The City Unseen:
Iconography, Specificity and Mise-en-scène in the Cinematic Representation of Melbourne’s Urban Space, 1896-1966

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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August 2017
DECLARATION

I certify that except where due acknowledgement has been made, the work is that of the author alone; the work has not been submitted previously, in whole or in part, to qualify for any other academic award; the content of the thesis is the result of work which has been carried out since the official commencement date of the approved research program; any editorial work, paid or unpaid, carried out by a third party is acknowledged; and, ethics procedures and guidelines have been followed.

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Federico Passi, August 2017
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*For Orson, Martino and Ornella*

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION .............................................................................................................. i

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .............................................................................................. ii

TABLE OF CONTENTS ........................................................................................................ iii

TABLE OF FIGURES ........................................................................................................ v

ABSTRACT ............................................................................................................................... 1

INTRODUCTION ......................................................................................................................... 2

CHAPTER ONE
Melbourne in Film: Research Outline, Literature and Framework ......................................................... 10
1.1. Design and Method
1.2. Literature on Melbourne in Film
1.3. Framework
1.3.1. Theatricality, Mise-en-scène and Modes of Representation
1.3.2. Cinematic Identity of Place

CHAPTER TWO
Melbourne Pre-Cinematic Representations and the First Films ................................................................. 28
2.1. Pre-cinematic Views of Melbourne
2.1.1. Painted City Views
2.1.2. Two Ways of Viewing the City
2.1.3. J.W. Lindt
2.1.4. Charles Nettleton
2.1.5. Crisis of images in 1890s Melbourne
2.2. Cinema comes to Melbourne
2.2.1. The Modern Cine-City screens in Melbourne
2.2.2. Attraction, cinema, modernity
2.2.3. The Lumière Catalogue: Worldviews and Genres
2.3. Melbourne events on screen
2.3.1. The Melbourne Cup Film
2.3.2. After Lumière

CHAPTER THREE
Urban Travelogues and Local Films I (1905-7) .......................................................................................... 74
3.1. Inner City Representation
3.1.1. Travelogues of the Modern City
3.1.2. Living London: the Spectacle of the Modern Cinematic City
3.1.3. Cities in Motion and ‘Phantom rides’
3.1.4. Moving Modern Melbourne
3.1.5. ‘Tours of the World’ in Melbourne
3.1.6. Beautiful Ballarat
3.2. Local Suburban Cityscapes
3.2.1. Workers Leaving the Factory in Port Melbourne
3.2.2. Living Hawthorn
3.2.3. Opening Travelling Shot
3.2.4. Workers Leaving Work in Hawthorn
3.2.5. Human Figures and Gazes
CHAPTER FOUR
Urban Travelogues and Local Films II (1907-11) ................................................................. 105
4.1. The Melbourne of 1910
4.2. Celebration and Crisis of the Modern city: Marvellous Melbourne, Queen City of the South
4.2.1. The Opening Panorama
4.2.2. A Train Arriving in Richmond
4.2.3. Tram ‘Phantom Ride’ in Melbourne
4.2.4. City Views and Viewpoints
4.2.5. The View on Elizabeth Street
4.3. A Prosperous Suburb
4.4. Melbourne in Newsreels
4.4.1. Late ‘Phantom Rides’
4.5. Other City Film and Travelogues (1918-25)

CHAPTER FIVE
Institutional and Promotional City Images (1930-1966) ................................................................. 136
5.1. Anti-Urbanism and the Green City
5.1.1. Eftee Film Production and Melbourne Today
5.1.2. Promoting the ‘village-image’
5.1.3. Spires and Bridges
5.1.4. Human Characters and Skylines
5.2. Melbourne Post-War Promotional Films
5.3. Planning Melbourne on Films
5.4. Public Housing Films
5.4.1. The Films of the Brotherhood
5.4.2. Gaol Does Not Cure
5.4.3. The Realist Film Unit
5.4.4. The Films of the Victorian Housing Commission

CHAPTER SIX
Personal City Documentaries and Fiction Films ............................................................................... 179
6.1. Giorgio Mangiamele
6.2. Robin Boyd, Peter McIntyre and the University Films
6.3. Gil Brealey
6.4. Melbourne’s Fictional image
6.4.1. Looking Back at Fictional Films of Melbourne
6.4.2. Sydney and Melbourne in Early Fiction
6.5. Melbourne in On the Beach
6.5.1. Shot Designs as Cultural Viewpoints
6.5.2. The ‘Crane Shot’
6.5.3. The ‘Walk and Talk Shot’ on Swanston Street
6.5.4. The ‘Flinders Street Station Shot’
6.5.5. Deserted Urban Spaces
6.5.6. Reactions

CONCLUSION ........................................................................................................................................... 220

FILMOGRAPHY ......................................................................................................................................... 226

BIBLIOGRAPHY ....................................................................................................................................... 234
### TABLE OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fig.</th>
<th>Figure Title</th>
<th>Artist/Author</th>
<th>Date/Description</th>
<th>Institution/Location</th>
<th>Accession Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>John Adamson. <em>Melbourne (Port Phillip)</em>. 1841 [1839], lithograph.</td>
<td>State Library of Victoria, Melbourne</td>
<td>H6262/2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>William Knight. <em>Collins Street, Town of Melbourne [View from Batman Hill]</em>.</td>
<td>National Library of Australia, Canberra</td>
<td>OBJ-135240584</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>S.T. Gill. <em>Collins Street</em>. 1853, lithograph.</td>
<td>State Library of Victoria, Melbourne</td>
<td>H18124/1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Henry Burn. <em>Swanston Street from the Bridge</em>. 1861, oil on canvas.</td>
<td>National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne</td>
<td>H2008.59/1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Charles Nettleton. <em>Carte de visite</em>. 1870-90, albumen prints. Royal Society of Tasmania, University of Tasmania Library Special and Rare Materials Collection, Hobart.</td>
<td>ACC.NO: RS.123/16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Charles Nettleton. <em>Collins Street from the Treasury Looking West</em>. 1866, albumen silver print.</td>
<td>State Library of Victoria, Melbourne</td>
<td>H88.22/19</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Charles Rudd. <em>Collins Street [From Treasury Building]</em>. 1888, albumen silver print. State Library of Victoria, Melbourne</td>
<td>ACC.NO: H373638</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FIG. 27. LUMIÈRE. ARRIVÉE DU GOUVERNOUR, 1896, CATALOGUE IMAGE. HTTPS://CATALOGUE-LUMIERE.COM/ARRIVEE-DU-GOUVERNEUR/ ACCESSED 15.08.2015 .......................................................... 65
FIG. 28. LUMIÈRE. ENCENTE DU PESAGE, 1896, CATALOGUE IMAGE. HTTPS://CATALOGUE-LUMIERE.COM/ENCEINTE-DU-PESAGE/ ACCESSED 15.08.2015 .................................................................. 65
FIG. 29. LUMIÈRE. SORTIE DES CHEVAUX, 1896, CATALOGUE IMAGE. HTTPS://CATALOGUE-LUMIERE.COM/SORTIE-DES-CHEVAUX/ ACCESSED 15.08.2015 .......................................................... 65
FIG. 30. LUMIÈRE. LA COURSE. 1896, CATALOGUE IMAGE. HTTPS://CATALOGUE-LUMIERE.COM/LA-COURSE/ ACCESSED 15.08.2015 .......................................................... 66
FIG. 31. LUMIÈRE. PRESENTATION DU VAINQUEUR, 1896, CATALOGUE IMAGE. HTTPS://CATALOGUE-LUMIERE.COM/PRESENTATION-DU-VAINQUEUR/ ACCESSED 15.08.2015 .......................................................... 66
FIG. 32. THE DERBY FINISH. THE ILLUSTRATE AUSTRALIAN NEWS, 1894, PRINT. STATE LIBRARY OF VICTORIA, MELBOURNE, ACC.NO: IAN08/11/94/20-21A .......................................................... 68
FIG. 33. ARRIVAL OF GOVERNOR'S PARTY. THE ILLUSTRATE AUSTRALIAN. 1894, HALFTONE PHOTO REPRODUCTION. STATE LIBRARY OF VICTORIA, MELBOURNE, ACC.NO: IAN08/11/94/20-21D .......................................................... 68
FIG. 34. (ARRIVÉE D'UN TRAIN À MELBOURNE, 1896), SCREENSHOT. NFSA, CANBERRA, ACC.NO: 5826. ...................... 69
FIG. 35. TRAIN ARRIVING AT THE COURSE. VIEWS AT FLEMINGTON ARRIVAL OF GOVERNOR'S PARTY. THE ILLUSTRATE AUSTRALIAN. 1894, PRINT. STATE LIBRARY OF VICTORIA, MELBOURNE, ACC.NO: IAN08/11/94/20-21A .......................................................... 69
FIG. 37. WELLINGTON PARADE, EAST MELBOURNE, (EARLY TEST FILM 1898), FILM STILL. SALVATION ARMY ARCHIVES & MUSEUM, MELBOURNE. ........................................................................ 69
FIG. 38. EX-CONVICTS LOADING TOYS INTO A CARRIAGE, ABBOTSFORD, MELBOURNE, (THE PRISON GATE BRIGADE 1898). FILM STILL. SALVATION ARMY ARCHIVES & MUSEUM, MELBOURNE. ........................................................................ 69
FIG. 39. FREDERICK NELSON JONES. CLEMENT TALBOT MOTORCAR, CA 1905, GELATIN SILVER PRINT. NATIONAL LIBRARY OF NEW ZEALAND. .............................................................................. 84
FIG. 40. (SWALLOW AND ARIELL’S EMPLOYEES 1905) SCREENSHOT. NFSA, CANBERRA. HTTPS://YOUTUBE.BE/RZCSSMNWPHM ACCESSED 23.4.2015 .......................................................... 90
FIG. 41. FRAME COMPARISON OF THE SAME SHOT (LIVING HAWTHORN 1906). a) 35MM PRINT. NFSA, CANBERRA, ACC.NO: 9124/20, b) THE VHS VERSION. NFSA, CANBERRA, ACC.NO: 9124/7, c) THE DIGITAL VERSION RELEASED ONLINE (ASO.GOV.AU/TITLES/HISTORICAL/LIVING-HAWTHORN/) ACCESSED 20.3.2016 .......................................................... 92
FIG. 42. SHOPKEEPER (LIVING HAWTHORN 1906) FRAME COMPARISON A) AUTHOR’S PHOTO 35MM FRAME. NFSA, CANBERRA, ACC.NO:9124/14. B) AUTHOR’S PHOTO VHS TV SCREEN. (NFSA, CANBERRA, ACC.NO:9124/7.93 ACCESSED 20.2.2012 .......................... 95
FIG. 43. BURWOOD ROAD (LIVING HAWTHORN 1906) SCREENSHOT (ASO.GOV.AU/TITLES/HISTORICAL/LIVING-HAWTHORN/) ACCESSED 20.2.2012 .......................... 95
FIG. 44. BURWOOD ROAD, RUNNING BOY (LIVING HAWTHORN 1906) SCREENSHOT (ASO.GOV.AU/TITLES/HISTORICAL/LIVING-HAWTHORN/) ACCESSED 20.2.2012 .......................... 95
FIG. 45. WORKERS LEAVING WORK AT BURGESS TANNER (LIVING HAWTHORN 1906) VHS-TV SCREEN PHOTO. NFSA, CANBERRA, ACC.NO:9124/7. .............................................................................. 97
FIG. 46. MCDONALD AND CO, ELECTRICIANS (LIVING HAWTHORN 1906) VHS-TV SCREEN PHOTO. NFSA, CANBERRA, ACC.NO:9124/7. .............................................................................. 97
FIG. 47. BURTON AND KNOXVILLE COACHBUILDERS (LIVING HAWTHORN 1906) VHS-TV SCREEN PHOTO. NFSA, CANBERRA, ACC.NO:9124/7. .............................................................................. 98
FIG. 48. PARKER & BIRD COACHBUILDERS (LIVING HAWTHORN 1906) VHS-TV SCREEN PHOTO. NFSA, CANBERRA, ACC.NO:9124/7. .............................................................................. 99
FIG. 49. W.J. HOLDER CATERER (LIVING HAWTHORN 1906). VHS-TV SCREEN PHOTO. NFSA, CANBERRA, ACC.NO:9124/7. .............................................................................. 100
FIG. 50. W.J. HOLDER CATERER (LIVING HAWTHORN 1906). PHOTO OF 35MM FILM. NFSA, CANBERRA, ACC.NO:9124/20, .............................................................................. 100
FIG. 51. WORKERS (LIVING HAWTHORN 1906) VHS-TV SCREEN PHOTO. NFSA, CANBERRA, ACC.NO:9124/7 .......................... 101
FIG. 52. SHOPKEEPERS AND BYSTANDERS (LIVING HAWTHORN 1906) VHS-TV SCREEN PHOTO. NFSA, CANBERRA, ACC.NO:9124/7 .......................... 102
FIG. 53. SCHOOL ATTENDING THE ARRIVAL OF THE MAYOR (LIVING HAWTHORN 1906) 35MM FILM PHOTO. NFSA, CANBERRA, ACC.NO:9124/20 .......................... 103
FIG. 127. LONELY FIGURES (MOULDIES 1953) DVD SCREENSHOT. DVD, 2011, MELBOURNE SCHOOL OF DESIGN, UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE. ................................................................. 192

FIG. 128. THE CITY BEHIND (LATE WINTER TO EARLY SPRING 1954). SCREEN PHOTO FROM 16MM FILM. AUSTRALIAN MEDIATHEQUE, MELBOURNE, ACC.NO.: 006013. ............................................................. 195

FIG. 129. AN ICONIC SHOT (A QUEEN WHO RETURNED 1958). 16MM FILM SCREEN PHOTO. AUSTRALIAN MEDIATHEQUE, MELBOURNE, ACC.NO: 308662. ................................................................. 197

FIG. 130. EMPTY STREETS, OPENING IMAGES (SUNDAY IN MELBOURNE 1958). TV SCREEN PHOTO. AUSTRALIAN MEDIATHEQUE, MELBOURNE, ACC.NO: 010431. ............................................................. 198

FIG. 131. CLOSED SHOPS IN (SUNDAY IN MELBOURNE 1958). TV SCREEN PHOTO. AUSTRALIAN MEDIATHEQUE, MELBOURNE, ACC.NO: 010431. ................................................................. 198

FIG. 132. NO SHOPPING DAY (SUNDAY IN MELBOURNE 1958). TV SCREEN PHOTO. AUSTRALIAN MEDIATHEQUE, MELBOURNE, ACC.NO: 010431. ............................................................. 199

FIG. 133. RHYTHM OF A CITY (LEFT) AND (CENTRE AND RIGHT) (SUNDAY IN MELBOURNE 1958). TV SCREEN PHOTO. AUSTRALIAN MEDIATHEQUE, MELBOURNE, ACC.NO: 010431. ............................................................. 200

FIG. 134. OPENING SEQUENCE (ON THE BEACH 1959), DVD SCREENSHOT. MGM, 2000. .................................................. 210

FIG. 135. OPENING SEQUENCE (ON THE BEACH 1959). DVD SCREENSHOT. MGM, 2000. .................................................. 210

FIG. 136. ELIZABETH ST - 1920s VIEW

FIG. 137. (NEARING THE MELBOURNE OLYMPICS 1956), SCREENSHOT FROM FILE. NFA/YOUTUBE: HTTPS://YOUTUBE.BE/YVN5iDkMrLQ. ACCESSED: 7.8.2014 ............................................................. 211


FIG. 139. MOIRA AT FLINDERS STREET STATION (ON THE BEACH 1959). DVD SCREENSHOT. MGM, 2000. ................... 213

FIG. 140. (A) AXIAL SHOT OF THE STATION; (B) THE CROWD ENTERING THE STATION (ON TIME 1953), SCREENSHOTS FROM FILE. NFSA, CANBERRA. HTTPS://YOUTUBE.BE/LVVFF2JF1A4. ACCESSED. 8.7.2013 .................................................. 214


FIG. 143. CINESOUND REVIEW NEWSREEL (MELBOURNE BECOMES A ‘DEAD’ CITY 1959), SCREENSHOT. YOUTUBE: HTTPS://YOUTUBE.BE/ByPJ6-fMDC-c. ACCESSED: 15.10.2014 .................................................. 216

FIG. 144. CLOSING SEQUENCE (ON THE BEACH 1959). DVD SCREENSHOTS. MGM, 2000. .................................................. 217

FIG. 145. FILMING ON THE BEACH: THE CREW ON LONSDALE STREET WITH THE ICI BUILDING IN THE BACKGROUND. 1959. FAIRFAX MEDIA. ................................................................. 218
ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the iconography of ‘place’ in the cinematic representation of Melbourne’s urban space from 1896 until 1966. The literature on the pictorial representation of Melbourne has often lamented the lack of specificity and the ‘anti-urbanism’ of images of the city. By looking precisely at the cinematic staging of the public urban space this dissertation intends to verify to what extent the cinematic image of the city can be defined as lacking specificity. To achieve this goal the analysis will look at specific scenes in cinematic representations of Melbourne in which the lived public urban space of the city is introduced and defined. By ‘public urban space’ I am specifically referring to cityscapes, views of streets and, with few exceptions, to publicly available city spaces. Each selected filmic representation of the civic space will be analysed in depth through compositional, stylistic, and historical analysis, attempting to verify the capacity of the ‘image’ to record a specific cinematic place and point of view of the city in that given moment. The analysis will look at the correlations between the cinematic staging of the city space and the characteristics of that space and the goals of the films as international promotional material, or local self-representations. Films representing Melbourne often mimic and adapt popular international cinematic points of view when framing buildings and people within the public urban space.

The thesis will investigate the pre-cinematic representations of the city and the arrival of film in Melbourne through the screening of the first foreign-filmed city-views. It will account for the initial appearances of the public city space on film within event-based news features such as the Lumières’ Melbourne Cup (1896). It will look at the style of travelogue films such as Moving Melbourne (Tait brothers 1906), Marvellous Melbourne, Queen City of the South (Spencer 1910) and Melbourne Today (Thring 1931). It will also review the representation of urban space in local community films such as Living Hawthorn (Johnson and Gibson 1906) and A Thriving and Prosperous Suburb. Bird’s Eye View of Footscray (Pathé 1910), which propose a less theatrical staging of the city space. The second part of the thesis will verify the continuation of earlier trends in post-war productions (1945-1966). The iconography of promotional films portraying Melbourne’s urban space is compared with that of local planning and public housing films. Finally, these cinematic images are compared with local films by Peter McIntyre and Robin Boyd, Gil Brealey, Giorgio Mangiamele, with the lack of extant representation of the city streets in local feature films and the foreign American perspective on urban space offered by Stanley Kramer in On the Beach.
INTRODUCTION

This PhD thesis examines cinematic representations of Melbourne’s urban spaces in the years from 1896 to 1966. The time frame taken into consideration is wider: it includes early forms of visual representation of the city and extends into the 1960s to follow cinematic trends initiated in the 1950s. The notion of ‘urban spaces’ is used here in reference to outdoor spaces within the built environment of the city. They include Melbourne’s cityscapes and views, pictures of shared city spaces outdoors, shots of buildings, streets, open areas, squares, bridges and city parks, with an attention to the relationship between the human figure and urban space.

This research project stems from an interest in investigating the representations of Melbourne in film, given that these representations differ so markedly from those of other Western cities. In particular, it seems to offer a loose, almost ‘mimed’ version of the representation of various European capitals, or a stark opposition to such representations. Many images of Melbourne, as well as many films, seem to present a lack of ‘specificity’, also often lamented by the literature on the representation of Melbourne in film, photography and the fine arts. Pictures of Melbourne often seem to underplay a recognisable local urban image in favour of a less iconic and more malleable international city identity (Danks 1999, 173). This ‘lack’ takes different ‘forms’: a general lack of films, a lack of fictional films set in the city streets, a scarcity of images of the city streets and buildings in feature films; a repetitive and unremarkable presence in many promotional non-fiction films; an anonymous and ubiquitous representation of the urban space and an attempt to mimic the way other cities are represented. These phenomena are different but the effect is often similar: the picture of the city’s urban space is usually not retained in memory. The city’s urban space is either not represented, or is not seen. Yet, although Melbourne seems to have a way of de-emphasising specificity in its representation, it maintains its character, and a very definite, even though paradoxical, identity on screen.

The main aim of this study is to investigate and document the mise-en-scène and broader representation of the cinematic image of Melbourne’s urban space over an arc of seventy years of film production. By mise-en-scène I mean to include all the aspects of designing and executing a film shot: from choosing a location and camera viewpoint, composing the shot, orchestrating the position of people and space, to planning the movement of the camera and the people within the shot. The employment of these staging techniques is too often ignored by critics and audiences1. Jacques Amount has commented that in feature films “staging or mise-en-scène is not a concept, not an

1 As David Bordwell notes, mise-en-scène or cinematic staging is “an unassuming art, it passed unnoticed by audiences, [...] as the most thoughtful critics, as well as the most imaginative theorists, usually preached the virtue of cutting and ignore staging. [...] For ordinary moviegoers and film experts, cinematic staging remains a truly imperceptible art” (Bordwell 2005, 8).
aesthetic program, not a manifesto (though it could occasionally be one or the other): it is the flesh of a film shot, the very flesh of film, its intimate relationship to what has remained, in spite of all, its true subject – the figuration of human beings in interesting states and actions” (Aumont 2007, 77). I am expanding Aumont’s comment on staging to include the mise-en-scène of non-fiction films where the human figure is at time absent or implied. Even when the cinematic urban scene is deprived of human presence the setting implies this absence. When a feature film, a travelogue or a documentary begins with a view or a panoramic shot of an urban setting this is mostly presented as a ‘lived’ setting. Its existence in the film is always a function of the momentarily invisible human presence.

My focus is on specific technical details in the construction of the mise-en-scène of frames, shots and scenes. Because of this focus on the construction of cinematic space, I am interested in the way the city is presented and introduced to the spectator in relation to the human figure. Firstly, it is important to know how key representations of Melbourne function at the cinematic level, by looking at composition, camera movement, editing and so on. Secondly, I intend to look at the possible references drawn on to create each ‘image’. Is a given view, scene or ‘cinematic space’ influenced by or reproduced from other foreign films? Is it constructed by referencing the actual urban history of Melbourne? Does it do both things at the same time? To investigate the construction of the cinematic representation of Melbourne requires a close analysis of the iconography of such images. An examination of the term ‘iconography’\(^2\) encompasses the description and classification of recurring visual forms, motifs, and genres.

The study of the technical and compositional qualities of the visual ‘text’ is a specific aspect of the representation of Melbourne, and of other cities, that is rarely analysed in depth. Rarely does analysis of the nexus of city and film go into detail about the technical specificity of the cinematic image. Most studies look at the way films improve or construct the perception of the city. The analysis usually starts from the city, looks at films and comes back to the city. Here I would like to reverse this process and start from the cinematic text and return to it after having looked at the city. Through this perspective, the cinematic ‘text’ is not a mirror of the city but an independent historical ‘visual fact’ or event. The film ‘shot’ or sequence representing an urban space records a perceptual point of view. It entails the flattening of an actual city space into a ‘cinematic place’.

By studying these ‘places’ this thesis attempts to identify the main genres of the representation of urban space and urban life in Melbourne. It argues that in most cases foreign film genres were imported, adapted and reinvented to represent local city design and space, and it is this dialectic

\(^2\) Following Panofsky (1962), I am distinguishing between ‘iconography’, as the descriptive and taxonomic process in the description of specific images, and ‘iconology’, as the interpretation of the meaning of such images. At the same time, as Panofsky alerted, I consider the two moments as part of a unique hermeneutical process and not always separable in practice. In this research, I will use exclusively the term ‘iconography’ to mark the central role of the descriptive and classificatory process. At times the ‘semantic field’ of the term ‘iconography’ will be extended to cover also the occasional interpretative and iconological processes. For a relatively recent discussion of iconography and iconology see Belting (2005, 302-319).
between local and foreign cinematic objectives that strongly shapes the representation of Melbourne’s city space. The distinction between foreign and local aims is reflected in the different strategies employed in staging the urban space on screen. Firstly, for example, at the iconographic level, one notices a less-iconic representation in local films and a more iconic portrait of the city in films aimed at foreign markets. Secondly, the filming of the urban space can be divided between a ‘theatrical or more coded’ settings, usually when aimed at international audiences, and a ‘less-theatrical and less-coded’ mise-en-scène when aimed at local audiences. This difference in mise-en-scène is further expressed through the difference of representational focus between the city centre, symbolic reference of the city and most often used in international productions, and the suburbs, appearing mostly in productions aimed at local audiences.

The key research question addressed in this thesis is: **How is Melbourne’s urban space represented on film between 1896 to 1966?** An important sub-question it also examines is: How can the representation of city spaces - focusing on the mise-en-scène of imported genres or forms such as the ‘panorama’, the ‘street-view’, the ‘phantom ride’, the ‘train’s arrival’, ‘workers coming out of the factory’ and the ‘travelogue’ - shed light on the specificity of those points of view? In its cinematic representation, Melbourne seems to develop a localised point of view through the formalisation of an alternative ‘cinematic identity of place’. This identity finds its specificity not in the iconic images of quintessential views but in several less memorable or less visible images of the city, to be measured in relation to the former. My underlying claim here is that to properly understand the cinematic representation of Melbourne’s urban space, it is necessary to frame it within the international context of local and foreign influences, expectations and aims.

The choice of focusing on the first period of filmmaking in Melbourne was driven by the interest in looking at the representation of Melbourne pre-1968, before the establishment of regular forms of government support to the film industry. Thus, implying an influence between pre-1968 production and post-1968 production, as inferred in Lennard Jacobsen’s analysis of the cinematic representation of high-rise building during this shift (2006, 114-189).

My aim is to start at the beginning, when Melbourne and cinema met, and retrace the encounter between the pre-existing iconography of the capital of Victoria, and the arrival of a new foreign media, like cinema, imported through the colonial network. In 1896 urban cinema came to Melbourne

3 An ‘iconic representation’ is defined here as the capacity of a pictorial mise-en-scène to establish a non-arbitrary relation of identity with its object (“the relation between signified and signifier is quasi-tautological” Barthes 1977, 36).

4 The notion of Australian ‘suburbs’ is defined by David Nichols as “the largely residential part of a city, which exists not merely beyond the central business district but in a region which perhaps begins three kilometres by the edges of that district – arguably, a comfortable walking distance or brief trip from the city centre. That said, the terrain within that radius might be referred to as the ‘inner suburbs’ or the ‘inner city’”. The singular ‘suburb’ is “any residential district beyond the formally recognised central city” (Nichols, 2012)
bringing the attraction of a powerful medium capable of realistically reproducing the motion of human beings and vehicles in the streets of the key modern metropolises of the world. That same year Melbourne itself became an international ‘film-city’ thanks to the images of the Melbourne Cup filmed by Lumière’s operator Marius Sestier. In the following years, the city was represented in locally produced films often inspired by foreign paradigms. By looking at the formal evolution of the representation of the cinematic city views of Melbourne, I wish to shed further light on the relationship between Melbourne’s city design and its urban staging in film. The encounter between Melbourne’s pragmatic and un-theatrical colonial city design and the spectacular cinematic representation of modern imperial cities deserves attention. Melbourne developed its encounter with cinema within the British colonial context. Film, like commerce and show business travelled quickly around the globe through the Empire. For its capacity to be ubiquitous, cinema was ‘international before being national’ (Gunning 2008, 11), moreover, the transnational comparison of cities was ignited and expanded by films (Langlois 1986, 30); (Shiel 2001, 6-7). The widespread promotional use of international travelogues and actuality films had a major role in increasing the ‘visibility’ of iconic cities’ for Melbourne.

The primary aim of the thesis is to bridge a gap in the existing documentation and scholarship by providing a formal description and analysis of the staging of urban space within a representative group of films in the first seventy years of Melbourne’s film production. It is not intended as a comprehensive historical survey of the representations of Melbourne in these years, but as a study of a few exemplary texts, selected because they offer a meaningful local typology of aesthetic trends in city-representation. In this respect, Melbourne presents itself as an interesting case study of the cinematic representation of a modern colonial city, given that its foundation and development run parallel with the introduction and circulation of film and photography.

The secondary aim of the thesis is to look at how these films have come together to express on screen specific discourses about perceptions of Melbourne’s urban identities: the more international Central Business District (CBD) and the local suburbs, the modern city and the ‘village’ city, the industrial past and the later ‘greener’ views. It also examines how recurring city locations (for example, Princes Bridge) have been represented. How pertinent were these representations in relation to the history of the city? How is the human figure perceived within these views? All these elements come together in recurring visual patterns. They are recorded in cinematic ‘urban-images’ working as symbolic forms documenting the process of imagining place in Melbourne. A cinematic ‘sense of place’ is thus not simply the identification of a specific building within the city, but the staging of a point of view within the city space, that is negotiated between the nature of the medium and the urban character of the city.

The film productions examined in this study are divided into two main periods:
1. The first period (1896-1930s) is characterised by a high percentage of lost films and will look mostly at the establishment of patterns and features in Melbourne’s city representations. The analysis of pre-cinematic city-views set the terms of comparison for future film views. The local screening of the first filmed views of London in 1896 introduces cinema to Melbourne as a foreign medium. That same year, the Lumière’s Melbourne Cup films open a tradition of ‘event-actualities’ from Melbourne, focusing on the news and usually avoiding any significant introduction to the city. In the following years (1896-1930) the main film-genre representing Melbourne was the travelogue film, promoting an international ‘official’ image of Melbourne, which focused on the attempt to replicate the ‘spectacle’ of the city as seen in foreign travelogues. A less official, more informal and realistic city-image will appear in the same period in local films describing local communities and surrounding suburbs.

2. In the second period (1940s-1965) I analyse film travelogues of Melbourne, which became institutionalised as commercial products promoting the city, both internationally and locally, for citizens, newcomers, migrants, the 1956 Olympic bid, and for tourism. Local institutionalised films had a stronger social interest and developed a more varied language in denouncing, first, the poor housing conditions and, later, in promoting the construction of public housing. In this period, individual filmmakers offered an alternative and more original point of view on local issues through personal films and early fictional efforts. Accordingly, the thesis examines how these early stylistic patterns and genres have developed and changed. A closing section will look at the US production, On the Beach (Kramer 1959), and at the rare fictional films that represent Melbourne during that period.

The focus of my research on visual representation has required close examination of the available film footage of Melbourne, and contextual research to verify their exemplarity. These films are part of a fragmented cinematic corpus of Australian films, some of which, particularly newsreel and fiction films, can be considered partly ‘lost’ in the sense that they are mostly incomplete/fragmented in celluloid form. Nevertheless, their existence is mentioned through paratexts, such as contemporary newspaper reports. This lack of original material constitutes a challenge to producing “coherent narratives and broad interpretations of the cinematic output from this period” (Jacobsen 2006, 57). Notwithstanding the limited statistical evidence and the differences in production, circulation, and genres, the rare urban films and text sources available can still be considered indicative of the corpus as a whole. Therefore, when a film is considered significant but no longer survives or survives only partially, it will be investigated through references to it in articles published by newspapers.

The analytical approach employed in the thesis, with its focus on the compositional and stylistic qualities of cinematic mise-en-scène, draws methodologically on the study of iconology in art, and the need to cross-examine texts against the history of types (Elsner and Lorenz 2012, 496), iconographic
meanings and cinematic genres. This iconographic method distinguishes between progressive levels of investigation and meaning: “the visual material is treated as evidence supporting a particular hypothesis on the meanings that the visuals elicited in the original context. Visuals are treated as historic sources on culture, politics, society, life at a given time in the past” (Müller 2011, 287).

In his original theorisation (1962, 14-15), Erwin Panofsky distinguished between three levels of investigation, subject matter and meaning, which are all employed in this research:

1) a ‘pre-iconographical description’, i.e. a stylistic and compositional description accounting for the formal and technical characteristics of the visual text (painting, photography, and film). This primary level describes the elements of the design in the image and produces a descriptive formal analysis of its physical manifestation.

2) the ‘iconographic analysis’ which, in the narrower interpretation of the term, is based on a comparative process, identifying styles and genres and connecting the image to a “known story or recognizable character”, or a history of types and genres.

3) the ‘iconological interpretation’, which elaborates the meaning of the picture or text by reference to its context of production and the world of ‘symbolic values’ (Panofsky 1962, 40).

The proposed separation between each level of analysis is, of course, an analytical differentiation, not separable in practice as together they form a single act of hermeneutics referring “in reality to aspects of one phenomena” (Panofsky 1962 (1939), 14-16). The working application of this method to cinema will be explicated further in the first chapter.

The overall structure of the thesis is organised as follows:

Chapter 1 contains a review of the literature relating to “Melbourne in film” and the key analytical frameworks informing my research. The literature highlights the nature of the common cinematic images of Melbourne: rarely specific, often indistinct and, at times, portrayed as a city ‘other than’ Melbourne. The first part of my investigation interprets the filming of the urban space as the production of a particular and meaningful ‘cinematic identity of place’. The second part explores this identity through its modes of representation, and the use of specific mise-en-scène classified here as theatrical and informal (anti-theatrical). The representation re-organises space through the employment of cultural and stylistic elements such as composition, framing, camera movements and points of view.

Chapter 2 is dedicated to the early pictorial and photographic images of Melbourne, to the arrival of cinema as urban spectacle, and to the analysis of the first films shot in Melbourne. The first

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Footnote: 5 As Bordwell reminds us film criticism has yet to match the analysis of ‘pictorial intelligence’ performed by art historians like Svetlana Alpers and Michael Baxandall, both connected to the Warburg Institute in London (2005, 10).
films are significant because they introduce the Melbourne audience to a variety of international cinematic urban images and early film genres such as the ‘workers coming out of the factory’ and the ‘phantom ride’. My analysis includes the work of early Melbourne photographers, Charles Nettleton and J. W. Lindt, which pre-dates representations of cinematic urban representations of Melbourne. A comparison is drawn between films of Melbourne and the new cinematic city images of London imported by cinema; the position of images of Melbourne in the Lumière catalogue; and the analysis of Lumière’s Melbourne Cup, which opened a tradition of ‘news films’ based on actual events and therefore known as ‘actualities’.

Chapter 3 focuses on the cinematic images of Melbourne in the years 1905-7. A grand representation of the modern city is introduced to Melbourne through the 1906 Australian success of Living London (Urban 1904). Modernity in Melbourne is evoked by borrowing industrial cinematic ‘genres’ such as the ‘phantom ride’, used in the no longer extant travelogue Moving Melbourne (Tait 1906) and in the spectacle of travelogues such as the “World’s Tours”, which opened in the city in 1907. A second section looks at suburban films characterised by a more informal mise-en-scène, already visible in the rendering of the genre ‘workers leaving work’ in Port Melbourne, as pictured in Workers Coming Out of the Swallow and Ariell’s Factory (Perry 1905). Similar informal scenes of workers, shopkeepers, people gathering and looking back at the camera, are featured repeatedly in Living Hawthorn (Johnson and Gibson 1906).

Chapter 4 focuses on two surviving films from the years 1910-1911: the travelogue Marvellous Melbourne, Queen City of the South (Spencer 1910) and the suburban local film A Thriving and Prosperous Suburb. Bird’s Eye View of Footscray (Pathé 1910). The first film refashions the nineteenth century Victorian capital through emphasis on speed and modern overtones to evoke the nineteenth-century myth of ‘Marvellous Melbourne’. Today, the tram sequence is an uncanny sight as it brings to life the repressed modern aspirations of the city before they gave way to a more conservative image. The film engages with specific locations marking the changes in the city of 1910. A Thriving and Prosperous Suburb. Bird’s Eye View of Footscray shows an involution in the representation of the suburban settings, less open and engaged than Living Hawthorn. The chapter concludes with a review of newsreel and lost travelogues from the 1910s and 1920s.

Chapter 5 covers institutional Melbourne films from the 1930s to 1965. The introduction of a new calmer, greener, anti-industrial imagery is epitomised by the travelogue Melbourne Today (Thring 1931). It represents the CBD as static and claustrophobic against the more dynamic, open images of St. Kilda Road, the river banks and the Royal Botanic Gardens. From the 1940s, a stronger state interest in promotional and propaganda films led to the production of a larger number of institutional films and travelogues about Melbourne, often sharing common stylistic traits. This trend reaches its apex with the 'international' promotional films made for the 1956 Melbourne Olympics, tourism and to encourage migration to the city. These ‘international’ films, mostly stemming from the older genre
of the travelogue, promote a conventional and embalmed institutional image of Melbourne that was pervasive and widespread. On a ‘local’ level the Brotherhood of St. Laurence produced social films with the Realist Film Unit denouncing the living conditions in the poorer suburbs. The state institutions responded with propaganda films capturing and promoting the construction of new public housing.

Chapter 6 covers the same period, from the 1940s to 1965, from a different, more individual perspective. It places together a heterogeneous group of filmmakers sharing themes and different individual approaches to representations of the city. The city images proposed in the films by Robin Boyd and Peter McIntyre, and by Gil Brealey are compared to the city as seen in fictional representations by Giorgio Mangiamele and in *On the Beach*. Together they offer new and alternative ways of recording the experience of urban space in Melbourne in the post-World-War-II years. These films have in common an individual, at times a poetic figure, and a more emotional approach to the identity of place and people in Melbourne. Finally, the analysis of the iconic feature film *On the Beach* brings together questions about the scarcity of fictional representations of Melbourne, as well as positing conclusions about the local/foreign dialectic cinematic iconography of the city space and of its identity in film.
CHAPTER ONE

Melbourne in Film: Research Outline, Literature and Framework

_The history of the city is not always a story of changes in technology and ways of life, but in ways of seeing and communicating. From Fawkner’s printing press to the Cobb and Co mail coach, the telegraph and railways, the magic lantern, the diorama, Coles Book Arcade, the stereopticon, the cinematograph and television, the city is a product of imagination, that is, literally, the production and dissemination of pictures._ (Davison 2009, 377)

In this chapter I intend to clarify the methodology I will use, and locate the investigation within a critical and theoretical framework. The research is influenced by my own experience of moving from what was initially a ‘foreign’ point of view on the Australian city to a progressive acquaintance and familiarisation with the local urban space. I have moved to Australia twice in 15 years, having lived first in Sydney, then in Melbourne. My perception of the local urban space has slowly been modified, while remaining, at the same time, in dialogue with my previous experiences of European city spaces, referencing both real and cinematic cities.

1.1. Design and Method

As stated in the introduction, my project has originated from an interest in analysing the cinematic representation of the city’s public urban spaces, which, according to the literature on Melbourne and film, are characterised by a low level of specificity. Compared to Sydney, Melbourne seems to appear quantitatively less in films and when it does appear features locations that are not easily identifiable (some of the parts of Melbourne that appear on film give the impression that they could have been filmed in any modern city). These facts will be illustrated by the related literature in the following section of this chapter. To research this topic, it seemed apt to begin by investigating the first pre-cinematic representations of Melbourne and the early encounters between film and the city spaces.

Another important aspect of this research lies in its point of view. The research analyses not the actual space of the city but the cinematic representation of urban space. In so doing, it diverges from a tradition of urban studies that uses film and photography as mirrors to reflect specific aspects of the city's actual space. Therefore, I have looked at the space of Melbourne not as it really is but as it appears on screen.
The early corpus of visible urban scenes in films of Melbourne is essentially dominated by non-fiction films (newsreel, documentaries, advertisements and local suburban films). The availability of fictional scenes showing Melbourne’s early cityscapes is a rarity in feature films. When compared to feature films set in Sydney of the same period, which display a greater number of scenes of streets and views, this absence appears to be a peculiarly ‘negative’ trait of films set in, or depicting, Melbourne.

To analyse the representation of Melbourne’s views and cityscapes this study has looked mostly at film travelogues and to films promoting local issues, which were the main type of film documenting the early years of film production in the city. The films were sourced mostly from the film collection of the National Film and Sound Archive (NFSA) in Canberra and the Australian Centre for the Moving Image (ACMI). Many of these films were viewed at the Australian Mediatheque, a collaboration between ACMI and the NFSA in Melbourne. Regarding the material, it was a priority of this research to attempt to look at the actual filmed footage (16mm and 35mm films) when possible, in order to access the maximum amount of visual information available. As Pike and Edmondson have reminded us that “no amount of research can ever adequately reconstruct the early cinema of Australia, or allow proper evaluation of it, without the film themselves” (Pike and Edmondson 1982, 22).

Conversely, one must consider that Australian silent films have survived in very limited numbers, making it impossible to produce a complete corpus of scenes from this period. When looking at the first thirty-five years of film production in Melbourne (1896-1930), the researcher is faced with the loss of most film production. Close to 90% of the actuality films, and 80% of the feature films, have disappeared (Pike and Edmondson 1982, 9). The impossibility of accessing most of the films of that period is a fact that leaves little space for broad hypothesis. Each shot analysis of the early period should, therefore, be considered mostly within its own context of production. The aim, pursued in this study, to explore connections, narrative and patterns in shot design and composition of cinematic representations of the Melbourne streets and cityscapes, should be considered as the construction of a hypothesis. The loss of most of the silent films is a factual reality that can be only partially compensated for by comparing the limited available footage to more comprehensive resources such as newspaper accounts and still images.

Researchers have maintained that cinema and early cinema in particular “cannot be comprehensively studied merely by studying films, and that in order adequately to address the social and cultural history of cinema, we must find ways to write the histories of its audiences” (Stokes and Maltby 2014, 1). On the other hand, the films and footage of Melbourne that do survive allow us to

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6 An analysis of the available fragments and lost films showing early fictional urban views of Melbourne will be provided in Chapter 6, in the section dedicated to Stanley Kramer and On the Beach.

