Australian productions, and is strongly reminiscent of Period films in this respect.

Rabbit Proof Fence was released six years after the “Bringing Them Home” report was first published, and two years after thousands of people marched across Sydney Harbour Bridge in support of Aboriginal people, who demanded an official apology for the policy of child removal.

Despite its political relevance, the film was not a box-office success in Australia, proving that ‘Aboriginality’ is still not interesting enough for Australian audiences. In contrast to Australia, *Rabbit Proof Fence* was highly successful in the United States, Great Britain and other European countries (see Wimmer, *Australian Film* 50).

6.5 Australia

Director: Baz Luhrmann

Producer: Baz Luhrmann, Catherine Knapman, G. Mac Brown

Screenplay: Baz Luhrmann, Ronald Harwood, Stuart Beattie, Richard Flanagan

Camera: Mandy Walker

Starring: Nicole Kidman (Lady Sarah Ashley), Hugh Jackman (Drover), David Gulpilil (King George), Brandon Walters (Nullah), Bryan Brown (Lesley Carney), David Wenham (Neil Fletcher), Jack Thompson (Kipling Flynn), David Ngoombujarra (Margarri)

Year/Place: 2008/Australia

6.5.1 The Plot

Nullah, a boy of mixed descent, is the story's narrator and provides important background information as a voiceover throughout the film. Lord Maitland Ashley lives at Faraway Downs, a station in the Northern Territory, where he breeds cattle. Lady Sarah Ashley, in England, thinks that he does not want to sell the farm and come back to England because of his affairs with Australian women. She decides to travel to Australia to persuade her husband to sell the station and return to England with her. Her husband is worried and does not want her to come to Australia, as war is imminent, but Lady Sarah is stubborn, and ignores her husband. As he cannot pick her up from Darwin, he sends the Drover to meet her and bring her to the station.

Lesley Carney, the cattle king of the Northern Territory, wants to buy the Ashleys' farm, which is the last station that does not belong to him in the area. This means that the aristocratic family are his last competitors, and if Carney could acquire their farm, he would be the only supplier of cattle to the army.

Lady Ashley is a very fair skinned English aristocrat who stands out from the Australians because of her way of dress and her behaviour. When she arrives in Darwin, she looks for the Drover at a bar where he is said to be, but the barkeeper tells her to leave as women are not allowed in his pub. In the meantime, Drover gets in a fight outside the pub, because a man has insulted him for being a friend to Aboriginal people. He is a typical bushman: a rough, underdog who fights against injustice, and both drinks and swears profusely. He is also independent, as he only works on commission.

Drover and Lady Sarah's arrival at the station is commented on by Nullah, who hides in a tank because he thinks that the police are coming to take him to a mission. But soon he sees that he was mistaken.

When they arrive at Faraway Downs, the Drover and Lady Sarah find out that her husband has been murdered. Neil Fletcher, the station's manager, is in the room and tells Lady Sarah that Lord Fletcher was killed by the Aborigine King George, Nullah's grandfather.

Soon, Lady Ashley finds out that Fletcher secretly works for Carney, and although she cannot prove it, she knows that he steals her cattle. It is Nullah who tells her about this, and Fletcher beats the boy to convince Lady Ashley that he is a liar. She defends the boy and fires Fletcher, who leaves the station along with his men. From this day on, she is called Mrs Boss. Nullah compares her to the Rainbow Serpent, a sacred symbol in Aboriginal culture. He believes that Sarah will bring a change.

When Drover comes back to the station, ready to drive the cattle to Darwin, he gets angry because he cannot do this without Fletcher's help. But when he hears why Sarah fired Fletcher, he decides to help her.

Now he needs a new team. To this purpose, he trains Nullah's mother and grandmother, Nullah, and, after some hesitation, Sarah as well. Shortly before their departure, the police come to the station, and Nullah has to hide in the tank again. His mother goes with him, and drowns. Drover wants Sarah to comfort the boy, but she does not want to at first. Then she goes to Nullah and tells him the story *The Wizard of Oz*. Nullah likes the story because of the rainbow, which reminds him of the Rainbow Serpent, and especially because of the song "Over the Rainbow". Full of fresh hope, the team starts its cattle drive, always surveyed by King George, from different hidden vantage points.

Carney, who was sure that with the dismissal of Fletcher, his last competitor had been knocked out, hears about the cattle drive and orders Fletcher, his future son-in-law, to prevent the cattle from arriving in Darwin. Thus, the former Faraway Downs employee and three of his men ride to the place where the Faraway Downs team is camping on their first night, and set fire to the bush in order to scare the cattle. The team has to calm them down

quickly, before they can fall off a nearby cliff. In the course of the action, Flynn (the station's accountant who also helps in the drive) falls off his horse and is fatally wounded by the cattle running over him. All of a sudden, Nullah stands between the cattle and the cliff, but because he knows Aboriginal 'magic' he manages to calm them down. The boy inherits Flynn's harmonica, and learns to play "Over the Rainbow" on it.

Despite Flynn's death, the drive has to go on. The next evening, they camp beneath a tree, behind which Sarah and Drover kiss for the first time. When Nullah, who was sitting in the tree, discovers them, he wants to know what they are doing. They answer that they were dancing the foxtrot.

Fletcher is still eager to prevent them from arriving in Darwin and poisons the billabongs in the area. He believes that this will finally end the drive. But now King George comes to help the team, and leads them directly through the Never Never desert. Usually, nobody crosses this part of the desert, because it is easy to lose one's orientation, but as the old Aboriginal man knows the ancient songs of his culture, he is able to "sing them across" the land.

In Darwin, rumour spreads that the team died on their way through Never Never land. However, they arrive in time, and have to race their cattle onto the army ship before Carney's. When they win the race, people on the streets cheer.

The evening after the race, Sarah attends a charity ball and asks Drover to come with her. She has decided to stay in Australia and keep the farm, and wants Drover to be the manager. He declines both offers, the first, because he does not belong to white society, as he is a friend of the Aboriginal people, and the second, because he wants to continue his life as a drover working on commission.

Upset, Sarah goes to the ball alone, where she tries to convince Dr Bark to let her adopt Nullah. He has no understanding of her feelings for the boy, and insists that every 'half-caste' child has to be brought to a mission to re-educate them. He is of the opinion that Aboriginal mothers forget their children soon after they are removed, and that these children must be protected from Aboriginal culture, which is considered inferior to white culture. Out of despair,

Sarah nearly accepts Carney's offer to buy her farm, as he promises to take care of all her employees, including Nullah. Just when she is about to sign the contract, Drover comes in, and she knows that she is not alone anymore.

For two years, Sarah and Drover live at Faraway Downs, together with Nullah and her employees. The boy wants to go on a walkabout with his grandfather, which Sarah does not want to allow. Drover and Sarah's relationship ends when he leaves for a cattle drive although Sarah says she needs him, as Nullah has run away to go on his walkabout. During these two years, Fletcher has killed Carney, married his daughter, and become the new cattle king. Under his influence, the police come to capture King George and Nullah. The Aboriginal man is imprisoned in Darwin and accused of murdering Lord Ashley, and Nullah is brought to Mission Island. Sarah promises to get him back, which he believes.

Two months later, the Japanese Navy arrives in Australian water, and bombs Mission Island and Darwin. Drover and his Aboriginal friend, Margarri, who have been in the outback, rush to Darwin, where Drover is told that Sarah has been killed. Together with Margarri, the bartender, and a young priest, he reaches Mission Island by boat, where they search for surviving children. In the meantime, the audience sees that Sarah is alive. On their way back to Darwin, Nullah plays "Over the Rainbow" on his harmonica, which is heard by Sarah. Luckily reunited, Drover, Sarah, and Nullah decide to go back to Faraway Downs. Fletcher sees Nullah and wants to shoot him because he believes that the boy has cursed him, but is speared by King George, who was again standing on a faraway vantage point.

On their way to the station, they pause at the tree where Sarah and Drover first kissed. Another key event takes place here: Sarah finally allows Nullah to go on a walkabout with his grandfather.

6.5.2 The Landscape

For the first part of the movie, the Northern Territory is presented as dry and hot. Whenever the camera angle offers a wide view of the country, it is

dusty and brown, except for the billabong near Faraway Downs. The vastness of Australia is represented by shots in which the station is seen as a small dot on the landscape.

During the cattle drive, the approach of disaster is denoted by the narrow valley the team has to cross. The life-threatening aspects of Australia's nature are represented by Never Never land, which not even Drover, the experienced bushman, wants to cross. This unwelcoming place can only be overcome with the help of the knowledge of the Aboriginal magic man King George, who is closely connected to nature by his ancestry. The "Ur Angst" of "being lost in the bush" is recalled, and is dealt with in the typical way: nature is hostile only towards white men, while Aboriginal people belong to it and therefore have nothing to fear (see Chapter 5).

Another familiar topic dealt with in *Australia* is the city-bush-conflict. The 'good' characters – Drover, Nullah, Sarah, King George etc. – all are connected to the bush, while Carney and Fletcher are connected to Darwin. Even though Carney is the cattle king, he is never seen in the outback, except for one time: when he is killed by a crocodile. This contrast between the morally degenerate city and the bush is also made obvious by the character of the police officer. As long as he is a friend of Sarah's, representing the bush, he does not harm Nullah or King George, but when he is under the influence of Fletcher, he catches them and brings them to Darwin. Fletcher congratulates him for this - no surprise - in Darwin.

As usual, nature wins over culture. By bringing King George to Darwin, Fletcher signs his own death warrant, as the Aboriginal man kills him when he tries to shoot Nullah.

6.5.3 Aboriginal culture

King George and his grandson Nullah, a child of mixed-race, represent Aboriginality. Both have magic powers and can influence events by singing ancient songs. They have songs against fear, to make themselves invisible, and by singing, King George even manages to guide Drover and his team through

the Never Never desert. Drover explains to Sarah (and the audience) that Aborigines have songs for everything in nature – for every stone, every tree etc. This allows them to never lose their way.

In an interview, Baz Luhrmann stated that the film's main message is, as Nullah says: "The rain will fall, the grass goes green, and life begins again". Hence, "after all, tomorrow is another day." Luhrmann puts this in the context of family, and says that as long as you are with the ones you love, the world around you can change. This in fact is also an important element of Aboriginal life, in which the Dreaming²⁸ "is an enduring life-force, even though individuals come and go, and life changes" (Pascoe 11).

6.5.3.1 The Stolen Generations

A topic already discussed in Chapter 6.4 is the Stolen Generation. In this film, the practice of forceful child removal threatens Nullah, who is finally brought to Mission Island (a fictional place based on Bathurst Island 80 kilometres north of Darwin). By the time he is captured, however, he has already learned a lot about his ancestors and can sing Drover and 'Mrs Boss' to him.

At the ball, Dr Bark expresses the common opinion about Australian children in the 1940s when he opposes Sarah's desire to adopt Nullah. 'Half-caste' children had to be brought to missions, where they were trained as servants for white people.

The superficiality of white society is emphasized when Japanese forces draw nearer and nobody wants to save the children on Mission Island. Representatives of white society, such as Carney's wife, the Chief Protector, and Fletcher, think that Sarah makes a fool of herself when she tries to get Nullah back. The only one who understands her is Catherine, but rather than helping Sarah, she tells her husband Neil Fletcher to intervene.

²⁸ The Dreaming is the time in which the ancestors created the world, but it is also the present and the future.

A step towards reconciliation is taken when the bartender finally allows Margarri (Drover's former brother-in-law who works with him) to enter the pub and have a drink there. But as Drover has to force him to allow it, it is possible to argue that no real reconciliation takes place. However, a little later he helps the men rescue the children from Mission Island, which he does deliberately. While other white people did not even think of helping the 'half-castes', he risks his life for them, and with this act, shows real affection.

6.5.3.2 The Rainbow Serpent

The Rainbow Serpent is an ancestral being connected with water. On the one hand, it is the creator of all life; on the other hand, it can also become a destructive force. Hence, when Nullah compares Sarah to the Rainbow Serpent when they first meet, the change he predicts means that Sarah might change his life for the better, or for the worse, if she were to sell the farm.

The Rainbow Serpent's form is imitated when the cattle drive begins. As they depart, they stir up dust, which looks like a giant snake from above, winding its way to Darwin.

6.5.4 Lady Sarah Ashley aka Mrs Boss

Lady Sarah is an English aristocrat who travels to Australia to pick up her husband, who, she assumes, remains in Australia because of his affairs. For the first part of the film, she is a perfect representative of a 'pommy': well educated, well dressed, but also arrogant – not only towards workers, but also towards the upper-class women who want to welcome her to Darwin.

Her 'un-Australianness' is also indicated by her dresses. From the time she arrives in Australia, until the cattle drive begins, she is dressed in light colours, utterly unfit for a journey through the outback. Only once does she wear black: for her husband's funeral. But again, this dress only mirrors her inner stiffness. She cannot understand what her husband saw in the land and

intends to sell the farm. Through her unsuitability to the land, Australia's anti-British attitude is expressed.

Sarah not only brings change to the station employees' lives, but is also the one who undergoes the biggest change in character. When she arrives in Darwin, the bartender tells her to leave the bar, as no women are allowed in it. When she comes back to Darwin after the cattle drive, she is no longer the aristocrat she was. She is a drover now, and has a drink at the pub, together with the other men. The bartender represents not only Australian hostility towards the indigenous population, but also sexism. By the end of the film, Sarah has become an Australian woman who also 'did her duty' in war, and she and he eventually become friends.

Shortly after the team's arrival in Darwin, Sarah discards her driving garments and dons a dress again. Drover obviously does not like this change, which indicates that she has become more British again. But he is mistaken: Sarah decides to stay in Australia and wants him to become the manager of Faraway Downs. While she has changed, he is still caught in his old behavioural patterns, which he shows not only when he declines her offer to become the station's manager, but also when he does not want to come with her to the ball, as he considers himself an outsider. He thinks that this will never change, but she thinks that "just because it is, doesn't mean it should be". However, he does not understand her at the time.

Sarah is a strong character who does not accept things just because they are what they are. Neither does she want to accept that Drover should not be accepted by white society, nor can she approve of the practice of forceful child removal. She is also intelligent enough to recognise situations in which she was wrong, which she proves when she lets Nullah go on his walkabout after she learns that this is part of his culture. Over the course of the film, she seems to become more human. She becomes tougher and loses her British stiffness, fights for her right to adopt Nullah, and eventually takes up his mother's role.

Even though she gets everything she wants at the end of the film, she still is not powerful enough to do things on her own, but always needs Drover's

help. Without him, the cattle drive would not have been possible, and she would have signed the contract to sell Faraway Downs to Carney, as well as failed to rescue Nullah from Mission Island. Furthermore, it is only because of Drover and King George that Fletcher fails to shoot Nullah. Even if the former Lady Ashley is accepted in the bar after the drive, she is only allowed to stay because she is, in a way, half male now that she has crossed the desert with Drover.

6.5.5 The Drover

Drover is, as his name suggests, representative of the typical Australian. He is tough, speaks with a heavy Australian accent, swears a lot, likes to drink, is always ready for a fight, fought in World War I (where he proved his courage), and is independent; he is also an underdog who fights against injustice and would never forget his mates.

Like the Bloke in *The Sentimental Bloke*, Drover changes for his 'ideal tart' Sarah. At first, he and the British lady hate each other, but slowly, they fall in love, and while he does not give up his job, he at least becomes more domestic as he stays at the station during the rainy season.

Drover cannot be tamed, which is highlighted in the scene when he and Sarah end their relationship because she wants him to stay at home instead of driving cattle for the army. He is too afraid of opening his heart completely, as it was once broken when his Aboriginal wife died. This is why he leaves the farm and reiterates that Nullah is not his child.

However, over the course of the film, he is influenced by Sarah and changes his attitude towards family and society. As he is stubborn, he at first flees from his feelings, but his brother-in-law, Margarri, talks to him and tells him that as long as he does not open his heart, he has nothing: "no dreams, no story, nothing".

When he and Margarri arrive in Darwin after the outbreak of war, and the bartender does not want to allow the Aboriginal man to enter the bar, Drover

repeats Sarah's words, and tells the bartender that "just because it is, doesn't mean it should be".

6.5.6 Reviews

In an interview with Jason Solomons (film critic, *The Guardian*), Baz Luhrmann agrees with the critic that his film is cheeky. He says the film has a silly start, but that this was done intentionally, because only then would audiences "check their cynicism at the door" and immerse themselves emotionally in the film, without arrogance.

Claire Sutherland was very enthusiastic about the film, and said that as a „love letter to the Australian landscape and our history, *Australia* has international blockbuster written all over it.“

Chris Tookey implies that Hugh Jackman's performance was very manly:

“...The Drover, a brawling man's man with a chequered romantic past that includes a deceased Aboriginal wife. Compared to this guy, Crocodile Dundee was a roaring poofta.“

But the majority of critics did not praise the film like Sutherland. David Stratton thought that “Baz Luhrmann's long-awaited romantic epic, handsomely photographed by Mandy Walker, is a sweeping, rather old-fashioned, adventure which climaxes with the Japanese attack on Darwin [... It] seems squarely aimed at an overseas audience; not only does it keep referencing THE WIZARD OF OZ, but its approach to the Stolen Generations is superficial.”

Sandra Hall criticised *Australia* for including too many genres, borrowing from too many films, and being too long: “Nothing succeeds like excess. Oscar Wilde coined the phrase and I wouldn't be surprised to learn that Baz Luhrmann has it embroidered on scatter cushions all over the house.”

6.5.7 Conclusion

Australia is an epic romance, starting out with comical scenes and becoming more earnest as the film progresses. Many beautiful views of Australia's landscape are offered, but nature does not have the same status as it had in the period genre of the 1970s or as in *Rabbit Proof Fence*. Like in ocker comedies such as *The Adventures of Barry McKenzie*, the humour is derived from the cultural clash between British snobbery and Australian roughness in the beginning of the film.

But Luhrmann does not pursue these elements as the film goes on, as he wanted to convey a serious message about reconciliation and family life. He was lucky, as in 2008 Prime Minister Kevin Rudd finally offered an official apology to the Lost Generations, raising awareness about the topic again. Hence, the film had its finger on the pulse of the times.