7 Distinctive Sydney locations are notable at least in The Enemy Within (Stavely 1918), The Sentimental Bloke (Longford 1919), On Our Selection (Longford 1920), For the Term of His Natural Life (Dawn 1927), The Kid Stakes (Ordell 1927).
view the fragmented details of a visual story. And it is that visual fragmentation that pushes us to find an alternative logic. As Didi-Huberman has written, regarding Aby Warburg’s surviving images⁸, “it is the flaw in consciousness, the fault in logic, the lack of sense in the argumentation that opens a breach, the breach of survival, in the currency of historical facts” (Didi-Huberman 2002, 66). I believe images, particularly footage showing the compositional relationship of people and streets, have the capacity to question the viewer about the inner logic of their composition. When properly contextualised images and cinematic scenes, even with no apparent artistic value, can tell a story of the city as it was seen and perceived in the past. These documents of past viewpoints of the city challenge our present perception of the city and our interpretation of earlier representations. The sense of this investigation, seeking questions more than answers, lies in the suspended gap between images and sequences that cannot be fully resolved, but which intriguingly interrogate us from the past.

Films about people and the streets of Melbourne are analysed by looking at the formal structure of their images. I am interested in studying how human figures and urban spaces are composed, set in motion, and drawn into a common perspective. The material was examined in the chronological context of the history of urban cinema and the context of the urban history of Melbourne, to identify the relationship between local and foreign cinematic influences. This work has permitted an initial ordering of the corpus based on formal features: visibility of the street space, position and movement of the camera, framing and planning of the scene. By comparing these features with the subject of the film it has been possible to group the films in key descriptive subgenres: from centripetal (inner city) to centrifugal (suburban) film; from local to foreign promotional aims and circulation; and from theatrical and more specific representations to less specific and neutral portraits of the city space.

Once analysed in their formal aspects, these films have been set into a chronological perspective to better evaluate and compare their variations and similarities in staging cityscapes. This comparative analysis has led to the need to verify the findings within a broader and more consistent spectrum of representations of Melbourne. The research has therefore been structured into two main temporal sections (from 1896 to the 1920s, and from the 1930s to the mid 1960s). A preliminary section on the

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⁸ Aby Warburg (1866-1929) initiated modern iconographic studies by collecting a vast quantity of books and photographic images of artworks in the private Kulturwissenschaftliche Bibliothek Warburg. In 1924 Warburg attempted to create a Mnemosyne Atlas, a study of how certain images of great symbolic power ‘survive’ in history. “Warburg was interested in the vestiges of classical antiquity, vestiges which were in no way reducible to the existence of material objects, but could equally live on in forms, styles, behaviours, the psyche.” (Didi-Huberman 2002, 64) Warburg has defined this property as the nachleben der Antike, the survival of antique cultures through images. Such mnemonic presence is both plastic and psychic, transmitting an imagining substance and psychic powers. “For Warburg, the surviving form does not triumphantly outlive the death of its competitors. On the contrary, it symptomatically and phantastically survives its own death: disappearing from a point in history, reappearing much later at a moment when it is perhaps no longer expected, and consequently having survived in the still poorly defined reaches of a ‘collective memory’” (Didi-Huberman 2002, 68). See also Didi-Huberman 2016 [2002].
The pre-cinematic representation of Melbourne has been added to frame the early period of cinema in Melbourne within a more structured context of data. The extension of the chronological perspective has allowed a clearer view of the dialectical opposition between ‘foreign and local’ points of view in the representation of Melbourne.

At the core of the analysis is the study of single film shots introducing the city’s public spaces and people on film. The analysis will proceed by describing firstly its formal characteristics while, at the same time, contextualising the cinematic images through examples of similar local and foreign filmmaking genres, as well as other available pictorial representations of the same subject. This will lead to an exploration of the relationship between the style of the representation and the history of the represented space in a given image and site. The aim is to verify whether the shot ‘makes place’ in the sense of respecting the specificity of the original historical and symbolic characteristics of the urban space.

In carrying out my analysis I have referred to the first two stages of the three-part triadic iconographic method theorised by Erwin Panofsky in the introduction to *Studies on Iconology* (1962 [1939], 14-15). These are the ‘pre-iconographic description of motifs’ concerning the history of styles, and ‘the iconographic analysis concerning the categorisation of images, stories and allegories according to types or genres’ (Panofsky 1962, 14-15). This division in stages between form and meaning has been criticised by Gombrich⁹, even though, as Panofsky noted, the ‘parts’ of the iconographic analysis are not separated in real-life analysis but are applied together, merging “with each other into one organic and indivisible process” (17).

Firstly, I will review the local literature on the representation of Melbourne in film and then define the theoretical framework of my research.

### 1.2. Literature on Melbourne in Film

Critical interest in the representation of Melbourne is populated by articles and opinions but lacks a major systematic investigation of representations of the city in film. In recent years a collection of film notes on Melbourne films was published in a volume of the series ‘World Film Locations’ (Mitchell 2012), featuring an introduction by Danks (2012). Otherwise, most of the literature has looked at trends characterising the representation of Melbourne in post-1960s feature films (Dermody and Jacka 1897 and 1988; McFarlane 1987; Tsiolkas 1997; Lucas 1999).

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⁹ Panofsky’s method was criticised by Gombrich for its accent on separating ‘meaning’ from the stylistic element, sustaining that “the perception of form cannot be separated from the perception of meaning” (Woodfield 2008, 155).
The present study intends to partly fill this large gap through the analysis of a representative selection of films, looking particularly at the early and less studied years from the 1890s to the 1950s. The texts on early Melbourne urban cinema have mostly focussed on feature films, even though fictional films represent less than the one fifth of the overall cinematic production of this early period (Long 1999, 109). Given the paucity of surviving films and lack of surviving urban scenes, there has been a lack of critical analysis of representations of urban space in these years. Jacobsen (2006) has provided a list of the extant early fiction films and a somewhat incomplete reference to early non-fiction films.

Melbourne features prominently in the histories of Australian cinema as the setting for several seminal cinematic events. Melbourne is the city where the first film was screened in August 1896, it is also the city where Australia’s first films were shot in November 1896, and the place where Australia’s first film studio, the Salvation Army’s Limelight Department, was based (Laughren 1995, 14; Long 1993c, 34; Long 1993e, 38). Yet none of these histories has shown an interest in the representation of the city, nor in its urban space. The studies on early films made in Melbourne have focused on specific titles, usually analysed in isolation from their international context of production and distribution. I will first review the available critical literature on the silent films under analysis, to show how the study contributes to their better knowledge by providing a wider context of analysis and stronger focus on the forms of representation of urban space.

Early news films of or about Melbourne have yet to be the subject of a specific comprehensive study. Films made in/representing Melbourne have occasionally been mentioned in broader histories of Australian cinema, such as Shirley and Adams (1989, 36), and have an important place in Chris Long’s seminal articles on early cinema, mostly regarding Melbourne films and filmmakers (Long 1993c, 1993d, 1993e, 1994a, 1994b, 1994c and 1994d). But as Jacobsen (2006, 59) has observed, the presence of images of the city in the surviving footage of the 1920s and 1930s, and the production of newsreels, remains a chapter of Melbourne’s cinematic history still to be written. The Lumière Melbourne Cup films have been addressed mostly in terms of film historiography (Long 1993c and 1993d), or in relation to issues of social representation (Jackson 2015), and not yet in terms of their representation of space. The same can be said for the surviving films of the Salvation Army Limelight Department. Long has written an important contribution on the Limelight Department (Long 1993e, 1994a, Long 1994b) but has shown less interest in formal aspects of the films. The lost film Moving Melbourne (Tait 1906) was only briefly noted by Eric Reade in his book Australian Silent Films, 1904-1907 (Reade 1983, 87), but he did not investigate the central relationship of the film with the city space that I have retraced in printed commentaries from the same time, which are quite specific about the locations and the type of shooting involved. MacDougall has provided anthropological

10 “More than 80 per cent of Australia’s silent footage was devoted to non-fiction subjects: documentaries, actualities, newsreels and advertisements” (Long 1999, 109).
insight into the largely forgotten and unexplored *Living Hawthorn* (1906) (MacDougall 2006, 98-99). He has also considered some of the formal aspects of its images, such as the capacity of the film to ‘look back’ at the viewer through its subjects, with what he called an ‘unprivileged camera style’¹¹ revealing the gaze of the camera on the people being filmed (MacDougall 1982, 8).

One of the first Melbourne travelogues, *Marvellous Melbourne, Queen City of the South*, only recently received sustained critical attention when Stephen Gaunson examined aspects of its production and the social representation of the people portrayed in this significant film (Gaunson 2011 and 2014). Finally, *A Thriving and Prosperous Suburb. Bird’s Eye View of Footscray* (Pathé), and *Melbourne Today*, analysed here, are almost completely lacking in critical commentary, aside from the curatorial notes by Poppy de Souza on the Australian Screen website¹².

The second period, from the 1940s to the mid 1960s, presents more accessible films and contextual data. Studies such as Albert Moran’s *Projecting Australia*, which analyses Australian government films made since 1945, provides a landscape of the overall production, and also examines the representation of the Australian city, even if does not address any specific city. Moran notes an increase in the representation of urban settings in government films after the mid 1960s (Moran 1991, 148). The period and the films have attracted a stronger critical interest, even though the discussion has been mostly limited to historical and social issues in relation to specific films, and has rarely included comparative compositional analysis. The principal studies on the representation of Melbourne in film focus on the central decade of the 1950s, when a shift occurred in production and styles of representation. The main references for this study are Graeme Davison’s two essays on the representation of Melbourne—in art: “The Picture of Melbourne 1835-1985” (Davison 1998), and “Images of Modern Melbourne, Self-Imaging in Photography, Journalism and Film, 1945-1970” (Davison 1995); Adrian Danks’ essay “Don’t Rain on Ava Gardner Parade” (Danks 1999) about *On the Beach* and the ‘foreign’ representations of Melbourne in film in the 1950s; and Lennart Jacobsen’s dissertation *High-Rise Architecture in Melbourne Film from 1955 to 1985* (Jacobsen 2006), introduced with a partial review of earlier representations of Melbourne.

These critical writings have placed films of Melbourne within a broader pattern of representation and understanding of the city. They have looked at cinema as something both specific and symptomatic. What emerges from their analysis is the view that films of/about Melbourne offer a complex and, at times, contradictory case within the broader representation of its city image. The city seems to escape an essential identity, preferring to blend with other foreign, more established urban images (Davison 1998, 145; Danks 1999, 174). These studies have noted a series of repeating traits in

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¹¹ MacDougall defines the “unprivileged camera style” as “a style based on the assumption that the appearance of a film should be an artefact of the social and physical encounter between the film-maker and the subject” (1982, 9).

cinematic images of the city, leading to a lack of prominence given to Melbourne’s visual identity, and the resilience of its elusive character (Davison 1986, 25).

One of the main characteristics of images of Melbourne, according to the literature, is their shared identity with other cities. Juliana Engberg has noted how Melbourne tends to double with other cities, thus suggesting its own ambivalent identity, romanticised in such designations as “the Paris end, the New York end, the Italian end”. In imagining the city in terms of pictures and photographs or films, Engberg sees a perpetuation of these claims with “a touching replication of sights seen elsewhere. The skyscraper. The neon lights. The urban dweller. The bridge. These icons of the generic city are duplicated along a time-line of dreams and displacements” (Engberg 1992, 9).

Davison has noted a similar trend in relation to Melbourne’s representation in film and photography, remarking that often the city is defined in parallel with or against other cities – and not only Sydney, its natural ‘rival’. British people have compared Melbourne’s Victorian architecture to Manchester, Americans have seen it as the Boston of the South (there are even films set in Boston and New York that have been shot in Melbourne). Melbournian architect Robin Boyd, notes Davison, sketched out a more flattering city-to-city analogy, comparing Melbourne’s Edinburgh to Sydney’s Glasgow, and Melbourne’s Bath to Sydney’s Bristol (Davison 1998, 150). This scarcity of specific features and the concomitant sense of ubiquity facilitate the perception of a sense of ‘anywhere’ in the filmed city images, so much so that the city can became a relatively neutral screen canvas easily transformed into a cinematic ‘anywhere’.

Davison particularly identifies the neutrality of images in promotional films from the 1940s and 1950s. They appear as uneventful, repetitive, often fading-out un-remarkably (Davison 1998, 145). Even in those non-fiction films made in Melbourne where the city cannot escape being the main character, the urban images do seem to have a low level of iconicity, less than other important cities. These promotional Melbourne images seem to lack a sense of spectacle, a staging specificity that would make them memorable to the spectator (Davison 1998, 146), although Davison does not investigate how and where this phenomenon takes place.

13 Knowing (2009), a US production, was filmed at Melbourne’s Docklands Studios. It contains scenes shot in Melbourne’s CBD and set in New York, and scenes shot in Melbourne’s inner suburbs and set in Boston. The view that in Knowing Melbourne stands for Boston as “a consequence of globalization in international filmmaking” (Brandum 2012, 105) is only part of the story, and does not acknowledge the role of Film Victoria in selling the city to international film productions (Jungwirt and Wallis 2006, 68-70). Since 1985, the Boston-Melbourne relationship has been cemented in a sister city agreement. See http://www.melbourne-boston.org/ (accessed 10.11.2012).

In his essay, Danks noted a similar sense of absence. He remarked on the stability, consistency and continuity of a certain ‘insipid’ image of Melbourne, playing on generic international claims as “the world’s most liveable city”, “one of the most filmable cities”, “a great place to do show business”. Without going into a formal analysis, Danks writes of a cinematic Melbourne defusing ambitions of place-representativeness, self-place-identity and place-branding, and resisting the representation of recognisable iconic features. The characteristics of an apparently neutral urban identity are mirrored locally by a cinematic city-space “often iconically and representationally heterogeneous, temporally and spatially indistinct” (Danks 1999, 174). These heterogeneous characteristics can be interpreted negatively as a lack of specificity, or as a derivativeness wishing “to be something other than it actually is”. Or, more positively, as the ubiquitous product of a “specificity residing in the extraordinary combination of less than distinct elements.” (Danks 1999, 176).

This trend continued in the 1990s when the Melbourne Film Office “championed Melbourne’s chameleon-like capacities” (Danks 1999, 176). The film Office promoted Melbourne internationally as a shooting destination for “its easiness and hospitality, and highlighted its ability to ‘transform itself in virtually any city in the world’ thus promoting Melbourne for the foreign film market as a “varied, flexible and heterogeneous package” (Danks 1999, 176). The trans-geographical low specificity is promoted in Melbourne by the Docklands Studio, by the Melbourne Film Office and by Film Victoria. This pan-urban picture is welcomed as much by international filmmaking as by film marketing (O’Regan 1996, 266). Deb Verhoeven noted “that Melbourne’s various studios have almost always been called on to create the impression of times and places other than contemporary Melbourne” (Verhoeven 2012, 26). The Victorian Government site FilmMelbourneNow.com also has a list of locations accompanied by texts advertising the attractive visual multiplicity of its urban areas: “Melbourne’s ultra-modern architecture and towering skyscrapers allow it to replicate large North American cities such as New York City and Chicago”15. Virginia Trioli summarised these perspectives by ironically noting that in Melbourne, the city “is anything you wanted to be, anywhere you wanted to be, anywhere but here” (Trioli 1992, 69). More recently the geographical anonymity of specific examples of modernist Melbournian architecture (DCM’s “Melbourne Museum”) has been reproduced in film advertising to sell products for the American or Asian market. Commercial estimates suggest that “ninety per cent of all commercials shot in Melbourne are for the international market and are never seen on Australian television. Nearly all of these use Melbourne and its architecture anonymously.” (Jungwirth and Wallis 2006, 70).

Other texts dealing with Melbourne’s representation interpret the lack of strong local features as a puzzling and negative aspect of the city. Jacobsen, for instance, reads ‘the absence of a defined picture’, in the period under analysis, as a sign of an incomplete development and lack of ‘visual personality’. He sees this lack of definition as the “conscious reluctance to engage with the visuality of

the changing city, as if in imagining the city in visual terms Melbourne’s shortcomings were made all the more obvious and poignant” (59). For Jacobsen, this absence of icons is a symptom of an actual lack of visual development in the pro-filmic period, but is also a trait characterising its difference:

*In its topography and surrounding views Melbourne was no Sydney. Dramatically it was no Berlin. Romantically it was no Paris. Historically it was no Rome. Kinetically it was no New York. By the 1950s, Melbourne had so few cinematic pictures of itself to reflect upon, so little experience of seeing a familiar celluloid landscape, that the absence of a defined picture of the city was almost a trait that, paradoxically, made Melbourne identifiable. (Jacobsen 2006, 59)*

Danks suggests this absence can also be also seen as a positive attribute. The hybridity and the greyness of images of Melbourne, apparently without character, may be the very features (“extraordinary combination of less than distinctive elements”) that provide the city with a paradoxically distinctive sense of place (Danks 1999, 176).

The question then is what cinematic sense of place makes Melbourne ‘distinctive’, and how does such a combination produce a ubiquitous or positive specificity? My hypothesis is that Melbourne’s cinematic identity of place may have a dual combined identity; local and foreign. It is ubiquitous when looked at within an ‘international perspective’, when dealing with an ‘internationalist aspiration’ (Danks 1999, 176) or when ‘involving the city with the world’ (Fox 1996, 46). But the same city-images may become distinctive when looked at within the local urban context. Neither the local nor the international perspective can, alone, make sense of this dual cinematic city-image. A joint perspective is required to keep account of the ‘contact zone’16 of this hybrid duality.

The ‘international perspective’ is localised in those films and cinematic views produced for an international distribution. Cinematic identities of place are able to combine the ‘somewhere’ with the ‘anywhere’, when expressing ‘cosmopolitan and metropolitan pretensions’ (Danks 1999, 174). McAuliffe has pointed out the sense of international belonging implied in the perception of a ‘suburban anywhere’; “it was not that suburbs made all Australians the same, they made all Australians the same as everyone else in the Western industrial world” (McAuliffe 1996, 73). Moreover, Danks, quoting Paul Fox (1992, 47), connects the ubiquity and the heterogeneity of these views with the history of Melbourne and its representation, as it presupposes a continuity between past and present:

*A mode of ‘being’ that may have its roots in the internationalist aspirations and economic ‘miracle’ of nineteenth century Melbourne: “By 1880 Melbourne measured

16 Similar ambivalences in the rendering of modernity seem to be shared by postcolonial cinematic urbanism: For Bill Ashcroft “The Bombay film industry is just one example of the adaptation and transformation by which alternative modernity come into being. Such transformations of modernity occur in the contact zone between local and global, and no space better frames this zone than the postcolonial city. In this complex relation between nationalism, fundamentalism and cosmopolitanism we find a clue to the emerging identity of contemporary modernity itself” (Ashcroft 2011, 508).
its success by being like somewhere else, be it San Francisco, London or Paris, and by
acquiring artefacts which allowed it a vicarious and peripatetic involvement with the
world”. These qualities suggest the textual, cultural and spatial variety of Melbourne,
as well as the difficulty of pinpointing aspects which are identifiable as local. (Danks
1999, 176)

But despite the wider coverage of Melbourne in films made in the 1940s and 1950s, much
remains to be studied, particularly in terms of the actual staging of the city space on screen. Some of
the promotional travelogues of the city have been critically reviewed. Davison provides an interesting
reading of the ‘international’ retelling of Melbourne’s history aimed at the British and American
public in Place for a Village (Allan 1948) (the film’s “rather schizoid character may derive, in part,
from the desire to meet the expectations of these two different audiences”) (Davison 1998, 148).
Hannah Lewi has recently written on the relation between Australian and British planning films
produced from the 1930s through the 1950s (Lewi 2013), and her work is relevant here for its views
on Planning for Melbourne’s Future (Thompson 1954). Deane Williams has dedicated a chapter of his
book on Australian documentary to the Melbourne Realist Film Unit, denouncing local housing
conditions with the support of the Brotherhood of St. Laurence (in films such as Beautiful Melbourne
[1947] A Place to Live [1950]). David Nichols (2011) has published a good introduction to Your
House and Mine (McIntyre and Boyd 1954). Jacobsen (2006, 67-68) has pointed to the influence of
Giorgio Mangiamele on 1960s filmmakers such as Nigel Buesst (Fun Radio!, 1964) and Brian Davies
(The Pudding Thieves, 1967), and I would add Tom Cowan (Nimmo St, 1962). Other recent critical
writing on Mangiamele (Tuccio 2010; Moliterno 2010; Moliterno 2011; Moliterno and Rando 2011;)
has mostly skirted a discussion of the Italo-Australian filmmaker’s images of Melbourne and the
suburb of Carlton. Finally, Jacobsen has been one of the few critical voices to deal with the films of
Gil Brealey, covering both the 1950s and the 1960s. In re-evaluating these films and their authors in
relation to Melbourne I will focus particularly on the construction of the city images in each film and
in its reference to staging people, urban space and genres, mostly absent in the previous analysis.

1.3. Framework

This analysis is informed by two interrelated framing ideas. First that the representation of urban space
in film can be measured by its ‘theatricality’ or the adoption of conventional ‘visual cues’ employed to
modify, improve and, eventually, iconise characters and space. The more a spatial representation is
coded and strictly obeys and follows conventions, the more it is defined here as ‘theatrical’. Popular
conventions, views, or ‘camera genres’ in city representation include the diagonal street view,
perpendicular views, bird’s eye views, phantom rides, panoramic views, postcard-views, etc.
‘Theatricality’ can be achieved through the contrasting ‘effects’ of light and dark, perspective cues,
axial positioning, use of figures in space, variation of lenses, camera motion, etc. And the
establishment of a theatrical setting most often leads to an iconic system of representation.
Photographic and cinematic icons are most often simple and powerful images centring their subjects (human figures or buildings) in the middle of the frame balanced by a theatrical composition. The second framing idea is that the selection of a specific ‘genre’ in the representation of urban space establishes a specific cinematic ‘fact’, and produces a particular identity of place. These ‘cinematic urban places’ can be related to key vantage points in the urban history of Melbourne through foreign and local modes of representation.

1.3.1. Theatricality, Mise-en-scène and Modes of Representation

The representation of space in film involves the re-coding (mise-en-scène) of the tridimensional urban space through a set of representational ‘aspects’ or ‘forms’ that have the perceptual effect of modifying the ‘impression’ of reality in the rendering of that space. As has been widely made known, the perception of depth, size and movement of space can be ‘modified’ or ‘improved’ through the use of perceptual cues that can ‘trick’ the eye into seeing ‘more’ or ‘less’. The use of a darker or a lighter colour can expand or compress space; the positioning of two objects in the foreground and background can improve the perception of depth; the presence of a human figure helps provide a sense of proportion within a given space; the alignment of the camera with the axis of a building improves its sense of stability; and so on. These are just some of the many coded elements guiding the eye in the perception of space. In film they come together to create specific spatial ‘effects’ or ‘spatial experiences’, mostly in relation to the human character, which I define in terms of the cinematic mise-en-scène of the urban space. This mise-en-scène is composed of a filmed iconography of ‘shots’ like the city view, the urban portrait of human characters, the crowded scene, the streetscape, the panoramic view, the forward tracking shot or the ‘phantom ride’. These shots are then combined in various ways to produce a repeating typology of sequences, defining ‘genres’ such as the travelogue, the news film, the actuality, or the city film. What matters here is not the establishment or classification of genres but the relations between repeating patterns in the representation of urban space. For instance, the capacity for a new building to create a new viewpoint and a new streetscape within the cinematic space.

Theatricality is an expression of the mise-en-scène. It borrows from the theatre the sense of formalised staging, and I use the term also to draw a distinction between a less coded, informal or performative representation of space. Carlson associates the term theatricality “primarily with formal, traditional and formally structured operations, potentially or actually opposed to the unrestricted and more authentic impulses of life itself” (Carlson 2002, 242-243).

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17 An example can be found in the opening shots of Marvellous Melbourne and Melbourne Today (cfr Chapter 5).

18 For a discussion of the concept of ‘theatricality’ as opposed to ‘performance’, see Carlson (2002, 238).
Why do ‘theatricality and ‘iconicity’ matter in the analysis of the iconography of cinematic mise-en-scène? A reason is because they allow an initial pre-classification of the type of formal solutions employed without requiring preliminary information about the context of the production of the image that can be then verified at the moment of the analysis. In the uncertain textuality of the early cinematic representation of Melbourne, caused by the lack of availability of many of the films, common formal structures can only be loosely hypothesised. These hypotheses are then verified by the analysis of the ‘theatricality’ of the mise-en-scène which may confirm local or foreign influences, marketing strategies and targeted audiences.

The opposition between a theatrical and a non-theatrical rendering of reality is further used in connection with the distinction between a specific and less-specific identity of place. In theory, a theatrical representation aims at being iconic, memorable and communicating a clear and specific identity, within a balanced composition. Conversely a non-theatrical representation should avoid iconicity, and, at times, specificity.

The opposition theatrical/non-theatrical, made in reference to the realistic rendering of urban life in film has been amply discussed in cinema studies and has been theorised in different ways by Bazin (1967, 1971), Heath (1976), Burch (1990), Aumont (1995) and Dimendberg (2004). Within the formalised process of filmmaking, the adoption of a ‘formal’ or an ‘informal’ mise-en-scène manifests often in a conscious choice. It usually translates in the opposition between a detached theatrical naturalism and an experiential anti-theatrical realism, corresponding to the Bazinian distinction between ‘pseudo-realism’ and ‘true realism’ (Bazin 1967, 12).

The coding of space in cinema has been often discussed, but rarely in terms of urban spaces. Stephen Heath (1976) (after Francastel [1970]), in theorising a ‘narrative space’ has underlined that the cinematographic camera reads space by adopting the theatrical framing inherited from the Quattrocento spatial system. The camera reproduces the centripetal, centralised, closed view subjected to the rule of monocular perspective positing a central spectator in front of a window, watching a world aimed explicitly towards the viewer.

…the stress, in other words, is on the camera as machine for the reproduction of objects (of solids) in the form of images realised according to the laws of the rectilinear propagation of light rays, which laws constitute the perspective effect. (Heath 1976, 76).

On the other hand, the formal ‘rapture’ of the spatial cues that enhance perspectival effect, can produce an informal, anti-spectacular, and therefore, ultimately, more ‘real’ experience of reality. The long shot, the decentring of space, the lack of formal ‘closure’, the unbalanced positioning of the spectator are all anti-theatrical perceptual markers of a different “impression of realism” that may
appear to be more ‘spontaneous’\textsuperscript{19}. This type of subtle mise-en-scène is opposed, by Bazin, to editing. Eisenstein distinguished between mise-en-scène (action direction), mise-en-cadre (frame composition), montage (editing) and staging in depth (the movement of the actors within a single shot) (Bordwell 2005, 17). Bordwell himself associates the term ‘mise-en-scene’ mostly with cinematic staging which is aimed at “creating significance and emotion chiefly by means of what happens within each shot” (Bordwell 2005, 11). As mentioned, in this research I will be using the term mise-en-scène more broadly to highlight all the techniques used to orchestrate people and urban space within a scene.

Bazin has theorised that in film the ‘impression of reality’ can be differently perceived, when watching a staged naturalistic representation of space that ‘looks’ real, or when experiencing a staged reality effect that ‘feels’ real. In this case the use of staging practices, such as the ‘long take’ can create an ‘excess of reality’ (Bazin 1967, 33)\textsuperscript{20}. This centripetal system is retraceable in Melbourne’s phantom rides, in the Hales’s Tours, and in most of the Lumière cinema’s staging of urban space. In these films the space is created specifically for the spectator. This notion will be further explored in combination with travelling or panoramic shots in films about Melbourne, such as Moving Melbourne or Marvellous Melbourne, Queen City of the South.

A third significant aspect of the cinema of Melbourne is the ‘postcard effect’, or what Davison has called the use of ‘stock urban images’ (Davison 1998, 146). This phenomenon concerns the ‘normalisation’ of a view through repetition of similar theatrical patterns. The same type of shot, carrying the same rhetorical meaning, through iteration on various promotional films, achieved often, thanks to its ‘dullness’, something close to an ‘insensibility to perception’. These types of shots were frequently employed, for example, in many of Melbourne’s travelogues and promotional films, following a predictable formula in government-related film production (Moran 1991, 139).

In this thesis, which examines a predominance of non-fiction films, the distinction I am trying to draw between a theatrical and a less formalised mise-en-scène is subtler than in fiction feature films. The employment of a formulaic mise-en-scène is a type of camouflage performed to conform to dominant discourse and help gain access to an international and local audience. The use of popular film genres within a colonial context has the double effect of maximising the conformity to a shared dominant discourse and of understating cultural differences. The full adoption of the dominant mode of mise-en-scène of a genre produces an ambivalence by creating a copy which is “almost the same but not quite” as the original (Bhabha 1984, 125). The shot of the train arriving at Flemington Station

\textsuperscript{19} As Carlson observes, ‘performing’ rather than ‘performance’ should oppose ‘theatrical’ as ‘true performance’, “should involve the conscious display of skills” (Carlson 2002, 245) and is therefore subject to theatricality.

\textsuperscript{20} “It is quite evident that the one-shot sequence used by Welles in The Magnificent Ambersons are in no sense the purely passive recording of an action shot within the same framing. On the contrary, his refusal to break up the action, to analyse the dramatic field in time, is a positive action the results of which are far superior to anything that could be achieved by the classical “cut”” (Bazin 1968, 34).
taken by Sestier in 1896 is, in its own way, a variation upon the original produced by his employer, the Lumière Company. The train arrival filmed at Richmond Station in 1910 for *Marvellous Melbourne, Queen City of the South* adopts most of the characteristics of the original’s mise-en-scène, but is performed with a number of significant ‘excesses’: there are three trains instead of one, the point of view is located on top of a bridge, and the scene’s duration is longer. The difference between this and the dominant model, that “almost the same but not quite” produces a gap between the original and the copy which leaves space for a critical response performed through excess or by subtraction. The representations of the urban space of Melbourne on screen take on different aspects and forms, from the ‘phantom ride’ to the disappearance of the human figure, to the absence of the same urban space. All these aspects react to a dominant model, none are indifferent to it.

1.3.2. The production of a cinematic identity of place

This thesis is informed by the notion that when cinema and photography reproduce the city’s urban spaces they create a ‘cinematic’ place. In writing about the city, urban “imagery is commonly used in a more or less straightforward manner to identify and explain buildings, re-creating them on the screen” (Borden 2007, 59). In reality the simplest technical and aesthetic act of framing an actual spatial reality constitutes the declaration of a choice, necessarily modifying the urban space, and creating a cinematic place. For Rhodes and Gorfinkle films ‘take place’ by selecting a space and turning it into place (whatever one thinks of a real place, a mystical location, a backdrop or the construction of stage settings in a studio)22. When the spectator recognises a cinematic location, a place, that location, that urban space, is always ‘filmed’, manipulated. It is reconstructed or rearranged to capture the spectator’s attention and produce a place to be shared in a film. Therefore, cinematic identity is constructed in and through place, whether by our embrace of a place, our inhabitation of a particular point in space, or by our rejection of and departure from a given place, and our movement towards, adoption and inhabitation of, another. (Rhodes and Gorfinkle 2011, ix).

As a result, the virtual production of space through film creates a specific cinematic place, reframing the actual civic space that was itself already ‘produced’23 before being further interpreted by cinema. This reframing produces an added meaning connected to the idea of place. The idea of cinematic place as a significant filmed space is a commonly shared idea. As Brunsdon writes; “the notion of place as ‘meaningful’ is the principal way in which it is distinguished by space in much discussion” (Brunsdon 2010, 95).

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22 The other way in which film can ‘take place’, write Rhodes and Gorfinkle, is through the study of the location in which the film is screened.

Marc Augé’s anthropological interpretation of ‘place’ (1995) provides a more articulated reading of the meaning attributed to cinematic place. Augé distinguishes three common characteristics of lived places as “places of identity, of relations and of history” (Augé 1995, 43). A place is identified by its making, exists in a relation of coexistence with others, and acquires meaning through its relation with time. For the people living in it an anthropological space is historical “to the precise extent that it escapes history as a science” (Augé 1995, 44). This is a distinction that pertains also to cinematic places, for they produce identity through time in relation to images. Cinematic places are able to capture the historical reorganisation of spatial relations present in city spaces.

The notion that cinema creates ‘place’ through the reorganisation of space is consonant with Shiel’s plea for film’s spatial identity:

> cinema is a peculiar spatial form of culture, of course, because (of all cultures) cinema operates and is understood in terms of the organisation of space: both space in film – the space of the shot; the space of the narrative setting; the geographical relationship of various settings in sequence in a film; the mapping of a lived environment on film; and films in space – the shaping of lived urban space by cinema as a cultural practice; the spatial organisation of its industry at the levels of production, distribution, and exhibition. (Shiel 2001, 5-6).

For Rhodes and Gorfinkle urban spaces and cinematic places “share an intriguing and morphologically consonant doubleness” (2011, ix). Each of them has produced an image and is perceived as, at the same time, transparent and opaque, organic and constructed, real and hyper-real. Spaces and cinematic places are the result of a codification. The shift to cinematic place involves coding (a ‘genre’) of urban space through the employment of a number of film practices, from framing to editing. It can be said that cinematic place is a space practiced by film, as the cinematic formalisation of urban space is able to produce a new identity of place by re-arranging the condition of perception of the lived urban space.

Adapting Massey’s theory of the relational identity of place to Melbourne’s ambivalent (local and foreign) sense of identity, it is possible to suggest that:

> the very formation of the [visual] identity of place – its social structure, its political character, its ‘local’ culture – is also a product of interactions. The ‘character of an area’ is no more the product of an internalised history than are the recent fortunes of its manufacturing industry. The global is the local in the very process of formation of the local (Massey 1995, 120).

In this sense, the shaping of Melbourne’s cinematic city-images, within a cosmopolitan network of cinematic city-images, is linked indissolubly in its representation to both local and foreign identities. This has occurred to the point that one identity cannot be defined without the other. This has shaped and affected the city’s character in a visual nexus where local and cosmopolitan city images have been experienced, and remembered, alongside the formation of the city. It is useful here to mention Massey’s characteristics of the wider identity of place, which, following Magee and Thompson (2010), concern the shaping of a mediated colonial identity. For Massey places can be identified through types of social relations, these relations should be read as ‘changing processes’ or, better, in
terms of the idea that “places are processes”. Cinematic places should be without defined boundaries; therefore local and foreign appear as two sides of the same identity. Nor should identities be regarded as singular, but instead composed of plural, even conflicting, identities. Finally, the specificity of the ‘cinematic’ place is not denied but reaffirmed through its ‘relational character’, rather than from an ‘internalised history’ (Massey 1994, 155). This definition of identity of place based on a relational process seems to fit Melbourne’s ambivalent system of representation.

### 1.3.2.1 Local and international cinematic identities

The basis of Melbourne’s photo-cinematic urban identity of place was set in the nineteenth century with the invention and diffusion of photography and cinematic media and the commercial network created by British colonialism. Melbourne was an important city in this context, being the second largest of the British Empire, and new technologies were quick to reach the city. The daguerreotype arrived in 1841 (Ennis 2007, 13), the Kinetoscope in 1894 (Shirley and Adams 1989, 3), the Cinématographe in 1896. As Batchen has remarked:

> It was the moment that in Europe first induced a general desire to photograph and ultimately led to the invention of a marketable photographic process in 1839. In this sense one might say that Australia is one of the few national entities that has been from its outset framed by a photo-sopic episteme. (Batchen 2001, 29)

The formation of Melbourne’s photo-cinematic identity within such a ‘photo-sopic episteme’ is, possibly, one of its distinctive traits. Melbourne was one of the greatest colonial cities, its growth after the Gold Rush was prodigious, and the city seemed to rival other truly great international cities. Melbourne’s emerging photo-cinematic identity was influenced by the international image of the great modern city, partly composed of photos of New York, London, Paris, Chicago and San Francisco. Compared to these cities, the images of Melbourne were less known and less iconic. The Victorian capital has remained one of the least seen and visually memorised of the great cities, and this is a trait that it shares with Canadian cities such as Toronto or Vancouver, but not with the more iconic Sydney. If, as Sassen maintains, cities find their identity in the international network that links them together, Melbourne seems to belong to a non-iconic network of such metropolises.

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24 As Gunning has noted, “experience of this newly accessible globe could become a commodity in numerous and novel forms, such as worldwide tourism, packaged by the Cooks Travel Agency, or the widely popular travel writings and lectures, revolutionised by photography, and the possibility of modern lantern projections, and eventually motion pictures.” (Gunning 2008, 12)

25 It is possible to adapt to the major ex-colonial cities of the former British Empire that sense of a shared international urban identity that Shiel (after Sassen) has observed in global cities: “the relationship between cities (and cities alone) corroborates the view held by large numbers of social commentators today that the city - more so than the “nation”, perhaps less so than the “transnational corporations” - is the fundamental unit of the new global system which has emerged since the 1960s, of which the mobility of capital and information is the most celebrated feature. […] a network of semi-autonomous cities and megacities, many of which (as Sassen said they would) relate primarily to other cities in the network rather than to the particular national or regional space in which they are physically located” (Shiel 2001, 6-7).
Although photography did gradually create a network of city images, cinema was an international urban medium from its conception. Gunning has pointed out that early cinema spread so fast that it became cosmopolitan before having the chance to develop a local identity. On the other hand, the control of film production was restricted to a very small number of countries. The international breadth of the films on offer, covering the main centres of power and the main locations of the colonies, transformed cinema into an instrument of cultural hegemony irradiating from the centre to the periphery. Most film catalogues of early cinema (Lumière, Bioscope, Urban) were planned with worldwide ambitions, as films

*followed global pathways opened up by worldwide capitalism, colonialism and imperialism. In its first decade cinema production remained concentrated in the industrial and technologically developed countries of the northern and western hemisphere. Although film exhibition moved quickly across the globe [...] it initially appeared almost exclusively in the metropolitan centres of imperialistic commerce. Certainly the national economies and politics of these dominant nations determine many aspects of early cinema* (Gunning 2008, 11).

When the Lumières declared that they wanted to show the Cinématographe first in the great capitals of Europe and then in the cities of France, they expressed a regime of economic and cultural influence (Gunning 2008, 11). So while the Lumière catalogue was screened both internationally and locally, in France, it was at an international level that it obtained its true identity, success and influence. Each film catalogue (Urban, Edison, etc.) presented a visual summary of the world and each collection worked as an encyclopaedia offering “the world in the form of consumable images” (Gunning 2008, 15). And as the city images were amongst the most popular images, filmed city views became immensely popular commodities. This phenomenon was particularly successful when the metropolitan cities on display were at the centre of the colonial network.

In order to travel to Melbourne, the Lumières used the colonial network of the transportation of goods and people created by the British Empire. The width and depth of the imperial colonial network can be equated to a pre-global structure, possessing many of the characteristics of globalisation (Magee and Thompson 2010, 10). In this sense Ashcroft can also say that the ‘mobility’ of postcolonial cities (such as Melbourne) “is the sign of a large global movement set in motion by colonialism” (Ashcroft 2011, 500). The geographical distance, the gap in subject matter between local culture and international culture within the imperial framework, induced a moving identity, a nomadic oscillation, a circling between local and international urban spaces, thus affecting the nature of the

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26 Deane Williams has detected a similar “nomadic trajectory” in Australian landscape films, which, I think, can be translated to the relational shift between local and international cinematic urban identities. As he writes “what is striking about all these films is that there is a sense that, despite their employment of ‘international’ or ‘global’ styles, there remains a gulf between their use of styles and the specificities or ‘essentials’ of Australian culture; their ‘Australianness’. For some people this has meant that the films look inadequate (meaningless) in local term. It may also mean that the film-makers have imitated overseas films so well that their films exist internationally, making Australia ‘mean’ something to the rest of the world”. (Williams 2008, 144-145)
identity of place in postcolonial cities such as Melbourne, Vancouver or Toronto. Cities were a “particularly intense demonstration of the diasporic movement of populations, microcosm of the global flow of people that intensifies during and after the period of European Colonialism.” (Ashcroft 2011, 497) As Helen Ennis has remarked it is “one inescapable historical reality” that

photography in Australia is not simply a product of the modern era, but it is tied inextricably to the imperialist and colonialist underpinning of modernity. This distinguishes Australian photographic practice from its counterparts in Great Britain and various European countries, aligning in a crucial way with that of other colonized countries such as India, Indonesia and New Zealand instead. (Ennis 2007, 8)

The international aspirations of Melbourne and Sydney to ‘encounter’ other cities were, therefore, part of the very nature of their colonial identity, and this identity needed at that time to be ‘validated’ by the centres of colonial hegemony. Such aspirations are demonstrated by the comments of the people who worked on early films. At the presentation to the press of the first Lumière film (now lost), depicting people disembarking from the Manly Ferry, The Sydney Morning Herald reported Walter Barnett27 as saying

a whole series of Australian scenes were in preparation, and that both at the Paris and London halls M. Lumière would exhibit the pictures, and would thus put Sydney and Melbourne in touch with the great capitals named in a manner which could never have been approached but for the invention of this marvellous machine (Long 1993c, 38).

This clearly shows the international expectations linked to the diffusion of the early films.

Conclusion

This research project is aimed at investigating the visual representation of Melbourne’s urban space in films made between 1895 and 1965; an interval that spans the arrival of cinema in the city to the promotional documentaries of the mid-1960s. The primary goal of this study is to provide an original contribution to the fields of film studies and urban studies by describing and documenting the first sixty-five years of Melbourne city-films not previously analysed in relation to a specific or coherent aesthetic. I will employ an iconographic methodology to move from close analysis of the visual composition to the use of early film genres, such as the travelogue. The analysis will be read in the wider context of the symbolic meanings of the local and international representation of Melbourne. The representation of specific urban spaces (i.e. city centre and suburbs) will be correlated with the mode of representation employed (i.e. theatrical or informal) in order to distinguish recurring patterns

27 Walter Barnett (1863-1934), born in St. Kilda, Melbourne, was a portrait photographer active in Hobart, London and in Sydney, where he opened a photographic studio. Barnett partnered with Marius Sestier in producing the Melbourne Cup and other Australian Lumière films (he directed people in front of the camera). Barnett moved first to London, from 1897 to 1920, where he opened a popular photographic studio, and later retired to France. (De Serville, 1979).
and repetitions. A strategy used to enable such a discussion will be the comparative analysis with other foreign cinematic city images, which stand as key points of reference.