Comparable to the *Crocodile Dundee* films, the male lead character has no prejudices against Aboriginal people. But in *Australia*, this relaxed relationship to the indigenous population is not portrayed as the norm, as other white people are racist. Furthermore, the film deals with forceful child removal, and in the course of discussions about this practice the position white people who were in support of this had is presented. This makes Drover a subverted hero, the underdog who disagrees with injustice and who is ready to fight with others who are narrow-minded.

7. Conclusion

Even before Europeans started to settle Australia, its nature had been mystified because people hoped to find gold and other resources there. When it became clear that Australia was no Arcadian paradise, it nevertheless was idealised by painters and writers, who romanticised landscape and used it as a background for their stories. In the 1890s, the Australian landscape was still romanticised, but at the same time presented as harsh and hostile towards Europeans. In the stories of Lawson, Paterson, etc., masculinity was measured against nature. Only the strongest could survive in the outback, who became the representatives of the Australian type.

Even though much effort was put into the attempt to create a national identity which would differentiate Australia from its mother country Great Britain, the cultural cringe was still felt in the 1960s, when writers, film makers, students and many others finally wanted to overcome this feeling of inferiority. They longed for an independent film industry and with their films, in which they focused on Australia's past and on nationalist values, they wanted to boost the Australians nationhood.

In the 1970s, Australia's film industry was revived due to governmental programmes which funded films with Australian content. Two new genres developed: the ocker comedy, which revived the myth of the Australian bushman and the pioneer. This genre soon decreased due to heavy criticism concerning the way in which Australian society was represented in these works. The second genre was the period film, in which not only Australia's past was a major theme, but also landscape was given significance and was used to put the films in a specific Australian context.

Throughout the 1970s until the early 1980s, the period genre prospered. Its popularity declined when the production of blockbusters started. *Mad Max*, *Crocodile Dundee*, but also films of the 1990s as *Matrix*, *Babe*, or *Mission Impossible* all followed the Hollywood formula. But while most of the mentioned films had no Australian content at all, the top of the most successful films at the Australian box-offices is a film that incorporates the Australian landscape and

stars a bushman/ocker type: *Crocodile Dundee* is the proof that the Australian audience still prefers films with national content to other films.

As of the 1990s, a rising number of films is concerned with reconciliation, again a national issue. While for example *The Tracker* was not successful in financial terms in Australia, it could be argued that the acceptance of this issue in Australian films rose over time, as *Rabbit Proof Fence* or *Australia* were also successful in Australia.

In the 1970s, film makers were increasingly interested into selling their films to overseas audiences. For their representation of Australia, they drew on long-existing myths (bush myth, the pioneer legend etc.) and with this influenced the image Australia had abroad. This exhibition of Australianess was done extremely successful in *Crocodile Dundee*, after which release tourism to Australia soared.

What is common to the films analysed in this paper is the perpetuation of certain topics, contributing to the strengthening of national identity. These are living in the bush, freedom, mateship, the leading characters are underdogs with a strong sense for equality. The stories are embedded into the Australian landscape, which is mystified and seems to interact with the characters.

Characters like Sue Charlton and Lady Sarah Ashley represent strong-minded women who manage to deal with problems, but still need the help of men when worst comes to worst. This is the role that was already ascribed to women in the late 19th century in Henry Lawson's story "The Drover's Wife". They are strong and can handle difficult situations, but could never live without men.

In the 1990s and the following years, Aboriginality became an increasingly important topic in films. *The Tracker* or *Rabbit Proof Fence* are examples of attempts to portray the sad fate Aboriginal people had to endure under white oppression and to come to terms with this.

An unrepresentative survey conducted for this paper revealed that Mick "Crocodile" Dundee still represents the typical Australian for many people who have never visited Australia. His life in the bush and his attitudes are what came

to the participants' minds when they were asked what they thought the typical Australian was like. Although Sydney (many of the asked people thought this is Australia's capital) and Melbourne are famous cities, people did not think that Australians living in cities are typical Australians. Another striking fact is that nobody mentioned women as typical Australians, but Aboriginal people were named in the list of what is typically Australian. Interestingly, the participants did not know of the still prevailing racism. They think that white Australians and Aboriginal people live together in harmony, just like films pretend it to be. Although it cannot be said that people only know of issues dealt with in films, it was interesting to compare their knowledge with the image sold in Australian films.

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Annex

Sequencing list of *Crocodile Dundee*

0:00:00 to 0:01:22	The Skyline of New York comes into view. Richard and Sue are talking on the phone. The setting switches to Sydney. Sue is sitting in an office, and in the background the audience sees the Sydney Harbour Bridge and the Opera House. She is working on a story about Mick Dundee, for which she has to fly to Darwin. When Richard tells her to take care of herself, she tells him that he does not need to worry, as she is a New Yorker.
0:01:23 to 0:13:37	Susan flies to Walkabout Creek by helicopter. Wally, the travel guide of Never Never Safaris, welcomes her and takes her to her hotel. Walkabout Creek is a tiny sandy town in the outback. The hotel is also the town's pub. Sue and Wally are waiting for Mick while watching locals drink and be quite rude. They are bushmen. The bar maid laughs when she hears Wally telling Sue about the crocodile that attacked Mick. She knows that he is exaggerating. Suddenly, a knife hits the wall right next to Sue, and Mick comes in, wrestling with a dead crocodile. After he 'wins', he orders beers for himself and his mate. He welcomes Sue while dancing with her and shows her his scar where the crocodile bit him. He is a typical bushman: tanned, wearing a hat spiked with crocodile teeth, speaking with a heavy Australian accent, swearing, drinking, etc. A guest accuses him of showing-off and says he is a poacher. For this, Mick slaps him in the face—as a typical bushman, he is always ready for a fight.
0:13:38 to 0:30:06	Wally, Mick, and Sue are on their way through the outback with an old lorry. She asks him personal questions and wants to know how old he is. He cannot tell, because in Aboriginal culture, age does not mean anything. He was once married, but when he came back from a walkabout of 18 months, his wife was gone. He cannot understand why she did not wait. They encounter a buffalo, which is standing in the middle of the road. Mick hypnotises the animal, which impresses Sue. Next, they are on a boat. A crocodile in the water next to them does not worry anybody except for Sue. While Sue is not watching, Mick takes a look at Wally's watch. Then he looks at the sun, which Sue sees, and tells her what time it is. Again, she is impressed. Sue and Mick continue their journey through the outback, which is no longer dry, as they are in the rain forest now. Wally will pick them up two days later. They arrive at the place where Mick was attacked. He shows her the rest of his boat and he tells Sue that he was attacked while he was fishing. Because the crocodile let go of him for a brief moment, he was able to kill it with his knife. When Sue finds cartridge cases in his boat, she questions whether he really went fishing. But he sticks to his story and tells her that fish are really big in Australia. He would never hunt crocodiles since it is illegal. At night, she wants to know what he thinks about world politics, but he is not interested in them at all. Next, she asks him for his opinion on the Aboriginal fight for land rights. He explains to her that Aborigines do not possess their land. They just want to live on it and want to have the possibility to walk on the land to which they belong. While he is talking, he breaks the neck of a King Brown, an especially poisonous snake. The next morning, they are woken up by loud noises and hear shots. Mick tells her that these are the "city cowboys", poachers who kill kangaroos for fun. At first he does not intend to do anything, but then he decides to act, disguises himself as a kangaroo, and shoots at the poachers, who are scared into leaving. Mick is satisfied and tells the dead kangaroo "Well done, Skippy!"
0:30:07 to 0:47:01	On the next day, he shaves with a razor, but when Sue comes he switches the razor for his knife and pretends to shave with his knife. He makes fun of her and says a city-girl like Sue could not survive in the outback, as it is a man's land. She is