The following chapter will map early examples of the urban representations of Melbourne in fine art and in photography, and will follow the transition to the arrival of cinema, the first screenings of urban films, the presence of Melbourne in the Lumière catalogue and the beginning of a series of “event films”, which concentrate mostly on events and ignore the city.

CHAPTER TWO

Pre-cinematic Representations and the First Films

Les opérateurs formés par Lumière se mirent à parcourir le globe, mettant pour la première fois les hommes et les villes face-à-face, les rapprochant et leur permettant de se voir vivre, de se mieux connaître, de se sentir frères et de confronter leur destin.28 (Langlois, 1986, 30)

This chapter seeks to collect, expose and intertwine sources and evidence surrounding the encounter of Melbourne with the cinematic image. It concerns the early pre-cinematic views of the city, the first urban images screened in Melbourne and the first filmed images of the city. Of these, the Lumière films of the Melbourne Cup Carnival will be granted a special focus. They contain the first cinematic images shot in Melbourne and the first representations of people in public space, even though not fully “urban”29, within the city. Moreover, these films touch on several central aspects of the cinematic representation of the city. They are ‘local representations for a local audience’, they are the first ‘international’ representations of Melbourne outside Australia, and they are, at the same time, ‘foreign’ representations of the city. These films have represented Melbourne in the Lumière catalogue of ‘world views’. They also initiated a local tradition and the practice of screening news films documenting local events.

This chapter begins with a discussion of early representations of Melbourne in painting, drawings and photographs. As André Gaudreault and Philippe Marion have noted “a medium is always born twice...” (2005, 4). They meant that new media have an initial birth when they first appear, mostly concurring with other existing media, and a second birth when they fully realise their

28 The operators trained by Lumière began to travel the globe, setting for the first-time people and cities face-to-face, they drew people closer, allowing them to watch each other living, to know each other better, to feel like brothers and compare their fates.
29 I use the term ‘urban space’ to refer mostly to the public urban space of the city.
potentiality. Cinema in Melbourne came after painting and photography. Films offered a subject matter taken “as a new way of presenting already well-established entertainment ‘genres’: magic and fairy shows, farce, plays and other kinds of stage performances”. The second birth came later, when the medium became autonomous, that is not until “cinema’s practitioners arrived at a reflexive understanding of the medium and until the cinema achieved a certain degree of institutionalization” (Gaudreault and Marion 2005, 4).

Henri Langlois has identified in the Lumières’ cinema the ‘first’ global ‘face-à-face’ encounter between people and cities (Langlois 1986, 30), but that encounter had already occurred years before, in smaller measure, with photography. The years before cinema were characterised by the increasing circulation of photographic materials depicting international urban views, culminating in the widespread distribution of the photographic postcard in the 1900s30. How was Melbourne viewed before the arrival of cinema, in particular in photographs? How did cinema draw people and buildings together in the new cinematic urban place?

I am interested here in detecting how such views may have produced certain iconographic antecedents, by establishing recurring visual patterns in the reproduction of the city. The changes in pictorial style, the angle and viewpoint, the distance from the main subject, the type and presence of human figures, are all elements declaring a variety of urban identities. None of the pictures under analysis in this and in the following chapters were private pictures, but pictures designed to be shared socially. These are images produced with a social or economic interest, communicating the need for an extended urban identity. Modifications in style, viewpoint, and subject responded to the changes in city-design and to the evolution of the mass media.

2.1. Pre-cinematic Views of Melbourne

In 1937, Robert Hoddle laid out a grid design for Melbourne. The grid plan without squares seemed aimed at maximising transportation and production and at defying opportunities for social gatherings and distraction31. The urban grid was visually characterised by deep perspective spaces, pointing at distant vanishing points beyond the horizon, alternated with flat streetscapes. The impression of a pragmatic but repetitive streetscape of the newly founded city was reported by the anonymous author of the pamphlet Melbourne as it is and as it Should Be (1850), and by the travelling English novelist Anthony Trollope. For Paul Carter:

31 There has been much debate about the lack of squares in the original planning of Melbourne and about the later need to create public squares in the 1970s (see Carter 1987, 206). Carter also summarises the pros and cons of such a design.
The anonymous critic and Trollope shared a feeling that the grid-plan town was placeless and directionless. Their impression was of a city monotonous and alike. But, as both were candid enough to admit, this spatial tedium did not seem to hold on social or economic activity. (Carter 1987, 209)

Since its foundation in 1835, Melbourne’s rapid development has been repeatedly portrayed. Most initial reproductions were topographic representations answering the need to define the clear delimitation of property. The initial views were orthogonal representations of topographical reports, drawn by surveyors to establish ownership. As Davison has noted:

_the first views of Melbourne, drawn by surveyors like Russell, architects like Samuel Jackson or amateur painters like John Adamson and Wilbraham Liardet, were little more than scenic versions of these maps. They carefully delineated each building and identified its owner; they sketched in the surrounding terrain and sometimes indicated the main economic activities. Their purpose was as much economic as aesthetic._ (Davison 1986, 13) (fig.1).

Davison groups the paintings and drawings of Melbourne in this period into _pastoral landscape views, topographical views_ and _scenes of urban-life_. Pastoral landscapes offered romanticised images of a Melbourne surrounded by nature. The _topographical views_ were aimed at documenting land holdings and buildings (fig. 1). _City-life scenes_ were urban views populated with character-types (Davison 1986, 18). They were popular subjects published in magazines and newspapers, and were regularly requested by merchants and shopkeepers.
2.1.1. Painted City Views

In describing the different aspects of Melbourne’s city-views it is useful to make reference to traditional portraits of city and urban-views. Stroffolino (1988, 17), after De Seta\footnote{De Seta’s views are expressed in De Seta 1999, 17. For a discussion of these classifications see Ryan Gregg’s dissertation on Vasari’s City Portraits (Gregg 2008, 22).}, distinguishes between four main categories of city-views in painting: Map View, Bird’s Eye View, Perspective View and Profile View. The Map View is a traditional orthogonal and ‘zenith-like view’ mapping the plan of the urban fabric. The Bird’s Eye View presents an imaginary viewpoint seeking to describe the morphological system of a city. It is usually produced from an orthogonal projection (isometric, diametric, trimetric) or from an axonometric oblique projection of a city map (its angle on the horizon is between 30 and 60 degrees). The Perspective View is generally taken from an actual viewpoint with an angle on the horizon between 60 and 90 degrees. The Profile View is set on a parallel plane, thus producing a city profile with no significant elevation (Stroffolino 1998, 17). The views of Melbourne I am concerned with here are mostly bird’s eye and perspective views. Early profile views are rarer in Melbourne. They became more common after 1915, with the increasing popularity of the views showing the neo-gothic city skyline seen from the other side of the Yarra River.

Some of Melbourne’s first portraits were pastoral views aimed at providing a mastering and reassuring gaze over the new city and its environment (fig. 2). The insertion of the city skyline in a wilder natural landscape hinted at romantic notions of the landscape and helped to distract the viewer from the industrial growth of Melbourne. In other views, the repetition of specific points of view helped to measure the growth of the city and its changes. The most popular point of observation for the painted city view was from the Botanical Reserve on the south side of the Yarra River. The position permitted a panoramic view of the other side of the river, overlooking the city, which sloped down towards the Yarra. From there surveyor Robert Russell painted the nascent settlement in 1837 (fig. 6 and 7). In 1839 John Adamson recorded another view from the same area (fig.1) (Galimany 2006, 51).

When, in 1846, Charles La Trobe selected this site for the Royal Botanic Gardens, the difference between the urban domain and the garden domain, on the two sides of the Yarra, became even more obvious\footnote{See Chapter 5 for cinematic references to the southern side of the Yarra.}. More city-views from the same side of the river followed.
Thomas Clark, Henry C. Gritten and Henry Burn were amongst the main artists representing Melbourne in this period. All three arrived in Melbourne from Britain in the years 1852-54, following news of the Victorian Gold Rush, having been trained in English art schools (Galimany 2006, 101). Melbourne was often interpreted in their work with an anti-urban approach, influenced by the romantic movement. In most of their works, the city, set in a central horizontal position, occupies only a small part of the space of the oil painting. The urban presence appears as a limited, distant and transient entity, dominated by a powerful nature. This was particularly true of the work of Clark (fig. 2) and Burn, who painted a minimised Melbourne, “merely a hazy outline beyond” the natural landscape (Galimany 2006, 51). Gritten’s view from the Botanical Gardens (fig. 3) is closer to the city and more picturesque in style. He shows human figures strolling in the foreground through the

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gardens, while in the background it is possible to sense the evolution of the city, which is still framed by the natural environment.35

With the expansion and industrialisation of Melbourne these types of romanticised city-landscapes would become, temporarily, rarer. They gave way to a more modern representation of Melbourne, but were recovered thematically when Melbourne developed anti-urban sentiments, particularly after the 1890s crisis and in the 1930s. Modern city-views featured increasingly industrial urban features. The change in perception towards the character of the city is most evident in the painted view *Melbourne* (1905) by Laurence Wilson (fig. 4). Similarly to previous views, the painting is seen from the Botanic Gardens, but the subject matter is quite different, for the city is bursting with activity and surrounded by industrial smoke. This is no longer a bird’s eye view, nor a perspective view but almost a profile view, with an unusual width reminiscent of the panoramic views seen in widescreen films. Here the cityscape of Melbourne dominates the entire 267 cm of the painting, and stretches beyond the left and right borders. The botanical element is confined to a few grass fields in the foreground. In the city there are plenty of chimneys in action bursting with dark smoke. Princes Bridge, crossed by two cable trams, is now the centre point of the painting. The image shows the city after the crisis of the 1890s, in a moment of reacquired modern industrial identity.37 Even the panoramic ratio of the painting (3:3:1), wider than any future CinemaScope, suggests a different experience of reality. The industrial cityscape has a panoramic scope, forcing the spectator to move his/her gaze across the visual field.38

![Fig. 4. Laurence Wilson. *Melbourne*. 1905, oil on canvas. State Library of Victoria, Melbourne, acc.no: H36538.](image)

35 “Gritten records both the progress of civilisation in the expanding city and the ordering of nature through the formal garden plantings that were set out by the government botanist and director of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Ferdinand von Mueller (1825-1896)” (Galimany 2006, 51).

36 Frederick McCubbin’s *The Pioneer* (1904) is an example of an anti-urban representation of Melbourne following the economic crisis. It features the city in the right section of a triptych where a radically different Melbourne appears: the urban presence is almost unreal, a pale shadow of urbanity visible in the background beyond the forest of eucalyptus trees, while the pioneer and his wife are camped in the foreground.

37 This period will be analysed in chapter 3 and 4.

38 For a brief history of windows and a look at the use of virtual windows in film and architecture, see Anne Friedberg 2006, 103; particularly the chapter dedicated to the “Age of Windows”.
These painted views provide pre-photographic references, which are helpful for detecting continuity and change in the visual discourse about the city. Already at this stage some views and locations were more popular than others: Collins Street, Princes Bridge, the views from the Botanic Gardens were more likely to feature in representations of Melbourne.

Fig. 5. William Knight. *Collins Street, town of Melbourne [View from Batman Hill]*. 1839, watercolour. National Library of Australia, Canberra, acc.no: obj-135240584.

The capability of the city’s design to create and erase points of view is shown by the decreasing prominence of the first popular urban-views of Melbourne. William Knight’s watercolour *Collins Street 1839* (fig. 5), is not only one of the earliest views of Collins Street, but is also painted from a viewpoint which has now disappeared. The bird’s eye view was taken from Batman’s Hill, one of the few original natural viewpoints of the city, which was flattened to make room for Spencer Railway Station in 1863-5 (fig. 1).39 This watercolour framed the new ‘Town of Melbourne, New South Wales’, casting the city between two tall eucalyptus trees, watched by a group of local Aborigines, re-fashioned in ancient robes.40 The composition shows some recurring themes in early bird’s eye views of Melbourne: the trees in the foreground break the line of the horizon, usually set in the middle of the picture, making its leafy presence felt in the space of the sky; in the street the presence of small human figures helps provide the perception of scale. The static structure divides the composition into

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39 Batman’s Hill had an elevation of 18 meters creating a natural theatrical setting. This important marker of space, delimiting the grid and overlooking it, lasted for almost thirty years in the urban design of the new Melbourne. The hill was sold by the Batman family to the State and partly flattened in 1863-65 to leave room for the new Spencer Street Railway Station. (Edmonds 2005, 63) The levelling of the hill cleared the city of a natural elevated point of view, suggesting a pragmatic disinterest in scenic views of Melbourne.

40 The juxtaposition of indigenous people in front of colonial city settings was sadly common in British colonial iconography. On a similar image, connecting urban views and indigenous people, Hallam comments “The image of the Indian, a common symbol of the New World, had adorned the official seal of the Massachusetts Bay colony since the seventeenth century; yet this pastoral scene […] also represents the extension – in reality, the forceful imposition – of British colonial power over the native population” (Hallam 1990, 156).
foreground, background and sky to hint at spatial depth (figs 1, 2 and 5). These are typical traits of the topographical tradition, which will dominate the production of colonial townscapes until the 1850s (Davison 1986, 14).

Fig. 6. Robert Russell. *Melbourne from eastern end of Collins Street*. 1841, watercolour. State Library of New South Wales, Sydney, acc.no: ML57/IE3261891.

Fig. 7. Robert Russell. *Melbourne from Collins Street East [1844]*. 1883, watercolour over pen & ink. State Library of Victoria, Melbourne, acc.no: H38114.

The comparison of Robert Russell’s views of Collins Street (figs. 6 and 7) produced in the 1840s with those drawn in 1853 by John E. Thomas (fig. 8) and S. T. Gill (fig. 9), illustrates different spatial approaches to the pictorial representation of the Melbourne’s street space. All images involve a certain level of theatricality in the mise-en-scène. Russell’s bird’s eye views are aimed at documenting particular properties. They divide the representation into three spaces: the viewpoint in the foreground, the street and city in the middle-ground and the sky, occupying half of the picture in the background. Each change in spatial depth is enhanced by visual signposts: the fence, the tree, the house and the figures looking at the view.
In his view of Collins Street, John E. Thomas (fig. 8) presents a traditionally staged space. He shortens the perspective of Collins Street by choosing a point of view set outside the space of the street, the viewer of this image is standing on the right side where the ‘pavement’ would be. This viewpoint reduces the spatial field by hiding the vanishing point behind the right side of the street, and concentrating the viewer’s attention on the frontal space. Thomas reinforces the legibility of the frontal space by setting human figures in the foreground, thus augmenting the perceived distance from the background. The space is organised through horizontal planes, and is accentuated by locating the human figures in proximity to the line marking the visual plane. The woman in the foreground sits on the border of the darkened plane, accentuating its prominence.

In contrast, S.T. Gill (fig. 9) embraces the full width and depth of Collins Street by setting the viewpoint in the middle of the street. The illusionary effect of depth is based on a wide perspective, on
a skilled play of light and shadow, and mostly on the increasing size of the figures in the street and the buildings to the side of it.

These spatial solutions will at times be repeated in early cinema and in Melbourne’s later film views. Russell’s appears in panoramic views or panoramic shots. Thomas’ spatial coding is closer to the controlled space of the theatrical stage. The space is compressed by a diagonal point of view and the characters become structuring elements in the rendering of space. A similarly ‘compressed’ spatial coding was adopted by many early cinematic urban views, such as those by R. W. Paul and the Lumières, opting for a diagonal perspective when filming single urban scenes with a fixed camera (fig. 25). When adopted, this approach transforms the perception of Melbourne’s space, aligning it with that of a European city street\textsuperscript{41}. Gill’s wider spatial solution, on the contrary, appears more respectful towards the perceptual impression of the Melbourne streetscape. This wider spatial approach will be more common in suburban views, both in photography and in local films such as in the opening shot of \textit{Living Hawthorn}.

Together with a fixed set of spatial solutions, the first painted views of Melbourne introduced the representation of recurring places and structures – amongst which Princes Bridge, and the area surrounding it – which became the most popular images of the city. Set at the centre of Wilson’s painting of 1905, Princes Bridge is the main city bridge and one of the city’s principal landmarks. It was built in 1888, designed by the architects Grainger and Jenkins who were influenced by Blackfriars Bridge in London (1870). Before the current structure was built, Melbourne had a timber bridge built in 1845 and a one-arch bluestone bridge built by stonemason David Lennox in 1850\textsuperscript{42}. Both were widely painted and photographed. Given its position, as the southern gate to the city, the bridge has been one of the city-subjects most frequently portrayed, and one of the main places where the spatial identity of the city has been produced and transformed. The modification in urban design, around the bridge and the surrounding area, is an example of how city planning can create and change the points of view expressed through artistic representation\textsuperscript{43}.

The changes in the organisation of the urban space, the creation of new-elevated points of view, as well as new visual landmarks, have modified the way this area has been portrayed and photographed. Princes Bridge, seen from the southern side of the Yarra featured in many of the city-views previously discussed (figs. 1 and 4). The early iconography of Melbourne’s views represents the

\textsuperscript{41} A similar ‘reduction’ of spatial depth is characterised by the mise-en-scène of the urban space of Melbourne produced by Paul Cox and cinematographer Yuri Sokol, on \textit{Lonely Hearts} (1982) and on \textit{Man of Flowers} (1983).

\textsuperscript{42} See the entries “Bridges” and “Princes Bridge” in Brown-May and Swain (2005).

\textsuperscript{43} The urban design of the area surrounding the bridge has been constantly evolving since completing the present bridge in 1888. Amongst the main buildings creating then new perspectives on the area are St. Paul’s Cathedral (1890-1931); Flinders Street Railway Station (1901-11) and the Shrine of Remembrance (1927-34).
bridge from the southern side of the Yarra, looking towards the city, leading to Swanston Street. There are at least four possible main points of view of the bridge in this direction. One is from the top of the Botanic Gardens, where it is possible to see the bridge in its entirety, with the river dividing the two shores and the bridge connecting the south side to the city grid. This perspective is clearly visible in Wilson’s painting (fig. 4), but will not be repeated in early film and photography. Conversely there is a postcard-like viewpoint, seen from the northern bend of the river, upstream from the bridge, which will became popular in documentaries from the 1930s onwards, but it is rarely found in nineteenth century paintings of Melbourne.44

A popular early scene was the view of Swanston Street, taken from a mid-way position in the middle-right section of Lennox Bridge (the bridge built before the actual Princes Bridge)45. In the space of a few years, Gritten (1856) (fig. 10), Becker (1857) and Burn (1861) (fig. 11) portrayed the bridge and Swanston Street from a very similar position. All adopted mid-air vantage points, above the street level, typical of the prospective view formalised by 16th Century vedutismo46. Their urban portraits correctly show the traffic, monuments and buildings, as well as the spatial organisation of the interchange between Swanston Street and Princes Bridge.47

Henry Burn48 offers a dynamic and spectacular revisitation of Gritten’s picture. He uses oils instead of watercolours. The brilliant blue sky, with a perspective-enhancing progression of white cloud, and the dynamic use of light and shadows increases the depth of the view. Burn uses colour to structure the space and the characters: the red jacket of the rider and the white wedding dress, at the centre of the painting, stand out against the dark shadow, creating two main visual foci in the foreground. This represents a stark difference when compared to Gritten’s darker farmers and workers

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44 This is a view taken from the northern side of the Yarra after the first bend upstream. The darkened trees frame the bridge and the city is lit by the early morning sun or at sunset. Another view is the one of the left side of the bridge, seen from where the Arts Centre is now located. See Chapter 5 for a discussion of these later views.

45 This stone bridge lasted from 1850 to 1888 and was built by mason master David Lennox (1788-1873). “A graceful stone structure, it spanned the river with a single low arch of exceptional length (45.7 m). It was the longest stone arch ever built in Australia and marked the beginning of a fine tradition of innovative Melbourne bridges” (Churchward 2005, 88).

46 “Working closely with topographical representation, this genre of view painting emphasized the drama of location; the portrait of the city in Italian vedutismo, that is, tended toward a narrative dramatization of sites, characterised by a heightened and tactile texture of place” (Bruno 2002, 174). For vedutismo see also Briganti 1970.

47 The pictures show an earlier version of St. Paul’s Cathedral (1891-1931), oriented differently compared to the current church, and an earlier version of the current Town Hall (1870).

48 Henry Burn was born in Birmingham, England and is believed to have been trained by Samuel Lines, one of the founders of the Birmingham School of Arts. He arrived in Melbourne in January 1853 when he was 43, and produced at least four views of Melbourne, from 1855 to 1862. His artistic career in Melbourne was not very successful. He lived in the Collingwood-Fitzroy-Richmond area in humble conditions and in 1877 was admitted to the Melbourne Benevolent Asylum, to die there in 1884 (Reynold 1973, 49). Galimany reads in his work “a light and airy quality, quite unusual for the period in which he was painting”, with influences of French landscape painters Fragonard and Watteau (Galimany 2006, 54).
absorbed by the background. Burn hides the vanishing point, moves the point of view in a left to right direction, widening the bridge unnaturally and turning its expanded ground into a theatrical proscenium, thus increasing the spatial movement at the opening of Swanston Street. As Davison noted, Burn’s painting is more reminiscent of the luscious style of its English contemporaries (1987, 17), while Gritten’s pictures seem more domesticated.

Fig. 10. Henry Gritten. *Princes Bridge*. 1856, watercolour.
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, acc.no: 752-2.

Fig. 11. Henry Burn. *Swanston Street from the Bridge*. 1861, oil on canvas.
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, acc.no: 754-2.

With the establishment of albumen silver photography as a local business from 1850, the city-portrait of Melbourne was a popular demand, used by government and private enterprises eager to
document their activities. Shortly before the arrival of cinema, and continuing a tradition of painted city-views, the technical possibilities (and limitations) of city-photography brought a new way of looking at the city, forcing a paradigm shift in the way the city was viewed. The limitation imposed by the camera shifted the common viewpoints established by the painted views of Melbourne. Traditional landscapes featuring wide panoramas and bird’s eye views (such as “from the Botanic Gardens”) did not translate well to the new medium. The reason was possibly technical: the ubiquitous industrial smoke and the long exposures produced foggy long-distance views of the city.

The preference developed, therefore, for closer urban views, mostly taken at street level or from the higher viewpoint of a building. The urban views of the central city-grid were preferred to the suburban views, as is evident from the photographic records of many Melbourne city photographers such as J. W. Lindt and Charles Nettleton. Commercial photographers were generally asked to record man-made urban subjects: streets, crossroads, buildings, bridges, factories, trains, shops and industrial structures. Architectural photography after the 1870s was closely associated with the promotion of national urban progress as “buildings were tangible proofs of the establishment of a burgeoning new settlement: bricks and mortar fashioned along the lines of familiar European architectural styles were the manifestation of desires for prosperity and security” (Crombie 2000, 81). Photography was therefore an essential reflective element influencing the perception of urban spaces in nineteenth century Melbourne. The increased circulation of photographic albums portraying the city and the insertion of Melbourne into the global network of the International Exhibition in 1880, brought an international circulation of urban images to the city. Images of foreign cities began to circulate in the local imaginary, and compete with images of Melbourne.

2.1.2. Two Ways of Viewing the City

Photography is, first of all, a way of seeing. It is not seeing itself.
(Sontag 2007, 124)

49 The Gold Rush brought to Melbourne many photographers, the most relevant were Americans Townsend Durya from New York, who opened a studio in Bourke Street in 1853, and P. M. Batchelder from Boston, who opened a studio on Collins Street in 1854. According to Jack Cato other Melbourne photographers of the 1850s were T. A. Hill, John Noon, W. Asquith, W. W. Pentland, Antoine Fauchery, Davis and Co. and Burman (Cato 1977, 21-24).

50 As it is possible to see in the background of many urban photographic panorama of Melbourne, the city landscape starts to lose detail beyond a certain distance.

51 Urban photos of foreign cities were available mostly through photographic albums. Foreign urban images were also visible at the Melbourne International Exhibition of 1880. A collection of over 300 pictures of modern Paris (c. 1877) by French photographer Charles Marville (1813-1879) were exhibited by the French Government at the Paris Exhibition of 1878 and in Melbourne in 1880, and were subsequently donated to the city of Melbourne. They are now part of the photographic collection of the State Library of Victoria (Reynaud 2013, 202-205).
Between 1860 and 1890, several photographic studios were based in Melbourne (Cato 1977). British born Charles Nettleton (1826-1902) and German born J. W. Lindt (1845-1926) distinguished themselves as two of the most significant city photographers of the period. Both had exhibited internationally and locally at the 1880 Melbourne International Exhibition (and Lindt was the official exhibition photographer for the 1888 Centenary Exhibition). Their interpretation of urban photography epitomises two different stylistic approaches towards street views of Melbourne. Nettleton’s photos did not often seem preoccupied with balance and composition. He mostly documented architectural progress and the events of the new city without unnecessary aestheticism. On the contrary, Lindt interpreted photography as art, seeking memorable images and spectacular city-views (Boyer 1994, 117).

The difference between Lindt’s formalism and Nettleton’s pragmatism introduces two aspects of Melbourne’s image (theatrical and informal) that I am interested in raising as a future point of reference for the analysis of films about the city. I am arguing for the correlation between the formal/theatrical mise-en-scène of the image of the urban space of Melbourne and its link to an imaginary foreign audience, in terms of international circulation and evaluation. In essence, my argument is that images produced (by a local or a foreign producer) for a mostly foreign audience, are more likely to conform to a dominant coded (theatrical) system of the representation of urban space. Images of Melbourne aimed at a foreign spectator seem to have a more self-conscious awareness of complying with these international stylistic standards, as they are expected to aid the perception and circulation of such images.

In contrast to this trend, the images of Melbourne that are aimed exclusively at local audiences appear to be more informal in style, denouncing a series of traits which are apparently ‘negative’ compared with the more formal trend. These ‘local’ images appear less composed and less balanced, human figures are minimised, are less readable, and are at not identified in relation to a specific urban space. Nettleton’s photography seems to be characterised by this kind of approach, which is less concerned with aestheticism and formalism. His urban photographs have an attractive imbalance, which seems to faithfully represent the day-by-day aspects of a city and are less iconic and less ‘staged’.

The city’s pragmatic planning design offered limited space for spectacle. Lindt staged streets and buildings using what can be considered a ‘theatrical approach’. He refashioned Melbourne’s urban space, through an enhancement of axially and composition, augmenting, for instance, the sense of pictorial depth through the placement of the human body in the urban space. He increased the number

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52 In 1850, only fifteen years after the foundation of the city, the anonymous essay “Melbourne as it is and as it ought to be” appeared, expressing the desire to redesign Melbourne as an international and ‘more European’ city. The anonymous author imagined public squares, boulevards, and public works.
of visual planes by adopting staging effects, such as the introduction of a person or an object in the picture’s foreground or middle ground.

The use of these kinds of perceptual solutions, which clearly have the effect of staging an apprehension of the urban space, situates Lindt’s photography in the tradition of the eighteenth-century veduta. The adoption of this kind of tradition, apparent also in the work of Thomas and Henry Burn, evokes the visual commerce surrounding the European Grand Tour, which offered city images ready to be consumed, to be ‘taken away’. This kind of imagery was ‘promotional’ in a not dissimilar way to the images of buildings appearing in many architectural magazines later.

In contrast, Nettleton limited the role of the human character in architectural photography, focussing instead on representation of the urban fabric. People are mostly absent from his early photographs, or only feature accidentally. Nettleton’s photographic style communicates a more impersonal point of view. The author behind these images seems detached, not so easily revealing an individual point of view. The impression is that the bareness of the images seems to better reveal the pragmatic urban design of the city.

Lindt’s photos, on the other hand, are more balanced pictorially and demonstrate a greater mastery of composition and detail. But today they seem affected by an excessive formalism. Lindt’s self-conscious style reflects the ‘larger than life’ expectation of the booming metropolis. But his architectural photographs of the buildings of ‘Marvellous Melbourne’ portray a world that is about to disappear.

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2.1.3. J.W. Lindt

Born in Germany and trained in Australia, Lindt introduced compositional traits characterised by a strong sense of theatricality and spectacle to the photography of Melbourne. Lindt’s photography was interpreted according to an artistic pictorial canon of spatial composition and framing. He photographed much of what was connected with the booming city: local personalities and important visitors, popular city views; new public buildings, the Botanic Gardens and images related to criminal events. Lindt worked in Melbourne until 1894 when the economic depression forced the closure of his studio (De Lorenzo and Van Der Plaat 2004, 133). He was known internationally for Australian and forest scenery views, for the ethnographic portraits of Aborigines and the people of New Guinea. During the 1880s he was the official photographer accompanying an expedition to New Guinea, whose photos were published in the book *Picturesque New Guinea*, distributed in 1888 in Australia and Britain (Lindt 1888, 6).

Lindt presented himself as well informed about international and national trends, modern styles and technology, as is evident in his pamphlet *Notes on Modern Photography* (Lindt 1888). He regularly travelled to London, Paris and Frankfurt’s photographic fairs. He won Gold, Silver and Bronze Medals in Philadelphia, Paris, Sydney, Brisbane and Sandhurst, as revealed on the reverse of his photographic cards (fig. 12). On the back of the same card Lindt introduces the client to the idea of photography as art. On the card is written, “Home’s chief adornments and life’s fairest gift is Art, and therefore give it honoured place”, on the left side, and “All does not depend on chemistry and optics, Art must with these in triple union blend” is included on the right. At the centre, to illustrate the text, is a lesser-seen view of the city, lithographed from a photograph taken from the Victoria Barracks on St. Kilda Road (fig. 12). The lithographed image is reminiscent of views of German towns, including its military aspects, particularly in the rendering of the vegetation and the array of gothic towers overlooking the city.

There is a photo, *Bird’s Eye View of Melbourne*, taken by Lindt from the same viewpoint. The image is unusual because it foregrounds a man with a bowler hat on the roof of the barracks on St. Kilda Road (fig. 13). The careful placement of the human figure in front of the city skyline is a rare sight in Melbourne’s pictorial iconography.

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53 Born in Frankfurt in 1845, John William Lindt moved to Australia when he was 17, in 1863. He studied photography in Grafton, NSW, where he became well known for his portraits of Aboriginal people in 1872. In 1876 he came to Melbourne and opened a studio at 7 Collins Street (Frost 1974).
The difference in style and composition between Lindt and Nettleton is clear when comparing similar views. Nettleton took an earlier version of the same view of St. Kilda Road in 1865 (fig. 14). Here the city’s skyline and buildings appear more defined and identifiable producing a clearer and more readable document. By contrast, Lindt’s version foregrounds the viewpoint of the spectator, frames the view from the balcony of the barracks and sets the city almost as a distant stage.

In September 1888, in order to promote his *Picturesque New Guinea* at the International Exhibition of the same year, Lindt republished his *Notes on Modern Photography*, originally released in 1886. He underlined that “my motto as a photographic portraitist has always been ‘Truth – but truth in a pleasant form’” (Lindt 1888, 6): an aesthetic truth that resonates with the Humboldtian reading suggested by De Lorenzo. His photographic style and choice of subject, are informed by cultural
references to the tradition of connecting science and art, thus allowing the artist to reach a formal truth in representation. Humboldt (and Lindt) “believed that artists were best able to look beyond what can be strictly observed in nature and make use of observed ‘sensuous form’ to reveal a sense of this unity” (De Lorenzo and Van Der Plaat 2004a, 145).

Lindt achieved this urban ‘truth’ through the production of sharp images, possibly not retouched, and with carefully balanced compositions. Following Humboldt54, Lindt limited the use of filters, retouching and attempts to avoid making the photograph more painterly: “I have always paid the greatest attention to the production of negatives as nearly as possible perfect in expression, lighting and pose” (Lindt 1888, 5). The urban views photographed between 1876 and 1894 are precise, but very self-conscious in their composition. Lindt prefers an axial viewpoint, centring the photographic subject in the middle of the picture. The photographs of single buildings are taken from a viewing angle that is usually aligned with the corner of the building structure, a position guaranteeing the maximum stretch of the diagonal lines within a perspective formed by two vanishing points. The Finks Building (1888) (fig.16) and the Australian Building (1889) (fig.15), Melbourne’s tallest at the year of completion, are photographed from a similar position providing a strong sense of stability and weight to the buildings. The edifice is not just at the centre of the picture, it is turned into an architectural object. The two vanishing points anchor the structure to the gaze of the viewer giving the building an imposing sense of visual presence55. Lindt’s theatrical approach matches the elaborate mannerism of the ‘Boom Style’56. The axial anchoring of the perspective emphasizes the remarkable size of the over decorated high-rise architecture, creating a memorable image of the vestiges of ‘Marvellous Melbourne’. Davison ends his book on ‘Marvellous Melbourne’ by suggesting that many buildings erected during the boom were “a better guide to its citizens’ aspirations than their cultural achievements” (Davison 1979, 233). Melbourne, a city planned on a pragmatic and un-theatrical gridded design had created, during the boom years, impractical buildings that the coming economic depression would turn into ghostly facades57.

54 Alexander von Humboldt wrote a series of articles at the time of the introduction of photography, advocating images with an “extreme sharpness in drawing details like ‘no painter would draw’” (Hannavy 2013, 581). On Humboldt and Lindt, see also De Lorenzo and Van Der Plaat 2004b.

55 German-Australian photographer Wolfgang Sievers will often use a similar two-point perspective in his modernist architectural photography of Melbourne in the 1950s and 1960s. On Sievers see Crombie 2000, 80-82.

56 The ‘Boom-style’ was typical of Melbourne’s economic boom of the 1880s and “was widely adopted for public and commercial buildings, especially town halls and large hotels” (Goad 2009, 66). In this period, writes Goad, “the facades of buildings were given even richer and more sophisticated overlays of trabeated and arced classical schemes: giant classical orders (often coupled columns) overlaid onto Renaissance symmetry; balustraded parapets, cement-rendered swags and festoons of fruit; Mannerist manipulations of keystones and segmental pediments” (Goad 2009, 66).

57 Philip Goad wrote that “Melbourne, after the 1890 is often seen as a Sabbatarian shadow of ‘Marvellous Melbourne’, raked by economic depression and declining in population (at least until 1900)” (Goad 2009, 78).
A similar attention is dedicated to the position of the human body. In most of Lindt’s urban images, one or more human figures appear in small or medium size. In some cases, it is the recognisably recurring figure of a boy with a large hat, probably an assistant or a paid ‘extra’. He has the double role of increasing the sense of depth by “covering” the vanishing point, and providing a sense of proportion and rhythm to the space of the empty street (fig. 17). The human figures are strategically positioned in the picture. In most of the photographs of buildings there are people standing on the corner of the sidewalk circling the structure. Their position is often in alignment with the vertical axis of the building’s corner. The visual effect is to balance the larger structure of the building. The human figure creates a visual counter-weight to the large edifice. The dark mark of the human body grounds the composition towards the lower part of the image.

In photographs of wider urban spaces (a street, a crossing, a view), the figure of the human body intersects with the key diagonals or the main line of the horizon, thus positing the human body as an anchor to the whole. Fellow German photographer Fred Kruger, in a rare view of Collins Street, expresses a similar attitude toward a balanced axiality, anchoring the view with the dark shapes of a horse-drawn carriage set exactly in the middle of the perspective (fig. 18).
2.1.4. Charles Nettleton

Charles Nettleton (active from 1860-1890) was for 25 years Melbourne’s leading police photographer, and his was one of the main photographic studios in Melbourne (fig. 19). He took the last photograph of Ned Kelly before the bushranger was hanged on 11 November 1880 (Gittins 1974). Nettleton worked on public commissions as well as for private companies. Born in Northern England in 1826, he arrived in Victoria with the same Gold Rush wave that brought Lindt, Clark, Gritten and Burn in 1853-4. He then joined a local studio and in 1860 opened his own. From 1860 to the closure of the studio in 1890, his camera recorded the major public events: from the construction of sewers to that of bridges, from tram tracks to streets, from the diversion of the Yarra River to the opening of the Royal Botanic Gardens.

The importance of Nettleton’s street photography for this research is historical and stylistic. Nettleton is historically important because he set a clear standard for the photographic documentation of the city. The breadth and consistency of his work cannot be ignored. Cinema arrived thirty years after Nettleton’s photos circulated locally in exhibitions, in albums or simply shared by the community. From a stylistic point of view, Nettleton’s photography, when compared to Lindt’s, seems to have a different preoccupation with balancing composition and overall features a more ‘informal’ approach to rendering the city58. His visual approach to photographing the city was similar to that of later local actualities and newsreels, even though it would be difficult to establish a direct influence between the two.

Nettleton’s architectural photography focused on the documentation of different aspects of the ‘urban fabric’. He specialised in views of the city, of the main streets, and of new and established buildings. He photographed railway piers, gardens, churches, banks, asylums, colleges and the university. Nettleton mostly worked with wet-plate photography, which was the dominant type of photography until the 1880s. The long exposure time made it difficult to capture ‘instantaneous’ movements within city views. Therefore, most of his photographs do not show people passing by, unless they were posing (fig. 20). The human figure photographed by Nettleton is a largely accidental presence. The body is not inscribed within the image; it is not in direct relationship with the building. Ennis suggests that Nettleton’s architectural photography impresses for its “resoluteness and confidence […] These are buildings whose beauty is enhanced in Nettleton’s eyes through their independence from function; people would be a distraction and are permitted only as indicators of scale” (Ennis 2003, 21–22).

Compared to Lindt, Nettleton’s style appears less formal and balanced. He seems unconcerned with the symbolic formalism of the single building or view. His images registered city life with an attractive neutrality, escaping overly aestheticized views. The value of Nettleton’s approach to urban space is in the breadth of his project. The combination of different views, and particularly the variations of each view, document an official map of the city. Seen together his series of subsequent Collins Street views show something particularly compelling about Melbourne as it evolved. The shift from one viewpoint to the other, the change of axis and height, suggest a city in constant change, more

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59 Glass wet-plate photography was the most popular technology between the 1850s and 1880s. The required exposure time was a few seconds, not quick enough for instantaneous photography, which would be available only with the commercial introduction of dry-plate photography in the 1880s (Coe 1977, 30-43).
preoccupied with constructing the next building, or street, than in taking time to celebrate its latest achievements.

Fig. 20. Charles Nettleton. *Collins Street from the Treasury looking west* 1866, albumen silver print. State Library of Victoria, Melbourne, acc.no: H88.22/19.

Fig. 21. Charles Nettleton. *Collins Street from Treasury looking West* 1871, albumen silver print. State Library of Victoria, Melbourne, acc.no: H96.160/2726.


Fig. 23. Charles Nettleton. *Collins Street from the Treasury*. 1883, albumen silver print. State Library of Victoria, Melbourne, acc.no: H851.
Before the east end of Collins Street was turned into a Parisian Boulevard (the trees planted in 1878 are visible in figs. 22 and 23), the Old Treasury Building (Clark 1862) offered a good axial viewpoint of the street. Charles Nettleton took several photos of Collins Street from the Treasury building between 1865 and 1885 (figs. 21, 22 and 23). The composition of these images demonstrates a different concern from that of Lindt’s formalism. In the photographs taken from 1865 to 1885 the viewpoint changes repeatedly. Each photograph is taken with variations of angle, height and depth, and with an apparent carelessness of form and composition. Images are not formally balanced, the perspective angle is not axial, the eye does not have a clear visual trajectory to follow. In the 1860s view of Collins Street (fig. 20), the imbalance between the group of buildings on the left side of Collins Street, compared to the lesser mass on the right side, gives more emphasis on the left part of the photograph. The attempt to re-centre the image focusing on the street, produces an unsettling movement, because the image is too unbalanced. The only way to restore balance to the image would be to cover the left part with the hand, or to crop it.

Nettleton seems to move in a different direction. The effect of this series of pictures of Collins Street from the Treasury Building is to dislocate the view. These photographs create not only different views of the same site, but produce different photographic ‘places’ of the same urban space, that is different urban photographic identities. Unanchored to the axial view (see fig. 24 for an actual axial version of the same view), the space of the street is perceived as temporary and mutating. Nettleton’s images of Collins Street escape aesthetic concerns for balance and rely upon a time interval to document the urban space. These images do not show time in relation to space, as is usual in images taken from the same viewpoint, but space in relation to time. Each new image therefore frames a different space. Nettleton’s photographs have the function of being informative about the site of the image, rather than its aesthetic. The composition is dictated by the necessity of providing the maximum visibility of the subject.

Fig. 24. Charles Rudd. Collins Street [from Treasury Building]. 1888, albumen silver print. State Library of Victoria, Melbourne, acc.no: H373638.
This is noticeable when comparing these views to Charles Rudd’s photograph taken in 1888 from the same viewpoint (fig. 24). Rudd’s view of Collins Street has centred the representation of the urban space under a traditional and theatrical monocular perspective. The high viewpoint above the middle line of the perspective permits him to ‘lock’ the scene by aligning the point of view of the spectator with the vanishing point. That is precisely what Nettleton had previously avoided doing in all his views of Collins Street.

2.1.5. Crisis of images in 1890s Melbourne

Three decades of growth sustained by the economic boom of the Gold Rush had transformed Melbourne into a large colonial city. After the 1850s Melbourne became one of the fastest growing cities in the world. In 1880, the city hosted the Melbourne International Exhibition. The very same year the first telephone exchange was installed (Brown-May 1998). In 1885 the first cable tramline was inaugurated. In 1886 the city was dubbed ‘Marvellous’ by popular London Daily Telegraph journalist George Sala60. The year after, the Melbourne Hydralic Power Company was founded, which, by the 1890s, was running around 300 elevators in the city. In 1890 the first coin-operated public phones appeared (Lewis 1995, 68). At this time, Melbourne was the second largest city of the British Empire with 490,000 inhabitants. It was compared by the American press to Chicago and San Francisco, and considered one of the wonders of modernity (Davison 1979, 231). Between 1885 and 1890, Melbourne’s construction activity was up to ten buildings per week, and “by 1890 it was said that many of those in the heart of the city were between six and ten storeys high” (Lewis 1995, 79). By 1888 the city had one of the tallest structures in the world: the Australian Building (80 meters), served by hydraulic powered elevators.

In 1891, shortly before the arrival of cinema, Melbourne’s overinflated economy ‘busted’. The crisis was big enough to halt the city’s development, bankrupt many businesses, photographic studios included, and stop population growth. What happened was that the property-based economy of the city collapsed, leading to sixteen city banks and building societies filing for bankruptcy (Davison 1979, 231). In 1893 the full extent of the problem became apparent when the crisis became continent-wide. The Federal Bank collapsed and in May 1893 the Australian Stock Market had to stop trading.

After the financial downturn, the registered yearly growth of the population of Melbourne, which had reached 5.7% in 1891, fell to 0% until 1900. In 1891 the inner city municipality reached a maximum level of demographic density, which started to decrease after 1891. The level of population density registered in 1891 was higher than at any time after (McDonald 2005, 201). After 1891 the number of city inhabitants started to decrease: many people left the colony for the Western Australian

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60 In the colonial city “Melbournians immediately seized upon the phrase as though it were a talisman. [...] The old lion of journalism had hit upon a phrase with just the sweep and crude euphony to captivate real-estate promoters, guide-book writers and city ‘boosters’.” (Davison 1979, 230).
goldfields. Wealthy families inhabiting the city moved progressively to new suburbs sustained by a more efficient transportation system (Lewis 1995, 64). The population growth of Melbourne began to rise to 0.1% only in 1901, growing to 2.2% in 1911 (McDonald 2005, 200-202). Only after the declaration of a new Federation of Australia (1901) and the temporary appointment of Melbourne as the capital of the nation, did the city gain new growth under a more conservative and regulated approach to the city economy. At the same time the introduction of a wider transport system and the arrival of the first cars allowed the further extension of the city borders, with a progressive depopulation of the inner city (Lewis 1985, 81). In the 1890s Melbourne appeared to be a city that had grown too fast and was in need of better infrastructure. Transportation and technology had become more important than basic sanitary needs. For instance, the cable tram network was operative by 1885 but independent toilets and a properly functioning sewage system would not arrive until twelve years later (Davison 1979, 223).

The crisis was a traumatic event with repercussions on the city’s identity, on the self-esteem of its urban image (Briggs 1968, 294) and probably on its representability in the photographic media. The economic crisis forced the closure of many businesses and undermined a sense of confidence about local modern identity. For some commentators, it was Melbourne’s most important crisis, marking a change of character in the city’s attitude from modern to anti-modern (Davison 1998, 146). For British historian Asa Briggs, those years of economic unrest modified the city’s identity to produce a new Melbourne with a conservative consciousness. The city’s “buoyant optimism gave way to staid frugality. As the economic foundations of prosperity collapsed, there were profound transformations in family fortunes, municipal plans and moral attitudes. It is scarcely any exaggeration to say that the ‘personality’ of Melbourne – certainly its image – changed at this time” (Briggs 1968, 294). The sense of security of the city was shattered and “confidence, so easily gained in the ‘long boom’ of the 1870s and 1880s, was very easily lost in the unemployment and distress of the 1890s” (Proudfoot 2000, 26).

The economic crisis of 1891 concerns this thesis as a key element contributing to diminishing representations of Melbourne in the 1890s. By looking at the Melbourne photographic archives in the State Library of Victoria and the National Library of Australia it is possible to note a fall in photographic representations from 1891 to 1898. When searching Melbourne and Collins Street, the most popular views in the city, the National Library returns 544 photographic items for the 1860s, 664 for the 1870s, 602 for the 1880s, 371 for the 1890s and 610 for the decade from 1900 to 1910. Opening the file for the 1890s one discovers that the most popular years are 1890 and 1899, while very few views or none at all can be found for the intermediate years. The closure of many photographic businesses before and after the crisis is a plausible explanation. Nettleton closed in 1890, 61 “[B]y 1886 only one fatal blot remained. ‘Marvellous Melbourne’ was still unsewered. ‘Anything more degrading to a fine city than soil carts parading the streets at night or night-men being met on the staircase of a stately hotel, polluting the air with an abominable stench that well cannot be imagined’. Bad drains were not just an embarrassment, they seemed to threaten the city’s very foundation”. (Davison 1979, 233)
and Lindt in 1894. As if to prove the lack of local material, some of the archived photos came from the album of Sir Francis Boileau’s family voyage from England to Australia in 1894-1895.

The arrival of cinema in Melbourne followed this dramatic period of depression. When the Lumière Cinématographe had its first screening in Melbourne in November 1896, the city was still recovering. Cinema proposed other visions of growing cities, other examples of successful urban modernity. The first films of Melbourne are the site of an apparent paradox. Before the arrival of cinema, Melbourne’s public spaces had been portrayed repeatedly for sixty years through a wealth of urban views in drawings, paintings and photographs (Coote 2012). Despite their number, these works created beautiful views but mostly failed to capture the bustling urban energy of the newly developing city (Davison 1986, 25). When the Lumière cameraman arrived in 1896, delivering the most modern and sophisticated technology for reproducing movement, they surprisingly showed little interest in recording Melbourne’s urban space. The Lumière operator only filmed the Melbourne Cup Carnival, even though the Lumière film catalogue featured, as a main genre, urban views from many cities around the world (Bertozzi 2001, 134-135).

The pre-cinematic representation of Melbourne in painting and photography did not influence cinema directly. Cinema came to Melbourne as an imported foreign technology with its own imported language. I cannot see a direct influence of paintings and photographs of Melbourne on most Melbourne films, besides the factual reference to the same city. The comparison with pre-cinematic views of Melbourne is therefore mostly relevant as an attempt to identify the influence of the city’s design and planning on its representation. For instance: have the changes in design and function of Princes Bridge influenced its representation? And have such local influences produced a local style? I believe they have, even if it is very difficult to evidence and demonstrate. Comparing film scenes with early pictorial scenes is important in evaluating similarities and differences that may have been influenced by the ‘fabric’ of the actual city space, or by its socio-economic context.

2.2. Cinema comes to Melbourne

While few cinematic images of Melbourne streets are available from this period, it is important to look the arrival in the Victorian city of films portraying the urban spaces of other modern metropolis. The newly available cinematic images of foreign city streets and urban spaces ‘re-frame’ the visual relationship of Melbourne with other cinematic cities. These films set Melbourne in comparison with a

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62 The slow-speed of early photographic stock was unable to register movement. Davison cites Tom Roberts’ Bourke Street (1886) as one of the few paintings able to render the energy of ‘Marvellous Melbourne’ (Davison 1986, 25).

63 A small number of views were also shot in Sydney. These include Passengers Alighting from the Paddle Steamer “Brighton” at Manly (1896), and Patineur Grotesque (1896).
dynamic and realistic experience of modernity. I believe that this experience was important for understanding how Melbourne developed the cinematic representation of its urban space.

The arrival of cinema in Melbourne, first with the Kinetoscope in 1895 and then with the Theatroscope and the Cinematographe in 1896, introduced the city to the representation of animated motion within an urban setting. The technological novelty of this international spectacle produced a new paradigm in the urban perception of Melbourne. First, it opened the possibility of showing images in motion from other cities around the world. Secondly, the Lumière company selected Melbourne and Sydney as prospective subjects for the commercial distribution of the Cinematographe because they were important markets for film. Third, film operators avoided filming views of Australian cities, but filmed Melbourne’s most important social event: the Melbourne Cup Carnival, allowing people from Melbourne to see themselves on screen and inserting the city into the new global network of cinematic spectacles. Lastly, after its departure, the Lumière Cinematographe cameras were sold to Australian filmmakers, thus opening-up the possibility for a local urban cinema created by local filmmakers.

2.2.1. The Modern Cine-City screens in Melbourne

The arrival of cinema led to Melbourne’s encounter with other cine-cities on screen. In his compendium of mental images of the modern city, Donald imagines the city as a state of mind, more an experience than a real place, more a sensation than a reality. The modern city is depicted as bustling, multicultural, often subject to bad weather, and a generator of crimes. The modern city is in itself a representation because “it is true that what we experience is never the real thing. It is also true that the everyday reality of the city is always a space already constituted and structured by symbolic mechanism” (Donald 1999, 8). Even before it is filmed, the modern city is therefore already a symbol, an imaginary place, which cinema often records and disseminates.

In the 1890s, still operating within a largely colonial culture prior to the arrival of twentieth century globalisation, cinema brought a new shared urban identity generated by modern cities, communicated through a visual realism which was, until then, unprecedented. Mimetic images of other cities began circulating in Melbourne with photography, but their level of experiential and emotional realism was still very limited. Only with cinema was it possible to experience the illusory, but believable, experience of being in another city.

The encounter between Melbourne and cinema can be traced back to the arrival of the Edison-Dickson Kinetoscope, which had its Melbourne première in Bourke Street in March 1895 (Long 1993a, 39). But Edison’s first films did not feature any urban scenes, as they were shot inside a very
small movie studio nicknamed ‘The Black Maria’\textsuperscript{64}. Those early films mixed the spectacular, the exotic and the ordinary: acrobats, dancers, wrestling men, and celebrities such as Buffalo Bill alongside ordinary workers such as a blacksmith shoeing a horse (Long 1993a, 39). These films were not screened, but were viewed by ‘peeping’ into the Kinetoscope. To observe the first mediated connection between Melbourne and the city on film it is necessary to wait for the first Melbourne screenings. In August 1896, magician Carl Hertz presented R. W. Paul’s \textit{Theatrograph} in Melbourne. In Carl Hertz’s show Melbournian spectators were able to watch footage of London and its people. Three months later, in November 1896, the first Lumière films screened the \textit{Melbourne Cup} and the crowd attending it in Melbourne (Long 1993b, 42).

The Lumière films were not the first films to arrive in Melbourne, but they were probably the most successful. One of the reasons for their success was that the Lumiere company “had sufficient capital, contacts and entrepreneurial skills, to market their machinery successfully” (Williams 1983, 154). Another reason, more important for this study, was that their films possessed something very close to a categorised, formalised and systematised film language (Deutelbaum 1983, 303).

The \textit{Lumière Cinématographe} offered, for the first time, the possibility of filming and watching an event within a short space of time. It also presented a new formalized film language as well as a new way to look at the city, relying on the experience and the aesthetics of the photographic city-view. In those films the interest was not just on the built environment. What attracted most of the attention were the people living in the cities, how they crossed the streets, how crowded those streets were, how intense and feverish city-life appeared in those images.

To return to Langlois’ opening quote, it was the first time that people from Melbourne could come ‘face to face’ on screen with people from other cities. This ‘face to face’ encounter encapsulated the gaze of the spectator towards the screen, the gaze of the character or subject within the screen, and the gaze of the camera embedding the gaze of the operator/director\textsuperscript{65}. Since its introduction, the new prosthetic eye of the cine-camera shortened spatial distances by permitting virtual experiences of faraway streets and cities. The accent here is on experience and movement, since those one reel films were ‘re-lived’ by their spectators in the same duration as they were shot, as there was no editing between shots at that time\textsuperscript{66}. For a city like Melbourne, facing the enormous geographical distance from its points of European cultural reference, the ability to re-experience these visual sources also

\textsuperscript{64} For more information about the Kinetoscope and Edison system of production and exhibition see Musser 1991 and 1997. For a comparison between the Lumière and Edison’s systems of production see Musser 2004, 15-30.

\textsuperscript{65} At least until 1908, operators were generally responsible for camera positioning, framing, camera movement and composition both with or without actors (Bertrand 2000, 219)

\textsuperscript{66} On rare occasions the films were interrupted ‘in camera’ by stopping and restarting the cranking of the film. In a study of early cinematic editing, Gaudreault (2001, 77) showed that the number of ‘fragmented’ views in the Lumière films increased from 0.7% in 1896 (2 out of 293) to 19.3% in 1899 (23 out of 119)
constituted a cultural necessity in overcoming the distance from its cultural sources. As Fox suggests, Melbourne was initially conceived as a “city of European illusions – an antipodean Paris or London drawing on European civilization, […] which profoundly affected how Melbourne imagined itself” (Fox 1992, 43). For instance, the National Gallery and the National Library were built to emulate similar urban libraries overseas, acquiring large collections of texts and images from Europe (Fox 1992, 43).

### 2.2.2. Attraction, cinema, modernity

On the 22nd of August 1896, the Melbourne Opera House hosted the first Australian film screening, only two months before the arrival of the Lumière representative. In Melbourne, the introduction of cinema was a central attraction in the show orchestrated by Harry Richard for his “New Tivoli Minstrels and Specialty Company”. The program included, as side attractions, an English vocalist, a baritone and an Australian song and dance man. The film show was organised and presented by American magician Carl Hertz, billed as “Premier Prestidigitator and Illusionist of the world, in his Conflux of apparent miracles including the most Marvellous Illusion”.

The advertisement appeared in Melbourne’s daily newspaper *The Argus* (22 August 1896). By inviting the spectator to “the Marvellous reproduction of animated figures”, to “the most startling scientific marvel of the age” and to “the photo electric sensation of the day, every photo in motion”, it expressed well the rupturing rhetoric of attractions connecting the most modern of inventions to the city’s once glorious identity (Bertrand 1996, 23). This was not just an aesthetic of wonder but also a language of enticement. The tone of the words, and the accumulation of the adjectives used in these advertisements, speak to an audience that wanted to be surprised (Bertrand 1996, 26). Most of the films on that first screening were actuality films, an essential part of what Gunning and Gaudreault have defined as the ‘cinema of attractions’ or the cinema of ‘monstration’, a pre-narrative cinema lasting for a little over a decade, between 1894 and 1906. Most of the productions of this period were characterised by an aesthetic which addressed the audience “directly, sometimes, exaggerating the confrontation in an experience of assault” (Gunning 1995, 121). The idea of attraction relates to that of ‘monstration’, which implied the act of watching something that is being ‘exhibited’, or given to the eyes (Gaudreault 1990, 275). The experience of going to the cinema was not therefore about a psychological involvement with the film’s characters but was outward in nature. It was about looking, peeping, being distracted and surprised. Screen and spectator were separated. The spectacle of ‘attraction’ represented a transition from the common ‘live’ form of popular spectatorship at the circus, fairgrounds, vaudeville and music hall, where performers commonly addressed the audience.

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67 Tom Gunning theorized, with André Gaudreault, the notion of a “cinema of attractions” in the 1980s, building on studies by Noël Burch. Since its first formulation, the expression has been defined more precisely by analysing its role in films showed in fairgrounds and magic shows (Garncarz 2012).
The program of that first screening in Melbourne followed a broad aesthetic of attractions, as is evident from the titles screened and from the context of live performances they were shown alongside. But not all the attractions were the same, some were about natural or urban settings, others showed recorded performances. As Chris Long has noted, “these films were Australian [Melbourne] audiences’ first major exposure to subject matter significantly different to the studio-bound kinetoscope product” (Long 1993b, 42). Most of the early films were popular performances acted for the camera. Few were narrative films. Most titles included actualities such as seascapes and urban films, each with a specific aesthetic. Westminster Bridge, London Street Scene and Rush Hour Record on London Bridge were not strictly ‘performances’. The street scenes of London showed something new and different, a point of view on the street life of the capital of the British Empire. The views of London’s streets on screen were a curiosity for Londoners, but they became a spectacular attraction for the Melbourne colonialist who identified as British. The cultural and economic interests of Melbourne, closely tied to London, provided a special bond with these images. The cinematic novelty relevant to this study is that the spectacle on show was the city itself. It was made up of people and vehicles moving along the street, which were filmed from a diagonal viewpoint to intensify lines and perspective (fig.25).

The view of many people walking and going about their business was nothing special in itself but it become spectacular when transported to the screen. Producing spectacle by filming the most ordinary reality was, by subtraction, a demonstration of the new transformative power of the Cinematographe. In this sense, the spectacle of London was different from the images of acrobats and magicians. More than the traditional attractions, which were performed for an audience, the filmed city views appeared to have been ‘monstrated’, made visible (Gaudreault 1990, 275). The modern cine-city existed not by itself but as a spectacle, insofar as it was first filmed and then apprehended by the viewer. It was the spectator who closed this new circle of meaning by re-creating the spectacular event through repetitive viewing. This mechanism is demonstrated by press reports on the way the first Melbourne spectators interacted with the figures appearing in R.W. Paul’s London films. As Bertrand writes, in those very first screenings “the audience even began to interact with the performances, returning to witness their favourite moment repeatedly” (Bertrand 1996, 30). The Bulletin (September 12, 1896), commented that

"some of the figures that travel ‘London Bridge’ are now regarded as dear old friends, especially the man who looks over his shoulder, when he gets halfway across the picture, as though startled by the roar from the gallery. Some of the ‘gods’ pay

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68 The list of titles included R.W. Paul and Kinetoscope films: scenes of nature (Rough Seas at Dover), sport and dance scenes (Kimpton Park Races, Boxing Cats, Sword Combat on Horseback, Negro Dancers, Burlesque Boxing Match, Gaiety co. Ballet) and a few urban scenes of London: Westminster Bridge, London Street Scene, Rush Hour Record on London Bridge) (Long 1993b, 42; Rossell 1995, 214).
sixpence two or three times a week, just for the pleasure of shouting at that particular man and seeing him turn his head.

The same event is recounted by another magazine:

*The ‘Westminster Bridge’ and ‘London Street’ scenes are very good, though in these again the vehicles move too rapidly; in the bridge view, the way a man who is walking along with his back to the spectators, suddenly turns his head and faces them for a moment, as if wondering what they are looking at, convulses the house.* *(Australian Photographic Journal, September 21st 1896, p. 220)*.

![Fig. 25. The man looking back, extract from a flipbook (Westminster Bridge, 1896), screenshot.](https://youtu.be/wLH93XuNRK0), accessed 10.03.2017.

The sudden movement of the man looking back at the camera from the centre of the picture (fig. 25), far from being casual, produces a theatrical event, small but important, which breaks the ordinary rhythm of the view. It creates a cinematic fact, a point of fissure, a rupture in the studied equilibrium of the scene. It was the repetitive watching of this event that produced a mnemonic ‘attraction’ for the spectators, who established an emotional ‘history’ with the film. That little event, the rupture in the *equilibrium* of the scene in the film, far from being a simple attraction, was exactly the ‘something’ that would create an empathy with the viewer. It created a cinematic memory, an iconic system (the character is in the centre of the screen) which, beyond its ordinary appearance, was formalised into a coded action. The confirm comes from a similar R.W. Paul’s film, *Blackfriars Bridge* (1896), which stages another man crossing the bridge and looking back at the viewer, again at centre of the composition.

The comparison between the Lumière’s three restaged versions of their first view *La sortie de l’usine Lumière à Lyon [I, II and III]* (1895) demonstrates the high level of theatrical control that could be exercised by these early films. *La sortie de l’usine Lumière à Lyon*, the view of the workers leaving the Lumière factory, was filmed three times at three different moments. Each version worked toward the achievement of a seamless action informed by a structural unity enclosed by the opening and closing of the factory doors. The success that turned this forty-second film into an international coded genre was the product of a theatrical intent. The sequential sorting of the workers filmed in three versions and the ‘accidental events’ occurring in the film (the bicycle, the dog, the fight) are all carefully planned. The ‘events’ are repeated (or excluded, such as the horse carriage) in a studied order
to obtain the desired effect of watching the opening and closing of a staged performance played by non-professional actors.70

The capacity of the camera to stage an ordinary event of urban life and the possibility for an urban spectator to see that event again and again, provided the initial ground for the cinematic city-image. Through the re-run of staged segments of city life, producers and spectators created the conditions through which the modern city could be re-experienced by many spectators at the same time. As has been observed “the industrial medium of cinema intractably based itself […] on the principle of infinite reproduction” (Barber 2002, 14), or, on a similar point, “cinema was a machine-based art whose mechanical reproduction made it available to the masses” (Gunning 2006, 300). By gathering mass, speed, movement, machine, light and repetition, cinema created a spectacular virtual double of the city. The cine-city was a fundamental constituent of the spirit of modernity (even though not all modern cities were equally cinematic) (Bruno 1997, 47). The cinematic medium, made of moving images in motion, was an ideal technology to visualise and help code the new points of view created by the industrial city. The moving film camera from the Venetian vaporetto, the descending view from the Tour Eiffel elevator, the first train-based phantom rides, the camera set on the tapis roulant at the 1900 Paris Exhibition, all depicted new modern visual perspectives filmed and formalised by cinema.71 Through film the new modern metropolis could not just be seen, but experienced and re-lived, by a public community of urban spectators (Hansen 1993).

2.2.3. The Lumière Catalogue: Worldviews and Genres

The commercial catalogues of the turn of the century […] performed the function of a systematic gathering and presentation of information that could best be compared with the first great global projects of the Encyclopaedia of Diderot and d’Alembert. In commodity form, the mail catalogue placed the world within the reach of its customers, much as the Internet does today. The film catalogues of the early film companies, but most obviously, those of Pathé-Frères and Lumière, offered the world in the form of consumable images. (Gunning 2008, 13).

The films of the 1896 Melbourne Cup Carnival represented the Australian entries in the Lumière catalogue. The presence of the city’s name in the catalogue has been subjected to several misrepresentations, which interestingly anticipate ambivalent future cinematic mis-representations of the urban space of Melbourne in cinema. One of the films in the Lumière catalogue, Le Patineur Grotesque, which was archived as filmed in Melbourne, was recently discovered72 to have been

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70 On cinematic staging in silent films see also Bordwell 2005, 43-82.

71 The Lumière catalogue featured travelling shots from boats: Panorama du Grand Canal pris d’un bateau (v.295) (Promio 1896); trains: Panorama du départ de la gare d’Ambérieu pris du train (temps de neige) (1897); the Eiffel lift: Panorama pendant l’ascension de la tour Eiffel (1897-8); funicular: Panorama du funiculaire de Bellevue, II (1897-8).

72 The Patineur Grotesque [catalogue n. 117] “Exercices excentriques d’un patineur muni de patins à roulettes”, was reported as being shot in Melbourne by Jackson (2010). More recent research asserts that the
actually filmed in Sydney\(^{73}\). Moreover, contrary to the practice of the catalogue Lumière of using cities names in film titles, the name of Melbourne only features in the shot of the train’s arrival (Arrivée d’un train à Melbourne, 1896).

The full critical edition of the Lumière catalogue edited by Aubert and Seguin in 1996 includes the 1,428 films shot and distributed by Lumière representatives from 1896 to 1991\(^{74}\). In 1896 the Lumière Company had the money, vision and experience to pursue a business plan on a global scale. The goal was to profit quickly from the invention, marketed as Cinématographe Lumière, before it became outdated by a more advanced technology\(^{75}\). In 1896 the Cinématographe was a technological wonder: small, elegant, manually powered and light (5 kilos). It was the first film camera able to shoot, print and screen a film, all in one. A Lumière opérateur could potentially shoot an event, go back to his hotel room, print the film, and screen it that same night (Barnouw 1993, 6). It was a terrific combination of features that in two years brought the Cinématographe to almost every corner of the world. The first Lumière screening (La sortie de l’usine Lumière à Lyon) took place in Lyon on March 22, 1895. The first commercial screening was in Paris on December 28 1895. In the first six months of 1896 the Cinématographe premiered in the UK, Belgium, Holland, Germany, Austria, Hungary, Switzerland, Spain, Italy, Serbia, Russia, Sweden and the US (June 26, New York) (Musser 1999, 156). At the end of that same year, it arrived in Algeria, Tunisia, Turkey, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Japan, Mexico and Australia (Barnouw 1993, 11).

Geography was one of the main categories in the catalogue. As Gubern has shown, the distribution of the views constructs a filmed geography shaped by established and recent colonialism (Gubern 2010)\(^{76}\). For Barnouw the work of the Lumière company, as well as that of other early film

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\(^{73}\) The comparison between the cinematic representation of Melbourne and Sydney has been briefly debated at the end of this chapter and in Chapter Six (feature films). What I am interested in is, in this case, mostly the mis-identification of Melbourne as Sydney, occurring until the 1920s. The attribution to Melbourne of Le Patineur Grotesque, is followed by the mis-attribution to Melbourne (1917) of a photograph of the Queen Victoria Building in Sydney by travelogue-inventor Burton Holmes (Holmes 2006). Another case is British Pathé’s attribution to Melbourne of British Pathé newsreel of Mr. Hughes, the prime Minister, opening the Bank of Australia Building, which occurred in Sydney (British Pathé, film id: 1864.26).

\(^{74}\) Most of the films were shot by unknown operators (784). Alexandre Promio, shot 348 films, Gabriel Veyre 72, Charles Moisson 48, Constant Girel 37, Louis Lumière 34, Felix Mesguich 23, Gaston Velle 13, Sestier 8, Calcina 8, Shibata 5 (source Seguin and Aubert 1996). There were films shot in Australia, and possibly in other locations, which screened locally but were never included in the international catalogue.

\(^{75}\) As it turned out the Lumière Cinématographe would already be ‘old’ by 1900, as its films could only be played on Lumière projectors.

\(^{76}\) The views can be organised in three large geographical groups: French National views (813), European views (371) and Extra-European views (235). The French National views constitute, with 813 films, the majority of a mostly self-referential Franco-centric corpus. The European views are 371 with Italy having the largest share (108 films), followed by Britain (100), Spain (45), Germany (33), Russia (26). Most of the countries displayed colonial, cultural or economic ties with France. Asia has 97 views: 33 in Japan, 33 in
companies, “reflected the attitudes that made up the colonial rationale”. And this wasn’t surprising as “most of the main film-producing countries were nations with colonial empires”. (Barnouw 1993, 23). One effect of this kind of marketing power was a cultural and aesthetic hegemony. One of the major accomplishments of the Lumière Company was the promotion of an early cinematic aesthetic. The company sold a new technology (the Cinématographe) with a catalogue of views that informed a coded aesthetic of the city. The Cinématographe and the other apparatuses allured spectators by promoting French, British and American views of the world already successfully mediated through an existing colonial tradition of photography, advertising and the broader visual arts. In this sense, the world film catalogues weren’t just a list of films, they also created a mirroring world catalogue of city-images, and of ‘genres’ of views, classifying the various city-settings according to their status as spectacle and in relation to their iconicity.

Most of the views ‘genres’ were urban and were filmed according to coded theatrical procedures, when they were not staged directly for the camera. One of the aims was to frame reality by capturing the greatest intensity of movement, both in terms of dynamism in composition, and the actual movement of people and vehicles in the frame. The composition preferred points of view constructing diagonal lines, with an intensity that was heightened by the movement of people and vehicles along these lines. The careful coding of the views brought popularity to the ‘genres’ of city-views or ‘scenics’ as they were also called at the time. The crowded military parades and the visits of notable celebrities were amongst the most popular in the Lumière catalogue. The second most popular topic was the selection of city-views.

The catalogue displayed views of over 140 cities from 34 countries around the world. It presented Western cities such as Paris, London, Lyon, Rome, New York, Berlin, Vienna, and Moscow, as well as non-Western cities; Saigon, Cairo, Algiers, Constantinople and Jerusalem. The great majority of the city-views were filmed in the street showing people in popular city areas. The selection of the places followed mostly that of the Grand Tour, showing famous places that would compose a visually encyclopaedic and touristic catalogue.

Vietnam and 15 in Turkey. North Africa has 86 views from Tunisia (18), Algeria (33), Morocco and Egypt (35). America has 52 views of which 31 where shot in the United States. Australia is recorded with 8 views.

77 “When the Lumière cameramen descended the peninsula to immortalise in their vues Naples and the South, they embarked upon the last vedutisti Grand Tour of the 19th century. They set out to capture a representation of the city potentially mobile and in transformation, but which, in factual reality, followed the model of the iconographic patrimony, codified and historicised, firmly rooted in painting and in particular the genre of vedutismo.” (Virgolin 2010, 181).
2.3. **Melbourne events on screen**

To understand the role of news event films, actualities and newsreels in this first period, it would be enough to recognise that they represent at least two thirds of the film production in and about Melbourne from 1896 to 1940. Of over 1,600 ‘Melbourne’ films listed in the National Film and Sound Archive (NFSA) under the keyword ‘Melbourne’, 1,120 films, or two thirds, are newsreels or actualities. The rest consists of 31 advertisements, 236 documentaries, 27 feature films and 184 home movies. Of these, only a fraction, probably less than ten percent, actually display street scenes or footage of Melbourne’s urban space.

The Lumière films of the *Melbourne Cup* (1896) were not newsreels but ‘news event films’. That is news film documenting on popular events (sports and politics), different from actualities which documented daily or repeating ordinary events. The films of the *Melbourne Cup* were not only the first films shot in Melbourne, but also the first Australian news films reporting on a popular event. The decision to film Australia’s most popular horse-race with its gathering of celebrities, instead of the city’s urban space, is indicative of a long running trend. The popularity of the Melbourne Cup Carnival amongst the early films of Melbourne is also indicative of the importance of event-films in local cinematic representation. Following the Lumière films, the Melbourne Cup Carnival was filmed again in 1897 (The V.R.C. Derby by Ernest Jardine Twaites), in 1907, in 1910 (Johnson and Gibson), in 1915, in 1916 (Australasian Films) and probably in each of the following years.

In all these films, as in most event-films, the city is not introduced, unless the event itself takes place on the road, on in front of a public building, as is often the case in relation to marches, demonstrations or parades. Even when event-films are shot in public spaces, as in *The Opening of the Melbourne Parliament and Royal Visit* (Perry 1901), the camera closes in on its subject, carefully avoiding master shots, and rarely including street views or panoramic views of the city. While this was the rule there were a few exceptions, such as the wider and more panoramic shots of Spring Street and the Carlton Gardens in the commemoration of *Armistice Day* filmed in 1925 for the Australasian Gazette. Perhaps as a result of the static nature of the commemoration, the less than two-minute news feature relies on editing and the combination of closer and wider shots, closing with a rare panoramic shot from the Royal Exhibition Building to Parliament House. The Lumière *Melbourne Cup* can be

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78 The classification of the ‘news event-film’ should also include most of those films classified as ‘documentary’ when they relate to a single event. For McKernan “news event films followed the simple premise of giving illustration to events that another medium, newspapers, already had made into news.” (2010a, 861).

79 The first Lumière film shot in Australia *Passengers Alighting from the Paddle Steamer “Brighton” at Manly* (October 25, 1896), is an actuality now considered lost.

80 The National Film and Sound Archive has documents on the filming of the Melbourne Cup Carnival in: 1919 (Australasian Gazette), 1920, 1922, 1923, 1924 (Australasian Gazette), 1925, 1926, 1927, 1928 and in 1929 (Fox Movietone), etc.
regarded as a forerunner of later news event films such as the *Federation Celebration. Sydney. 19.01.01* (1901), *Inauguration of the Commonwealth of Australia* (1901), and *Footy Final* (1909).

### 2.3.1 The Melbourne Cup Films

The Lumière *Melbourne Cup* films do not show streetscapes or city views, instead they portray Melbourne’s wealthy society at the most important of Australian racecourses. In the filming of this staged spectacle the space is reorganised according to precise rituals. For instance, the view *The Lawn Near the Band Stand* shows the parade of a well-dressed crowd which fits handsomely with the Lumière company’s theatrical aesthetics and with their other filmed views of celebrities. This view reconnects with the balanced views of J. W. Lindt and with views of French society observed in French impressionist paintings⁸¹. In different ways, the ‘Cup’ film introduces the practice of staging the event for an audience. There is an augmented value of spectacle in these films that goes beyond the mere documentation of an event.

The Lumière *opérateur* Marius Sestier and his wife arrived in Sydney from India on the 16th of September 1896. The first Australian public screening occurred on 28th September at 237 Pitt Street, Sydney (Reade 1972, 9). The first Australian Lumière film shot by Sestier was ‘Passengers Leaving SS ‘Brighton’ at Manly’ (now lost), which screened at the Salon Lumière on the 27th of October. The following day Sestier left for Melbourne where, in partnership with Henry Walter Barnet, he filmed the VRC Derby on the 31ˢᵗ of October, and then The Melbourne Cup on the 3ʳᵈ of November. The footage of the Melbourne Cup and other Lumière films were screened in Melbourne at the Princess Theatre on the 19ᵗʰ and 20ᵗʰ of November. Later, Sestier moved back to Sydney where he screened the complete list of the Cup films at the Criterion Theatre on November 24ᵗʰ. He then proceeded to Adelaide, and later to Western Australia, before returning to Sydney. He never returned to Melbourne again. Sestier left Australia in May 1897 (Jackson 2010).

According to Jackson (2010), in this period Sestier shot 19 films, 14 of which were part of the Melbourne Cup Carnival. All of the films shot between the 31ˢᵗ of October and the 3ʳᵈ of November are now widely known as “The Melbourne Cup 1896”. Jackson (2010) has confirmed 11 of the Lumière film titles screened in Australia during Sestier’s visit. Once shipped back to France, only seven of those titles would ‘make it’ into the Lumière catalogue, where they would be listed as filmed

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⁸¹ *The Lawn Near the Band Stand* recalls the crowd gathering in Renoir’s painting *Moulin de la Galette* (1876). *The Arrival of the Horses* can be linked to Manet’s *Races at Longchamp* (1864), even though they are seen from a different perspective. The weighing of the horses reminds us of Degas’ *After the Weighing* (1866), and the presentation of “Newhaven” has affinities with Degas’ *Chevaux de course devant les stands* (1866). For more comparison of Lumière films to paintings see also Routt 1996, 37-48.
in Australia. The films screened in Australia are listed below, following Jackson’s findings (2010), (in square brackets the French titles of the films released in the catalogue)\textsuperscript{82}.

**Derby Day films**

1. *Derby Day (the Betting Ring)*
2. *Lady Brassey placing the Blue Ribbon on “Newhaven”*

**Cup Day films**

1. *Arrival of Train, Hill Platform* [652 Arrivée d’un train à Melbourne (Australie)]
2. *The Lawn near the Band Stand* [418 La Foule] (fig.26)
3. *[On the lawn,] near the Grand Stand* [419 Arrivée du gouverneur] (fig.27)
4. *The Saddling Paddock* [421 Sortie des chevaux] (fig.29)
5. *Finish of Hurdle Race, Cup Day* [420 Enceinte du pesage] (fig.28)
6. *Start of the Melbourne Cup Race* [422 La course] (fig.30)
7. *Weighing-in for the Cup* [423 Presentation du Vainqueur] (fig.31)
8. *Newhaven, his Trainer, W. Hicke nbotham, and Jockey, Gardiner, after the race*

Sestier’s films were mostly shot in the first two months of his seven-month stay in Australia. The Melbourne Cup views, the first cinematic images of Melbourne, are set in a suburban location (the Flemington racecourse), populated by wealthy representatives of the city’s inhabitants (Jackson 2015). A possible reason for the lack of urban views was due to Sestier’s profile as Lumière’s representative.

Sestier was not a filmmaker or a photographer, he was a chemist, and belonged to the same social background as the Lumière brothers; the Lyon bourgeoisie. In contrast to most of the Lumière representatives, Sestier was the holder of an exploitation contract obtained through his personal friendship with the Lumières. His main interest was, therefore, in selling the most tickets to the screenings, for which he received a share of the profits. When the Lumières prepared the launch of the Cinématographe they organised the signing of few exploitation contracts with specific rights for specific locations. They granted:

> concessions to people who thereby acquired ‘the right to exploit the cinematograph’ for a given time for a town, a county or a country. These concession-owners were commercial people, show-business professionals. In England, it was Félicien Trewey, an old friend of the Lumière family (whom we see in a Partie d’écarté). In Australia it was Marius Sestier, also a friend of Lumière, who signed an exploitation contract before leaving Lyons. (Jeancolas 1996, 15)

Hence Sestier came to Australia as a businessman. His interest was in doing what was necessary to promote the Cinématographe locally so that he would be able to gain the best revenue. The

\textsuperscript{82} I have listed the Lumière catalogue name and the catalogue number in brackets; on the left the Australian titles reported by the Australian newspapers. If the brackets are empty it means that the films were not archived in the catalogue. For more information about the Lumière Catalogue see Gubern 2010, Aubert and Seguin 1996, and also Seguin 1994 and Sestier 1896.
Melbourne Cup Carnival was an expected choice, particularly in that period of the year. It made sense in relation to the local exploitation of the concession, both in terms of selling tickets and, later, the sale of the two cameras. He was not the only one to have considered this subject, which became one of the most recorded cinematic events in Australia. According to Laughren “Carl Hertz floated the idea of filming the Melbourne Cup but he lacked a camera”, while Sestier had the technology and access to local photographic facilities (Laughren 1995, 14).

Fig. 26. Lumière. _La Foule_, 1896, catalogue image. https://catalogue-lumiere.com/la-foule/

Fig. 27. Lumière. _Arrivee du Gouverneur_, 1896, catalogue image. https://catalogue-lumiere.com/arrivee-du-gouverneur/

Fig. 28. Lumière. _Enceinte du Pesage_, 1896, catalogue image. https://catalogue-lumiere.com/enceinte-du-pesage/

Fig. 29. Lumière. _Sortie des Chevaux_, 1896, catalogue image. https://catalogue-lumiere.com/sortie-des-chevaux/

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Six of the fourteen films of the Melbourne Cup were selected for the Lumière catalogue under the generic title La Course (‘The Race’). Contrary to most of the items in the catalogue, these ‘views’ were only specified by genre. Melbourne appeared in the Lumière catalogue only as the location of the arriving train: ‘Arrivée d’un train in Melbourne (Australie)’, the view opening the Australian screenings.

Even though it only led to the production of one-reel films, the filming of the 1896 Melbourne Cup forced Sestier and the Lumières to deal with the problem of ‘re-staging an event’. There was a need to present a coherent narrative over a small number of films. In comparing the screening of the Cup films in Australia with their presentation in the Lumière Catalogue, a strategy can be identified; moving from the specific to the general, from the determinate to the non-determinate, from the local to the international. Most of the Australian screenings presented some, or all, of the views of the Cup in chronological order, which made sense because the Australian public was familiar with the unfolding of the race. In the Lumière catalogue, instead, six views were selected, with a seventh, the ‘arriving train’, added later as an event unrelated to the race.

The catalogue views were:

1. 418 La Foule [The Lawn near the Band Stand]
2. 419 Arrivée du gouverneur [Arrival of H.E. Lord Brassey and Suite]
3. 420 Enceinte du pesage [Weighing-out for the Cup]
4. 421 Sortie des chevaux [The Saddling Paddock]
5. 422 La course [Finish of the Melbourne Cup Race]
6. 423 Presentation du Vainqueur [Newhaven and its Trainer]
7. 652 Arrivée d’un train à Melbourne (Australie) [Arrival of Train, Hill Platform]

In term of representation and specificity it is interesting to see how the ‘films’ of the Melbourne Cup were re-titled and ‘edited’ by the curators of the Lumière Catalogue. In the original Australian version, the titles were specific. They referred to specific nouns related to people (Lord Brassey,
Hickenbotham), a horse (Newhaven), places (Band Stand, Hill Platform) or events (the Melbourne Cup). The rendering in the Lumière catalogue has none of that specificity. The Cup has been translated from a local event to a non-specific or generic international event. The change of perspective from ‘somewhere’ to ‘anywhere’ operates on two interconnected levels: de-placement in classification and the adoption of a more compressed sequence. The local event of the Melbourne Cup has been transformed into the general La Course, ‘the Horse Race’, a race that might have taken place anywhere in the world. What is important is that the event has been condensed in to a basic sequence: first the crowd, the people, and then the Governor, the authority. Then the competitors are weighed, and paraded for the viewers. Finally, there is the race and the winner.

By analysing the Melbourne Cup films closely, it is possible to verify that Sestier, like other Lumière operators, had strict instructions on how to compose his frame and ‘scenes’. Most Lumière views foreground spatial strategies relating to the composition of the frame, as well as the narrative and the direction of the action, as noted by Koeck (2009), Deutelbaum (1983) and Aumont (1995). These spatial strategies are more evident in the views La foule (418), Arrivée du gouverneur (419), La course (422) and Arrivée d’un train à Melbourne (Australie) (652). In these views the camera is elevated on a tripod rising from ground level. The picture comprises a pictorial view with a progression of visual planes enhancing the depth of the image. The composition of La Foule uses the structure of the Grandstand as a perspective cue, echoing the way other Lumière urban views use buildings. The architectural structure is set as a background, along a diagonal axis with an external vanishing point. The diagonal framing enhances the movement of the people walking by and, at times, coming closer to the camera and increasing in size. They then disappear left of frame, but not without throwing a look of curiosity at the camera. These overlapping movements create a perspective of crowded spatial progression and spectacle, common to many Lumière views. From the right side of the frame to the left, the human figures build a crescendo of the spatial field by using people as perspective cues, ranging from close up to long distance (fig. 26).

A key effect of these and other Lumière views is produced by staging the ‘event’ in relation to a person or a vehicle. The camera is set up in proximity to the approaching vehicle or person. They come closer towards the camera, and then disappear out of frame. The film of the arrival of the Governor shows the basic narrative sequence mentioned above, filming the progressive appearance of

84 The pictorial effect is not dissimilar in principle to the one used by Henry Burn and S.T. Gill to enhance the spatial depth of their urban views of Melbourne (cfr. first part of this chapter)

85 Koeck sees a similar spatial depth in Church Street (700) and Lime Street (701) filmed by Alexandre Promio in Liverpool in 1897. The framing is diagonal and permitted a “form of a fore-, middle- and background, using a composing technique that is not unlike that found in painterly art. In fact, almost the same location is used in countless renderings, paintings and still photographs of St Georges’s Hall” (Koeck 2009, 73)
the personalities and then their disappearance (Deutelbaum 1983, 303). Aumont, after Bazin 86, points out the centrifugal nature of this movement. A small character, or vehicle, enters the frame and crosses its centre while growing in size, then disappears on the left-side or right-side of the screen. The progressive ‘in and out of frame’ action sets up a centrifugal motion that reverses the centripetal force of traditional perspective-based framing (Aumont 1995, 16). Often in the Lumière films, the framing of the urban space is centripetal whereas the action is centrifugal, it comes out of the screen. The frame – continues Aumont – establishes a relationship between the position of the camera and that of the filmed subject, thus defining the camera angle and the viewpoint of the filmmaker (Aumont 1995, 17).