	stubborn and wants to prove that she would be able to survive. Hence she takes his rifle and tells him to meet her at a rock in the afternoon. He secretly follows her. When she tries to refill her water bottle, a crocodile attacks her. Mick comes to her aid and stabs the crocodile. At night, Sue admits that the bush is too dangerous for her, but Mick also doubts that he would survive in a big city. But he does not know, because he has never been in one. During the fight with the crocodile, Sue suffers an injury. Mick offers to treat Sue's wound, which is on her backside. Suddenly they hear a noise, Mick stands up and vanishes. Sue is really scared. An Aboriginal man turns up behind a tree, but before he can do anything, Mick appears behind him, threatening him with his knife. But the scare was only in fun, as Nev is Mick's friend. Nev is wearing jeans and speaks English. He tells them that he is on his way to a Corroboree (an Aboriginal dance) because his father has forced him to go. Sue wants to take a photo, but Nev tells her that she cannot. She apologizes and reveals that she thinks Nev believes that this would steal his soul, but then discovers the reason he stopped her is that the lens cap was on. Nev leaves, but in the dark he does not see an obstacle, and as he walks away, he mutters that he hates the bush. Mick also leaves for the dance, but tells Sue to remain at the camp, as women are not allowed at the Corroboree. Sue secretly follows him, and Mick discovers her. When they are both back at the camp, she wants to know how he knew she was there. She imagines that he has some sort of telepathic ability. He discloses that he knew it because she is a sheila, and a reporter, and therefore she must be the most curious person in the world. Mick and Sue walk on, and he tells her that he thought he would die when the crocodile attacked him. He is not afraid of death, as he has read the bible and believes in a god who would be a mate of his. They arrive at a billabong and he prepares a lizard and other strange things for lunch. She tries them, while for himself Mick prepares food from a can, as he thinks one can live on it, despite its awful taste. Sue has suggested that he come to New York with her, and they nearly kiss, when all of a sudden they hear Wally, who wanted to pick them up but got lost in the bush. Mick comments on this: "Bloody Wally. He's only been here a dozen of times. He's probably lost." Wally, who hopes that Sue's article will attract tourists, thinks that it would be great if Mick visited New York.
0:47:02 to 0:57:43	Mick is a little bit nervous on the plane. At the airport, he has difficulty with the escalator. Richard, Sue's fiancé, picks them up and makes fun of him. When he tells Mick that New York is home to seven million people, Mick is fascinated: "Imagine seven million people all wanting to live together. Yeah, New York must be the friendliest place on earth!" Mick, who is not used to anonymity, greets people on the streets. When they arrive at this hotel, he asks the black driver to which tribe he belongs. Mick's room is huge and he is fascinated by the television and wonders why there are two 'dunnies' (one of course is the bidet). Sue tells him that she is going to pick him up for dinner in the evening. Mick goes out to explore the city. But because of all the people, he loses his way. He climbs up a lantern. A friendly policeman sees him and brings him back to his hotel by horse.
0:57:44 to 1:08:26	Sue, Richard and Mick are in a fancy restaurant. Richard is again making fun of Mick. He says that it must be a new experience for Mick to eat something he did not have to kill on his own. In a moment when Sue isn't looking, Mick hits him, and they have to leave the restaurant. Sue is angry with Mick, who cannot believe that she really loves this wimp Richard. Sue and Richard get out of the taxi at their apartment, but Mick wants to go to a pub. The taxi driver comes with him. At the pub, Mick tells stories about Australia to a fascinated crowd. He flirts with a transvestite (because he does not know that this 'girl' is a man). The taxi driver warns him about the transvestite, but Mick cannot believe that this could be a guy: to discover the truth, he grabs between the 'girl's' legs. They decide to go home. While Mick is waiting for the taxi driver to get the car, he

	chats with two girls. Mick does not know that they are prostitutes. When their pimp comes, Mick does not understand what he wants, but as the pimp uses obscene language in front of the ladies, Mick beats him and tells him to be nicer to the girls.
1:08:27 to 1:19:02	Mick is taking a bath and washing his socks in the tub. Sue comes into his room and discovers that he has been sleeping on the floor next to the bed. Sue buys a hotdog for Mick, who cannot believe that people really eat this. It is Sue's revenge for the lizard in the bush. While strolling through the streets, Mick sees a thief steal a woman's purse. Mick then overpowers the thief by throwing a can at his head. Sue is fascinated. In the evening, Sue takes Mick to a party, where they meet a female friend hers. As he is not sure whether or not she is another transvestite, he grabs her between the legs, and is astonished to find that she really is a lady. Mick also comes into contact with drugs for the first time in his life when he sees a young man about to snort cocaine. Mick thinks that the man has a cold and is trying to take medicine. Wanting to help the man, the Australian pours the cocaine into hot water, so the man can inhale it. On their way home, young gangsters threaten Sue and Mick with a knife and want to take their wallets. Mick reacts with giggles, and pulls out his knife while saying: "That's not a knife... That's a knife." Sue tells Mick that she always feels safe when she is with him and they kiss.
1:19:03 to 1:30:31	Sue's father throws a welcome back party for his daughter at his mansion. When Sue, Richard, and Mick arrive, the guard dogs come. Mick hypnotises them as he did with the buffalo in Australia. At the party, Sue tells Mick about a friend who sees a psychiatrist. Mick does not understand why someone would need a doctor, when they could just talk to their mates. When people in his hometown have problems, they talk to Wally, he tells everybody about it, and the problem is solved. Richard surprises Sue by proposing to her, and, as Mick is sure that she has accepted him, he leaves the party alone and asks the driver to take him somewhere he can have a drink. Drunken Mick staggers through the streets, when all of a sudden the pimp he once hit turns up with two other guys. They start to beat Mick. Luckily, his driver comes back and helps him. One of the gangsters tries to run away, but the driver is able to overpower him with a part of his car that looks like a boomerang. Again, Mick wants to know whether he is sure that he does not belong to an Aboriginal tribe, and the driver tells him that he is member of a boomerang club.
1:30:32 to 1:37:04	Mick wants to leave the city and go on a walkabout through America. He does not tell Sue that he is leaving, as he is too disappointed. Sue tries to call him, but Mick has already left. When she comes to the hotel, the concierge tells her that Mick wants to leave New York and is on his way to the subway. She finds him at the subway station, and with the help of two men, tells him that she is not going to marry Richard and that she loves Mick.
0:00:00 to 0:01:22	The Skyline of New York comes into view. Richard and Sue are talking on the phone. The setting switches to Sydney. Sue is sitting in a bureau, in the background the audience sees Sydney Harbour Bridge and the Opera House. She is working on a story about Mick Dundee, for which she has to fly to Darwin. When Richard tells her to take care of herself, she tells him that he does not need to worry as she is a New Yorker.
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	dead crocodile. After he 'won' he orders two beers for him and his mate. He welcomes Sue while dancing with her and shows her his scar where the crocodile bit him. He is a typical bushman: tanned, wearing a hat spiked with crocodile teeth, speaking a heavy Australian accent, swearing, drinking etc. A guest accuses him of showing-off and says he is a poacher. For this, he gets slapped in the face by Mick, who, as typical bushman, is always ready for a fight.
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	and a reporter, and therefore she is the most curious person in the world. Mick and Sue walk on, and he tells her that he thought he would die when the crocodile attacked him. But he is not afraid of death, as he has read the bible and believes in god who would become a mate of Mick. They arrive at a billabong and prepares a lizard and other strange things for lunch. She tries them, but for himself he prepares a food from a can, as he thinks that one can live on it, but it tastes awful. She wants him to come to New York with her and they nearly kiss, when all of a sudden they hear Wally, who wanted to pick them up but got lost in the bush. Mick comments on this: "Bloody Wally. He's only been her a dozen of times. He's probably lost. Wally, who hopes that Sue's article will attract tourists, thinks that it would be great if Mick visited New York.
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1:08:27 to 1:19:02	Mick is taking a bath and is washing his socks in the tub. Sue comes into his room and discovers that he sleeps on the floor next to the bed. Sue buys a hotdog for Mick, who cannot believe that people really eat this. It is Sue's revenge for the lizard in the bush. While strolling through the streets, Mick watches a thief who steals a woman's purse. Mick can overpower the thief by throwing a can onto his head. Sue is fascinated. In the evening, Sue takes Mick to a party, where they meet a female friend of Sue. As he is not sure whether this is a transvestite again, he grabs her between her legs again, and is astonished as she really is a lady. Mick also comes into contact with drugs for the first time in his life, when he sees a young man who is about to sniff cocaine. Mick thinks that the man has a cold and wants to sniff medicine. The Australian wants to help the man, and pours the cocaine into hot water, so the man can inhale it. On their way home, young gangsters threaten Sue and Mick with a knife and want their wallets. But Mick only giggles and pulls out his knife while saying: "That's not a knife... That's a knife." Sue tells Mick that she always feels safe when she is with him

	and they kiss.
1:19:03 to 1:30:31	Sue's father gives a welcome back party for his daughter at his mansion. When Sue, Richard and Mick arrive, the guard dogs come. Mick hypnotises them like he did with the buffalo in Australia. At the party, Sue tells Mick about a friend who sees a psychiatrist. Mick does not understand why one would need a doctor, she should talk to her mates. When people in his hometown have problems, they talk to Wally, he tells everybody about it and the problem is solved. Richard surprisingly proposes to Sue, and as Mick is sure that she accepted him, he leaves the party alone and asks the driver to take him somewhere he can have a drink. Drunk Mick staggers through the streets, when all of a sudden the pimp he once hit turns up together with two other guys. They start to beat Mick. Luckily, his driver comes back and helps him. One of the gangsters tries to run away, and the driver can overpower him with a part of his car that looks like a boomerang. Again, Mick wants to know whether he is sure that he does not belong to an Aboriginal tribe, and the driver tells him that he is member of a boomerang club.
1:30:32 to 1:37:04	Mick wants to leave the city and go on a walkabout through America. He does not tell Sue that he is leaving, as he is too disappointed. Sue tries to talk to him on the phone, but Mick has already left. When she comes to the hotel, the concierge tells her that Mick wants to leave New York and is on his way to the subway. She actually finds him at the station, and with the help of two men, she tells him that she is not going to marry Richard and that she loves Mick.

Sequencing list of “*Crocodile Dundee II*”

0:00:00 to 0:11:58	Mick Dundee is sitting in a boat, smoking a cigarette and opens a bag full of dynamite. He looks around to see if anybody is watching him and then throws the dynamite in the water. After the explosion, he takes the dead fish out of the water, and the New York skyline appears in the background. A police helicopter and boat come to see who caused the explosion, but when they see that it is Mick sitting in the boat, they leave. Obviously, Mick has already become popular in New York. Sue wakes up in her apartment in Manhattan and finds a note from Mick saying that he has gone fishing again. During breakfast, Mick seems to be in reminiscing about his home, but instead of going back, he wants to find a job in New York. At a playground, Mick plays with children who know him well. He has taught them to read the traces of animals. In a pub, he asks for everyone's attention and announces that he is looking for a job. The black gangster Leroy Black approaches him, and tells Mick he could work for him. When Mick wants to know what he would have to do, Leroy tells him that he would have to deliver things. It turns out that Leroy does not deal in illicit good, but rather with office requisites. Leroy only pretends to be a gangster because he likes the image. At a mall, Mick, strolling with Sue, sees a snake and does not realise that it belongs to a snake charmer. Mick breaks its neck, like he did with the snake in the bush in the first <i>Crocodile Dundee</i> film. At her office, Sue discovers a newspaper article about her ex-husband, Bob Tenner, who is in Columbia at the moment.
0:11:59 to 0:16:17	Text insert: Columbia, South America Bob is hiding behind some banana trees, taking pictures of drug dealers who are executing a man. He is discovered, but manages to escape. Back at his hotel, he calls the DEA at New York and tells them to pick him up. Then he tries to call Sue, but as she is not at home, he leaves a message, saying that she is going to receive some film. He begs her to keep it and not to talk to anybody about this. The drug dealers are already at the hotel and hear everything. They shoot Bob.

0:16:18 to 0:21:25	The postman and Mick meet at the door and the postman shows Mick his impression of President Nixon. But Mick, who does not care for politics, does not know who this is and asks if he lives in the neighbourhood. Mick meets Leroy, who has to deliver two parcels. Mick offers his help and delivers one of the parcels of office supplies to a nearby bank. When he gives the material to the secretary, he sees somebody walking outside the window. Immediately, the secretary calls the police, but Mick decides to help himself and steps outside, too. He pretends that he is going for a walk, and asks the jumper to hurry up so that he can walk on. Mick manages to save the man's life, but nearly falls himself when he hears that the man wanted to kill himself because his boyfriend had left him.
0:21:26 to 0:54:13	Sue is kidnapped by the Columbian gangsters, who take her to Rico's mansion. He wants her to give him the film, but she has not received Bob's message because her answering machine is broken. When Mick arrives in their apartment, he sees that it is a mess. Sue calls Mick to ask if he has seen the letter from Bob. He tells her that he has it – it arrived that day. Rico tells Mick not to talk to the police, who are already at his house because they also know that Bob sent the photos to Sue. Mick is told to deliver the photos to a subway station. A policeman follows him, but Mick suddenly vanishes. The policeman goes to the bathroom in a building, and Mick suddenly reappears and threatens the officer with his knife. Mick wants to know what is going on, and the policeman tells him about the photos. Mick arrives at the subway station, but refuses to hand over the letter before Sue arrives. The Columbian gangster threatens him with a gun, when a group of Japanese tourists arrives. They hurry onto the arriving train because they are afraid of the gangster, but two stay behind and overpower the Columbian. They believe that they have just helped Clint Eastwood. At the mansion, Sue is shown cocaine. She is not impressed, and starts a quarrel with Rico, who tells her that he killed Bob and threatens to kill her and Mick as well. Mick arrives at the apartment, waiting for a further call. Another Columbian gangster comes and tries to shoot Mick, but he overpowers the gangster and hangs him upside down out the window. He tortures the man in this way, until he reveals Sue's whereabouts. The police, who have just arrived, see the man hanging out of the window and run up to the apartment, but Mick is able to escape. Mick and Leroy drive to the mansion. Mick knows that Sue is alive, and inside the mansion, Sue seems to feel Mick's presence. Leroy introduces Mick to a gang. The gang leader, Red, has already heard of the Crocodile man. Mick wants the gang to help him. He needs them to distract the gangsters while he breaks into the house. At first, they hesitate, but Mick impresses them when he throws his knife into the mohawk of one gang member. Thanks to his bushman abilities, Mick is able to free Sue.
0:54:14 to 1:10:05	The police want to take Sue and Mick into protective custody until they find Rico. However, Mick no longer trusts the police's ability to protect them and decides instead to go to the Northern Territory with Sue. Text insert: Australia Mick and Sue arrive at the pub in Walkabout Creek where Wally is telling stories to tourists. All his mates welcome him and are happy to see him again. Nothing has changed in his absence. Rico wants to find them at any price. Mick and Sue arrive at the outback. Sue wants to know what the land is called and learns that they are on Mick's land, Belangamick. He says that it is a small area - one could cross it in three to four days - but it is not worthless, as it contains a small gold mine. Rico, Miguel, and a third Columbian, arrive in the Northern Territory. They are welcomed by Miguel's friend Frank, who brought a tracker with him. But when the tracker hears whom they are searching for, he turns around and disappears. Now they need a new tracker. Mick takes Sue to his hut, but they leave when Mick senses danger. They hide behind a rock and see the gangsters, who shoot in the air and shout for Mick. They

	have kidnapped Wally. Rico threatens to shoot him, but Mick pretends that he doesn't care and even shoots at his friend (though he only slightly hurts him). Now the gangsters believe that Mick wanted to kill his best friend because he is the only one who could track Mick. Hence, Wally becomes their new tracker.
1:10:06 to 1:28:57	Mick and Sue camp at a rock. Mick goes and captures the first gangster with the help of a buffalo. He brings him back to the camp, where Sue has to guard the bound and gagged gangster. Mick captures the next gangster while he is trying to refill his water bottle. The others believe that a crocodile killed him. After this, Mick makes a "phone call" while Sue gathers some red berries. Mick throws them at the gangsters, because the smell of the berries attracts flying foxes. During the night, Mick runs through the gangsters' camp and throws a snake at one of them. He believes that Mick was a ghost because he appeared and vanished without a noise. The next morning, the next gangster is gone. Instead of him, they find a lizard in his sleeping bag. Wally says that Mick can do black magic, but Rico does not believe him. When Wally is sent to find Mick's tracks, Mick secretly tells him where to lead the gangsters.
1:28:58 to 1:42:53	Two Aboriginal men come to help Mick, while two more hide behind a bush and capture another gangster. One of the men helping Sue guard the prisoners eats the whole time. He points at the gangsters and says something in his mother tongue. Sue wants to know what he said, and another answers that he wanted to know if they were allowed to eat the prisoners. Another gangster arrives at a billabong and sees Nugget, a guy from Walkabout Creek, who says he is searching for Wally. The gangster says that he should have brought a gun with him, but Nugget says one does not need a gun if he has a Donk. At this point, Donk, another guy from Walkabout Creek, comes out of the bush and beats the gangster. Wally, Rico, and Miguel have to cross a river. The gangsters want Wally to go first, and he is seemingly attacked by a crocodile and disappears; however, this is part of Mick's plan to free his friend. Mick follows the two remaining gangsters to where he sent them. Wally goes to the camp and informs Sue about Mick's plan. She is worried that Mick thinks this is a game and decides to follow him. Wally comes with her. Rico, who has finally had enough of Mick's games, sets fire to the dry bush. Miguel and Rico are separated. Mick overpowers the gangster boss and changes clothes. When Sue and Wally arrive, they see that Rico is threatening Mick with a gun. Wally shoots Rico. Then Miguel turns up and shoots Mick, who falls off a cliff. Sue shoots Miguel. Sue runs to the cliff and sees that Mick is lying at the bottom. She thinks he is dead until an Aboriginal man turns up and says that if Mick wanted to get his clothes back, he would have to climb down alone. Mick, who was dressed as Rico, is still alive.