Lumière’s dynamic staging and centrifugal action are discernible in the Melbourne Cup films when compared to pre-cinematographic views of the same event. *La course* (Finish of the Melbourne Cup Race), *Arrival of the Governor* and *Arrivée d’un train à Melbourne (Australie)* (Arrival of Train, Hill Platform). *La course* (fig. 30) can be compared with a printed view of the finish of the 1894 Derby Cup (fig. 32), and *Arrivee du Governour* (fig. 27) with the photograph *Arrival of Governor’s Party* (fig. 33), both published in *The Illustrate Australian* on November 8th 1894. Both previous views choose to look at the finishing line from afar, while the Lumière films record the race and the arrival of the Governor from the stand, close to the crowd. The main difference in framing is in the proximity to the event and in the appearance and disappearance of the event. The Lumière view is closer to the track, with a lower vantage point, looking directly at the people and the track. It is possible to see the people moving, and glimpse the horses, but it is not possible to determine who has won, as the part of the action is out of frame. While this choice of framing may seem bizarre, it validates the notion of centrifugal action in Lumière cinema, implying a reality that exists outside of the frame. As Burch has

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86 See André Bazin, in “Film and Painting”: “The outer edges of the screen are not, as the technical jargon would seem to imply, the frame of the film image. They are the edges of a piece of masking that shows only a portion of reality. The picture frame polarises space inwards. On the contrary, what the screen shows us seems to be part of something prolonged indefinitely into the universe. A frame is centripetal, the screen centrifugal” (Bazin 1968, 166)
noted “the general rule in the Lumière films and in the subsequent ‘Lumière school’ was that the film (the shot) ended when there was no film left in the camera, [...] which gave them the implicit signification that the action went on outside the film (before and after”). (Burch 1990, 191)

The scene of the arrival of the train at Flemington Station (fig. 34) also displays the ‘theatrical composition’ common to the Lumière films, which is even more evident when compared to a photograph of the same train arrival taken two years earlier (fig. 35). Besides being static the photograph frames the station from a higher and more distant vantage point. The platform is photographed with an axial view flattening the crowd in a centripetal perspective. In contrast the Lumière film’s dynamic framing builds on a diagonal perspective of the platform. The train arriving in a centrifugal motion from the top-left corner of the frame, crosses the screen and partially exits to the right side. The crowd exiting the train and approaching the camera creates a dynamic, living perspective.
2.3.2 After Lumière

Before Sestier’s departure in 1897, the two Lumière Cinématographe cameras in his possession were put up for sale. The Salvation Army Limelight Department managed by Joseph Perry bought the first Lumière camera (a second was ordered in 1899). The other camera was finally acquired in 1898 by the Queensland Government to produce government promotional materials for the Department of Agriculture and Stock (fig. 38).

After Sestier’s departure a certain amount of filmmaking activity flourished in the city as Melbourne became the first main centre of film production in Australia (“our early film industry was based in Melbourne” [Long 1993e, 38]). According to Chris Long (1993e, 40-41), the primacy of being the first Melbournian filmmaker should go to Ernest Jardine Thwaites, a Melbourne-based engineer who constructed his own film camera in 1897. With the help of Robert William Harvie, he started filming local Melbourne scenes from March 1897 onwards, including the 1897 Melbourne Cup Carnival. Thwaites set up a commercial space in the Melbourne Opera House to deliver

*speedy news reporting, notably the screening on the evening of the event of horse races such as the Caulfield Cup, VRC Derby and Melbourne Cup of 1897. Thwaites continued filming sports events in 1898, including cricket and Australian Rules football, and devised a flip-book with scenes printed from his films, but left film production in mid-1898 for the marketing of Edison Phonographs. (Long and McKernan 1996b)*

In that same year 1897 Joseph Perry started a series of film tests for the Salvation Army Limelight Department. The department had been started in 1892 to organise evangelical public slide projections with a ‘twin lensed’ magic lantern screening hand-painted slides. In 1897 the department turned to film and acquired the Cinematographe and other cameras. Some of the earliest filmed images of Melbourne’s streets were probably recorded by Perry and his department, who “in 1897 began shooting short (23 one minute) motion picture films describing the Army’s social and religious work” (Moran and Veith 2005, 5). The now lost Melbourne Street Scene (October 1897) and Early Test Films (1898) (fig. 37) showed “crowds waiting to board trams in Wellington Parade, East Melbourne, with Clevedon Mansion in the background, now the site of the Hilton Hotel” (ABC 2001) (fig. 37). There are only a few remaining fragments of these Early Test Films shot by Perry in October 1897 (Long and McKernan 1996a). The surviving image of that crowded Melbourne street of 1897, suggests a respect for the rule of the 45-degree angle in filming, thus showing an apparent continuity with the Lumière (fig. 36) and R.W. Paul’s films. Perry was also the first in Australia to shoot fictional film producing works like Hungry Man Stealing Bread (And His Arrest By Police) (Perry

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87 The earliest surviving urban scenes filmed in those early days are those created in Brisbane by Wills in 1899, who filmed the tram passing through Queen Street and Victoria Bridge in Brisbane, still respecting the transversal perspective of the street.
1898) and *Prison Gate Brigade (Welcoming Released Prisoner at Gaol Gates)* (Perry 1898), the latest has a scene in the suburb of Abbotsford (fig. 38) (Long 1993b, 41).

Limelight Department’s growing popularity would lead the department to became Australia’s first production unit, delivering religious as well as professional services to the community. Besides producing mixed media shows for their stakeholders, such as *Soldiers of the Cross* (Perry 1900), the department accepted commissions to shoot footage outside the Salvation Army. Among these commissions they filmed the surviving *The Inauguration of the Australian Commonwealth* (Sydney 1901), *The Opening of the Melbourne Parliament* (1901) and *Under Southern Skies* (1902), a history of Australia from settlement to Federation (Long 1993b, 34). Of the other 300 films shot mostly in Melbourne by the department to help fight poverty in the streets very little has been preserved. (Long 1993b, 36).

All these scenes have in common the position of the camera within the action. The angle of view is similar even though the proximity of the camera to the subject changes. The two Australian urban scenes (fig. 37 and 38) have a slightly more detached position leaving open a wider portion of urban space. The width of the space and the distances between people, traffic and buildings betray a diminished density and a wider space between buildings.

### 2.3.3. ‘Event News films’ in Melbourne

Most of the early films shot in Melbourne documented and made more accessible actual events. These ‘actualities’ were almost exclusively focussed on the event and its venue without bothering to introduce the city. The numerous *Melbourne Cup* films, the footy matches, the political events, such as the opening of parliament, and entertainment-related events such as the opening of the St. Kilda Luna Park mostly ignored city settings.

The lack of such visual introductions to the city is characteristic of most Melbourne event films, particularly recordings of sports events. The films move directly to the event without introducing the city or the location as more frequently happens in films of Sydney. Most of the films of the Melbourne Cup Carnival consist of a sequence of small events: the weighing, the arrival, the presentation of the winner. One of the most popular sports events were Australian rules football matches. In the surviving films the focus is on the game: *Footy Final* (Spencer 1909) shows snippets of a match.

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88 The Melbourne based Limelight Department was called upon to film in many Australian and New Zealand locations. In 1901 the Department went to Sydney to film the celebration of the new Federation at Centennial Park in Sydney (Long 1993e, 38).
Other types of actualities filmed events within the city streets, such as demonstrations, marches, parades and, later, news about street-based events: accidents, roadworks, etc. These films were fairly static and not very preoccupied with composition and balance. A limited exception was usually made for the filming of parades. They did not usually introduce the city through separate shots, but incorporated a wider framing of the urban setting to include the site of the event. An early example is the wider framing in *Independent Order of Rechabites Jubilee Presentation* (1906), a small actuality film recording the presentation of the Order of Rechabites on Princes Bridge. The wider shot allows the footage to locate the Jubilee presentation as coming from Swanston Street towards the bridge.

Melbourne newsreels before the 1920s commonly reveal a lack of wider shots documenting the city, or even to contextualise the event within its settings, particularly when they are urban settings. The inauguration of Luna Park in December 1912 and the popularity of the beaches in those years has been recorded in several newsreels: *St. Kilda Beach Scenes* (1912), *Luna Park St. Kilda is Now Open* (1912), *St. Kilda Esplanade* (1913), *St. Kilda Esplanade* (1914). There are few exceptions to this trend. One exception is the footage of the St. Patrick’s Day Parade in Melbourne in *Ireland Will Be Free* (1920), an unusual political-film celebrating the reclamation of Ireland’s independence. Filmed with multiple cameras, the documentary records the huge Melbourne crowd following the parade and the floats, but also displays the city surrounding the parade with wide-angle camera shots. *Armistice Day* (1925), a newsreel filming the crowd commemorating Armistice Day on the steps of Parliament Building on Spring Street, is another exception to the trend. After a series of close shots of the crowd, the camera finally widens the view from the Parliament steps to a wider shot encompassing Spring Street, the Carlton Gardens and the Royal Exhibition Building. Another brief and rare example, amongst the majority of newsreel lacking urban views, is the shot in *Parliament Opens* (1925) framing the middle of Bourke Street from within two columns of Parliament House, featuring the silhouette of two people with hats looking at the view while standing next to the column on the right. These shots comprise a small catalogue of episodic urban views. We can understand how little Melbourne urban views are documented by comparing these with the with greater representation of urban views of Sydney on film.

Melbourne was initially more active than Sydney in film production, with its Limelight Department and the release of *The Story of the Kelly Gang* but, after 1909, Sydney became the preferred centre for the production of films. In 1912 film studios were opened in Rushcutters Bay in Sydney, and from that moment on a greater number of films was shot in Sydney. An external point of view on the cinematic representation of the two cities can be gleaned from an analysis of footage featuring Melbourne and Sydney in some of the main international news archives (British Pathé,
French Gaumont, and British Movietone), which are now available online. Depending on the archive\(^89\), Sydney features from two- to four-times more frequently than Melbourne in ‘events-film’, whether actualities or filmed news. The visual ‘staging’ of Melbourne and Sydney occurs differently. By comparing the footage of the 1954 royal tour in the two cities, we can observe that in the Sydney news *Australia Hails Queen* (British Movietone News 1954) the main story is introduced by the arrival of the Queen in the bay followed by many local boats, while in Melbourne *Royal Tour: Tasmania and Melbourne* (British Movietone News 1954) the report cuts immediately to the parade. None of the newsreel reports I have looked at from Melbourne before 1945 feature any form of introduction to the city, or panoramic views of it. While this is generally the case for Sydney too, it is not difficult to note that Sydney is occasionally featured in panoramic shots (as in *Flying Boat - Sydney AKA New Empire Flying Boat Leaves Sydney For Southampton* [1938]). The more photogenic aspect of Sydney is also further confirmed by the wider presence of Sydney views and images in feature films\(^90\).

**Conclusion**

This chapter has analysed early pictorial and photographic representations of urban space pre-dating and surrounding the arrival of cinema in Melbourne. The discussion of the photographic work of Charles Nettleton and J.W. Lindt has shown the existence of at least two separate stylistic approaches to the city–image of Melbourne. On the one hand, the photographer Lindt and painters Henry Gritten and Henry Burn tended to recompose the urban space of Melbourne. They viewed it through what I have called a ‘theatrical’ perspective, involving formal balance and spectacle. They generally enhanced the features of the cityscape using techniques and visual artifice designed to impress the viewer. On the other hand, Nettleton seems to employ a less spectacular approach, underplaying traditional staging effects and highlighting the subject of the scene within a more discreet and unbalanced system of representation. These two different modalities in the representation of Melbourne appear to suggest a consonance with international and local circulation. For instance, Lindt, who had stronger international references in his work, employs a style that connects with a European tradition in the representation of the city, preferring clear and well-organised images, an axial focus, and effects and framing that let the single buildings stand out from the urban fabric. Whereas Nettleton’s lack of concern for balance and proportion provides a stronger focus on the documentary function of the image.

\(^89\) Searching the online database of each archive from 1896 to 1966 with the ‘Melbourne’ and ‘Sydney’ keywords gives the following results: *British Movietone Archive*: Melbourne 253, Sydney 618; *British Pathé Archive*: Melbourne 294, Sydney 880; *French Gaumont Archive*: Melbourne 83, Sydney 147.

\(^90\) See the section on *On the Beach* in chapter 6 for a discussion of feature films shot in Melbourne and Sydney.
From the very beginning, this difference of approach is replicated in cinematic representations of Melbourne. The second section, examining the relations between the Melbourne economic crises of the 1890s and the arrival of cinema, shows the difference between the ‘theatrical’ composition of the Lumière films of Melbourne, and the ‘unseen city’ filmed by the Salvation Army Limelight Department. Contrary to well archived photographic views of Melbourne taken by Sestier, in extant early films there is little visible trace of representations of urban space in Melbourne. It is also not clear to what extent this absence may have been influenced by the economic crisis of the 1890s. This analysis has set in parallel the contrast between Melbourne’s urban space, sparsely represented during the post-‘Marvellous Melbourne’ economic downturn, and the spectacular new cinematic images of modern London and other thriving international metropolises that appeared on screen in Melbourne in 1896.
CHAPTER THREE

Melbourne Travelogues and Local Films I (1905-7)

In this chapter I analyse the earliest surviving films of Melbourne depicting street scenes with people, which can be divided into two categories; commercial city travelogues and local suburban production. In Melbourne, the development of commercial film production was sustained by the successful distribution in 1906 of Living London (Urban 1904) and followed by the making of the now lost Moving Melbourne (Taits 1906) and the first Australian feature film The Story of the Kelly Gang (Taits 1906). A year before, local suburban film production was represented by Workers Coming Out of a Swallow and Ariell’s Factory (Perry 1905) and followed by Living Hawthorn (Johnson and Gibson 1906). The difference between a more theatrical and ‘international’ image of Melbourne and a less formal, local and suburban cinematic image of the city became clear with the production of these early travelogues and local films.

The great success of Living London and of The Story of the Kelly Gang helped create the first commercial network of cinema theatres in Melbourne and Sydney (Shirley and Adams 1989, 22). It marked the beginning of a seven-year period (1905-1912) that saw the establishment, growth, success, popularity and eventual crisis of early commercial film production in Melbourne (Bertrand and Routt 1989, 10). Despite the limited number of surviving films available, the production between 1905 and 1908 confirms three main, long-lasting trends in the creation of Melbourne’s cinematic urban images, and in general, of urban-set silent films. Firstly, the creation of documentaries/travelogues structured around travelling shots through or across the city centre filmed from a car or a tram. Secondly, an increase in the production of local films involving suburban communities. Thirdly, the filming of specific sporting, political or festive events (the Melbourne Cup Carnival, marches, etc., most often with little visualisation of the city’s urban spaces). None of these trends were specific only to Melbourne, as they mostly represented a development of and a variation on film genres produced in the early international film catalogues. As in other cities, early urban film travelogues were mostly aimed at international audiences and markets, news footage was generally consumed locally with a small percentage circulating internationally, while local films were usually screened to the same filmed community.

Until 1906, Joseph Perry and his Salvation Army Limelight Department were probably the only Australian film unit capable of filming events in Melbourne. Their production output is today almost completely lost91. In 1906, theatrical entrepreneurs such as the brothers J. and N. Tait were encouraged into production by the successful screening of Living London in Melbourne and to the broader Australian public. They first produced Moving Melbourne and then The Story of the Kelly Gang. Johnson and Gibson, two

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91 Surviving films of the Salvation Army Limelight Department include: Inauguration of the Commonwealth (1901) in Centennial Park, Sydney; Royal Visit to Ballarat (1901); The Raising of Lazarus (1904); and Grand Memorial Service. The Funeral of Mayor Kenneth McLeod filmed on 8 January, 1908 at the Kew Cemetery, Melbourne.
entrepreneurs and industrial chemists running “a profitable sideline hiring film projectors, films and operators in the Melbourne suburbs” (Bertrand and Routt 1989, 10), helped make the Taits’ films and completed their own local productions, such as Living Hawthorn.

The first part of this chapter will analyse two films that set up a comparison between Melbourne and London, at the time the largest city in the world: Living London, distributed in Melbourne and Australia in 1906; and Moving Melbourne, produced as a companion piece to the former. Both films are reputedly lost and my analysis will concentrate mostly on their reception and comments made in the Australian press.

The second section will analyse Melbourne’s local identity of place within film production aimed at local suburban audiences. These films mostly depict scenes of workers leaving factories, a very popular genre in this period of early cinema. The first short film, Workers Coming Out of a Swallow and Ariell’s Factory, is set in a Port Melbourne street, the second and more important Living Hawthorn, shows the working life of the titular suburb. The only other suburban footage of Melbourne surviving from this period is an outdoor scene from The Story of the Kelly Gang, the first Australian feature film. It was shot on private ground in the former Chartersville Estate owned by the Tait brothers in the suburb of Heidelberg (Mitchell 2012, 10).

3.1. Inner-City Representation

3.1.1 Travelogues of the Modern City

Before moving onto the analysis of the films it is worth introducing the genre of the urban travelogue which influenced most films about the city including those about Melbourne. Richard Abel underlines the ‘fixity’ of the genre and its specificity to place:

*Travelogues appeared in widely differing exhibition contexts in this period, such as educational travel lectures, commercial fair/fairground shows, Hale’s Tours, or variety programs in small storefront movie theatres. The films’ subject matter, however, remained constant no matter what the venue: they were continually concerned with the specificity of place and space, combined with generalized notions of “timeless” scenery and the exotic.*

(Abel 2010, 928)

Travelogues became increasingly popular after 1905/6 with the growth of the circuit of cinema theatres. These films were cheaper to make as they did not involve actors, the use of artificial lights or the renting of a stage space. Moreover, travelogues were often sponsored by railway companies as they were supposed to promote tourism and travelling. As will be shown, these films generally have a basic narrative logic comprised of an introduction to the inner city, usually performed with a long take or a panorama, then a
series of views of cityscapes and city events, and shifting at the end to views of the suburbs, or the local community.

Travelogues also are characterized by an overwhelming dominance of extreme long shots. Finally, travelogues are filled with movement in just about every shot, either camera movement such as a pan or a tracking shot made by placing the camera on a moving train, or image-movement such as a shot of crashing waves or a crowd of moving people. Indeed, it can be argued that travelogues were the films that first innovated camera movement. (Abel 2010, 929)

3.1.2. Living London: the Spectacle of the Modern Cinematic City

For colonial Australians there was only one measure of urban civilisation: London.

(Davison 2016, 35)

The year 1906 marked a change in film distribution, as the success of Living London demonstrated the potential of the Australian film market. Until 1906 films were generally shown in spaces not initially conceived for this type of spectacle, such as theatres or fairgrounds. According to Bertrand, only from 1906 is it possible to speak of consistent film exhibition and of an Australian cinema when “exhibitors like T. J. West, Cozens Spencer and the Tait [brothers] were beginning to develop their national circuits” (Bertrand 1989, 26). Then in 1906 the Tait brothers (Charles, John Henry, James Nevin, Edward Joseph and Frank Samuel), Melbourne entrepreneurs active in the theatre business, acquired the Australian distribution rights for Living London (1904) from the Charles Urban Company in London (Jackson 2009).

In 2008, British film scholar Ian Christie unearthed eleven minutes of footage from a longer film, thought to be a section of the 40-minute Living London (1904) by Charles Urban (Christie 2009), in the Corrick Collection, preserved in the NFSA archives. The Charles Urban website, hosted by the leading scholar on Urban, Luke McKernan, disputes the finding, claiming the film is actually Urban’s Streets of London (Sims 1906)92. The NFSA maintains that the footage is from Living London (1904)93, a claim supported by the fact that there is no evidence of a film called Streets of London being distributed in Australia, as the title does not appear in any major newspaper of the period.

The four-part film was different from conventional travelogues, for it ran to the extraordinary length (for the time) of four thousand feet. Projected at a median speed of 16 frames per second, it guaranteed a

92 “An extract from one of the two parts of Urban’s original four-part documentary The Streets of London, an exceptionally observant view of London life. When the film was discovered by the National Film and Sound Archive of Australia it was thought to be Urban’s earlier film Living London (1904), and the film is still described as this on YouTube” from the Charles Urban web site [http://www.charlesurban.com/films.html (accessed 8.4.2013)].

93 On this topic, I have consulted the large selection of Australian newspapers accessible through the ‘Trove’ digital archive, available from the National Library of Australia. From this research it appears that Charles Urban’s Streets of London (1906) was never distributed to Australia, at least with this title. But if McKernan is right in his identification, it is quite possible that the film that was distributed in Australia was actually Streets of London, bearing the title of the previously unreleased and more popular production.
running time of over forty minutes, creating a one-hour show with three intermissions. As attested by Sally Jackson (2009), *Living London* became an overwhelming success, pioneering and testing a new way of distributing popular spectacle in Australia. It demonstrated the potential of cinema distribution in Australia, as well as a way of testing the commercial interest of Australian audiences in cinema (Jackson 2009).

Despite the fact that it is not a ‘Melbourne film’, *Living London* is analysed here because it was the first full-length cinematic portrait of a modern metropolis to come to Melbourne, and it had, I believe, a considerable effect on the representation of urban modernity in subsequent films of Melbourne. In my opinion the cinematic representation of the modern Western city had a ‘negative’ impact on filmed portraits of Melbourne, as most of the subsequent representations of Melbourne seem to have avoided the possibility of a comparison in scale, size and narrative with the large-scale representation of modernity projected, for instance, in *Living London*. The London film and its literary sources displayed a type of social modernity that would be extremely rare in future films of Melbourne. *Living London* projected on screen the quintessential modern capital, filled with social contrasts, business and poverty, crime and demographic density, visual shock and urban motion. These subjects, particularly crime, poverty and the presence of non-European migrants, are elements that would be very difficult to see in early Melbourne images, at least until 1940.


The books of ‘Living London’ were about the desire to know about crimes, stories and little events that made other people’s lives. Christie notes how Sims profiles “a series of ‘typical’ London scenes and customs, using the new technology to reproduce photographs” (Christie 2009). The film was inspired by a similar curiosity about metropolitan life.

This is how the film was announced in the Sydney press:

*The picture itself depicts sights along a route over the most important thoroughfares of London, not merely showing street scenes, but including ‘snapshots’ of the various human types from fashionable West End, London, to the slums of Whitechapel [Sydney Morning Herald, 17 March, 1906, p. 17]*

The reference to ‘types’, to human ‘snapshots’, seems to move from books to film. The ‘typification’ of modern life betrays an attraction for the use of iconic characters, the exemplary images of people that could

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94 Richard Higgins (2006) wrote of Sims: “a good part of his work’s popularity is due to his ability to render London legible for a middle class hungry for the assurance of legibility he provided. In particular, Sims uses melodrama to impose coherence on contemporary urban conditions. By creating the illusion that audiences were transported into the midst of urban destitution, melodrama collapses the distance between audience and the city’s spectacle while simultaneously ensuring that spectators could travel back to the refuge of their West End and suburban homes.”
stand for larger social groups. There is already a significant difference here between the human typology of *Living London* compared with that of later Melbourne films, which rarely feature ‘characters’.

The maid ‘with a speck of dust in her eye’ appearing in the film (Christie 2009) is not just a specific maid, we do not know her story, or her name, but she becomes the icon of a maid. As Christie writes, “it is an image of individuality amongst the city’s masses that testify to the new century concern with the individual in the crowd” (Christie 2009). She is a symbolic character standing for other individual girls in Edwardian London.

Some of the film’s novelty lay in its length and the absence of any title cards during the screening. The Brisbane Courier wrote that it “consists of 280 different views, and occupies over two hours in representation” (Brisbane Courier, 26th March 1906, p. 5). In reality, the film alone lasted between forty minutes and an hour, but was accompanied by other films and shows to reach the two-hour length. The result must have been, indeed, ‘startling’ for the Melbourne spectator. For Christie

> Living London showed London as the most exciting city of the new century, especially for those with personal and, in the case of Australia and other parts of the British Empire, [political] links. And how seeing Living London, with the added bonus of electrical illumination, must have been almost as good as visiting it. (Christie 2009)

Overall the reviews in the newspapers expressed a sense of awe at the size and activity of modern London. The report by *The Bendigo Advertiser* communicates well the excitement of watching the city waking up and moving into the day:

> The Stock Exchange, the very centre of the throbbing city, and similar scenes, passed before the eyes in one moving panorama. In contrast the spectator was taken through the congested and poor localities of the East of London. […] It was an impressive sight to witness London from its waking stage in the early morning till the traffic swelled into one sullen roaring stream, perfectly unmanageable apparently, but in reality controlled by a finger – that of the policeman.

Other Australian reviewers noted the experience of looking at different social classes almost bumping into each other on the street, while underlining the cosmopolitan nature of London:

> The spectator obtains a panoramic view of the great capital of the British Empire and the London life is depicted with vivid realism. […] The scenes displayed are truly cosmopolitan. London by night is a startling picture whilst London by day is a startling replica of what may be seen at any time in the streets of the great city. The camera which produces the beautiful images is no respecter of persons, hence it is that in the busy streets, jostling one another in the hurried movements, are lords and ladies and the occupants of the slum quarters of the great metropolis. [Euroa Advertiser, July 20, 1906, p. 2]

Compared to these appreciations of cosmopolitan London on screen, cinematic modern Melbourne would present a much tamer version of modernity, suggesting differing trends and perspectives. The films of Melbourne have avoided, even in recent times, full-size portraits of the city. In Melbourne’s filmography, there are no ‘feature films about the city’ comparable to the size and length of footage documenting cinema’s interest for the British Capital (Brunsdon 2007). Nor have there been any full-length filmed essays such as Patrick Keiller’s *London* (1994) or *Robinson in Space* (1997). Most of the films about Melbourne discussed
in this research - from *Moving Melbourne* (1906), *Marvellous Melbourne, Queen City of the South* (1910), and *Melbourne Today* (1931), to *Sunday in Melbourne* (1958) and *The City Speaks* (1966) - are around or below twenty minutes in length. This lack of “full-size” representation is not casual, and should not be erroneously considered as merely a ‘lack’, as it was most likely a ‘low profile’ response to an imposing dominant image of the modern city emanating from London. In this comparative perspective, the analysis of events, such as the success of *Living London* in Australia, is important to our understanding of films about Melbourne.

### 3.1.3. Cities in Motion and ‘Phantom rides’

Within a comparative perspective it is important to introduce here the ‘genre’ of the ‘phantom ride’ and its successive development into the filmed travelogue. As Gunning has stated, the “camera movement in early cinema played an unusually important role. [They] appeared most often in non-fiction films, defining one of the key genres of early cinema, the phantom train ride” (Gunning 2005, 132). This was a tracking shot taken from the front of a train (or tram) looking forward, visualising the point of view of the traveling vehicle. The movie camera moved forward while the hidden vehicle remained invisible to the spectator, at least pictorially. The effect was an eerie experience in which the point of view of the spectator identified itself with the point of view of the camera, while being transported forward in a phantasmic and not fully explicable movement. The vehicle had to be imagined by the spectators, inferring it from the type of street and from the surrounding vehicles. This kind of ambivalence about the mode of transportation created an ambiguity that was central to the long-lasting popularity of this type of shot. The ‘phantom ride’ well embodied the attraction of cinema’s illusory promise to ‘see all’ in a single long take. This promise was already embedded in the spectacular success of the ‘moving panorama’ productions, seen between 1860 and the 1890s by an estimated hundred million people (Miller 1996, 34).

The first attested ‘phantom ride’, or traveling shot, was cranked by Alexander Promio for the Lumières in Venice from a traveling boat. The film was called *Panorama du Gran Canal vu d’un bateau* (1896), as the camera movement was initially considered an extension of earlier painted panoramas (Uricchio 2011, 234). Both the painted and the cinematic panorama shared an equal interest in spectacle and the wondrous. They also set the spectator within a centripetal experience and a mastering point of view (the Greek etymology of the word panorama means to ‘see all’). On the other hand, the phantom ride was an ambivalent experience, combining full control of the visual field with a clear lack of control of the mode of transportation out-of-the frame\(^\text{95}\). After Promio’s first traveling shots of Venice in 1186, the ‘phantom ride’ sequence was repeated many times, particularly in French and British film productions. Whether from a boat, a train or a balloon, the panorama was a regular feature in the Lumière catalogue. Charles Urban took the ‘phantom ride genre’ to new heights by producing *View from the Engine Front - Barnstaple* (1898, running

\(^{95}\) For more information about the ‘phantom ride’ see Gunning 2005, pp. 132-6 and Rabinovits 2005b, 791-792.
two minutes) and *View from the Engine Front - Ilfracombe* (1898, running four minutes) for the British Warwick Trading Company.

After the fading of their early popularity, ‘phantom ride’ sequences enjoyed a renaissance after 1904 thanks to ‘Hale’s Tours’. The ‘Tours’ created a new type of exhibition space for films. It was based on a mechanical invention of a still vehicle, the size of a tram, which provided the realistic illusion of traveling on a tram or in a train carriage. It was presented in St. Louis in 1904 by George Hale, patented in 1905 in the United States as ‘Pleasure Railways’, and soon commercialised as ‘Hale’s Tours of the World’ (Fielding 1970, 35). ‘Hale’s Tours’ arrived in the UK in 1906 and in Australia in the following year (first Sydney, then Melbourne, Adelaide and Perth) under the shortened titles ‘Tours of the World’ and ‘The World’s Touring Car’.

The first attested examples of the ‘phantom ride’ shot in Australia appeared in 1905. Eric Reade mentions two panoramic shots taken in Sydney: *From Post-Office-Place to Redfern (taken from the top of George Street tram)* (1905) and *Panoramic View of Circular Quay (from a Ferry Boat)* (1905). They were screened in Sydney in October 1905 as part of the spectacle *Bio Tableau* run by the American J. C. Williamson. *From the Post-Office-Place to Redfern* is the first existing example of the traveling shot in Australia. It was filmed from the roof of a Sydney tram travelling along George Street.*

These dynamic views of the Australian city streets were becoming a way to promote the main Australian cities nationally and internationally. As reported by Reade, in October 1905 *Australia by Biograph* (1905) was “taken by Williamson’s bioscopists for special presentation to England and America” (Reade 1983, 85). The film contained street scenes of Melbourne (Collins Street) and Sydney. Another Victorian urban city was shown in motion in *Beautiful Ballarat* (Messers Best and Baker 1906). The film, like *Moving Melbourne*, is centred around a phantom ride shot, this time not from a car but from a tram

running east-west and west-east between Doveton and Grenville Streets Ballarat. Shows the city’s shop lined street and road traffic, mainly horse and buggy and people walking across the streets. The film is taken from a tram; possibly the newly installed electric tramway, which commenced operation in Ballarat in August 1905. *(NFSA Catalogue, Title No: 33982)*.

But none of these pictures constituted a specifically Melburnian film. These titles helped here to introduce and stage the evolution of the ‘phantom ride’ before *Moving Melbourne*, the city’s first attested urban traveling shot.

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* The description of the content of the film published on the 7th of October 1905 on page 2 of the *Sydney Morning Herald* is very close to another title dated 1906 by the National Film and Sound Archive (NFSA, archive title: 106667). In the newspaper, the film is presented as “A 1905 BIRD’S EYE VIEW OF GEORGE STREET: SYDNEY, N.S.W.: CAMERAMAN TAKES HIS LIFE IN HIS HANDS IN PERILOUS TRIP: WHOOPPEE”. The record item n.106667 has the following description: “Shows a busy George St, Sydney, c1906, taken from the top of a tram which is traveling from Circular Quay to Sydney Town Hall. The shops lining George Street are visible as is a variety of horse-drawn and motor vehicles and other trams. (02:00)”. The summary of the item 106667 appears to correspond closely with the film described in the Sydney daily in 1905.
3.1.4 Moving Modern Melbourne

The filming of Melbourne scarcely reported the city’s real changes, recording instead mostly perceptions of those changes. The main changes in transportation and demographic distribution may be seen on screen only indirectly. By 1906 the new modes of transportation allowed Melbourne to develop from a busy Victorian centre into a wider metropolitan city, progressively increasing the mobility of its inhabitants, who lived in suburban areas and moved from their suburban residencies to the inner city for work. With the establishment of the Commonwealth of Australia, Melbourne had become the temporary capital of the nation (1901-1927), while the economy of the city “climbed back to financial normality about the turn of the century” (Lewis 1995, 91). This development reached a highpoint after 1906 when the Melbourne Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW) “reported a revenue surplus for the first time at the end of the 1906/7 financial year” (Lewis 1995, 91).

This period of prosperity brought an increase in population and the construction of new public buildings in the Federation style: the State Library Dome (1909-11), the Melbourne Hospital (1904-10) and the Flinders Street Railway Station (one of the most frequently filmed buildings in Melbourne). The years during which Flinders Street Station was erected (1905-1911) would be some of the most productive in Melbourne’s cinematic history. In the years 1905 to 1912 commercial film production and distribution were fully developed and established, and Melbourne was also, for a few years, the film capital of Australia.

In May 1906, the Tait brothers produced a film accompaniment to Living London, entitled Moving Melbourne (Taits 1906). The film, now lost, was the first attempt to create a modern portrait of Melbourne centred around a car-driven traveling shot along the main city streets. The film’s commercial strategy was to attract those sections of the population interested in local city life and keen to see themselves and their city on screen. It was also a way of promoting the city through overseas screenings of the film in Britain. Reade commented that:

> In 1906 most of the action was in Melbourne, yet strangely several months had elapsed before this city recorded its first important entry. In early May J. and N. Tait at the Melbourne Town Hall were exhibiting Living London. Then on 11 May a change of program included Moving Melbourne (taken the previous Wednesday). This was the first of a series taken for exhibition in London. (Reade 1983, 87)

Reade’s comments were based on a series of articles that appeared in the Victorian press before and after the shooting of Moving Melbourne. The changes in tone, title and film description document well the desire to adapt to the established genre of the urban traveling shot or ‘phantom ride’.

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97 The surviving films of 1905-1906 do not seem to show this type of activity

98 A similar strategy was behind the production, also in 1906, of Living Sydney (West 1906), which was “filmed and screened to NSW audiences” (Reade 1983, 86).
It is noteworthy that *Moving Melbourne’s* first proposed title was *Marvellous Melbourne*. It indicates how much that ‘label’ had remained commercially appealing, and would be changed only because the ‘motion’ element had become so central to the film. In *The Argus* on Tuesday the 8th of May 1906, reporting on the screening of *Living London* at the Melbourne Town Hall, it was possible to read the announced title ‘MARVELLOUS MELBOURNE’ repeated three times, followed by the details of the imminent shooting:

*The management begs to notify that, weather conditions permitting, a Moving Picture of Melbourne will be taken to-morrow (Wednesday). Commencing punctually at 1 o’clock. The operator will proceed on a motor car from the Block Exchange and proceed along Collins Street to Swanston Street, thence to Bourke Street to finish opposite the G.P.O. Come and see how it is done and be in the picture. [The Argus, May 8th 1906]*

The news item is like many published in newspapers around the world aiming to attract readers to the filming of city scenes. The promise to ‘be in the picture’ was intended to lure curious readers to being part of the film, aiming at transforming them into potential future spectators. The invitation ‘you can watch yourself on screen’ belongs here both to the genre of local entertainment and to a larger commercial enterprise, as it was also used to ‘populate’ the frame, following a trend that preferred modern city streets to be visually dense and crowded (Benjamin 2006, 320-321).

The news of the shooting tells us a few significant things about the presentation of the city centre of Melbourne in 1906. The first is the central position of the location: chosen for its commercial and symbolic importance. The area around the three streets (Collins St., Swanston St. and Bourke St.), known as the Block Exchange, was, and still is, one of the commercial hearts of Melbourne. The Block Exchange, measuring 201 square meters, is one of the blocks at the centre of Hoddle’s original rectangular grid of 1837\(^9\). By concluding with a shot of Bourke Street in front of the General Post Office (GPO), the actual ‘centre’ of Melbourne, the iconographic desire to represent the historic essence of the city is emphasised. These images also combine masses of people in movement. The moving car, the crowd and the centrality of the location are metaphors – as Benjamin reminds us - of urban modernity (Benjamin 2006 [1934], 32). The overcrowded streets of Melbourne here echo the crowded streets of modern Paris noted by Baudelaire where people do not “stand for classes or any sort of collective; rather, they are nothing but the amorphous crowd of passers-by, the people in the street.” (Benjamin 2006 [1940], 320-321). Moreover, the sequence communicates movement in all its parts (people, car, camera). The long moving take recorded by a forward-looking camera transported by a car emphasised the acceleration of modern life.

On the following day, a new announcement renewed the invitation to the reader of *The Argus* to participate in the shot. The wording is similar, but a new title is proposed: *Marvellous Moving Melbourne* (*The Argus*, May 9th 1906, p.12). The producers started to connect the film/shot with the idea of a moving city. Of course, it is the city that is moved by a film camera mounted on a car. In this case the city is set in

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\(^9\) Melbourne’s city-grid design was mapped in 1837 by surveyor Robert Hoddle following “standard surveying practices already established in New South Wales” (Lewis 1995, 24).
motion by cinema, which is itself kinetic technology driven by modernity to accelerate perception and increase the sense of movement.

On the 10th of May, after the filming, *The Ballarat Star* reported a detailed account of the shoot, naming the type of camera, the car employed and what the film captured. The information most likely came from the filmmakers themselves, as the film was not yet released. It is worth quoting the entire news piece as it provides unique information about the now lost *Moving Melbourne*:

A very long biograph film of *Moving Melbourne* was photographed this afternoon on behalf of Messrs J. and N. Tait, whose exhibition of Living London has recently proved so great a success. The camera — an Irvine cinematograph machine — was mounted on a Clement-Talbot motor car; and a drive was taken through the busier parts of the city as the film was unrolled and exposed. A start was made at the E.S. and A. Bank, Collins street, a picturesque building that will at least do something to sustain the reputation of Melbourne for taste. Next came the picture of a huge crowd of brokers and their clerks on the steps of the Exchange. Hats, round faces, and broad smiles almost monopolised the scene. Collins street all through was at its busiest, the ordinary throng that a bright day brings out being increased by many who desired world-fame by having their lineaments included in the picture. In Swanston street the picture was scarcely less animated. The light was superb, and it would be difficult to find more favourable conditions for photographing the life and movement of a great city. Along Bourke street placards containing advertisers’ names were prominent, keen businessmen being prompt to take advantage of an advertisement that may enable them to extend their businesses to London, Paris, Chicago, and San Francisco — when it is rebuilt. The busiest section of Elizabeth street was also photographed, and this presented its accustomed everyday, sober-sided, stick-to business aspect. The film of *Moving Melbourne* will be exhibited at the Town Hall probably this week. As has already been indicated, duplicate films will be sent abroad. *(The Ballarat Star, 10 May 1906, 6)\(^{100}\)

The report demonstrates the film’s intention of turning Melbourne into a modern spectacle. The use of words constructs an international and modern image of central Melbourne, using cinema as a vehicle for modern and international urban communication. In its choice of words the news feature recalls many tropes of modernity. The age of machines is implied by the technical jargon: the ‘Irvine cinematograph machine’,

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\(^{100}\) Title in italics added.
the ‘Clement-Talbot motor car’, the ‘film was unrolled and exposed’. The imagery of the modern metropolis is repeatedly invoked: the crowd is suggested by ‘the busier part of the city’, and ‘the busiest section of Elizabeth Street’. The terms ‘light’, ‘life’, ‘movement’ and ‘city’, come together in the sentence “The light was superb, and it would be difficult to find more favourable conditions for photographing the life and movement of a great city”, amounting almost to an advertisement for the modern city. The tone of the article works on a double level of commercial enticement: it advises the reader to watch the film, and the businessman to use cinema in advertising his trade. Finally, the capacity of cinema to cross borders and connect international cities and businesses is spelled out. The cities cited were certainly high in people’s imagination at the time: London, Paris, Chicago and San Francisco (filmed scenes of the April 1906 San Francisco earthquake were shown alongside Living London and Moving Melbourne).

The next day, on Friday the 11th of May, The Argus published, within the announced program for Living London, the result of the filming. The news included the definitive version of the title of the new film, and the announcement of further filming scheduled for the following Saturday. The news also reminded the reader that the Melbourne film was not just for local spectators, but that it would also be screened in London, which is so prescient of much that will follow:

**MOVING MELBOURNE**

*The first picture of this series, which will be shown in London, was taken on Wednesday, when thousands were present to witness the taking of the unique series. The film has been developed and it is a complete success. The picture will be shown tonight and tomorrow afternoon and evening. Come and See Yourself and Your City.*

*SMITH STREET, COLLINGWOOD, CHAPEL STREET, PRAHAN, THE BLOCK AT MIDDAY ON SATURDAY Will also be taken*

[The Argus, 11 May 1906]

The title of the film has finally shifted from Marvellous Melbourne (May 8th), to Marvellous Moving Melbourne (May 9th) to Moving Melbourne (May 11th). The term ‘motion’ is used here like a ‘buzzword’ of those years of faster traveling and moving images. The ‘moving’ title shifts attention from the city of Melbourne, to the perspective of the camera in motion. There is also another shift: the action moves from the centripetal action of the ‘phantom ride’ to a centrifugal movement passing from the city centre to the inner suburbs: Collingwood, South Yarra, Prahran. It is a combination that will be later repeated by Marvellous Melbourne, Queen City of the South.

Furthermore, the announcement deals with the connection between time and identity. The text alerts the reader to the speed of the process (“The film has been developed and it is a complete success. The picture will be shown tonight”). The immediacy of vision, and a strong accent on the procedural aspects of the operation, reveals how much the reader’s imagination was caught by the functioning of the apparatus and not
just by the object of the recording. Time is kept in a brief loop to connect the capturing of the event to its showing. In the short circuit between being and appearing there is the thrill of an immediate exposure connected to a proof of existential identity.