Sequencing List of *Rabbit Proof Fence*

0:00:00 to 0:05:40	Text insert: Western Australia 1931. For 100 years the Aboriginal Peoples have resisted the invasion of their lands by white settlers. Now a special law, the Aborigines Act, controls their lives in every detail. Mar. A. O. Neville, the Chief Protector of Aborigines, is the legal guardian of every Aborigine in the State of Western Australia. He has the power "to remove any half-caste child" from their family, from anywhere within the state. Molly says from the offset that she is going to tell a true story that happened to her, her sister Daisy, and her cousin Gracie, all of them being so-called half-castes. She belongs to the Jigalong tribe. They were nomads who settled when the white man opened a warehouse in the desert, providing the Aboriginal people with food, while the white settlers erected a fence. Their white father has abandoned them.
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	The family is first seen navigating through the desert. Molly's mother shows her the spirit bird that, she says, will always look after her. Then she easily catches a lizard – she is a good hunter. Two white men, Constable Riggs, and another man, who lives in the area and knows the girls' names, watch the family. When the mother discovers the men, she tells the children to hide because she is afraid that they are looking for half-castes.
0:05:41 to 0:11:46	Text insert: Perth, Western Australia Mr Neville, the state's Chief Protector, signs a document ordering the removal of the three girls from their families. The youngest is of particular concern as she is assuredly a full-blood. At the same time, the audience learns that Aboriginal people had to ask for permission for every aspect of their lives: if they wanted to marry, visit their children, or if they just wanted to buy new shoes. At Jigalong Depot, the Aboriginal people gather at the warehouse. In the meantime, the children ask a white worker erecting the fence how long it is, and learn that it is the longest fence in the world, intended to keep the rabbits off the farmland. A man distributing goods to the women, tells the children's mother about Mr Neville's decision, but she says that if he wants half-caste children, he will have to make his own – she will not give her children away. Suddenly a police car appears and the officer takes the children with him, citing the law. In the following scene, the women break down and cry; one old woman even hits herself with a stone.
0:11:47 to 0:13:38	Mr Neville gives a speech about the Protection Acts. He explains that with the growing number of half-castes, a third race could develop, which must be prevented. To achieve this aim, the government wants to breed out the Aboriginal by mixing them with white individuals. He thinks that this will help the natives advance in order to meet the white race. To teach them about white culture, children are brought to Moore River Native Settlement, where they are trained for the future.
0:13:39 to 0:31:00	The three Aboriginal girls are locked in a cage and carried across the country by train. At the same time, their mothers and the other women are still crying back at Jigalong Depot. Text insert: Moore River Native Settlement. 1200 Miles South from Jigalong A nun welcomes Molly, Gracie, and Daisy in a very friendly way and takes them straight to the dormitory – a house locked during the night in which many children sleep on cots. In the morning, they are woken up by loud sounds. Immediately, the other children in the dormitory make their beds and get ready for breakfast. One of the girls has to bring out the bucket, which is used as a toilet during the night. Molly, Daisy, and Gracie are very frightened. At breakfast, the children have to pray before they are allowed to eat. An Aboriginal guard tells the new girls not to speak any language other than English. In the next scene, a nun scrubs the girls clean under the shower and gives them their white uniforms. Mr Neville visits the mission and wants to inspect the girls. He picks out the fairer girls, believed to be more intelligent than the darker girls, and they are sent to a boarding school. He also looks at Molly, but decides that she is too dark. The tracker, Moodoo, brings back a girl who ran away to see her boyfriend. For this the nuns beat her. The tracker comes from Kimberley and is at the mission because his daughter is there. Molly cannot cope with the situation at Moore River; it makes her sick. While lying in bed, she thinks about the spirit bird. The next morning, while everyone is at church, Molly decides to flee with her little sister and her cousin.
0:31:01 to 0:44:16	Their absence is noticed in the evening. The tracker is sent to find them and bring them back, but he loses their tracks when it starts to rain heavily. Mr Neville, is informed two days later, and wants the police to help him find the children. He believes that Molly is already too Aboriginal to become a worthy member of white society. In the meantime, Molly lays false tracks to confuse the tracker and prevent him from

	being able to find them. She also hears him before he can see them, allowing the girls time to hide. On their way, they meet two Aboriginal men who give matches to Molly and share bits of their kangaroo with the girls. These men warn the girls about the tracker, who is said to be very skilled. At Jigalong Depot, Molly's mother is informed about her children's flight, which makes her smile. Molly is caught stealing eggs at a farm, but the station owner (female) is nice and gives food and coats to the girls. They have to leave the farm in the evening when the men come back, and the woman tells them to be careful as the boys often hunt rabbits at the fence. Molly wants to know where the fence is, because she knows that if they follow it, it will lead them back to Jigalong Depot.
0:44:17 to 1:07:39	One month later, the children find the fence. Their mother presumes that they will return by following the fence and waits for them. But Mr Neville, still trying to find Molly, Gracie, and Daisy, has the same idea, and sends two men to two parts of the fence, assumes that the girls will then be caught in the middle. However, this plan does not work. The children meet a bushman who helps them and tells them that there are three fences, and that they have been following the wrong one. They have to cross the bushland in order to reach the fence that will lead them back to Jigalong Depot. This error saves them from being caught by Neville's men, who are waiting for the girls at the 'right' fence. At a station, they meet an Aboriginal housemaid called Mavis who was at Moore River herself as a child, and lets the girls sleep in her bed that night. This is not a mere act of friendliness, as the girls soon discover: at night, the station owner enters the housemaid's room and attempts to rape her as he does every night. Mavis thinks that he will not harm her as long as the children are with her. The station owner informs the police, but Molly and the other two girls are able to escape. The next morning, Moodoo tries to find the children again, but loses their tracks once more. The police want to end the search, but Mr Neville wants it to be continued. He spreads the rumour that Gracie's mother is in a town near where he suspects the girls to be. When they meet an Aboriginal man he informs them that he read about Gracie's mother's whereabouts. Molly, who is very clever, says he is a liar and leaves with Daisy. Gracie follows them, but she still wants to take the train to where her mother is said to be. The girls separate, which Molly soon regrets. She eventually decides to follow Gracie to the station, but at the same time as Molly and Daisy arrive, a police car comes and takes Gracie back to Moore River.
1:07:40 to 1:14:10	Molly and Daisy continue on their way, crying for the loss of their cousin. The tracker is still waiting for them at the fence. Mr Neville finally decides to give up the search and wants Constable Riggs to await the girls' arrival at Jigalong Depot and simply recapture them there. Before the girls arrive home, they have to cross part of the desert where no fence was erected. They can barely walk anymore and break down in the hot sun. Their mother and grandmother are still waiting for them, and try to sing the children to them. Molly wakes up and sees the spirit bird again. She gathers new hope, and suddenly she discovers farming land on which the fence begins again. She takes her sister and walks on.
1:14:11 to 1:23:20	Constable Riggs arrives at Jigalong Depot and hears the Aboriginal people singing traditional songs. He assumes that they are up to something and goes to their camp, where Molly's mother and grandmother threaten him with a spear. This, together with the uncanny sounds of nature, scare him off, and he leaves the Depot. Molly imitates the spirit bird's song, so her mother can find her. When the girls are reunited with their mother and grandmother, Molly wails, "I lost one". Mr Neville has called off the search for financial reasons, but he says that he wants to pick up the girls again at a later time. He cannot understand that Aboriginal families do not want to be separated, as he believes that they should be protected from themselves, and wishes that they would understand what white society does for them. As a voiceover, Molly says that it took nine weeks to return to Jigalong Depot. Afterwards, she hid in the desert, got married, and had two children. Together with

	her children, she was taken to River Moore again, whence she fled with her youngest daughter, Annabelle, a second time. When the child was three years old, she was taken away by Mr Neville, and Molly never saw her daughter again. Gracie has since died, but Molly and Daisy still live at Jigalong. Text insert: Mr Neville was Chief Protector of Aborigines in Western Australia for 25 years. Aboriginal children were forcibly removed from their families throughout Australia until 1970. Today many of these Aboriginal people continue to suffer from this destruction of identity, family life and culture. We call them the Stolen Generations.
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Sequencing List of *Australia*

Warning before the film starts: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander viewers should exercise caution when watching this film as it may contain images and voices of deceased persons.

0:00:00 to 0:04:59	Text insert: After the bombing of Pearl Harbour on the 7th of December 1941, the Imperial Japanese Navy streamed south, unleashing their fire on Darwin, a city in the Northern Territory of Australia. The Territory was a land of crocodiles, cattle barons and warrior chiefs where adventure and romance was a way of life. It was also a place where Aboriginal children of mixed-race were taken by force from their families and trained for service in white society. These children became known as the Stolen Generations The audience then sees landscape and an Aboriginal man (King George) who is teaching his grandson, Nullah (the narrator of the film), about Aboriginal knowledge ("blackfella way"). Suddenly white men approach and Nullah hides in a billabong, into which a dead man is thrown. Next, Nullah arrives at the station where he lives, but as he sees white people approaching, he hides in the water tank. He has to do this because he is afraid of being taken away by the 'coppers', as he calls the police. From his hideout he sees "Mrs Boss" for the first time. But the story does not begin on this day....
0:05:00 to 0:11:49	Lady Sarah Ashley has just returned from riding a white horse when she decides to travel to Australia to visit her husband. She wants to persuade him to sell the station (Faraway Downs) the Ashleys own in the Northern Territory. While she is on her journey, she receives letters from her husbands, who does not want her to come, as war is about to break out. He then writes that he will not be able to come to pick her up as he will soon be selling the cattle – instead, he will send the Drover to pick her up. Through dialogues the audience is informed that Faraway Downs is the only station that does not belong to Carney. He tells Neil Fletcher to prevent the Ashleys from bringing their cattle to Darwin, as this would mean that Carney would lose his monopoly as cattle provider for the army. Drover is first introduced to the film in a pub, having a fight with others as they insult him for being a friend of blacks. Meanwhile, Lady Ashley arrives in Darwin, dressed in white, and easily recognizable as a foreigner. She wants to enter the pub in which she is expected to meet Drover, but the bartender tells her to leave as no women are

	allowed in the pub. Outside, the fight goes on and now her luggage is involved. Once the fight is over, instead of an apology, Drover simply welcomes her to Australia and spits on the floor.
0:11:50 to 0:20:19	Drover takes Lady Ashley to Faraway Downs by car; two “blackfellas” (sitting on the roof) and a dingo come with them, which is bewildering to the aristocrat from England. She mistakes Drover for an employee, but he makes it clear that he only works on commission: “No man hires me, no man fires me”. His philosophy is that as long as you do not possess anything, you cannot lose anything. She is fascinated by the kangaroos jumping alongside the car, until one of the Aboriginal men suddenly shoots one of the animals – for dinner. She also gets to know Kipling Flynn, a drunkard, who is the station’s accountant. When they finally arrive at the station two days later, the first scene in which Nullah hides in the water trunk is seen again, but now the audience knows what will happen. Lady Ashley, who is already called Mrs Boss, sees Faraway Downs burning down, then goes into the house and discovers that her husband has been murdered. Neil Fletcher, the station’s manager, blames King George, as Lord Ashley was killed by a spear, which resembled one of King George’s spears.
0:20:20 to 0:30:45	Again, the sequence starts with a view of nature, in which the station is only a tiny spot. It is Lord Ashley’s burial. Fletcher accuses King George of murdering the station owner. Later it turns out that Fletcher was the murderer. The Aboriginal man watches the procedure from his vantage point on a nearby hill. Lady Ashley, while looking at the dry land, cannot understand what her husband saw in this place. At night, King George sing a song while standing on his vantage point in which he predicts that the lady will bring a change. Nullah, who translates his grandfather’s song, tells her that this land was cursed by Fletcher, but he compares Sarah to the rainbow serpent who will heal the land. Sarah learns about Fletcher’s affair with Nullah’s mother, who expresses her fear that Lady Sarah will send her son to a mission. Fletcher, now revealed to be Nullah’s father, abuses the boy’s mother. When Nullah informs Sarah about cattle he saw crossing the billabong near the station, Fletcher, who lied to Sarah and told her that her cattle do not cross the billabong, beats him. Sarah comes to help the boy and fires Fletcher, who leaves the station together with his workers.
0:31:12	Lady Sarah is the boss now. Her employees tell her that Kipling Flynn is good for nothing, but he turns out to be honest. Flynn knows about Carney’s cattle theft, but suggests that he is too powerful to take on. The only chance they have is to drive the cattle to Darwin, sell it to the army, and thus crack Carney’s monopoly. The only problem is that she needs a new drover now that Fletcher has gone. At this moment, Drover returns to the station with a herd of horses. When Sarah informs him that she has fired Fletcher, he gets angry because without the help of Fletcher and his men, he cannot drive the cattle to Darwin. Sarah tells him that Fletcher was working for Carney and stealing cattle, and he calms down. He tells her that as long as she cannot prove the theft, she cannot do anything about it, but when she promises Drover a precious horse, he decides to help her.
0:37:17 to 0:44:49	Drover trains Nullah’s mother and grandmother to help with the drive. Nullah also is allowed to help, but Drover does not take Sarah seriously when she says that she wants to help herself. It takes some time for her to prove her abilities as a drover, but eventually they all are ready for the cattle drive. On the day they plan to leave, the ‘coppers’ come, accompanied by a tracker, and Nullah and his mother hide in the water tank, where she subsequently drowns. The camera swings to show people running to the tank as soon as the authorities leave.
0:44:50 to	Drover wants Sarah to care for Nullah like a mother, but at first she hesitates. Then she goes to the boy and tells him the story of <i>The Wizard of Oz</i>. The most important

0:53:16	aspect of this story to Nullah is the song “Over the Rainbow” as it reminds him of the rainbow serpent. Now Nullah is full of hope again and encourages Mrs Boss to drive the cattle to Darwin. The next day, the drive starts. Flynn also helps them and swears that he will not drink during their journey. He is shown behind a twister, linking this situation to the Wizard of Oz. King George watches from up above again, and the camera’s angle becomes wider, showing the vast land, the river they have to cross, and the dusty path the cattle leave behind, which looks like a big snake.
0:53:17 to 1:06:02	At a cinema in Darwin, a movie about the war is screened, informing the audience that the Japanese are drawing nearer. Carney hears about the cattle drive and Fletcher knows that he has to prevent the team from arriving Darwin. Off-screen, Nullah says that when Mrs Boss arrived at Australia, “she looked, but she not see”. But now she has opened her eyes for the first time, and can see how stunningly beautiful the landscape is. At night, the team stays at a camp, and Flynn plays “Over the Rainbow” on his harmonica. When Drover decides that Nullah must also help watch over the cattle at night, Sarah thinks he is too young, but Drover insists. During Nullah and Flynn’s shift, Fletcher and his men set fire to the land around the cattle to scare them. The team has to calm down the herd before they run over a nearby cliff. Flynn falls off his horse and is fatally wounded by the cattle, then Nullah, an Aboriginal wizard, is able to calm the cattle down with his song. Still frightened, he nearly falls off the cliff, but Sarah catches him before he falls and promises to stay with him. Flynn gives his harmonica to Drover, who stays with him until he dies. He then gives the instrument to Nullah, who plays “Over the Rainbow”.
1:06:03 to	The next day, they continue their journey. One of Fletcher’s men assumes that Nullah knows the blacks’ magic. At night, the team toast their journey with Flynn’s rum and soon are tipsy. Sarah and Drover dance behind a tree and kiss. Nullah, who is sitting in the tree, discovers them. He wants to know what they are doing and they tell him that they are dancing the foxtrot. Sarah and Drover talk about their past lives. He was once married, but his wife died of tuberculosis. She was not treated in hospital, as she was an Aboriginal woman. They had no children. Sarah does not have children because she cannot. Drover thinks this is a pity as she would be a good mother. The team arrives at a billabong, but Fletcher has poisoned the water. Their only chance is to cross Kuraman, also called Never Never land. Drover is afraid of it because it is very dangerous, but then King George turns up and promises to sing them across the land. Drover explains to Sarah that Aboriginal people have songs for everything in nature, which help them not to lose their way. Then a sandstorm approaches.
1:14:58 to 1:38:03	Carney’s daughter is at the hairdresser’s where they are talking about a newspaper article about the droving team that is said to have died in Kuraman. Carney is now sure that he will be able to sell his cattle to the army, when all of a sudden the droving team and their cattle arrive in Darwin. The captain says that the first cattle to arrive at the ship will be bought, and a competition between Carney and Sarah begins. The governor watches this from his mansion and is happy that Carney’s monopoly is now broken. Thanks to Drover, the Faraway Downs team wins. The people who watched the competition cheer on the team. To celebrate, Drover and Sarah go into the bar, and she is now allowed to stay, as she is no longer seen as a Lady, but as a drover. Carney is dissatisfied with Fletcher and wants to take matters into his own hands; he

	will not trust the 'boy' Fletcher anymore. Narrating, Nullah says that everyone was now happy. Mrs Boss would be able to sell the station and go back to England, and Drover had won his horse, but Nullah himself is not happy, he says, as he is a 'creamy' who does belong nowhere. Sarah, who has donned her English dress, tells Drover that she does not want to sell Faraway Downs anymore and that she wants him to become its manager. He declines, as he wants to continue his life as a drover working on commission. He also refuses to accompany her to the ball, as people there treat him like a black person. Nullah's grandmother wants to take the boy to the cinema to watch <i>The Wizard of Oz</i>. For this, she uses "magic" and colours him dark with dirt. At the same time, Sarah is at the "Auxiliary Committee Ball" of the Children's Island Mission. Carney's wife gossips behind Sarah's back. Sarah tells Captain Dutton that she has decided to adopt Nullah and that she wants to talk to the mission's owner, but he responds that half-castes must be kept separate from the more primitive full-blooded Aboriginal children, and says that it is a fact that Aboriginal mothers forget about their children very soon after their removal. Sarah is appalled by this idea. Carney's wife says that Sarah's behaviour is improper. In turn, Carney's daughter Catherine becomes a fan of Sarah and wants to meet her. Mr Carney arrives at the ball and asks Sarah to dance. He renews his offer to buy the station and promises that he will look after all the employees, including Nullah. It is her last chance to sell the farm and return to England, as the last plane leaves the next day, because of the war. The moment she is about to sign the contract, Drover comes in. Now she is not alone anymore and does not need to sell Faraway Downs. The orchestra plays a foxtrot as Drover and Sarah meet on the dance floor. Carney's wife is gossiping again and cannot believe that Sarah invited Drover to the ball. Carney watches all of this, takes a deep sip from his bottle of rum, and laughs maniacally. Sarah and Drover leave the ball. Outside the mansion, it starts to rain. Drover tells Sarah that he will stay with her during the rainy season. During this time, Faraway Downs becomes an island, cut off from the outside world. Then they kiss, while the other people are dancing in the rain. Only Nullah, who is still sitting at the movie theatre, has not recognized that rain has set in. Back in the mansion's garden, Fletcher slips and falls. Carney, who found out about the murder of Lord Ashley, confronts Fletcher, and tells him to keep away from his daughter, to whom he had been engaged. Outside, people cheer.
1:38:04 to 1:43:12	The camera glides over fertile soil, billabongs, birds and other animals are seen, and at one billabong, Sarah, Drover, and Nullah are taking a bath. Nullah's voice explains that everybody was happy now, even the police officer that liked Sarah's tea so much that he pretended not to see the half-caste child. For the first time in his life, Nullah celebrates Christmas. When the rain stops, Drover has to leave Faraway Downs, but he comes back. King George tells Nullah that he must always take care, for the crocodile always watches and waits. As he says this to the boy, Fletcher is seen pushing Carney into a billabong where he is eaten by a crocodile. Newspaper headlines that glide across the screen indicate that Fletcher has become the new cattle king and married Carney's daughter. Fletcher visits Faraway Downs. He still wants to buy the station and threatens to tell the authorities to take away "the little creamy". When Sarah threatens to tell Fletcher's wife that he is Nullah's father, he says this would be a mistake, and points at spears from the Kimberly, which are in the room. He asks her if she heard about Carney's death. He says it was a terrible accident, but that it is dangerous in the