The text reveals the novelty of the operation (“the first picture of this series”) and its international aim (“which will be shown in London”). Most importantly with the words “Come and see yourself and your City” the organizers produced what today would be termed a ‘call to action’. Despite being one of the very first traveling shots of Melbourne, there is already a consciousness of cinema as a major tool for constructing identity. Melbourne is conceptualized as a modern city taking its place alongside other major international cities.

The film was also a means to promote the city and its businesses. The Melbourne-based Parliament of Australia endorsed the film. Reade reported: “Moving Melbourne created such a favourable impression that it was screened at Parliament House on 15 May. At the end of its run at the Town Hall on 15 May all in the audience were presented with a piece of this biograph film.” (Reade 1983, 87). The year before, in 1905, Wilson’s panoramic canvas Melbourne, was chosen to represent the ‘city-self’ in Britain. At its completion “the painting hung in the Melbourne Town Hall before being dispatched to London to hang in the Constitutional Club as part of the exhibition about Australia” (Galimany 2006, 59). In both the painting Melbourne (1905) and in the actuality Moving Melbourne there is the intention to adapt popular ‘genres’ of modernity, the panoramic view and the phantom ride, to convey new aspects of modern Melbourne. At the same time, comparing the comments on Moving Melbourne with those on Living London, underscores the difference between the complex social portrait of London and this more entertaining and less problematic film, closer to the early Lumière views. The Euroa Advertiser, noting the mixing of Lords and Ladies with popular slums in Living London, reviewed Moving Melbourne as

>a picture that can be appreciated in Victoria and its fidelity to real Melbourne is at times startling. Swanston Street, city, and Chapel Street, Prahran, are easily identifiable, while those who witnessed the progress of the Japanese sailors through the street remarked the fidelity of the picture illustrating the scene [Euroa Advertiser, July 20, 1906, p. 2]

Moving Melbourne seems to be characterised by the visual attraction of the moving camera and by the filmed parade of the Japanese sailors, more than by its social depth. Film was still more a tool for distraction than an occasion for social investigation. The urban phantom ride thrilled the spectator with an effect of ‘augmented reality’ making it a popular visual trend in the perception of the city. A more informal rendering of the same shot opened Living Hawthorn, a local production filmed at the end of 1906. While in February 1907, the first ‘Tours of the World’ debuted in Melbourne, a cinematic experience mixing reality and optical illusion, almost entirely constructed around the perceptual impression of the phantom ride.
3.1.5 ‘Tours of the world’ in Melbourne

‘Tours of the World’ and ‘The World’s Touring Car’ were the Australian version of an interactive spectacle of phantom rides and travelogues patented in the US in 1905 as ‘Hale’s Tours of the World’ and imported to Sydney from October 1906 and to Melbourne from January 1907. The change of name was probably due to copyright issues. The show introduced the spectator to a spectacle centred on the subjective point of view of the viewer, producing an increased impression of reality, that Fielding has called ‘ultra-realism’ (Fielding 1970, 39).

The ‘Tours’ illusion captured and attracted the attention of the eye while the other senses were distracted by the physical experience of the carriage: the voice of the ticket-collector/guide, the wind blowing, the sounds of bells and the fake sounds mimicking the movement of the carriage over the tracks, or on the road. The settings therefore were artificial but the experience was quite real, conflating imagination and reality. It is apt to propose, with Rabinovitz, that ‘Hale’s Tours’ were more than movies; they were also about the physical experience of motion itself, an incorporation of the cinematic into perceptual experience that located meaning in the body of the spectator. (Rabinovitz 1988, 147). The ‘Tours of the World’ were an important part of the viewing experience of the Melbourne spectator from 1907 to 1910. The first Tours of the world arrived in Sydney, then opened in Melbourne, followed by Adelaide and, finally, by Perth. This form of entertainment was hosted in a small space in the shape of a train carriage containing 66/70 seats (a ‘Pullman car’ was used in Melbourne) with a front-projected program of filmed travelogues. These consisted of continuous tracking shots filmed in spectacular destinations, both urban and non-urban. The carriage had a patented mechanism simulating the shaky movement of the actual vehicle, while bells and whistles and propellers simulated the sound and wind effects of the real carriage. In Melbourne there was a venue in which to experience the Tours: the ‘Bourke Street station’ (next to the Theatre Royal). Each film program included live sounds and wind effects, often accompanied with a commentary spoken by John Wallace ‘the well-known raconteur’ (The Argus, January 25 1907, p. 10). The show lasted an average of 20 minutes and was repeated from 10.30 am in the morning until the evening. The 1907 Melbourne programs included: A Journey on the Canadian Pacific Railway through Canada, the Rockies and the Niagara Falls (The Argus, January 25 1907, p. 10); ‘Switzerland’ and the ‘The Great Russian Empire’ (The Argus, February 11 1907, p. 12); ‘A tram ride through Boston, U.S.A’; and ‘The Italian Lakes’ (The Argus, March 5 1907, p.10).

The editing of static views with tracking long-takes operated like an animated travel album. Rabinovitz suggested a similar dynamic: “the film specially manufactured for the Hale’s tour, however, did not always maintain a strict cowcatcher point of view: they employed various kinds of editing and camera movement, although usually only after an initial one- to two-minute traveling shot” (Rabinovitz 2005, 421). After its initial success, this form of spectacle migrated from the smaller purpose-built venues to larger cinemas within Melbourne. After 1910, “Tours of the World” films were superceded by the new travelogues.

101 The Argus, Melbourne, February 11 1907, p. 12
The most important of the Melbourne travelogues to have survived was *Marvellous Melbourne, Queen City of the South.*

In conclusion, reports of *Moving Melbourne* in the news illustrates how the concepts of ‘motion’ and ‘movement’ were used to promote Melbourne as a modern cinematic city. Motion, and more broadly modernity, had become in *Moving Melbourne* a way to re-imagine and re-present Melbourne as a modern urban centre. The purpose of *Moving Melbourne*, screened alongside *Living London*, was to project the local screen identity alongside the international ‘aura’ of London.

### 3.1.6 Beautiful Ballarat

That same year, in September, the Ballarat film distributors Best and Baker produced a tram-based phantom ride across the city centre entitled *Beautiful Ballarat* (1906). It was shot on Thursday September 13th and screened the night of Saturday September 15th at the Alfred Hall as part of a larger program, including a reprise of *Living London* (*The Ballarat Star*, September 17th, 6). The film showed the main square of Ballarat filmed in a long take taken from an electric tram. The daily *Ballarat Star* reported that the film showed Sturt Street

> near Harry Davis’ store, where the traffic was very thick, and a large number of people have assembled. Then Sturt street, from Grenville street to Lyons street was shown, and the audience quickly picked up well-known figures, including the Mayor of the city and ex-Cr Kline, in animated conversation, presumably on amalgamation question. The picture which is worth seeing aroused much enthusiasm amongst the audience. The series included also the great Living London pictures, which have been shown here previously, but are always worth seeing a second time. (*September 17th, p. 6*)

Contrary to the lost *Moving Melbourne*, *Beautiful Ballarat* has survived and can be compared to textual commentaries. The film is composed of two long travelling shots along Sturt Street and back. Judging from the shadow on the ground, the film was shot around midday. There is a gathering of twenty or thirty people close to the first crossing at the beginning of the shot, and there are a few, not many, bystanders on the right side of the tram track. Besides looking at the tram, almost no one is waving or demonstrating excitement. The wide street appears quite depopulated. There are no cars on the road, mostly horse-drive carriages or bicycles. The result is neither modern nor intense. The centre of Ballarat probably appears wider and emptier due to the lack of a point of reference. By comparing the actual film with the text it is clear that the text overplays the number of people in the shot for promotional reasons. *Moving Melbourne*, despite the intensity of the city grid, was probably a much quieter affair.
3.2. Local Suburban Cityscapes

While *Moving Melbourne* identifies the city centre with the whole city, other types of films were aimed more specifically at local communities. The initial main attraction of such films was the same advertised for *Moving Melbourne*: to ‘see yourself on screen’. Before the creation of ‘movie theatres’, local travelling film entrepreneurs toured worker’s towns and suburbs filming people at work: in hospitals, at school, putting them at the centre of the films they made. It was a great novelty, probably for the first time working people themselves became the subject and the aim of the spectacle. The films of workers coming out of factories became a ‘genre’ with its own rules, gags and narrative (Toulmin 2001, 120).

Around the turn of the century, this type of product constituted the majority of non-fiction films. It was a cinema “tied directly to a date or event, or specific occasion in the history of a region, town or business operation” (Toulmin 2001, 118). As Toulmin writes these were ‘local films for local people’ (Toulmin 2001, 119), films that “both incorporated the attraction of news and the novelty factor of moving images, all placed in a regional and in many cases particular local setting” (Toulmin 2001, 120). These films were generally connected to a specific date, a small event, or the event of cinema itself ‘coming to town’ (Toulmin 2001, 119). The phenomenon has been observed and studied mainly in Britain, France, the United States, Australia and New Zealand. At the beginning, the filmmakers commonly worked within the context of fairgrounds, which is where these films were first shown. The existence of the fairground circuits predates cinema and films entered those fairgrounds as an added attraction in search of an audience. With the increased popularity of the ‘local’ genre the event required bigger and more important venues and moved to large and more communal spaces such as local town halls. The main scenes featured in these films were people at work or walking along the streets, and tried to include as many people as possible. Another popular feature was to film local personalities, such as the local mayor. Of the many films produced only a handful have survived from the period from the early 1900s until 1915. In this case the analysis is restricted by the limited availability of filmed documents in the archive, and only three films will be discussed.

3.2.1 Workers Leaving the Factory in Port Melbourne

In 1905, Perry’s Limelight Department (1892-1909) filmed the *Swallow and Ariell’s Employees* coming out of their Port Melbourne factory, illustrating the international popularity of the genre. The film was exploiting the same ‘see yourself on screen’ attraction to lure workers to the local Salvation Army station in Port Melbourne. The Limelight Department had its main office in Bourke Street, and subsidiaries in various cities in Australia and New Zealand. The film production of the Limelight Department represented

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92 The study of the relationship between local fairgrounds and cinema has been recently undertaken mostly in Britain and Ireland, following the discovery of the films of Mitchell and Kenyon. See in particular Toulmin (2001, pp. 118–37); Toulmin, Gunning, Popple, Russell (eds) (2005); Toulmin, Loiperdinger (2005, 7-18).
80 per cent of Australian film production (Moran and Veith 2005, 5) up until 1910 when the department was closed after a change of directorship in the Salvation Army. Only some of the footage has survived, the rest was disposed of by the Salvation Army, which destroyed all its films in the 1950s (Long 1993b, 36).

![Image](https://example.com/image.jpg)


The two and half minutes of *Swallow and Ariell’s Employees* are probably the earliest pieces of Melbourne street footage to have survived. They show the employees of Swallow and Ariell’s Biscuit Company in Port Melbourne coming out of work. The structure of *Swallow and Ariell’s Employees* replays the original genre of the ‘workers coming out from work’ and belongs fully to the tradition of ‘local cinema’ filmed and exhibited in a short lapse of time in the same location. As in the work of the Lumières, the film features a frontal composition with a locked-off framing. Here the framing is closer to the door of the factory, leaving the signs of the city mostly hidden. Most of these details do not refer to a specific geographical location, even though they do communicate an ‘urban mood’. The perception of the suburban streetscape is conveyed by small details: the label of the company appearing on the wall, the brick wall of the factory, the sidewalk, the un-asphalted street, the traffic of horses and people, and the small door of the factory. Many workers leave the building from that door: firstly, the men, then the children and, separately, the women. The most peculiar episode happens at the beginning[^103]. One of the workers, a man, comes out of the door, walks straight across the main street, and is hit violently by a horse, providing a rare sense of the danger of pre-automotive traffic. The density and the street traffic suggest a working-class suburb like those usually surrounding the business district of the colonial city. Most of the ‘suburban’ films of this period are interested in municipalities where workers live, such as Port Melbourne, Hawthorn, and Footscray[^104].

[^103]: The episode is labelled in the catalogue of the NFSA as “Australia’s earliest filmed road traffic accident known to survive” (see NFSA: 43202).

[^104]: Port Melbourne became a town in 1893 (it was previously called Sandridge). From here, in 1854 the first passenger railway in Australia was inaugurated, connecting the 4 km separating the port from the city centre of Melbourne. [sourced from the Port Phillips heritage web site, http://heritage.portphillip.vic.gov.au/Heritage_matters/History_of_Port_Phillip (accessed 10.4.2013)].
Compared with the Lumière films from ten years earlier, the Limelight Department seems unpreoccupied with questions of ‘framing’. In this sense, the film expresses a very different sense of place from *Moving Melbourne*. The structure of the representation is less interested in the spectacular, in artifice and in an enhanced performance. The theatricality here is reduced to a minimum, even though the scene is still staged, and the camera is largely standing as a spectator. People rarely react to the presence of the camera. Most of the men go their own way, while a few of the children remain still, looking at the camera. The women come out at a different moment, filmed in a subsequent set up (this is evident by the cut in the sequence). Their coming out is initially more organised and staged. The first group is asked to walk across the street towards the camera, which is set up on the other side. The traffic is stopped, the women cross and look at the camera; this is the only attempt the film makes to ‘stage’ the scene. The next group of women make their own way, walking along the sidewalk, without crossing the street. This short fragment is just an episode but is indicative of the popularity of the genre; of the two Melbourne suburban films surviving from 1905 and 1906, both deal largely with the genre of the ‘workers coming out of work’.

**3.2.2 Living Hawthorn**

The main suburban film to survive from this period, *Living Hawthorn* (Johnson and Gibson, 1906) is probably amongst the first true filmic portraits of a suburban community in Melbourne. It is a rare surviving example of a local suburban project. It linked film entrepreneurs with local businesses to show several commercial views of workers, shopkeepers and bystanders in the streets of Hawthorn.

At seven kilometres from the centre of Melbourne, Hawthorn, unlike Port Melbourne and Footscray, is a middle-class suburb. It became a popular suburb after the train line was opened in 1861. The film provides an opportunity to look at how suburbs like Hawthorn were represented, and how cinema was used to construct local identities, both at the time of shooting and over time. The main interest for this thesis is to identify local visual patterns, possibly different from those employed in ‘city films’, and from ‘dominant’ and more popular applications of the same film genres.

*Living Hawthorn* (Johnson and Gibson, 1906) is an exceptional document in the film history of Melbourne and Australia because it is probably the only ‘local film’ to have survived, almost complete, from this period. Unlike *Moving Melbourne*, the film is not mentioned in the key daily newspapers. The production and screening of films like *Living Hawthorn* were a ‘non-event’ for the wider city, but remained an important appointment for the community and for the suburb of Hawthorn. After a few screenings, these films were dismissed, destroyed or put aside and were eventually lost. *Living Hawthorn* is exceptional because it was preserved and survived. Its survival might be attributed to mere chance, but the retrieval of the film in the basement of the old Hawthorn Council in 1940 speaks loudly to a case of suburban identity. The Hawthorn Council Building had remained active from the time the film was produced until it was
discovered. Moreover, the council was eager to identify the importance of the film as a local document. However, critical discussion of the film has been very limited.

![Frame comparison of the same shot (Living Hawthorn 1906).](image)

a) 35mm print. National Film and Sound Archive, Canberra, acc.no: 9124/20,
b) the VHS version. National Film and Sound Archive, Canberra, acc.no: 9124/7,

The survival story of the film also speaks of a strong local identity connected to the permanence of the building where it was discovered. The footage survived in the basement of the building of the Hawthorn Council, where a copy was left untouched until the 1940s when the film was screened at the Hoyts Theatre in Glenferrie (Wilson 1978). When one compares the story of the survival of Living Hawthorn with that of the loss of the Limelight Department films destroyed by the Salvation Army in the 1950s, one has the sense of a different meaning given to the concept of 'historical identity' by the two institutions.
Living Hawthorn has been critically neglected despite its availability in the Australian Mediatheque in Melbourne and in the NFSA in Canberra. The film is not mentioned in the main overviews of early Australian cinema (Reade 1983, Bertrand 1989, Shirley and Adams 1989, Pike and Cooper 1998). Only the film anthropologist David McDougall has written briefly about it, specifically about the subjectivity communicated by the people in the film. As McDougall states, the film was made ‘on a shoestring’ by “William Alfred Gibson and Milliard Johnson as a quick money-spinner. They would come to town, film as many people as possible, develop and print the film overnight. And then hire a hall the next day and charge people admission to come and see themselves” (McDougall 2006, 98-99). This was common practice with local films, as has been confirmed by the analysis of the Mitchell and Kenyon Collection (Toulmin, Russell and Neal 2003, 3). The low-budget constraints within which Living Hawthorn was produced seem to be one of the main characteristics influencing the aesthetic of local Melbourne films. The analysis of the few editing joints on the 35mm copy of the original nitrate print confirms that the film has very few cuts and has been most likely assembled without editing\(^\text{106}\).

Since this is the first major film about Melbourne’s urban space under analysis it is worth remembering here, once and for all, the critical importance (and at times the impossibility) of viewing such films in the best possible conditions. These films should be screened and viewed the large screen for which they were conceived. This has been done when it was possible to access and store a digital copy. But even under the best conditions, with a digital screening one must consider in the analysis the loss of information occurring in the transfer from the original 35mm print to the digital or analogic copy. The need to check the actual editing joints on the 35mm access print of Living Hawthorn has revealed the level of visual information lost in the transfer to VHS, and to the online copy released by NFSA on the Australian Screen Online (ASO) website (fig. 41). The original 35mm copy of Living Hawthorn shows that there is practically no space left on the film between each frame, as the recording camera was shooting one photogram next to

\(^{106}\text{By looking at the 35mm access copy of the print held at NFSA [item no. 9124-20], it is clear that the film was shot and then assembled together to reach the length of 1,000 ft., without further polishing work. The single film scenes do no present internal editing, other than the juncture joining each main scene. Johnson and Gibson most likely filmed Living Hawthorn in December 1906, after they finished working on The Story of the Kelly Gang (1906).}\)
the other. When the transfer was made, this peculiarity was not considered, and a large portion of the top part of the frame was cut off. This is not all. Both the transfers of the VHS and the online ASO copy have failed to acknowledge the lack of soundtrack on the silent film which means it was of a larger size than the sound film. In both the VHS and the online ASO versions the left part of the frame with the head of the horse is missing (fig. 41), making it difficult to fully appreciate the composition of the scene.

The little information we have of the organisation of the film production comes from the 1978 brochure written by Eric Wilson and Frederick Howard, members of the Hawthorn Historical Society, for an exhibition of ‘still photographs’ printed from the original 35mm\textsuperscript{107}. Wilson (1978, 4) writes that the project was organised by Edward J. Rigg with William Alfred Gibson and Milliard Johnson. Rigg was a well-known figure in Hawthorn social life as he was part of the family that set up Rigg Brothers’ grocery store in Hawthorn West. Wilson explains, “Teddy – as he was known - was the city’s premier entrepreneur in arranging concerts, dances, public functions, appeals and amusements for private profit, charity or patriotic causes” (Wilson 1978, 4). The film is introduced by a handwritten titlecard, ‘Living Hawthorn’ cinematographed by Johnson and Gibson’ containing the title of the film and the name of the filmmakers.

The way the people are dressed, the verticality of the shadows and the presence of many children in the scenes alert us to the fact that the film may have been shot during the summer holidays of 1906. The film lasts fifteen minutes and is divided into two main sections: “Burwood Road from Glenferrie Hotel to Tower Hotel”, and “Business in Burwood Road – Hawthorn West”. Between these sections two minutes of scenes from the \textit{Naval Cadet Parade} in Hawthorn have been added\textsuperscript{108}. The scene of people bathing at the recently inaugurated Hawthorn Baths was also added later, after the rest of the film was completed.

\textit{Living Hawthorn} combines the travelling shot with scenes of ‘workers coming out of work’, and with the filmed arrival of the political authority. The film opens with a long travelling shot of Burwood Road, followed by the first scene of ‘workers coming out of work’, followed by the march of the naval cadets, then by further scenes of several ‘workers coming out of work’, then a series of street scenes of Hawthorn with people gathering around shops. And it closes with the scene of the arrival of the Mayor, and the scene of the Hawthorn Baths. By intersecting several genres, the ‘phantom ride’, the ‘street panorama’ and the ‘workers coming out of work’, the film produces a portrait of an Australian suburb. The analysis that follows will describe the visual content of the film, the construction of its suburban identity and its capacity to feed into local collective memory.

\textsuperscript{107} The brochure entitled “Photographs from Living Hawthorn” has been sourced with the permission of Andrew Pike, from the National Film and Sound Archive (NFSA) library in Canberra [title No: 606934].

\textsuperscript{108} Following the early genre of ‘military marches’, Johnson and Gibson frequently filmed Naval Cadet parades in Melbourne. In a 1910 news item in \textit{The Coburg Leader}, a naval cadets night is announced in Melbourne, featuring five biograph films by Johnson and Gibson. Amongst them: \textit{Grand March of 300 Naval Cadets; Physical Drill without Arms; Sword Bayonet Exercise} (\textit{The Coburg Leader}, 11 March 1910, p.3).
In terms of the style of filmmaking, *Living Hawthorn* shows, to the contemporary eye, a ‘perception of reality’ superior to that of other films of the period. This is due mostly to the style of shooting: long shots, no editing, urban street spaces rarely balanced in composition, and little indication of organised staging in the scenes provide a sense of freshness and realism to the film. As McDougall notes, Johnson and Gibson employ a more ‘observational style’ of filmmaking that “seem[s] intended to give a sense of ordinary life as it is lived” (McDougall 1998, 99). The presence of the camera is overt. People in the film frequently look back to the camera (fig. 42). The boys and girls posing along Burwood Road must have all known why they were being filmed and expected to see themselves on screen in a later screening. The whole film is marked by a sense of performance focusing on the human character and paying less attention to the composition of the urban settings109.

I will now analyse the three main settings of the film; the opening travelling shot, the scenes of workers coming out of work, and the more observational style looking at people and shopkeepers along the road.

### 3.2.3 Opening Travelling Shot

The film opens with a long, unstable tracking shot filmed from a car along Burwood Road. It is introduced with the titlecard; ‘from Glenferrie Hotel to Tower Hotel’. It is a hand-held variation of the phantom ride shot performed from a moving car, a situation similar to that already used in *Moving Melbourne*. The shot features a ghostly camera moving along the street without showing the means of transportation. The camera-car runs along the middle of Burwood Road marked by the dark shadows of the buildings. Alongside the camera, children run racing with the car (fig. 44). The long take lasts over two minutes and provides the spectator with the experience of travelling along a suburban Melbourne street of 1906. The use of a large wide-angle reveals buildings and people, but also areas without buildings and

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109 See Davis and Postlewait (2003, 1) for the relations between theatricality and realism, and Carlson (2002, 242) for the relations between theatricality and performance.
without people (fig. 43). The shops are grouped into clusters and the camera passes along large stretches of road where nothing much actually happens. On the other hand, the duration of the shot allows the spectator to experience the suburban context with a specific sense of time and space. It is possible to gain evidence about the bumpy non-asphalted condition of the road, of the spatial separation between the shops, empty visual spaces so different from the metropolitan scene of the city centre. The urban space, consequently, acquires a strong suburban character. If it was not known to be a part of Melbourne, Burwood Road could easily have registered visually as the main street of a provincial town. There are no major ‘visual shocks’ in this shot (fig. 43), besides those provided by the bumpiness of the road.

Johnson and Gibson chose to keep the camera placement at the centre of the road, thus minimising sudden movements and leaving plenty of space between the viewer and the buildings. While this shot seems to employ the point of view of a traditional perspective it breaks these conventions by avoiding cues indicating spatial depth, and thus flattening the perception of space. Therefore, in these images a minor level of theatricality is employed when compared, for instance, to the Lumière views. In this scene, the reduced formal construction of the framed space and the lack of dominant spatial clues leave the spectator uncertain whether to focus on the streets, the people or on other vehicles. The repetition of the wider and emptier suburban centrifugal space increases the perceptual distance from the centripetal spatial depth of the city-centre.

In the Burwood Road travelling shot there is only one example of this kind of proximity when the camera turns left to film a boy running alongside the car (fig.44). When the boy is in the frame the dynamic of the composition changes and is intensified by the juxtaposition of two spatial planes: the boy on the closer level and the houses on a secondary, more distant plane. The difference between the two shots, the wide view of the road (fig.43), and the dynamic framing of the boy (fig. 44), signal two ways of rendering cinematic space. The shot with the running boy is denser and more spectacular in its dynamic construction. On the contrary, the main travelling shot is less theatrical, less ‘guided’ and therefore visually less intense. Therefore, while the long opening take is a common feature of nonfiction (Marvellous Melbourne, Queen City of the South, A Thriving and Prosperous Suburb. Bird’s Eye View of Footscray, Melbourne Today) films of Melbourne in this period, the way this shot is filmed in Living Hawthorn is symptomatic of a point of view that differentiates the representation of Melbourne’s suburban cityscape from that of the inner-city views. This ‘suburban’ point of view - or the provincial one seen in Living Ballarat - seems less focused on a formal repetition of the genre and more interested in adapting the genre to the suburban environment.

3.2.4 Workers Leaving Work in Hawthorn

A similar process of adaptation of the genre to place is visible in the scenes of workers coming out of work. The first of these is ‘Burgess Tanner Employees – cheap lunch’. The scene is inserted after the Burwood Road sequence and before the march of the naval cadets. The setting is similar to the 1905
Limelight film of the biscuit factory. The camera is positioned at 90 degrees facing the main door of the factory. The framing is close to the door, communicating the sense of a claustrophobic ‘open’ space. The door opens, and from the dark space of the factory male workers, wearing bowler hats, jostle each other about, overreacting in the presence of the camera. The performance seems directed but also self-produced. The men are performing for the camera and occupying the full space of the frame. There is a man shown coming back into the frame screen left, pushing his co-workers and then turning to look at the camera. The image does not disclose information about the road or the suburb. The view of the brick-wall betrays the industrial Victorian building style of these types of factories. Most notably one of the Burgess Tanner shots ends with the main door closing and a little scene performed in front of it. The closure of the door makes a clear and direct reference to Sortie de l’usine, the Lumière ‘workers’ film, which theatrically starts with the opening of the doors of the factory and ends with the doors closing. But somehow the unity of the Lumière’s archetypal film is diminished here in the mere repetition of a gesture.

Fig. 45. Workers leaving work at Burgess Tanner (Living Hawthorn 1906)
VHS-TV screen photo. National Film and Sound Archive, Canberra, acc.no:9124/7.

Fig. 46. McDonald and Co, Electricians (Living Hawthorn 1906)
VHS-TV screen photo. National Film and Sound Archive, Canberra, acc.no:9124/7.

The other scenes of ‘workers coming out of work’ are in the second part of the film. They occur after the military parade, after a series of panning shots of the street shops and after the crowd scene featuring the
arrival of the Mayor. The different position suggests the minor status of these latter scenes (or perhaps corresponds to a lesser fee paid to appear in the film). The setting is also different, less ‘curated’ and less structured. These scenes mostly repeat the same repetitive pattern: the camera is set close to the exit door of a working place and films the workers coming out of the door, passing in front of the camera, occasionally making jokes and moving out of the frame. While the general pattern is well-known, what interests me here are the variations. Each scene puts forward different solutions to achieve the goal of creating a visible and recognisable depiction of the workers on film. The focus of this section is on how filming adapts to the logistics of the location, how the cinematic space deals with the urban space, and how there is an attempt to produce a spectacle, a piece of theatre, which has a different outcome from the inner-city films.

The exiting of the employees of A. H. McDonald and Co. electricians (fig. 46), is filmed from a different point of view when compared to the two episodes previously analysed. The camera is almost parallel to the street but not far enough away to disclose the vanishing point on the left. The angle of the framing leaves more space for reading the urban environment and has a more dynamic composition, structuring the screen space along diagonal lines. At the same time the position of the camera is not best situated to capture the company logo, as the sign is barely visible. This is probably the reason why many business portraits are introduced with handwritten titlecards (one of the few businesses whose sign appears and is easily readable, Parker and Bird, has no card). The exiting workers from A. H. McDonald and Co. have a military aspect; the men walk out in line, almost marching, and nobody plays or overreacts, even though some of the workers have smiles on their faces. What stays in the memory is the smile of the workers and, most of all, the faces of the children in the background. They were there at the beginning of the scene, and they are still there at the end.

![Fig. 47. Burton and Knoxville Coachbuilders (Living Hawthorn 1906)
VHS-TV screen photo. National Film and Sound Archive, Canberra, acc.no:9124/7.](image-url)
The angle of filming and the way the space is constructed changes often, apparently not obeying precise aesthetic rules or systems, but responding practically to different locations and to different urban designs. For each scene, the camera is placed in what seems to be the most economical position to ensure the quick execution of the scene. This means that the camera is often placed close to the workers, but not necessarily in the best position to frame the scene. The result is an inconsistency in the overall point of view and a clearer focus on the human characters versus the surrounding space. Therefore, the spectator must re-adjust to each camera angle, as each creates different spatial dimensions: front view, side view, left-angle view, and right-angle view.

In filming ‘Burton and Knoxville Coachbuilders Employes [sic] at Work’ (fig. 47) the camera is again positioned on the right side of the door. The frame is open to the vanishing point of the road on the left. The workers move out of frame, this time, at camera left.

The next scene shows the workers of Parker and Bird, Hawthorn West. From the catalogue notes one reads that the company “had a depot for [the] receipt of timber and building material for delivery to their joinery factory half a kilometre away, or to building sites” (Wilson 1978, 11). Hawthorn West was the most developed part of the suburb. In this scene, the full workforce is coming out with bicycles, carriages and horses. The flow is interrupted at one point by a truck passing by, which implies the film production could not stop the traffic on the main road. The Parker and Bird scene is filmed from across the street enabling the framing of the whole scene. Rigg appears in the background checking that all the workers have left the factory. The scene, like the others in the film, communicates a sense of the adjustment of the camera to the location. The camera does not dominate the urban space but adapts to it, to the point of appearing incidental.
The following two scenes are quite short. The first briefly shows ‘C. D. Straker Caterer Employees’ but is over too quickly to say much about it, other than that it is another ‘side view’ of workers leaving work. The footage of ‘W.J. Holder, Caterer Employees at Work’ is damaged, but it is possible to notice a frontal camera position set on the other side of the road. This position has probably been chosen because the scene of caterers coming out with their edible products was too wide to fit in a medium shot, and the operators were forced to make a wide master shot. The action begins and the workers start to come out, but the camera must stop because a horse has entered the scene. The operator starts again and now there are bicycles and children all over the place, as well as people watching the filming. After another unsuccessful attempt, the operator decides to close the doors and film the name of the factory on the door, but even here there are teenagers and other people gathering and passing by (fig. 50). The presence of this segment suggests the filmmakers’ incapacity (or unwillingness) to stop the traffic to film an unobstructed exiting scene, and the unedited nature of the material.
The following scene in the genre of ‘workers leaving work’ (fig. 51) bears a factory name that is illegible (it is only possible to read ‘Melbourne’ on the left side). Only male workers are visible. The camera encloses the entrance in a medium shot and does not allow us to read the surrounding space of the street. The workers in this scene are much more ‘active’ from a staging point of view. One of them (the one smiling in fig. 51) kicks a sack and makes it flip in the air. This is the last of the worker scenes and appears towards the end of the film.

The composition is once again slightly different but the cinematographer seems to have decided to break the conventions of the ‘workers leaving the factory’ genre. After the classic frontal view of the first episode, and the previous forced diagonal view, in this scene the operator sets the frame on the left side of the door. Again, this decision seems to have been taken more for practical reasons than to follow specific aesthetic principles. If there is an overarching principle in Johnson and Gibson’s camerawork it is the need to adapt to the urban space, attempt to show the factory logos, and renounce questions of formal balance.

Contrary to many of the Lumière films, the last scenes of ‘workers leaving the factory’ in *Living Hawthorn* show a lack of control over the action in the road, as per the urban space directing the production of the cinematic ‘place’. One might have expected that the filmmakers were easily capable of refashioning the suburban reality. They might have scheduled a better time of the day (early morning), or with a larger budget could have employed more people to control the road and stop the traffic or the people entering the frame. There were certainly budgetary concerns behind these choices, and one consequence is the decision not to edit out some of the ‘bad’ scenes. Johnson and Gibson seemed more preoccupied with completing the project than expressing a coherent control over the cinematic space. Their vision is pragmatic. The filmmakers have to adapt to the specificity of the urban space, without attempting to redesign this space. The need to shoot ‘across’ the busy Burwood Road following a perpendicular axis, as the ‘workers’ genre’ would require, is frustrated by a lack of control over the representation of the urban environment. Thus, the cinematic representation has to ‘obey’ the local urban design. This pragmatic attitude produces a specifically
local, ‘informal’ style; a way of filming with a low level of ‘theatricality’, which will become common in other Melbourne local films.

Fig. 52. Shopkeepers and bystanders (*Living Hawthorn* 1906)
VHS-TV screen photo. National Film and Sound Archive, Canberra, acc.no:9124/7.

### 3.2.5 Human Figures and Gazes

Before finishing my discussion of *Living Hawthorn*, I would like to analyse the scenes featuring mostly people and crowds along Burwood Road. In these images, it is possible to view part of the complex relationship occurring in early depictions of Melbourne, which combine camera, urban space and the body language and gaze of the human figure. As has been shown previously – looking at painting, photography and film of the Melbourne cityscape – the size and position of the human figure are often used to measure or enhance the theatrical setting of the represented urban space. But in these representations of Melbourne human figures and urban spaces are rarely given equal importance within the same frame. The human figure looks contained, diminished (when it does not disappear altogether) within the cityscape. Conversely, when the human figure becomes, occasionally, the main subject, then it is the city that appears fragmented, fractured, out of focus, if not in the process of disappearing.

The images of workers, bystanders and shopkeepers in *Living Hawthorn* allow us to witness this phenomenon. On the one hand, the long opening travelling shot, focuses on the centrifugal urban space where people are barely recognisable. On the other hand, when the workers start to come out of work the cityscape is reduce to a backdrop: a brick wall, the side of a shop. In the second section of the film this paradigm is contradicted by a few exceptions (and therefore indirectly confirmed). Some of the scenes feature a more balanced occurrence of human figures and urban space. The lateral position of the camera in filming the workers in McDonald & Co. and in Burton & Knoxville permits it to frame them while leaving in sight the partial prospective of the street. The ensuing panning shot of Burwood Road is able to retain a successful combination of the two aspects. The panning camera is close enough to read the faces of the
people, while its movement briefly embraces the view of the street allowing us to capture a growing portion of the streetscape. Similarly, a wider setting is repeated in the scene of the arrival of the Mayor or when, later, the panning follows an omnibus pulled by horses. Most of these shots capture a multitude of people expressing a rare urban density and energy in the main street of Hawthorn. This is a spectacle, characteristic of the suburban setting that will disappear after a few years. Inner city films have a different type of crowd (better dressed, often queuing and mostly not cheerful), while the film about Ballarat shows a much quieter city in 1906.

The many running children, the shopkeepers standing outside their shops, and the female clients passing by all look back at the camera with curiosity. While ‘looking back at the camera’ was a common reaction to being captured in early films, in *Living Hawthorn* the phenomenon is particularly dominant.

As David MacDougall has argued, in *Living Hawthorn* there is a
tremendous public interest in the presence of the camera. Children jump and dance in front of it, wobble past on bicycles, push each other, and throw their hats in the air. In these brief moments, the coolly disengaged stance of the camera – firmly established by this time in urban street photography – is violated. As people look into the lens, the viewer suddenly has the sense to be looked at, and looked at in this case with apparent delight. (MacDougall 1998, 99)

These repeated looks at the camera in *Living Hawthorn* produce a rare sense of inclusiveness that marks a difference from the more distant approach shown in the representation of the provincial city centre of *Beautiful Ballarat* (and probably of *Moving Melbourne*), and of later films shot in the city centre. In *Living Hawthorn* there is a sense of presence with the representation of a traditional iconography of the local identity of place, where the frontal gaze, the human body and the urban space are connected in a single image which seems to say ‘I belong to this place’ (figs. 52 and 54).

In *Living Hawthorn* there are several ‘portraits’ of shopkeepers, children and bystanders. Their gazes are direct and frank (fig. 53). They look at the camera not with surprise or excitement, but with just a bit of amusement. The faces of the shopkeepers are calm, framed by the background of the shop. There is a sense
of community conveyed by the people walking in the street, the boys and girls on bikes, pedalling and turning to look at the camera.

According to MacDougall those eyes looking back into the camera evoke one of the primal experiences of daily life – of look returned by look – through which we signal mutual recognition and affirm the shared experience of the moment. [...] the encounter produces a phatic reversal of roles, in which the viewer seems to be regarding himself or herself with the eyes of the other. In a Lacanian sense, the self is reaffirmed and mirrored in these comparatively rare direct glances from the screen. In Living Hawthorn, they have the effect of situating the audience in a psychological relation to the people on the screen. (MacDougall 1998, 100)

Beyond the ‘psychological relation’ these gazes and the crowd convey a strong sense of belonging to the suburb, and indirectly to the city. The central section of the film featuring the arrival of the Mayor is significant in showing the whole section of the road surrounding the Town Hall covered with people, children and teenagers, both boys and girls, all wearing hats (figs. 53 and 54). The panning from right to left
taken from an elevated position, probably from the roof of a car, is one of the more emotional scenes of the film (figs. 55 and 56). The speed of the panning camera movement is probably too fast-paced and the whole scene would be better appreciated at a lower speed.

![Image](image.jpg)

Fig. 56. Burwood Rd (*Living Hawthorn* 1906)
VHS-TV screen photo. National Film and Sound Archive, Canberra, acc.no:9124/7.

**Conclusion**

In Melbourne, 1906 was not just the year of *The Story of the Kelly Gang*. Before and after the first Australian feature film, non-fiction cinema in Melbourne took many significant steps. The same producers and cinematographers of the *The Story of the Kelly Gang* discovered the inner city and its suburbs. At the beginning of 1906 the Tait brothers imported and distributed Urban’s *Living London*, whose success gave room for a fuller visualisation of the Australian city. Shortly after doing so they produced *Moving Melbourne*, a short but important local companion piece made to screen alongside the urban film. The film presented Melbourne as a modern dynamic, centripetal, and fast-moving city. In September 1906 the tram phantom ride *Beautiful Ballarat* was shot and screened. At the end of 1906 Johnson and Gibson, cinematographers of *The Story of the Kelly Gang*, produced *Living Hawthorn*, the earliest surviving depiction of an Australian suburb. *Living Hawthorn* embodies a remarkable sense of place and self. It builds an image of the titular suburb that plays against the core dynamic and centred representation of the modern city found in *Moving Melbourne*. The film presents a more realistic and human image of the suburbs, focusing on people more than on urban space and speed.

In the following chapter, the differences between the representation of the inner city and that of specific suburbs will be further analysed. The focus is mostly on the years from 1908 until 1911 when two significant films appeared: *Marvellous Melbourne, Queen City of the South* and *A Thriving and Prosperous Suburb. Bird’s Eye View of Footscray*. 
CHAPTER FOUR

Urban Travelogues and Local Films II (1907-11)

Representing the metropolis is never an innocent gesture
but one that is always motived by cultural need and ambitions.
(Dimendberg 2004, 89)

Films about Melbourne made in 1910 and 1911 were significant for their modern view of the city-centre, and for their alternative views of the suburbs. The analysis in this chapter will focus, in particular, on how specific ‘genres’ and ‘film practices’ (such as the ‘phantom ride’, the ‘panorama’ and ‘city views’) were able to characterise and define urban and suburban cinematic places in Melbourne. Firstly, the main section of the chapter will focus on the release and widespread success of Marvellous Melbourne, Queen City of the South (1910), the first surviving city-travelogue about Melbourne. This was the main film to express a coherent, complex and unifying discourse about the city. It is a good example of a travelogue structured around the main visual experience of the phantom ride in the central city streets. An analysis of the tram ride in this film will be central to my analysis as it links to and is comparable with the car rides in other Melbourne travelogues: the previous Moving Melbourne (analysed in Chapter 3) and the subsequent Melbourne Today (analysed in Chapter 5). This film also expresses an ambivalent identity of place, contrasting the modernity of the city centre with the broader complexity of its surroundings. Secondly, I will provide an analysis of A Thriving and Prosperous Suburb. Bird’s Eye View of Footscray, produced by Pathé Australia, which is an example of a local film describing the suburban community of Footscray. The closing section of this chapter will survey the most significant newsreels featuring street scenes produced from 1909 to 1929. The period is marked by the introduction of gazette service event-driven newsreels such as Pathé and Australasia. The event newsreels rarely included urban views, and when they did they were episodic and rigid representations of local urban space offering a limited contribution to the corpus of the portrayal of Melbourne’s street spaces on screen. These two films made in the years 1910/11 were part of a national increase in film production. For Pike and Cooper,

The years before the First World War were the most productive for Australian cinema with a peak in 1911 that has not been equalled since. But by 1913 production has declined and did not recover until the heavy input of government finance in the 1970s (Pike and Cooper 1998, 4)

In 1911 the Australian film industry initiated a series of amalgamations. In Melbourne, at the beginning of 1911, West’s Pictures took over the Australian branch of Pathé Freres (A Thriving and Prosperous Suburb. Bird’s Eye View of Footscray). In March, Johnson and Gibson (Living Hawthorn) and J. and N. Tait (Making Melbourne; The Story of the Kelly Gang) joined forces to form the Amalgamated Picture Company Ltd with the intention of opening a new Melbourne film studio. In 1912 Amalgamated Pictures joined Spencer’s Pictures (Marvellous Melbourne, Queen City of the South) and West’s Pictures (ex
Pathé) in the General Film Company of Australasia, ostensibly moving film production to Sydney (Bertrand and Routt 1989, 9-10).