	outback – even for Drover and Nullah. Sarah does not want Drover to find out about his threat.
1:43:14 to 1:55:35	Drover comes back from a cattle drive. The next morning, Nullah wakes them up and says that they have to tame horses. He then engages Drover in a discussion about what it means to be a man and says that he wants to go on a walkabout. Captain Dutton visits to the station, and Drover wants to drive cattle to Darwin for the army, which Sarah does not like, as he has just returned. She is also against the idea of Nullah going on walkabout, as she thinks he is too young. Drover tells her that she has to accept that he will have to go one day, otherwise he will never have his own story. And Drover decides to drive cattle for the army. Nullah disappears. Sarah wants Drover to help her search for him, but he refuses, because he thinks it right that he went on a walkabout. She cannot understand that he will not stay with her, and tells him that he is not welcome anymore if he leaves now. But he goes. Nullah is running through the desert. He knows that Captain Kalaham does not drink tea with Sarah anymore. The tracker and the police capture King George and Nullah, who are brought to Darwin. At the movie theatre, the citizens are informed that Darwin will be evacuated as the Japanese draw nearer. Sarah arrives in Darwin as Nullah is being brought to the ship that will take him to Mission Island. She wants to get him back. Carney's widow sees this and cannot believe her behaviour once again. Catherine is the only one who wants to help her, and she tells Neil Fletcher to do something. Sarah promises Nullah that she will get him back, and he tells her that he will sing her to him. Fletcher suddenly appears next to Sarah and taunts her by saying that Mission Island will be the Japanese's first target.
1:55:36 to	The Japanese planes are drawing nearer to Australia. Nullah is still on Mission Island, which he describes as prison. Drover is far away driving cattle for the army. He and Nullah's uncle are at the tree where he first kissed Sarah. He misses Nullah and Sarah. When he tells the Aboriginal man that they separated because she did not want him to go on a walkabout, Nullah's uncle is worried and says that Drover only hides behind traditions because he is too afraid to admit his feelings. He is afraid that if Drover does not do this, "he has not dreams, no story, simply nothing". They see soldiers driving through the country. Sarah now works in Darwin and believes that she will get Nullah back this very day. But the Japanese arrive and bomb Mission Island. In Darwin, Sarah and Fletcher's wife, who now work together, are talking about Nullah, but they are interrupted by the Japanese' attack. All prisoners, including King George, are now let free. Drover arrives in Darwin after the attack is over. He thinks that Sarah has been killed. Indeed, her body is brought to a hospital. While he hears her voice, he goes to the bar. The bartender wants to prevent Drover's Aboriginal friend, Margarri, from entering the bar, which Drover does not accept. He repeats Sarah's words, that "just because it is, doesn't mean it should be." Margarri is allowed to enter the bar and they have a drink together. The bartender tells Drover that he saw Sarah that morning. She was happy because she was planning to pick up Nullah and go south with him. Drover is shocked when he hears that the children were left on the island. The bartender says that there are rumours that nobody on Mission Island survived. At the hospital, it turns out that the dead body is not Sarah, but Catherine. Sarah comes to see her. She now wants to go to the island, but is held back by Captain Dutton.

	At the docks, a young priest tries to get a boat to go to Mission Island, but he is held back by one of Fletcher's men. Suddenly, the drover comes and beats this man. Now he, Margarri, the bartender and the priest are able to go to the island. Sarah is told that Darwin will be evacuated at daybreak. The men arrive at the island. The houses are burning, and the sadness of the scene is enforced when Drover discovers little shoes. They hear a voice, and boys who had hid in the bush come out, with Nullah among them. He wants to know where Mrs Boss is, and Drover tells him that they are not allowed to say her name anymore. On their way to the water, they are nearly caught by Japanese soldiers who are on the island. Margarri sacrifices himself so that the others can flee. He sends Drover away because he has got family now.
2:15:53 to	Next morning in Darwin. Fletcher is informed that his wife has died. He blames Sarah for her death because she and Catherine had exchanged shifts so that Sarah could go get Nullah. Sarah does not want to leave Darwin, as she still hopes that Nullah is alive. Captain Dutton insists on her coming with him. She takes a last look at the sea and Darwin. On the boat, Nullah tries to sing, but the smoke off the burning ships prevents him from singing. King George reminds him that he still has the harmonica, and Nullah starts to play "Over the Rainbow". The other children start to sing. Sarah hears this, and then sees the little boat coming out of the fog. Nullah and Sarah are reunited, and then Drover appears out of the fog, who can hardly believe that she is alive. The children are being taken to the lorries that are about to leave Darwin when Fletcher sees them and discovers Nullah. Captain Dutton says that when he said that nobody could get to Mission Island, he forgot about Drover. Nullah says that the little family were now able to go back to Faraway Downs. In the background, "Over the Rainbow" is still playing. Neil Fletcher is possessed by the idea that Nullah cursed him and wants to shoot the boy. King George watches this and spears Fletcher before he can harm the boy. Fletcher had had every intention of killing his own son. Nullah says that he cannot be harmed, because he is an Aboriginal magician.
	When Sarah, Drover, and Nullah stop at the tree where they first kissed, King George appears and once again wants to take Nullah on a walkabout. This time Sarah lets him go. He gives her his shirt and throws away his shoes, smiles at her one last time, and the walkabout starts. King George points at Sarah and tells Nullah that he has been on a journey, but that now they are heading home to their country. Text insert: The government officially abandoned the assimilation policy for indigenous Australians in the Northern Territory in 1973. In 2008, the Prime Minister of Australia offered a formal apology to the members of the Stolen Generations.

Abstrakt

Diese Diplomarbeit beschäftigt sich mit dem Image, dass in australischen Filmen über den fünften Kontinent vermittelt wird. Dazu wird zunächst die Geschichte Australiens bearbeitet, um Hintergrundwissen zu vermitteln.

Anschließend werden die nationale Identität Australiens und deren Entstehung beleuchtet. Schon hier ist zu erkennen, dass sich Australien in dem Bestreben, eine eigene Kultur aufzubauen, die möglichst unabhängig vom Mutterland Großbritannien sein sollte, stark auf seine Natur bezog. Diese wurde stets als einzigartig dargestellt und gilt auch in heutigen Werken oftmals noch als „das wahre Australien“. In diesem Umfeld – dem australischen Busch – leben die Helden der Geschichten von A.B. Paterson, Henry Lawson etc. aber auch die vieler Filme. Es ist der Mythos des Buschmannes, der sich durch die Geschichten der Literaten und Filmemacher zieht und heute in Mick Dundee und dem Drover noch immer als typisch australisch vermittelt wird.

Im Kapitel 5 geht es um die australische Filmgeschichte, die bereits 1896 ihren Lauf nahm. Bis zu den 1970ern verlor die australische Filmindustrie zunehmend an Bedeutung, der Markt wurde von ausländischen Produktionen, insbesondere von Hollywoodfilmen, überschwemmt. Mit Hilfe von finanzieller Unterstützung der australischen Regierung wurde in 1970ern die Industrie wiederbelebt, ein Boom an Filmen folgte, die auch international Anerkennung fanden. Um die theoretischen Erläuterungen zu vergängenständlichen, werden im Zuge der Abhandlung der Filmgeschichte einige bedeutende Filme der verschiedenen Dekaden kurz diskutiert und die Hauptfiguren auf ihre typischen australischen Charakteristiken untersucht.

Abschließend folgt eine Analyse von vier ausgewählten Filmen, die in Hinblick auf die Vermittlung typischer australischer Attribute analysiert werden. In allen Filmen ist die australische Landschaft ein wichtiges Element der Handlung. Diese Thematisierung der Größe und Gefährlichkeit des australischen Busch nahm in den 1970ern ihre Anfänge.

Besonders auffällig ist, dass eine „Schönfärbung“ der Geschichte betrieben wird, um Australien in einem besonders positiven Licht zu präsentieren. In *Crocodile Dundee* wird die schwierige Beziehung der weißen

Bevölkerung und der Aborigines gänzlich ausgeblendet (bis auf einen kurzen Verweis auf die Landrechtsdebatte im ersten Teil). In *Australia* wird die Zwangsentfernung von „Mischlingskindern“, die jahrzehntelang nicht bei ihren schwarzen Verwandten aufwachsen dürfen, zwar zu einem wichtigen Thema, doch scheint dies nur von besonders intoleranten und böartigen Menschen unterstützt zu werden. Die Hauptcharaktere hingegen zeigen Rassismus und Zwangsentfernung gegenüber völliges Unverständnis. Eben diese Wegnahme der Kinder wird im Film *Rabbit Proof Fence* behandelt, der eindrucksvoll zeigt, was die Kinder und ihre Verwandten durchleiden mussten.

Curriculum vitae

Personal Data:

Name: Simone Peter
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Education:

1992–1994: Volksschule Gloggnitz
 1994–1996: Volksschule Santa Christiana Wr. Neustadt
 1996–2004: BRG Gröhrmühlgasse Wr. Neustadt
 2004–2009: Bachelor's degree programme „Publizistik und Kommunikationswissenschaften“
 2005–2013: Diploma studies „Anglistik und Amerikanistik“
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Experience:

2007–2009: Coaching at „Schülerhilfe“ Wr. Neustadt
 July 2008: Internship at ATV
 2009-2010: Assistant at the press department at Ärztekammer für Niederösterreich
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