These were the last years in which travelogues and non-fiction films represented the main source of income for film businesses. The success of fictional feature films relegated travelogues and documentaries to the role of supporting shows. According to Richard Abel

*As classical storytelling techniques developed and multiple-reel/feature films became more popular, however, this moment of arguing for the box office appeal of the educational film soon ended. The success of the classical Hollywood cinema effectively neutralized reformers’ attempts to promote the short nonfiction film. Travelogues persisted as an added attraction on movie screens well into the feature film era, but they no longer seemed viable commercial competition for fiction films after the early 1910s.* (Abel 2010, 931)

### 4.1 The Melbourne of 1910

The centrality of *Marvellous Melbourne, Queen City of the South* to the early discourse about the cinematic image of the city is characterised by its capacity to bring together many previous discourses about the city and its representation. *Marvellous Melbourne, Queen City of the South* was part of a series of new Australian urban travelogues sponsored by Spencer Pictures and including *Picturesque Sydney* (1910). In 1910 Melbourne was a city with a newfound economic wealth, and whose population had returned to growth after fifteen years of stagnation. This economic stability probably allowed Melbourne to imagine itself as a modern city once again, linking the industrial present to its more celebrated past. In 1906, with *Moving Melbourne*, there was a first attempt to use the epithet ‘Marvellous’ in the title of a film about the city. In 1910 the epithet officially reappeared to link the film to the myth of the past. Nevertheless, the representation of the modern city opening the films marked, at closer inspection, not so much a new beginning as an end of ‘modern Melbourne’.

Melbourne’s temporary spell as the capital of Australia (1901-1927) brought momentum to the debate about the city’s urban design. Of interest to the debate about the possible re-redesign of Melbourne were the ideas developed by the American City Beautiful movement, aimed at the symbolic planning of capital cities and inspired by the re-planning of Washington (Freestone 2000, 45; Rybczynski 1995, 134). Alongside these ideas the anti-urban precepts of the British Garden City movement, the slum clearance movement, and a move towards creating new boulevards gained popularity. As Christine Garnaut has pointed out, the 1910s was a time when

*an eclectic cohort of politicians, professionals, private citizens, and state and local government officials focused on pragmatic measures to improve the physical and social condition of the Australian City, remove its ‘worn-out system of development’ and create a vision for its future. […] The reform imperative of the 1910s – to ‘improve the condition of urban life for the masses’ – dictated a broader agenda than that which had previously inspired the city beautiful movement.* (Garnaut 2000, 46)
Besides the opening of new boulevards on the periphery, the extensive discussion about ‘slum clearance’ and a few ‘cosmetic’ interventions, the new economic stability was not accompanied by an equal development in urban design. The grid system was still the dominant form and structuring principle of the city. There were people arriving in the city in those years who perceived Melbourne as “ugly, dull and lacking civic pride […] a chaos of uncoordinated building designs and heights, fire escape stairs, street awnings, advertising signs, and tram, telegraph and telephone wires” (Freestone 2000, 30). This was not an isolated comment, and is similar in tone to those expressed fifty years later by the architect and critic Robin Boyd (1960, 47). According to Freestone, city reformers were looking at a comprehensive approach to town planning, different from the piecemeal attitude that characterized the urban planning of Australia’s cities and suburbs in the nineteenth century. While these ideas were being discussed in Melbourne in the 1910s, the representation of a ‘greener’ city would only be fully visible in film almost twenty years later and would feature prominently in many scenes of Melbourne Today.

4.2. Celebration and Crisis of the Modern city: Marvellous Melbourne, Queen City of the South

Marvellous Melbourne, Queen City of the South is the most significant early cinematic representation of Melbourne as a ‘modern city’ to survive. The city was seen through the eyes of two Melbourne ‘outsiders’: British director/producer Cozens Spencer and Tasmanian operator Edward Higgins, both based in Sydney. Gaunson writes that “the film segmented a variety of scenics that Spencer and Higgins had shot over the previous year” (Gaunson 2014, 9). But it seems unlikely that a film so widely advertised as a novelty was entirely made of previously released material.

Each ‘scenic’, as the filmed views were called at the time, framed people and urban spaces expressing views of specific Melbourne places; the intensity of the city centre, the mobility of the grid, the importance of the river for local leisure, the sports and the fairs, the seaside and the port. The mise-en-scène of most of the scenics replicated that of previous early film genres: the city views, the panorama, the phantom ride, and the fixed framing of the early Lumière films. The film’s novelty came from its centrifugal structure and from the relation of the single parts to the whole film. Each scene contributed a unique visual discourse about Melbourne, establishing a new relation between the representation of the city centre and that of the rest of the city.
Melbourne is proposed for the first time on film as a single modern entity made of many functioning parts. This modern portrait records the city at its industrial apex, linking together the colonial city of the past with the powered city of 1910. By then, Melbourne had been furnished with pipes and cables running underground. The telephone allowed lawyers and stockbrokers to easily reach their clients, while people working in the city could access their workplaces through one of the 1,000 lifts operating in Melbourne by 1907 (Lewis 1995). The introduction and implementation of the first cable tram in 1888, the electrified trams introduced in 1906, the arrival of the first cars, and finally the opening of the new Flinders Street Station at the end of 1910, changed the way people interacted with the urban space. By 1910 the network of trams and trains allowed thousands of people to arrive, work, inhabit the city in the morning and leave in the afternoon. The inner city slowly moved from a residential space to a working space. The demographic density of people living in the inner city of Melbourne, after reaching a peak in 1891 with a 5.7% growth rate, began a long progressive decline. It was caused by the economic crisis, by the spread of the metropolitan area supported by a new and more efficient transport system. In 1901 Melbourne had a 0.1% growth rate. By 1910, the city’s population had returned to a steady rate of increase, reaching almost 600,000 inhabitants (with a 2.2% growth rate in 1911). Until 1947, the growing demography of the city will be sustained mostly by the migratory movement from the rest of Victoria (McDonald 2008).

As is clear from the title, the imagined modern city of 1910 makes a direct reference back to the myth of the ‘Marvellous City of the South’ of the 1880s110. But the two cities, the past and the present, had quite

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110 See Gaunson (2014) for further literary references to the idea of Marvellous Melbourne.
different moods and perspectives. ‘Marvellous Melbourne’ was the embodiment of a furious and not very disciplined growth that had come to a halt 20 years earlier. In contrast, the Melbourne of 1910 had been the capital of the nation for nine years and as a result provided a more secure environment for financial investment. Lewis suggests that the adventurous edge in business and innovation had, by then, shifted from Melbourne to Sydney (Lewis 1995, 87).

Melbourne in the Edwardian period shed much of its character as a British provincial city - which is paradoxical because most observers would have thought that exactly the reverse was the case. The common perception of Melbourne in the 1880s was that of a new boom town, more American than any city in Australia, and certainly more so than any in Britain. It was a city of phenomenal growth, go-ahead ideas, high capital investment and advanced technology, and its skyscrapers were excelled only in Chicago and New York. The depression of the 1890s turned the flashy young Melbourne into a sober Edwardian matron, and the go-ahead image was appropriated by Sydney. (Lewis 1995, 87 (101)).

By calling 1910 Melbourne ‘Marvellous’ Spencer made a nostalgic link aimed at ‘banking’ on Melbourne’s previous international popularity. As Gaunson has written, it is a portrait that “hones in on the city’s iconography and landmarks to present an illuminating panorama of Melbourne when it was not just the nation’s capital, but also the major entry point into Australia from England” (Gaunson 2014, 30).

Marvellous Melbourne, Queen City of the South had its first screening on the evening of Tuesday November 22, 1910. The Argus, Melbourne’s most widely read newspaper at the time, advertised the new film with words still reminiscent of the rhetoric of the World’s Fairs. On that day Melburnians could read an advertisement promoting the technical marvel of the theatre, the arrival of the new foreign films, and the latest local productions.

Olympia, Wirth’s Olympia
(Just Over Prince’s Bridge)
MELBOURNE’S MODERN PICTURE THEATRE
Direction of C. Spencer
The Warehouse of the World’s Wonders
Rendered Delightfully Cool in Summer by the Recent Structural Improvements and Summer
Parallel Sliding Roofs

Wirth’s Olympia was having a change in program with a new set of foreign film reels “Just arrived by R.M.S. Otway Direct from Far Lending British, American, and European Homes”. Then Marvellous Melbourne, Queen City of the South was presented as

Another Notable Australian Production
OF PARAMOUNT LOCAL INTEREST
The Director has the Pleasure in announcing the Completion at the Spencer Cinematograph Studios and Factory of an Elaborated Animated Scenic Picture, Illustrating
MARVELLOUS MELBOURNE, QUEEN CITY OF THE SOUTH

111 Briggs too sees Melbourne, in this period, as more ‘British’ and less ‘American’ than the Marvellous Melbourne of the 1880s (Briggs 1968, 312).
The whole program was to be accompanied by an orchestra playing specially arranged music. The advertisement then provided a list of the film’s ‘scenes’, ‘vistas’ or ‘panoramas’, as they were called at the time\(^\text{112}\). The film was organised into a series of views of Melbourne that, as in a tour or a travelogue, could visually transport the viewer to the advertised places. For *Marvellous Melbourne, Queen City of the South* the ‘menu’ of proposed views was:

*Panorama of Melbourne, the Magnificent boulevards of Collins, Swanston, Elizabeth and Bourke Streets, Vista of Little Collins-Street, Federal Parliament-house, Treasury-buildings, the G.P.O., Melb. Town-hall, Federal Govt.-house, St. Paul’s Cathedral, Museum and Art Gallery (with interiors), Shipping in the Yarra, Yarra Scenes at Studley Park, Hanley-on-Yarra, Cloud and Sunset Effects on the Bay, Botanical-gardens, the Queen Victoria Memorial, Fair Barrackers at a Football Match, Elizabeth-St, Railway Station, Exhibition Building, Agricultural Show-grounds, Flemington Racecourse, Along St. Kilda Road.* [The Argus, 22 November 1910, p.12]

Even without watching the film, by looking at a map of Melbourne, it is clear that the list communicates an attempt to trace a centrifugal narrative and structure. The tour takes the spectator from the inner city of Melbourne to the ‘Bay’ and then back, closer to the inner city, to the most popular locations for entertainment. The views move from the city centre to the beach and back, from the boutique to the market, from the urban to the garden, from business to leisure. The same order is not entirely respected in the edited film. The traveling shot ‘Along St. Kilda Road’, which appears at the end of the list, actually features in the first part of the film. The ‘Flemington Racecourse’ scene, documenting the Melbourne Cup Carnival, is missing in the available copies, even though it is mentioned in a 1911 commentary:

*Beautiful sunset and moonlight effects on the waters of Port Phillip evoked tumultuous applause, while the splash board on the driver’s side finish of the Melbourne Cup was admirable* [Clarence and Richmond Examiner (Grafton, NSW) 28 February 1911, 4]

Another difference is that the news story text is structured around names, while the film is built, primarily, on images, through editing and framing. But an account like this can only tell us so much. By comparing this list of views with the actual sequence in the film, where the views of ‘Shipping on the Yarra’ and ‘Sunset Effects on the Bay’ are set as the last scenes of the film, one notes that the images do a better job of creating a potential centripetal trajectory. The visual width of the final views of the Yarra and over the Bay counterbalance the closed proximity of the initial shots of inner Melbourne nicely.

In fact, the opening scenes are filmed and edited in a spectacular way, with a strong accent on the centripetal motion within the city centre. These images push the viewer to identify with the inner-city spaces. The intensity of the cinematic motion in the CBD tram sequence conveys a heightened attention on the city centre and a secondary interest in the rest of the city. At the same time, this perceptual imbalance between a more dynamic experience of the urban centre, and a quieter representation of other locations suggests the relation between the two images of the city; the first central and international, the second suburban and local.

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Marvellous Melbourne, Queen City of the South is a travelogue structured around the balanced assemblage of early film genres: the panning traveling shot, the ‘train arrival’, the city-view, and the phantom ride. The film is directed with the intention of making a spectacle of Melbourne and its people. The visual elements come together to mimic images of the great British, European and American cities. There is a desire to entertain and capture the attention of Australian and European screens and theatres, as would happen when the film screened in London in 1911 paired with Living London.

The construction of Melbourne as city of spectacle is suggested from the start. The opening of the film proposes, not unintentionally, three attractions of modernity; the machine, movement and the crowd. The film opens with a panorama of the city buildings, and then shows a series of trains departing and arriving from a station, and finally a phantom ride from the front of a cable-tram moving into the centre from outside the city’s high-rise district. All these initial scenes cast the city as the principal character, and its inhabitants as equally important but less distinctive extras. At the same time the spectacle of the cinematic city in Marvellous Melbourne, Queen City of the South improves on a structure that was enclosed in the theatrical logic of promotional travelogues. Marvellous Melbourne, Queen City of the South may appear to have a limited scope when compared to Living London, yet despite its limitations it accomplishes for the first time a multifaceted description of the city’s principal attractions and facets. Even though it lacks the social depth of Living London, it is a far better constructed, and more balanced film than the later Melbourne Today.

4.2.1 The Opening Panorama

After the titlecard ‘Marvellous Melbourne, Queen City of the South’, the first ‘vista’ is, as advertised, a ‘Panorama of Melbourne’. The long lens of the film camera pans from left to right, from the Parliament Building to the northern suburbs, producing an establishing shot of the ‘marvellous’ city. The opening panoramic movement features a densely composed shot letting us into the city while displaying the European-inspired iconic edifices of the Gold-Rush period. The ‘panorama’ view is composed of two short panning shots (fig. 59). The first opens with the Parliament Building (1856) and slowly moves right along
Spring Street to reach the facade of the Princess Theatre (1886). Then there is a jump-cut to a shot with the same panning pace showing the Exhibition Building (1880), and moving right, revealing the inner northern suburbs of Carlton and Fitzroy. The cut avoids showing the northern side of the city grid, Victoria Parade and the Carlton Gardens. The filming of the whole panorama in a single panning movement was probably impeded by the viewpoint from the watchtower of the Eastern Hill Fire Station, where the windows do not allow for continuous movement.

The viewpoint of the panorama is also historically specific. The buildings portrayed in the panning shot all date from that pre-1900 period. The shot was filmed from the 1893 watchtower of the Eastern Hill Fire Station, which still stands today in East Melbourne at the corner of Gisborne Street and Victoria Parade. With its 150ft height served by a direct current electrical lift, the view from the watchtower represented a specific historical moment of ‘seeing’ Melbourne.

Through the long focus lens the buildings appear in close-up. They fill the frame and measure the city space while introducing the viewer to the density of the inner city. A wider, more detached point of view is avoided. From the beginning, the spectator is invited into a closer relationship with what is presented as a dense architectonical urban place. The novelty of this shot is that it achieves the perception of urban density by sheer architectural juxtaposition, without using people and crowds. It was customary at the time to present images of human bodies densely occupying the urban space as a quintessential sign of modernity. In this opening sequence the focus is just on the city buildings, with a high viewpoint that locates the spectator within the city, not outside it.

Fig. 59. Opening Panorama (*Marvellous Melbourne, Queen City of the South*, 1910)
DVD screenshot. National Film and Sound Archive, Canberra, acc.no: 9525-27.

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113 “The Eastern Hill Fire Station is of historical significance as the first major project undertaken by the Metropolitan Fire Brigades Board. It is a focal point in the historical development of organised firefighting in Melbourne. The original building remained the Board’s flagship for nearly ninety years and set the standard for the development of firefighting installations throughout the metropolis. The tall watch tower, which dominated the city skyline for over half a century, became an important civic Landmark” from: “Eastern Hill Fire Station” Victorian Heritage Database. [retrieved from http://vhd.heritagecouncil.vic.gov.au/places/4245 (accessed 6.5.2013)]
The repetition of exactly the same camera movement, forty years later, in the opening of *The Road to Bali* (Walker 1952)\(^\text{114}\) permits us to compare the shots. While these two films are completely different in scope, period, and narrative, the shot seems to have the similar function of visually introducing the city within a tight panorama. In both, the intention is to provide a visual anchor for the name ‘Melbourne’. The main difference in the 1952 shot is that it uses a framing that is two-times wider and the panning moves at a faster speed, widening the view to the whole city, then cutting to an interior shot. In contrast, *Marvellous Melbourne*’s opening does not distance the spectator from the urban, but prepares them to enter the city space.

4.2.2 A Train Arriving in Richmond

The scenic appearing after the ‘panorama’ is the arrival of the trains at Richmond Railway Station, an inner suburb of Melbourne (figs. 60 and 61). The train scene is a direct reference to a classic trope and genre of early cinema, ‘the train station arrival’, which first appeared in Melbourne in the Lumières’ *Melbourne Cup* films. This shot continues the encoded staging of the opening shot. The ‘Richmond view’ is an elaborated example of how a well-staged ‘view’ or ‘scenic’, had to possess its own internal balance and aesthetic, in terms of composition, movement and basic visual narrative. It had to stand alone and draw in the spectator by staging a minimal event.

The use of these tropes shows how the travelogue was composed of ‘pieces’, of filmed ‘genres’ that could still exist independently. These scenics were ‘combined’ together to produce a stronger meaning. The enduring permanence of these early tropes demonstrates the conservative formal structure of the travelogue (Peterson 2012, 928), which is repeated up to the promotional Melbourne films of the 1940s and 1950s. Travelogues connected early types of shots without blending them together. This was a very different approach from the cohesive experience of later symphony films, which ‘blended’ less meaningful and more abstract imagery into a single formal unity.

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\(^{114}\) In the opening of *Road to Bali* (1952) the voice-over presents Australia as “the last outpost of the art and culture of the western world. Our story takes us to Melbourne the birthplace of Nellie Melba, the famous coloratura soprano, Australia’s gift to American Opera. As a token of appreciation are here two concert hall artists, steeped in the tradition of American classical music”. Bing Crosby and Bob Hope are then chased by women they have promised to marry, and by their Australian country-farmer fathers armed with boomerangs.
The view is introduced by the title card ‘Richmond, a Busy Station. The Richmond scene carefully frames the station with the city behind from a higher viewpoint, probably a bridge, to provide a theatrical setting with the maximum amount of visual movement and information. The picture depicts, in diagonal converging lines, four platforms and three railway lines. As in one of the Lumière films of the Melbourne Cup Carnival, *La Foule*, the image articulates spatial depth through the progressive reduction in the size of the buildings caused by the diagonal perspective, decreasing in dimension from the lower right corner of the frame (see fig. 26). As in the genre of the ‘train arrival’, the view is firstly staged within a theatrical perspective and then ‘enacted’ through an action, which has a beginning, a middle and an end (Deutelbaum 1985, 300). In this locked-off shot, the composition is ‘animated’ by the arrival of the first train coming towards the viewer. The shot orchestrates its visual dynamics around the progressive movement of the trains. The logic of the shot has the captivating wonder of the cinema of attractions. Burch argues for the intrinsic
spectacle of the genre of the ‘train arrival’ and recognises the enhanced theatricality of the setting, “the symbolic place of the train in the spectacle of industrial progress […] but also the extraordinary effect of depth produced by a framing that makes the train arrive towards the spectator” (Burch 1990, 35). The train arrives puffing with smoke. People start to get on and off it. Then a second and a third train arrive. The first train departs and a fourth train arrives. Travellers disembark from the train and the trains depart, leaving the platform empty again. Finally, while the formal structure is borrowed from international models, the placing of the point of view is specific to Melbourne, given that it frames the station and the city together, indirectly revealing the viewpoint from a bridge over the train line.

4.2.3 Tram ‘Phantom Ride’ in Melbourne

The central scene of the film is the subsequent traveling shot from a cable tram. The sequence is introduced by the title card “Along St. Kilda Rd.” The scene does indeed feature a tracking shot starting along St. Kilda Road, followed by images of the tram moving along Swanston Street and Collins Street. The camera is firmly set on the front side of the tram, taking in the viewpoint of an imaginary passenger (fig. 62). The sequence is a transposition of similar sequences shown at the ‘Tours of the World’ spectacles. It features an edited ‘phantom ride’ of a view from a tram looking ahead and intercut with a series of views looking out of the window. The traveling views are introduced by explicatory title cards, followed by similarly labelled architectural views of buildings and crowded street scenes (fig. 66).

The traveling shot connects St. Kilda Road with the CBD, initiating a discourse between the north and south side of the River Yarra. The north side is the side of the colony, of the grid, of industrial development. The south side was the side temporarily left to the Aboriginal inhabitants, but it is also the side of the Botanical Gardens, the road to the beach and the bay. The shot re-enacts the action of the tram crossing Princes Bridge from St. Kilda Road painted five years earlier by William Wilson, Melbourne (fig. 4). The main link between the view of Princes Bridge in Marvellous Melbourne, Queen City of the South and earlier views is the direction and framing of the bridge and the city. As has been shown, nineteenth century representations of the bridge frequently looked at the city from a similar viewpoint (see Chapter 2). The film repeats that perspective, allowing the spectator to experience the crossing of the bridge. Once more, cinematic place is created through an identification with the specific point of view. The opening of the shot along the wide space of St. Kilda Road reinforces the sense of compression experienced once the camera enters the narrower space of Swanston Street, and describes a centripetal movement converging toward the city centre (fig. 63).
This sequence stages an encoded perception of the modern city, which combines the centripetal direction with the subjective position\textsuperscript{115} of the camera, uniting spectator and vehicle. For Melbourne in 1910 the novelty of this viewpoint is in the ‘blocked’ movement of the camera proceeding at street level towards and across the city. The movement re-iterates the experience of the cable-tram network, a new essential perceptual reality of travel in the ‘Marvellous city. The introduction of the cable-tram system in 1885 was a distinctive symbol of modernity. The tram was also a central symbol of urban modernity in painted representations. It featured in the already cited Melbourne, but was also central to the urban views Collins Street and Bourke Street, painted by George Pownall in 1912 (Fig. 64). Both paintings propose the familiar iconography of the tram at the centre of an animated streetscape seen in perspective.

\textsuperscript{115} A technique for employing the camera in such a way that it takes the point of view of one of the characters or that of a moving object (Konigsberg 1989, 361)
The tram sequence in *Marvellous Melbourne, Queen City of the South* was mostly about movement, aimed at conveying an enhanced experience of the city. The release of *Marvellous Melbourne, Queen City of the South* in November 1910 followed the release of one of the last ‘Tours of the World’ shows, which were by then screened in cinema theatres. Even if the perceptual experience of the physical movement conveyed by the carriage of the early *Tours* was mostly a thing of the past, the pattern of the visual sequence and the audio effects remained, such as the riding bells, which still played during the screening of the film.

Another aspect to consider is the editing. While unedited long-takes of tram sequences were common in Tours’ films\(^\text{116}\), it was also common practice to edit the phantom ride to exclude tram stops and intercut the sequence with views of monuments and street views. The stopping of the tram gave the movement through the urban space a continuity and density of perception that it lacked in daily reality. The aim was to maintain the shot at a constant speed, to provide a seamless illusion of continuous movement. It was a ‘hyperactive’ experience producing a hyper-realist effect, which did not accurately document the actual experience of traveling on a tram. The fixed continuity of the movement was therefore not real, but indeed ‘ultrareal’ as Fielding suggested when writing about early examples of the ‘Hales’s Tours’ (Fielding 1970, 47)\(^\text{117}\). The experience of the city was compressed, overstimulated, and editing was instrumental in achieving this experience. The stillness of the subjective camera position was one of the key effects capturing the illusion, as the camera was indeed capturing the viewpoint of the tram as well as that of the passenger. As Bruno points out

\(^{116}\) An example of a long take is the twelve minutes filmed from a San Francisco tram along Market Street, a few days before the 1906 earthquake.

\(^{117}\) It is worth quoting the article published in the *Evening Standard* on the “Hale’s Tours” reported by Fielding in his essay on “ultrarealism” before the 1910s: “the audience [of the Hale’s Tours] is seated as if in the cab of a simulated railroad engine, with a full view of the landscape not only in front but also on both sides of the train; a continuous, all-encompassing image is projected through the simulated windows; stereophonic sound is used; the landscape flashes by, in perfect synchronization and in color, the total impression so vivid as to approach the actual experience.” (Fielding 1970, 47).
When the camera is placed in this way – in trains, most typically; in suburban cars, as in Panoramic View of Boston Subway from an electric car (1901); on streetcars, as in Panoramic View of the Brooklyn Bridge (1899); or on vehicles moving through the street, as in Panorama of 4th St. St Joseph (1902) the camera becomes the vehicle: that is, it becomes, in a literal sense, a spectatorial means of transportation. The travel-film genre inscribed motion into the language of film, transporting the spectator into space and creating a multiform travel effect that resonated with the architectonics of the railroad-like movie theatre that housed it (Bruno 2008, 21).

The fixity of the gaze of the camera in the tram sequence connects the spectator with the mechanical tram network. More than simply conveying a realist experience, it is a visual metaphor for the industrial network linking parts of the city. Moving from the cinematic context typical of ‘Tours’ film screenings between 1907 and 1910/11, Spencer’s film draws the viewer into a re-constructed experience of Melbourne as a nineteenth century modern industrial city. As pointed out in the analysis, almost all the subjects depicted in these opening scenes belong to the previous century. All the main buildings, the introduction of the railway, Richmond Station and the same cable tram system were all already present in the Melbourne of 1890. The coherence of these settings is intended to bring the spectator back to a mythical pre-cinematic period in the history of the city.

Nevertheless, while the filmed city refers to the Melbourne of the 1880s, the style of filmmaking, particularly the editing, reflects the Melbourne of 1910. The phantom tram ride, the crossing of Princes Bridge, the tram’s entrance into the urban space of Swanston Street (fig. 62) and the scene of the boy running in between trams along Collins Street (fig. 63) are memorable and specific to this period. All these scenes suggest an iconography that is more likely to be found in representations of Melbourne in the years from 1905 to 1913. There is a pictorial parallel that runs from Wilson’s Melbourne to Pownall’s Collins Street (1912) and Bourke Street (1912). These are the years when Melbourne, capital of the nation, returns to
economic prosperity, allowing itself to be represented more comfortably as an urban spectacle. The centred perspective in Pownall’s *Collins Streets* (Fig. 64) draws on similarly spectacular perceptual premises. The painting stages Collins Street in a deep perspective helping to maintain the central focus on the moving tram.

![City Views - (Marvellous Melbourne, Queen City of the South, 1910) DVD screenshot. National Film and Sound Archive, Canberra, acc.no:9525-27.](image)

4.2.4. City Views and Viewpoints

The existence of viewpoints demonstrating a connection with the urban history of the city are an important element in producing specific cinematic identities of place. Conversely, the repetition of viewpoints lacking that reference can communicate a lack of specificity and focus. These opposing extremes are exposed, one next to the other, in the editing of the spectacular tram sequence as it shifts from the phantom ride to the city views. The trend of juxtaposing long traveling shots with footage featuring static framing was a commercial practice inherited from the ‘Tours of the World’. As Rabinowitz explains, during the ‘Tours’ “changes of locale occurred abruptly through editing, the camera position was moved, or the prospective from the front or rear of the train was altogether abandoned” (2012, 87).

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118 A depth of space that will be drastically ‘flattened’ in the more subdued version of *Collins Street* painted by the same artist in 1932.
The formulaic model of the ‘Tours’ travelogue was imported almost to the letter. The tram sequence in *Marvellous Melbourne, Queen City of the South* was edited with the insertion of a series of static shots depicting ‘views of monuments and buildings’ and ‘streets scenes with people’.

![Image](https://example.com/image.jpg)

**Fig. 67. St. Paul’s Cathedral and Town Hall (Marvellous Melbourne, Queen City of the South, 1910)**

DVD screenshot. National Film and Sound Archive, Canberra, acc.no:9525-27.

The frontal view from the cable tram has a historical specificity. While this type of shot was available in Melbourne from 1885 when the service was initially introduced, the appearance of this viewpoint on screen in 1910 links it to the popularity of the ‘Tours of the of World’ shows (1907-1910), and to the renewed aspirations of Melbourne as a modern industrial city in these years.

On the other hand, the city views of the monuments are not invested with a historical specificity, despite the partial reference to the period signifying ‘Marvellous Melbourne’. The monuments are framed from a traditional viewpoint, often filmed at close distance, cropping the upper parts of the buildings (fig. 67). In keeping with the historical tone of the opening, the views mostly showed nineteenth century buildings. The titlecards read: ‘Town Hall’, ‘Federal Parliament House’, ‘Law Courts’, ‘Treasury Building’, ‘General Post Office’, ‘Exhibition Building’ and ‘Government House’. The buildings are presented through a static, ‘normalising’ shot, giving the architecture a one-dimensional aspect that is neither dynamic nor spectacular.

In contrast, the few street scenes and views are composed with a more balanced iconography, showing human figures crossing the centre of the frame and looking into the camera (fig. 66). Both the ‘Little Collins Street’ and the ‘Bourke Street’ views are brought to life by the presence of young workers crossing the street and looking at the camera. Their gaze, more common in truly local film than in promotional Melbourne travelogues, is particularly striking here. Their position in the frame is more central and iconic than in similar images from the suburban films. The theatricality of their position, centred in the frame and reinforced by their proximity to the vanishing point, refers back to classic early examples of cinematic composition, such as R.W. Paul’s *Westminster Bridge* (1896).
4.2.5. The View on Elizabeth Street

Amongst the street views in Marvellous Melbourne, Queen City of the South, the elevated view of ‘Elizabeth Street’ is the most recent and the least common (fig. 68). Elizabeth Street occupies the lower level of the city grid and specialized in the automotive trade from the beginning of the twentieth century. This view was ‘secured’ from the second floor of the clock tower completed in 1907 as part of Flinders Street Station (fig. 69a). The choice of this viewpoint in 1910 gives the view a specific sense of cinematic place and time. Not long before a similarly iconic view of Elizabeth Street had been photographed, based on the same axial iconography and today often used as a symbol of ‘old Melbourne’ (fig. 69b).

Fig. 68. Elizabeth Street (Marvellous Melbourne, Queen City of the South, 1910)
DVD screenshot. National Film and Sound Archive, Canberra, acc.no:9525-27.

Fig. 69a. Elizabeth Street looking South: the clock tower after its completion. c. 1907-1910, glass negative.
In 1910, the Elizabeth Street view captured the new viewpoint and the new perspective, indirectly documenting the completion of the clock tower. The novelty of this viewpoint lies in the combination of an elevated viewpoint with the main orthogonal axis of the streetscape. This view has the effect of rendering the street through a mid-air perspective. Mid-air orthogonal views are rare in Melbourne but were usually quite popular in cityscapes, as in the orthogonal view of Collins Street from the Treasury Building. These views are more common in the street iconography of New York. In the Elizabeth Street view this connection is triggered by the perceived narrow space created by the presence, on the left side of the picture, of the Australian Building (1889), the tallest building in Melbourne.
The view from Flinders Street Station was one of the few axial views shot from a higher viewpoint into a main CBD Street available in Melbourne\(^{19}\). The perpendicular planning of the city grid, the lack of squares and interruptions made it quite difficult to witness an axial viewpoint of a main public space from a mid-air position from within the grid. The construction of the Flinders Street Station clock tower provided this kind of viewpoint. But after appearing for the first time in the travelogue *Marvellous Melbourne, Queen City of the South*, the ‘Elizabeth Street’ viewpoint would ‘disappear’ from cinematic representations of the city. It is peculiar and significant that this viewpoint does not seem to appear again in later films. These views were taken from the clock tower from a higher viewpoint, possibly the fourth floor. The images show a stronger midpoint perspective enhanced by the construction of floors and buildings on the right side of the street, with the characteristic contours of the Australian Building on the left-hand side, later demolished in 1980.

After the scenes shot in the inner city, *Marvellous Melbourne, Queen City of the South* seems to move outside the city centre by showing a series of communal spaces popular for entertainment. In reality, looking closely at the mise-en-scène of subsequent views, the film maintains a centripetal preoccupation and direction concentrating mostly on inner-city experiences, on large public events and amusements and bypassing representation of the suburban communities. After the ‘Exhibition Building’, the ‘Government House’, the ‘Queen Victoria Memorial’ and ‘Museum and Exhibition’ in the National Gallery, the itinerary moves out of the CBD into shared public spaces where the whole city gathers. One of the scenes shows the ‘Henley-on-Yarra’, the traditional parade of boats on the Yarra River, captured with a spectacular tracking shot from one of the boats. The Yarra is also featured in the view of the boating at Studley Park, followed by the ‘Agricultural Show-Grounds’ and by the ‘Fair Barrackers at a Football Match’. The latter shows the Australian rules football match between Collingwood and Fitzroy, filmed at Victoria Park the 6th of August 1910. Before closing with a view of shipping on the Yarra (fig. 72), the film returns to more recent inner city architecture, and films the new Flinders Street Station and the intense criss-crossing of trams and people between Swanston Street and Princes Bridge in front of the station.

![Fig. 71. Shipping on the Yarra (*Marvellous Melbourne, Queen City of the South*, 1910)](image)

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\(^{19}\) The other two views were from the Treasury Building into Collins Street and from Parliament House into Bourke Street.
4.3. A Prosperous Suburb

If *Marvellous Melbourne, Queen City of the South* ignored the suburban communities *A Thriving and Prosperous Suburb: Bird’s Eye View of Footscray* (1910), put Footscray on screen. The film was shot mostly on the 14th December 1910 (fig. 73). This version included a 180-degree one-minute-long panoramic shot by Pathé Frères Australia. As per *Living Hawthorn*, this film does not appear to have been advertised in the main city newspapers, but only in the local ones, thus suggesting the ‘local’ character of the production. Poppy de Souza, a curator for Australian Screen Online (ASO) writes120:

*This is one of the earliest moving image recordings of Footscray. According to the Footscray Advertiser newspaper, most of the footage was shot on 14 December 1910 by a Pathé Australian Animated Gazette film crew […]. The finished film screened a few days later on 17 December at the Federal Hall in Footscray to coincide with the Federal Picture Company’s first weekly picture show in Melbourne’s suburbs. The film was shown again the following year with added footage when the Federal Picture Company’s new theatre, the Grand, opened in November 1911.*

The structure of the work is organised in a series of scenes: the panoramic introduction; ‘Principal Streets’, a series of street views of Barkly Street and Nicholson Street; ‘Handsome Buildings’ with views of the Federal Hall and a few other significant buildings; a panoramic shot of the ‘Flemington Racecourse’ and the Maribyrnong River seen from Footscray Hill; a competition of the ‘Footscray Fire Brigades’; a ‘Game of Bowls’; the arrival of workers at the local station; and footage of a church being demolished to make space for a new cinema theatre.

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Before analysing how the film frames people and streets in suburban Melbourne, it is worth looking at the panoramic camera movement that introduces the film and the suburb, and initially presented as a separate view.

Fig. 73. West end Barkley Street (A Thriving and Prosperous Suburb: Bird’s Eye View of Footscray, 1910). VHS-TV screenshot. National Film and Sound Archive, Canberra, acc.no: 70645.

The opening ‘bird’s eye’ view is a single panoramic long shot lasting ninety seconds. It is filmed with a slow camera movement starting from Barkley Street East and turning right for 200 degrees to take in the railway Station and the Town Hall on the opposite side of the same street, having shown the roofs and houses of half of Footscray (fig. 74). The Pathé Frères operator recorded it, most likely, from the top of the Fire Brigade clock tower.

There is a short distance in time (three weeks) between the release of Marvellous Melbourne, Queen City of the South and the screening of the opening shot presented as A Thriving and Prosperous Suburb. Bird’s Eye View of Footscray. The close relation of the two opening sequences, and their structural similarities within the films, invites a comparison of the two shots, and of the different ways in which they represent the inner city and the suburb of Footscray. Both shots contain obvious similarities: they are panoramic opening views of Melbourne; they are filmed from a high viewpoint; they include panning movements of the camera to the right, following the Western preference for left to right scanning and reading\(^\text{121}\). Finally, both shots introduce a visual discourse about Melbourne’s urban space, saying something about the relationship between the inner city and its suburbs. The opening shot has a weaker impact and is less spectacular. The buildings are more distant, but the shot takes in the suburb almost in its entirety.

\(^{121}\) In Western visual cultures the preference for a rightward scanning direction is influenced by the direction in reading literary texts. Shimamura notes also “in addition to the general rightward directionality bias, people prefer to have objects moving into the picture (towards the centre) rather than out of it. For non-directional objects, such as the frontal view of a person or cat, a central placement is mostly preferred.” (Shimamura 2013, 93)
The panoramic shot of *A Thriving and Prosperous Suburb. Bird’s Eye View of Footscray* (fig. 73) is dependent on a camera movement connecting the main street of the suburb with its surroundings. After the initial panoramic shot, the film moves to a series of ground level views of Footscray using a static camera position to illustrate the life of the suburb. The titles of these scenes reveal their lack of specificity: ‘Principal Streets’, ‘Handsome Buildings’, ‘Game of Bowls’, ‘The Railway Station’, it is a typology of common, repetitive and functional places that can be found in most Melbourne suburbs. The only name grounding the images to a sense of place is ‘Footscray’; the geographical entity of the suburb, the Footscray Hill from which we view the Flemington Racecourse, and the Footscray Fire Brigade.

For a ‘local film’ *A Thriving and Prosperous Suburb. Bird’s Eye View of Footscray* remains distant from the representation of the local community. People cross the street, some stop and look at the camera, and workers go their way along the road. What is new and different is the height of the camera, which is set at a child’s eye level, giving the spectator the perspective of a child on the street. Children crossing, playing and staring at the camera seem to take central place in the space of the suburb (fig. 74b). But unlike the cohesive views in *Living Hawthorn*, where children and adults seems to belong to the same place, in *A Thriving and Prosperous Suburb. Bird’s Eye View of Footscray* children inhabit separate spaces, with adults and workers operating in the background or out of focus, or in separate scenes. *A Thriving and Prosperous Suburb. Bird’s Eye View of Footscray* tries unsuccessfully to blend these spaces, and even the innovative use of cross-dissolve editing\(^{122}\) seems redundant (figs. 76 and 77),

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\(^{122}\) A ‘dissolve’ or ‘cross-dissolve’ is a transition between two scenes or shots, with one gradually fading into the next with an overlap between the two (Konigsberg 1989, 86).
A Thriving and Prosperous Suburb. Bird’s Eye View of Footscray appears disengaged from the life of the street. The depth of the suburban space is here contained and domesticated by hiding the vanishing point behind people or vehicles, or by positioning it out of the frame to obtain a more compressed sense of space. The representation of the community within the urban space is contained too, certainly in comparison to Living Hawthorn, but also in relation to Marvellous Melbourne, Queen City of the South. The human figures are less present and involved in the composition, and more distant from the camera. The main characters are children who nevertheless appear mostly disengaged from the presence of the camera. Some children look at the camera (and at the operator behind it) with remote interest. On the few occasions when children and adults interact with the camera there is no sense of amusement or ‘attraction’. One of the most interesting characters in A Thriving and Prosperous Suburb. Bird’s Eye View of Footscray is a worker coming back from the city by train. The camera watches the passengers line up on the left-hand side of the frame. Many pass by, some look at the camera but this worker engages with it and starts mimicking the hand cranking gesture of the operator. He is not the only one, another person on the road repeats the same gesture. That repetition of the mechanical gesture of the operator out of frame draws attention to the gap between what the spectator sees and the unseen out of frame reality. The man’s mimicked gesture produces a space of complicity between the spectator and the representation, a space characteristic of the more relaxed community context of suburban life.

Besides these moments of ‘connection’ with the characters, the overall film seems visually uninterested in people and faces. The scenes of ‘Handsome Buildings’, the fire brigades and the Flemington Racecourse are mostly filmed in wide-angle shots. Besides two long shots, the opening panoramic one and the other from Footscray Hill, both pivoting around the same position, A Thriving and Prosperous Suburb. Bird’s Eye View of Footscray is filmed from a static camera position. It is framed with the ‘specific’ intent of being generic, more an ‘anywhere’ than a ‘somewhere’. The scenes of the children, the arrival of the train, the fire brigade, and bowling, replay the iconography of the suburb without being committed to creating a specific and unique portrayal of Footscray. On the one hand, A Thriving and Prosperous Suburb. Bird’s Eye View of Footscray recalls newsreels that merely document the event from afar. On the other hand, the film is
an early instalment of a series of travelogues about Melbourne with a similar approach based on distance, low specificity and detached views.

By communicating this sense of ‘privacy’ and ‘distance’ in filming the public space of the suburb, *A Thriving and Prosperous Suburb. Bird’s Eye View of Footscray* is today, paradoxically, much more a ‘Melbourne film’ than *Living Hawthorn* or *Marvellous Melbourne, Queen City of the South*. And it is significant too, from this perspective, that *A Thriving and Prosperous Suburb. Bird’s Eye View of Footscray* is much more of a newsreel film than *Marvellous Melbourne* was. Many scenes in *Marvellous Melbourne, Queen City of the South* demonstrate a strong sense of staging, and the visual space is structured so as to produce a positive tension in the representation, ‘making’ specific shots dynamic, more interesting and intense. *A Thriving and Prosperous Suburb. Bird’s Eye View of Footscray*, on the other hand, like most newsreels, is almost ‘transparent’ in its use of the medium, as it is mostly focused on recording the event. And while ‘event films’ and actuality films have been around since the beginning of cinema, one of the real novelties of the years between 1909 and 1911 was the introduction of the filmed gazettes or newsreels by Pathé Australia.

### 4.4. Melbourne in Newsreels

Most of the films shot in Melbourne were newsreel, at least from 1909, when the format was introduced in Australia by Pathé Film123, until the 1940s. The promotional travelogues were an important exception showing landscapes and the city streets (as also the brief screen appearances of the city in two or three feature films on the period) but the main body of cinematic images shot in Melbourne after 1909 were constituted by newsreels. The ‘film gazettes’ or ‘film magazines’ were screened in cinema theatres between feature film programs and they had a wider visibility. As Shirley and Adams reported, “with the consolidation of the combine in early 1913, various newsreels, principally Spencer’s, were absorbed in the newly founded Australasian Gazette and until the coming of sound nearly twenty years later, Australasian Gazette remained the most important Australian newsreel” (1989, 36).

Most of these newsreels focussed on city events which rarely featured city street life. They can nevertheless be grouped by topic to form a few ‘subgenres’ in early newsreels or ‘event films’ about Melbourne. A first popular group is composed of sporting events. The Melbourne Cup Carnival was the first and most popular of these events to be filmed, and has been recorded on film practically at every occurrence since 1896. Amongst the great majority of newsreels there are a few which documented public events and provided views and a sense of the local urban space. For example the opening of St. Kilda Luna Park in

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123 I follow here Luke McKernan’s definition of newsreel as “a specific means of packaging and exhibiting news on film, a collection of disparate topical stories, generally each of no more than a minute’s length, on a single reel of film, exhibited regularly.” (McKernan 2010b, 686). The format is to be distinguished from previous ‘event based news’ and actualities.
December 1912 was an important event, which brought St. Kilda to the centre of attention. The Luna Park and the esplanade were filmed for several newsreel features such as *St. Kilda Esplanade* (1912) and *St Kilda Beach Scenes, Victoria* (1912). In the following years, more films were added to the list, including: *The St Kilda Esplanade on Boxing Day* (1913), *St Kilda Esplanade 1914* and *Some of the Attractions at the St Kilda Fair* (1920). All these films can be considered ‘suburban’ in that they focus on the suburb of St. Kilda, even though, practically nothing is shown of St. Kilda’s daily life. The focus is mostly on people going to St. Kilda for the Luna Park or to swim.

Another newsreel ‘genre’ that appeared in the period 1920 to 1929, were films documenting traffic accidents, roadworks, or improvements to the city’s infrastructure. These include newsreels such as *Tram conversion in Collins Street* (*Australasian Gazette* 1920), dealing with the electrification of the cable tram system in Collins Street and showing a few shots of city-life, or the extension of the sewage system in Melbourne, mostly filmed underground or off the main streets, documented in *Sewerage of a Great City: Melbourne*, (c1922). Another example of this genre is *Traffic Chaos Caused by Fusing of Electric Tram Wires* (Pathé Australia 1926), which largely shows people gathering around the place of the accident, with little visual contextual information given.

Public demonstrations, marches, strikes, parades, political rallies and parliamentary events in Melbourne can be linked to a further group constituting a specific ‘genre’. Most of these films were shot in the inner city, focus on large crowds participating in and watching the event, and offer a unique opportunity of seeing the city’s public spaces fully ‘occupied’, in contrast with later images of the same spaces empty of people that would recur in the 1950s and 1960s. The parades and demonstrations usually took place along Swanston Street, Collins Street or Bourke Street. They frequently ended up in front of Parliament House, not just the main political reference in the state of Victoria (and at the time of Australia) but one of the very few places in Melbourne (the other is the area in front of the State Library), capable of functioning ‘as’ a public square. The following newsreels belong to this group: the *[Return of the ANZACS]* (1918), the long St. Patrick’s Day parade in *Ireland Will Be Free* (1920), *Armistice Day, Melbourne* (*Australasian Gazette* c. 1925), *Parliament Opens the New Session* (*Australasian Gazette* 1925), and *Delegates to the Victorian Labor Party’s 1928 Easter conference* (1928). Going back to early examples, it is worth mentioning as part of this ‘genre’: *Independent Order of Rechabites Jubilee Presentation* filmed on Princes Bridge (1908) and *The Opening of the Melbourne Parliament and Royal Visit* (Perry 1901).

City views, streetscapes and street-life are generally uncommon, episodic and fragmented in newsreel features. Nevertheless, they constitute a small group of their own as fragmented footage has often been re-edited, mostly freely without concern for date or context of production. Extant examples of these types of footage are: *Melbourne Street Scenes* edited in 1915; *[City Street Scenes]* (1920); *[Melbourne Early Traffic Scenes]* supposedly with footage from 1915-1923; *Flinders Street Station Melbourne* which presents a series of unusual shots of traffic on Flinders Street seen from the top of a building (1923). Other traffic scenes of a rainy Melbourne, and another of a building under construction are included in the compilation *Wheat*
Harvesting (1925). Wheat Harvesting is a collection of footage from various unknown sources. The single scenes are mostly static shots of public life: the funeral of Alfred Deakin, construction of a building, accelerated footage of traffic on Princes Bridge; Melbourne street in the rain; a football match. The lack of a production or a distribution context for these films limits analysis. Most of this footage has been collected in a disorderly fashion, while retaining a perception of a previous urban life in Melbourne, mostly in the CBD.

4.4.1. Late ‘Phantom Rides’

I will now concentrate on some footage of travelogues and cityscapes that are more significant for this investigation, as they are able to articulate a wider discourse about the city and its visual conceptualisation. Firstly, I would like to go back to Marvellous Melbourne, Queen City of the South and look at how some of the views, including the phantom ride, featuring in the film, became progressively more rare and unusual in later examples.

The ‘disappearance’ of the clock tower view over Elizabeth Street mentioned in the analysis of Marvellous Melbourne, Queen City of the South was one sign of a change of style and subjects in filming Melbourne. The 1916 ban limiting construction to 132 feet was another sign, or a crisis in the iconography of Melbourne as a modern city. In the late 1910s and in the 1920s most of the camera angles and camera movements conveying the experience of a frantic or dynamic lifestyle became progressively less common. These dynamic scenes were replaced by calmer, more static and controlled shots. The phantom ride, metaphor of a mechanically transported viewpoint, also became rare in the surviving films of Melbourne. During the 1920s and 1930s, the few times after Marvellous Melbourne, Queen City of the South that the city was filmed from a moving car or a tram, it was common to use this device to be either satirical or nostalgic about modernity. The two films discussed here provide fascinating parallels with the phantom ride in Marvellous Melbourne, Queen City of the South even though they were shot years later. The evolution of a spectacular ‘camera’ genre such as the urban phantom ride says much about attitudes towards the perception of Melbourne as a modern city.

The first subsequent phantom ride appears in the short newsreel City Traffic in Variable Moods (c. 1920s), a humorous look at the intensity of modern city traffic in Melbourne (figs. 78-80). It was filmed by

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124 The idea of a city limit was not new, and had been expressed before at least in 1891(Schrader 2010, 815). After 1905 the debate was reignited in conjunction with the new ideas of the City Beautiful finding supporters in the estimators of Paris and Washington model, and detractors in the estimators of the New York model. After a lengthy ten years debate the new building regulations were introduced by the city council in February 1916. The establishment of a cap of 132 feet (40 metres), allowed “the constructions of ornamental towers above 132 feet, so long as they remained unoccupied” (Schrader 2010, 818). The limit was instrumental in maintaining a lower skyline, where the vertical landmark of St. Paul’s Cathedral main spire, the most iconic marker for years to date, will find place after the construction.
The Australasian Gazette most likely in the second half of the 1920s. The film shows the crossing between Flinders Street Station, Swanston Street and Collins Street, already featured in a sequence of Marvellous Melbourne, Queen City of the South. The newsreel plays with film-speed and camera angles by accelerating and slowing down the movement of people and trams, or by filming from unusual camera angles, thus exposing that sense of ‘uncanny’ doubling of modern reality implicit in the tram sequence. The acceleration of the film’s pace creates mechanical and repetitive movements echoing that of a machine. People and trams move frantically and are stopped only by the rhythm of the traffic lights. The film demonstrates a critical perception of the routine of modern daily life, later connected to work in Fordist factories in films such as À nous la liberté (Clair 1931) and Modern Times (Chaplin 1936). Other effects used in the film include slow motion to imply a ‘lateness’ in going home from work (fig. 78), or tilting of the camera (figs. 79 and 80) to mimic a subjective drunken viewpoint after a ‘convivial Saturday afternoon’ as the titlecard reads.
The other dynamic tram sequence found in films of Melbourne of this period is in *Fez Please!* (c. 1935) (figs. 81-83) a silent film made by the Owen brothers as a homage to cable trams, before they were replaced. The film is discussed here as a late reference to the tram sequence in *Marvellous Melbourne*, even though it is not clear when the film was shown and in what context it was screened. The opening text says the film is ‘dedicated to the passing of Melbourne’s quaint cable trams’ which will ‘shortly sink into oblivion’. Released or unreleased, the short film is one of the most interesting films about trams and vehicles in Melbourne. It combines a free hand-held use of the camera with quick editing, and an informal camera style, with multiple viewpoints. The scenes are filmed from the side of streets following trams passing by, from the middle of the traffic in the street, or from inside the tram, looking out.

4.5. Other City Films and Travelogues

An exception to the very short form of the newsreel was the release of *Ireland Will be Free*, a feature documentary capturing celebrations of St. Patrick’s Day in Melbourne in March 1920. The film was produced under the patronage of Irish-born Daniel Mannix, Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne from 1917 to 1963. The intention of the film “was primarily to give voice and support for the granting of self-government
to Ireland. Britain’s harsh reaction to the 1916 Eastern Rebellion had shocked and saddened Mannix who was not known to be nationalistic prior to this event in 1916” (Naughton 2016, 6)\textsuperscript{125}

The film has only been recently restored and screened (2016). The most relevant part of Ireland Will be Free to this thesis appears to be the long scene documenting the parade of St. Patrick’s Day. It captures a large crowd of thousands in the streets of Melbourne along Swanston Street and other main streets. The novelty of the parade, when compared to the extant film production, is the width and length of the shots, and the use of multiple camera and viewpoints. The film is characterised by long shots, little editing, and a strong sense of the space of the city and the way the inhabitants have taken control of those spaces. The cameras are positioned on the tops of buildings, allowing the spectator to experience the movement of the crowd, and the sense of participating in the event, is unmatched by other Melbourne films of the period. Unlike the traditional newsreel, Ireland Will be Free gives the spectator the narrative time to watch the parade. The spatial relationship of the camera with the urban space shifts from descriptive to experiential. The camera follows the parade to show the crowd moving along. The wide-angle shot and the length of its duration allow the spectators to select their own foci of interest in the picture.

A few more travelogues are also documented from this period. The NFSA catalogue lists Glimpses of Australia: Melbourne (1925), a film in poor condition but with basic travelogue views of ‘Scenes of inner-city life and surrounding places and events in Melbourne, Vic., including Collins St, Parliament House, Central Railway Station, St Kilda Rd, Sylvan Dam, Henley on the Yarra and Melbourne Cup Day at Flemington’\textsuperscript{126}. The film was produced by the Australia Development and Migration Commission and distributed by Kodak Australasia. Glimpses of Australia was a series produced in the 1920s by the Australian government for educational and promotional reasons, and is made up of four or five minutes films on specific nature scenes or cities. The Melbourne film is composed mostly of static extreme long shots of buildings and the main city interchanges and events. The structure is that of the travelogue, even though Glimpses of Australia: Melbourne is not capable of articulating a discourse about the city in the way Marvellous Melbourne, Queen City of the South or, later, Melbourne Today did. The film is undocumented by major and minor newspapers.

From researching the newspapers I have uncovered a lost travelogue on Melbourne from the same period not mentioned in previous publications and not mentioned in the NFSA catalogue: So This is Melbourne (1925). This time the travelogue is reported in a few newspapers, which document its limited release in May 1925. The Argus writes about a private viewing of the film about Melbourne as a “city of

\textsuperscript{125} Booklet researched and written by Rachel Naughton published in occasion of the release of the restore edition of the film in 2016.

\textsuperscript{126} From the note on the film in the NFSA catalogue record [cat 43426].
activity and beauty” in the presence of the Governor, the Premier (Mr. Allan) and the Speaker of the House.

For *The Argus, So This Is Melbourne* is a ‘scenic motion picture’

*Showing the city’s industries and amusements, the public buildings, park, beaches and playgrounds, the picture will prove of interest both to Melbourne people who wish to know their own city and to people abroad who seek information with a view to migration or to investment of capital. It will be released in Melbourne shortly by the Universal Film Co, and the producer (Mr. Alfred Spence) is in negotiation with the Federal Ministry regarding the use of the picture abroad as an illustration of the beauty and the resources of the leading city of Victoria.* (The Argus, Friday 22 May 1925, p. 14)

Most of the other commentaries and reports on the film are quite generic, formal and vague about its content. The only descriptive and informed article capable of providing an idea of the content is the critical review that appeared in *The Australian Worker*, Wednesday June 10th on page 11. The article titled ‘A Delusive Film’ is quite refreshing and anticipates the criticism of forty years of promotional films about Melbourne. It is worth quoting in full:

*A PROPAGANDA film entitled 'So this is Melbourne', has been prepared for despatch to Great Britain; where it will be exhibited in the hope ‘that It will help to trick’ some of the British workers into emigrating to Australia. Naturally the film is got up in the very best style. Scenes included are: Prime Minister Bruce, wearing his famous spats, surrounded by members of the Federal Cabinet; a section of St. Kilda-road, showing glorious gardens, superb dwellings, and well-dressed, prosperous people; the fashionable city centre known as ‘The Block’; an up-to-date Australian factory, with the workers in joyous mood; and other prominent scenes of the city of Melbourne. The reading matter depicts Melbourne and suburbs as a land flowing with milk and honey. By some strange oversight - those responsible for the film have omitted to add: the processions of unemployed through the streets of Melbourne, the crowds of hungry people congregated at the soup kitchens, and the derelicts and workless sleeping in the parks. They have also forgotten to show any of the Slum dwellings of Fitzroy and other Melbourne suburbs, or even any of the Melbourne streets where the unemployed wander in search of jobs. Nor are there any pictures of some of the antiquated sweating dens that go by the respectable name of factories. Nothing is said about the profiteers, the rack-renters or the gangs who squeeze the life-blood out of the workers in the mills and factories. As to all the nice things shown on the films, the British ‘dead-enders’ can see them in plenty in their own land without taking the trouble of coming to Melbourne. At any rate, it is to be hoped that none of them will be tricked by such trashy propaganda. For while it may be Hell in Britain at the present time, Heaven is certainly nowhere near Melbourne.* (The Australian Worker, 10.6.1925, 11)

The article proposes an alternative view to the official promotional discourse about Melbourne, and suggests perspectives ‘forgotten’ or not included in these depictions of the city. The way Melbourne was promoted on film from the 1930s to the 1960s, what may have been shown on screen and what was left out (and would feature largely in suburban or personal works), will be the topic of the next two chapters.

**Conclusion**

Between 1907 and 1911 the small number of films produced in Melbourne can be connected with the industrial modernity of the city and with its suburban activities. For the first time the film *Marvellous
Melbourne (1910) proposed a reading of the ‘whole’ city, connecting the modernity of its city centre with the activities of its peripheries. The CBD tram sequence in the first part of the film was particularly effective in communicating the level of modernity achieved by the city. Melbourne was represented as a central, modern city, where speed, machines and spectatorship were united to create the experience of a new, denser sense of urban space. The alternative point of view was presented by the filming of local communities in the Melbourne suburbs such as those analysed in A Thriving and Prosperous Suburb. Bird’s Eye View of Footscray. This film expressed the perception of living a different and more realistic, if less spectacular, life. At the same A Thriving and Prosperous Suburb. Bird’s Eye View of Footscray proposed a stereotyped view of the suburb, based on archetypes and recurrent scenes.

The dominant representation of this period was well expressed by Marvellous Melbourne, which turned the urban space into a spectacle using the subjective point of view of the moving camera to offer an enhanced experience of the city grid. The duration of the mobile takes, the fixity of the framing, and the use of a mid-length lens brought together the city, the people and urban transportation (and cable trams), to create a kinetic visual experience. This type of shot created a novel spectacle of Melbourne, while re-reading the city as a modern metropolis. Many of these shots were common in early films depicting the large cities of the world. The construction of Melbourne as a modern city fulfilled the need to position the Australian capital alongside other more ‘popular’ and established cities.

Different modern views of central Melbourne appeared subsequently in other films. My research into newspapers articles and news clippings has evidenced a strong urban content in the now lost film The Mystery of a Hansom Cab (1911), to be discussed in a later chapter, while other tram sequences have been analysed in the later newsreels City Traffic in Variable Moods (c.1920s) and Fez Please! (c.1935).

This chapter has shown the ambivalent representations of Melbourne in the period 1907 to 1911. This was characterised by the myth and spectacle of the modern city and by a subdued, anti-modern, suburban identity. As will be shown in the following chapter, by the end of the 1920s the focus was moving away from the main city centre. The suburban and ‘greener’ images of a ‘village-city would slowly replace representations of modernity previously celebrated in the city’s inner spaces.
CHAPTER FIVE

Institutional and promotional city-images (1930-1966)

I have just received notice of the preview of a short, Place for a Village, the village being Melbourne.
The board\textsuperscript{127} has also made a surfing thriller, especially for screening at Buckingham Palace, no less. Australian Film Diary, No. 19, has also been completed. It looks as though we were getting places in documentaries.
(The Age, August 14, 1948)

This chapter investigates the key institutional films about Melbourne and its suburbs produced from the 1930s to the early 1960s. The length of the time-span allows us to identify changes in the cinematic image of Melbourne, and survey relatively stable and repetitive features in these films in terms of subject, modes of representation and reception. The greater number of documentary films available in this period (particularly from 1945), permits us to identify two main areas of investigation: a group of institutional, promotional, commercial and propaganda films (explored in this chapter), and a group of more personal films dealing with essayistic and fictional narratives about Melbourne, to be analysed in the subsequent chapter.

The promotional films analysed in this chapter were produced by private, industrial or institutional film units (or companies), largely with the direct or indirect help of government sponsors. These films pursue specific social and economic agendas relating to the city’s image, in areas such as tourism, migration, sporting events, public housing, advertising and city development.

As in previous chapters, this thesis is interested in looking at genres, visual patterns and staging trends in cinematic representations of Melbourne. The dominant genre of this period is still the travelogue, whose traditional structure is reapplied and adapted in most cases, as for instance in Melbourne Today (Thring 1931).

The travelogue genre structures and inspires most of the promotional films about Melbourne. It was used to inform the discourse about Melbourne as a village in Place for a Village (Allan 1948), Batman’s Village (Kershaw 1948) and Around Melbourne with Terry Dear (Thompson 1949). A similar discursive visual structure is used to promote Melbourne’s hosting of the Olympics. Melbourne Olympic Invitation (Driver 1949), Melbourne prepares for Olympic Games (ACFU 1955) and Nearing the Melbourne Olympics (ACFU 1956) hint at the idea of a journey and endorse investments in city development. The travelogue is also the inspiration for the tourist films Wintertime in Melbourne (Thompson 1960), Summertime in Melbourne (Thompson 1961), Springtime in Melbourne (Thompson 1963), as well as a promotional film

\footnote{127 The article makes a reference here to the Australian National Film Board.}
aimed to attract migrants: *Life in Australia: Melbourne* (White 1966). These films share a common interest in introducing and promoting Melbourne as a place to visit, whether physically, by visiting or moving to the city, or even conceptually, as a place to be imagined as a possible destination for a ‘future’ modernity. At the same time, there is an attempt to convey a reassuring cosmetic image of the city: secure, green, active and prosperous but not necessarily modern. At times, Melbourne is represented as distinctly ‘anti-modern’. The result is something like a ‘village-image’ of Melbourne, which is also sustained by the frequent iconographic and textual references to the idyllic settings of the village.

There is the pursuit of a dual city-image, British in character with American aspirations. In these representations of Melbourne, Davison sees the conservative or anti-modern trend challenged by a competitive and futuristic approach aimed at economic development (Davison 147). These two trends coexist in most of these films. In some cases sets of the two image types compete for control. A tension is revealed “between stability and change, between England and America, between state planning and private enterprise” (Davison 1998, 148).

Alongside this first group of films that viewed Melbourne mostly within a ‘foreign’ perspective, there were films looking at the city’s problems and issues mostly from an ‘inner’ perspective. This second group of films has the political intent of promoting and pushing specific local social issues, and campaigning for the improvement of living conditions in disadvantaged areas. These films explored sensitive topics for people living in Melbourne during those years: unemployment and drinking, public housing, city planning, public transport and urban development. Films such as *Gaol Does Not Cure* (Fitzsimons/BSL 1946), *Beautiful Melbourne* (Realist Film Unit/BSL 1947), *These Are Our Children* (Realist Film Unit/BSL 1947), *Prices and the People* (Realist Film Unit/BSL 1948), *A Home of Their Own* (Daniell/HCV 1949), *A Place to Live* (Realist Film Unit/HCV 1950), *Co-ordinated housing* (Thompson/HCV 1953), *Planning for Melbourne’s Future* (Thompson/MBBW 1954), and *The City Speaks* (Crawford/HCV 1965) dealt with these questions, promoting the agenda of public institutions, the Melbourne Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW) and the Housing Commission of Victoria (HCV). These films where shot and produced by a group of Melbourne filmmakers working for these institutions: Bob Matthews and Ken Coldicutt forming the Melbourne Realist Film Unit (RFU), J. G Fitzsimons “a member of Melbourne’s close-knit progressive community” (Williams 2008, 37), and Geoffrey Thompson.

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128 Films sponsored by the State Film Centre or the University of Melbourne are considered in the next chapter as they more frequently express the personal point of view of their authors, and less an official view of these institutions.
5.1. Anti-Urbanism and the Green City

In the years between 1920 and 1940, one can detect a trend towards a greener and less urban representation of Melbourne in films and in other art forms, such as painting and photography. According to Slater (2004, 6) “of 13,000 images exhibited by the Victorian Artists Society between 1919 and 1945 only about five per cent showed cities or their suburbs”, the cause being a widespread negative connotation of urbanisation. Objections against urbanism and concerns about the living conditions of the poorer suburbs were part of the public discussion. Again, for Slater

*This prejudice against metropolitan life and, by implication, a corresponding belief in the significance of rural Australia was based on observable circumstances of economic necessity, urban poverty and disease, judgement and social behaviour and, compared to British cities, to what was perceived to be the relative aesthetic insignificance of Australian city buildings and monuments* (Slater 2004, 7)

Nevertheless, the interwar years brought forward, at least in paintings and photography, some notable exceptions, as in the realist paintings of immigrant artists Daniela Vassilieff and Yosl Bergner, the images of Dora Wilson, Len Annois, John Shirlow, Victor Cobb and the photographic work of Jack Cato (Slater 2004, 21). In film, city images were produced exclusively for non-fiction travelogues and newsreels.

5.1.1. Eftee Film Productions and Melbourne Today

The early sound documentary *Melbourne Today* is the most significant urban film of Melbourne surviving from this period. The other documentaries showing representations of urban life, available in the various Australian archives, include fragmented footage, non-professional films (*The City of Melbourne [1935]*) , home movies (*Melbourne 1935*) and a number of local and international newsreels. Besides *Melbourne Today*, none of the other footage seems to be able to produce a coherent discourse about the city, or go beyond a quick impressionist view of the city’s streets and parks.

In the 1930s, the city did appear briefly at the beginning of Chauvel’s *Heritage* (1936), and as the ‘remote’ host city of the Melbourne Cup drama *Thoroughbred* (Hall 1936). The brevity of these cinematographic appearances combined with Melbourne’s lack of recognisable landmarks produced a fleeting cinematic identity, an abbreviated image “which is there but also somewhere else” (Danks 2012b, 16). In some cases, as in *Thoroughbred*, many scenes shot at the Flemington Racecourse were filmed beforehand and then incorporated as a backdrop into the film through rear projection carried out at the Bondi Junction studio in Sydney.

An understanding of the difficult balance between local and international images of Melbourne in feature films can be gained by the story of Eftee Film Productions, the producers of *Melbourne Today*. Eftee Film lasted only four years, collapsing due to a lack of local support and to the cost of positioning itselfs...
within an international market\textsuperscript{129}. In July 1931, Melbourne producer Frank Thring launched Efftee Film Productions playfully naming it with his initials. Between 1931 and 1934, Thring produced seven feature films: *Diggers* (Thring 1931), *The Sentimental Bloke* (Thring 1932), *His Royal Highness* (Thring 1932), *Harmony Row* (Kerr 1933), *A Ticket in Tatts* (Thring 1934), *Clara Gibbons* (Thring 1934), *The Streets of London* (Thring 1934), and fifty-two shorts. None of the films produced in Melbourne contained actual urban footage, even though a few street views were reconstructed in the studio, as in *Harmony Row*. Most of the films were shot in theatrical settings and told stories featuring theatrical references and performers. City streets appeared only as a backdrop. Amongst the shorts there was a series called ‘Cities of the Empire’ that included *Melbourne Today* (1931) and *Provincial Cities of Australia: Ballarat* (1932). Fitzpatrick sees these short documentaries as “priceless national treasures […] made well, by people who understood the state of their craft; and they were made with a passionate belief in the importance of their subject” (Fitzpatrick 2011, 162). They were the product of Thring’s passionate endorsement of Australian themes and images. This passion did not always translate to film, due to the international pressure of competing with British cinema and in making work for Australian and British audiences. For example, Thring’s films “were sometimes excessively influenced by accents and conventions of the Anglophile repertory theatre.” (Fitzpatrick 2011, 162). *Melbourne Today* was a by-product of this global reality, as it was conceived to promote an attractive Melbourne city-image for British and Australian audiences. The short screened overseas and locally as side-programs to the features of Efftee Film Productions.

The uncertain and problematic conditions for producing film in Melbourne were denounced by Thring in February 1934, when “he decided to suspend work on the studio in St. Kilda”, lamenting the monopoly and lack of competition in the Australian market. According to Thring, Efftee Film Productions had to refer to a single possible buyer in Melbourne with little chance of finding distribution in Sydney. This monopoly was further strengthened by a lack of adequate legislation (*The Argus*, 13 February 1934). When New South Wales introduced a form of quota system in 1935, Thring took the decision, in January 1936, to sell his St. Kilda studios and move to Sydney. The cause, it was reported, “was the neglect of the Victorian Government to gazette regulations for the Film Quota Act”, which translated to a lack of government support for the local industry. In fact Thring also commented on the fact that “Melbourne was too conservative and business men there looked with alarm to the prospect of putting money into anything as speculative as a motion picture business” (*The Argus*, 8 February 1936, p. 26). Before he could actuate his project Thring died that same year at the age of 52. After the demise of Eftee Productions, Melbourne remained without studio facilities and, partly as a result, virtually no feature films were produced locally for over thirty years\textsuperscript{130}.

\textsuperscript{129} Australian film production in this period is mostly concerned with bush stories and interior dramas or comedies. On the few occasions when a city space was featured, it mostly portrayed Sydney, which was where most of the Australian productions were located.

\textsuperscript{130} Exceptions to the drought of feature film production are *Night Club* (1953), shot in the theatre where it was set, and Mangiamele’s independent suburban filmmaking (see ch. 6).
Melbourne Today is one of Australia’s first sound documentaries and the key ‘commercial’ city-film produced in Melbourne to have survived from the period between 1911 and the 1940s. The film screened as a companion piece to Eftee’s first feature, Diggers (Hanna 1931) (a farce about Australian soldiers in World War I), and was briefly reviewed as “an excellent descriptive film of Melbourne” (The Argus, 7 November 1931, p. 22). Other than ‘excellent’, Melbourne Today is an important document of Melbourne’s 1930s city-image, firmly connecting the travelogue genre established in Marvellous Melbourne with the post-World War II series of promotional documentaries.

From the point of view of the structure, camera movement and the overall tone of the piece, Melbourne Today is still operating within the formal domain of the travelogue. It shows a descriptive narrative of the city unfolding like a moving version of an early photo-album. Not many things seem to have changed in the structural grammar or content of the genre since 1910: there is a similar opening panoramic shot, followed by a traveling shot moving around the city and, then, by a series of static city-scenes. Both Melbourne Today and Marvellous Melbourne comply with the original goal of the travelogue, which was to provide visual access to foreign locations through a system of titled images and scenes. The film is structured around locations introduced by inter-titles pre-empted by the use of the recently introduced (and badly recorded) voice-over. The soundtrack recorded for the travelogue is technically inadequate, and stylistically out of place. The voice-over read by the actor Norman Campbell, as well as the music, sound stiff and distorted, playing as an odd, incongruous addition to an essentially silent film. The ‘subtext’ of Melbourne Today is contained in its visual style, and it is within this style that its significant content is communicated. The comparison between Marvellous Melbourne and Melbourne Today demonstrates a shift in the city’s image from a centripetal to a conspicuously centrifugal and greener identity.

5.1.2. Promoting the ‘village-image’

The ‘village-image’ of Melbourne possessed an anti-modern character that had the dual function of re-reading and counter-balancing the old colonial image of the bustling, ‘marvellous’ city. As Reiner and Hindery have elaborated, the iconography of the village, with its connotations of stability, integration and solidarity, self-sufficiency, maintenance of traditional ways, and integration of land and capital, represents a challenging reaction to the burdens of industrialization, to the excess of the industrial city, to ‘coketown’ (Reiner and Hindery 1984, 136).

131 Burton Holmes popularized the term ‘travelogue’ after using it to promote a series of travelogue lectures in London in 1903. Holmes was a celebrated American speaker of illustrative travel lectures featuring still images and films. Cfr. Barber 1993. For references about travelogues and travel films see also Ruoff 2006 and Peterson 2013.

132 In 1930, silent films had a mature and sophisticated photographic style that was generally badly matched by the first audio recordings. The commentary and the soundtrack of Melbourne Today were of poor technical quality and often failed to connect with the images on screen. To fully appreciate the quality of the visual text, I had to watch the film without the soundtrack.
This image gave Melbourne the new nostalgic ‘look’ of a calm provincial town, with strong British neo-gothic references that reconnected the new city with John Batman’s founding myth of Melbourne as ‘the place for a village’. The idea of a return to a pre-industrial period was integral to the forthcoming celebration of the Centenary of the foundation of Victoria and Melbourne in 1934-5.

For Lewis, this nostalgic, introspective and explicitly backward look to the past, evident in many works and publications of this period, was, besides the connection with the Centenary, also a consequence of events like the Great War:

*This nostalgia and introspection also reflected the fact that Melbourne was culturally stagnant. There had never been a sustained period of so little growth, except for the 1890s, when the population actually shrank. There were not new ethnic groups until after the Second World War. Everything was British and, dare we say it, boring.* (Lewis 1995, 109-110)

The ‘creation’ of a safer image of place was also a response to the 1930s economic crisis, and the rise in unemployment133. Murphy has correctly stated that Melbourne during the Centenary was a place where “a reconstructed past and an unknown future could then be connected in an assured trajectory which evaded the conflicts of the present” (Murphy 1986, 8).

The opening shot of *Melbourne Today* (fig. 84) introduced this key element. The image was taken from the main central spire of St. Paul’s Cathedral, one of the highest viewpoints in the city, a point of view that belongs exclusively to those early years of the 1930s, as it was only accessible from the scaffolding while the spires were in construction134. The spire would remain the central element of Melbourne’s village skyline at least until the 1956 Olympics. Beyond its debt to the travelogue genre, the opening shot of

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133 “Between 1929 and 1932 unemployment in Victoria had risen from 11.1 per cent to 26.5 per cent. It fell back to 17.4 per cent in 1934” (Lewis 1995, 109)

134 Completed in 1932, the main spire changed the original plan of the Protestant Cathedral designed by English neo-gothic revivalist architect William Butterfield in 1880. The architect never visited Melbourne and resigned from the project in 1884 when he felt that his instructions where not carried out correctly. When works concluded in 1891 under the supervision of architect Joseph Reed, there was not enough money to complete the design of the main neo-gothic spire, which was left undone. Works recommenced only in 1926, the commission for the new design having been awarded to Sydney architect John Barr in 1925. The new project boosted the church profile with three new higher spires instead of the original single neo-gothic spire (Goad 2009, 51).
Melbourne Today demonstrates a poignancy in connecting film documentation with the history of the city’s architecture. It is a specific and symbolic choice both in framing and positioning the sequence at the beginning of the film.

Film, architecture and city image here are strictly inter-connected. The 1920s in Melbourne were a time of public debate about the importance of building a local architectural icon, and thus raising a symbol representing the city’s aspirations. When the project for the new spires was commissioned in 1924, the Royal Victorian Institute of Architects advised the removal of the church to a new site in the domain to alleviate the many problems of congestion in the area (Gippsland Times, 21 January 1924, 3). The week before, Sir Arthur Streeton, leading painter of the Heidelberg School, published an article in The Argus, expressing a sentiment held by many about the need for vertical markers to improve the identity of the image of Melbourne. Streeton’s opinion was that the church should rise “with spire piercing the sky at an elevation of 200 feet from the ground”. He continues, expressing a critical judgement of Melbourne’s urban setting:

[The] Town Hall, like the Cathedral, is squatting down amongst the shops and without any surrounding space. How unimpressive, how parochial: it looks like the civic hall of a town in England. There is something puritan, Philistine and killjoy in the look of much of our Melbourne and its environment. The beauty of Sydney is due principally to the fact that it is a deep-water inlet from a semi-tropic ocean, with its soft, warm air, golden sandstone, and scarlet Hibiscus. […] Here, in flat Melbourne, we need perpendicular lines to arrest the dreadful monotony of flat roofs. Witness Balaclava, Brighton, Richmond, and c; how dull and tiring to the eye, the only relief being the chimney stack for industrial power. […] It is to be hoped that the successful design for our war memorial will soar up like the voice of our Melba 200ft clear above the verdure of St. Kilda Road, and thus be visible like a radiant shaft of light from Macedon, the Dandenongs and the ship steaming up the bay. (The Argus, Monday 14 January 1924, 8)

Streeton’s opinion summed up the sentiments of many who preferred the development of a more iconic Melbourne. At the end of the 1920s, the completion of the Shrine of Remembrance and the spires of St. Paul’s Cathedral would provide the city with two new landmarks. Melbourne Today, a small but significant documentary, registers these two events that reshape the image of the city and lead to the promotion of a new ‘village-image’.

The opening shot of Melbourne Today communicates the architectural specificity of that moment in time. The camera opens with a bird’s eye view of the Yarra a little further upstream. It pans from left to right, ending between the two new frontal spires of St. Paul’s Cathedral (1926-1932), with a framing of the Shrine of Remembrance (1928-1934) “in progress of construction”, comments Campbell. At the end of the pan, the camera, positioned on the scaffolding of the main spire, rises to show the top of the frontal spires with the Shrine positioned in the lower part of the frame. It is a highly symbolic image, setting the new Melbourne on the ‘other’ side of the Yarra, and within the new frame of the village from the city grid. The final iconic image is a cinematic reproduction of a more detailed view that appeared in the Herald the year before (fig. 85). The photograph looks at the Shrine from above, connecting directly with the new vertical spires, Princes Bridge and the Royal Botanic Gardens.
The view opens by combining two of the main architectural events occurring in Melbourne in the 1920s, when the plan for the Shrine of Remembrance (Hudson and Wardrop 1923), and the completion of the Cathedral became a reality thanks to popular support and public funding. For Freestone, the Shrine was the landmark the city had long been waiting for, after searching for a city square or an iconic building that would compensate for its lack of a spectacular natural site (Freestone 2000, 43). In the film the left-to-right panning movement symbolically connects the River Yarra with the Royal Botanic Gardens, St. Paul’s Cathedral, the Shrine of Remembrance and St. Kilda Road. The idea of a beautiful, greener city-village takes shape, at least on screen. As Davison argues, “during the 1930s journalists and photographers [and filmmakers] swung their attention away from the soaring towers of the city itself and back towards the green perimeter of gardens which surrounded it.” (Davison 1998, 148). Melbourne Today can be read as a travelogue reinterpreted through the perspective of a greener city in response to an anti-industrial sentiment which gained momentum in the 1920s. The film clearly expresses a visual refusal of the industrial city and a preference for city parks, gardens and the river.

The main novelty of this opening scene is its change of point of view. After many city views of the Royal Botanic Gardens and St. Kilda Road, a new direction and orientation in city perspectives was taking shape. It reverses the previously common views and looked-back outside of the traditional grid, towards St. Kilda Road and the Royal Botanic Gardens. The construction of the Shrine of Remembrance along St. Kilda
Road, with its monumental pyramid shape, gave rise to the demand for a new vision, a new perspective. Here the role of the cinematic text is to represent an urban vision that remained drafted in the actual city.

As Freestone reminds us, the true potential of the City Beautiful movement remained unexpressed in Melbourne. It was blocked by a number of factors, such as the traditional local scepticism towards utopian planning; the resistance of politicians in getting involved in large and expensive urban development projects. Ultimately, “even when aesthetic-based physical reform was sold as functional, cost-effective improvement, it ultimately failed to directly address more pressing and practical planning needs such as better roads, improved subdivision plans and adequate housing” (Freestone 2004, 45). Once more, the filmic text expresses a projection, a construction and a perception, more than a mirror of actual urban reality. Nevertheless, in so doing, it promotes a specific ‘idea’ of Melbourne. The new greener image of Melbourne, looking from the city towards the Shrine of Remembrance and the Royal Botanic Gardens, would characterise promotional pictures of the city in the following years (fig. 86). In many of these images the iconography shows a clear opposition between the city and the gardens. The aerial view Melbourne, The Garden Capital of Victoria, Australia (1936) (fig. 86) proposed to travellers by the Victorian Railways is exemplary in this context. Here the historical urban centre of Melbourne is juxtaposed with a greener landscape, suggesting both a travel destination to escape the city by train or tram and the metaphor of a healthier future.

![Image](image.png)


The images discussed above are taken from different viewpoints, but they all look in the same direction to the other side of the Yarra. This new point of view becomes, in Melbourne Today, a new way of presenting Melbourne through the visual imaginary of a greener city. The subsequent scenes are another
example of this approach. In a subjective traveling shot, filmed from a moving vehicle, many cars are shown driving along St. Kilda Road. These cars, directed towards the city, are framed in the middle of the boulevard, with many leafy trees around them (fig. 87). Three years later, James Northfield created a similar composition for the Victorian and Melbourne Centenary, incorporating the clock tower on Flinders Street and St. Paul’s Cathedral (fig. 88).

Fig. 87. St. Kilda Road (Melbourne Today 1931). DVD Screenshot.
National Film and Sound Archive, Canberra, acc.no: 9181.

Fig. 88. James Northfield. St. Kilda Road, Victorian & Melbourne Centenary 1934, colour lithograph.

The car provides a fast and independent way to travel from the city to the suburbs or to the country. The boulevard is both part of the new city image and a link back to nineteenth century Melbourne and the first creation of a Parisian-style city boulevard in Collins Street. The boulevard is, therefore, both the memory of the modern continental city and the promise of nature, a corridor anticipating and announcing the green village and the countryside. The difference between the two references is in the composition of the
The two films have a strong similarity, not just in their travelogue structure but also in terms of production personnel, since they were shot by the Tasmanian brothers Ernest and Arthur Higgins, amongst the best cinematographers in Australia at the time. Ernest Higgins photographed *Marvellous Melbourne*, and Arthur Higgins shot *Melbourne Today* twenty years later. The two films present different images of the city but rely on a similar formal structure of the scenes. Both establish the city initially through a panoramic view, followed by traveling shots, even though the car shot in *Melbourne Today* is much shorter. The difference between the two traveling shots is significant. *Marvellous Melbourne*, as was illustrated in the previous chapter, opted to read the city as a modern metropolis: dense, dynamic, full of people, with a centralised point of view and rich in texture and contrasts. In 1910, trams and machines were at the centre of the film, focusing on public transport. In the 1930s, private cars appear as the main system of transportation. Following this trend, *Melbourne Today* marks a significant visual shift, granting minor visibility to trams, and eliminating trains and railway stations from the screen. The two films, so similar in other ways, are almost opposites of each other thematically. If *Marvellous Melbourne* was a late celebration of the industrial identity of the city, *Melbourne Today* carries an anti-industrial message linking the memory of the earlier image of Melbourne as ‘a village’ with the perception of a ‘greener city’.

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**Fig. 89.** Percy Trompf. *This Will Be the Place for a Village. Victorian & Melbourne Centenary Celebrations.* 1934, colour lithograph. State Library of Victoria, Melbourne, acc.no: H90.105/29.

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### 5.1.4. Spires and Bridges

The cinematic relationship between the ‘outer’ image of the city, with its skyline, and the internal, with its architectural streetscapes, was incongruent. Despite the economic crisis, new modernist buildings
were constructed in the 1930s: the Manchester Unity Building (Barlow 1932) and the McPherson Showroom (Calder 1936), both on Collins Street, and Mitchell House on Elizabeth Street (Norris 1937). Of these, only the Manchester Unity Building would appear on film (in later years and mostly because of its unavoidable position). Neither of the other two would have a major role in the cinematic city-image of Melbourne.

As indicated earlier, the film opens with a view of the Shrine of Remembrance, and then situates the spectator in a car traveling towards the city along St. Kilda Road. From within the car, the city remains out of sight. The transition to the city is made by cutting to a view of Princes Bridge seen from the south-west bank of the River Yarra. This uncommon vantage point, repeated in two versions in the film (figs. 90 and 91), produces a view overlapping the bridge and the eastern part of the city grid within a 45-degree angle.

The view currently under discussion looks at the bridge and at the city from the Southbank area, with an angle that increases its visual density. This less common point of view is set against the established iconography of the area, which is usually portrayed by looking from over the bridge towards the city. Arthur Higgins filmed a very similar shot twenty years before for the film Marvellous Melbourne. All three versions of this view reinforce the sense of the separation of the southern riverbank from the city, but they have different variations and focus. Let us look at the structure of the image first, and then at its variations.

All three images have distinct visual planes, which each image organised in a different way. On the first plane, closer to the viewer, is the riverbank with leaves and trees. On the second plane is Princes Bridge.

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135 The view is taken from where the Hamer Hall stands today.

136 The framing is similar to the early diagonal perspectives of the Lumiè re films (cfr Ch. 2).

137 See here the paintings of Princes Bridge looking towards Swanston Street: Old Princes Bridge (Gritten, 1856), Swanston Street from the Bridge (Burn, 1861), Princes Bridge (McCubbin, 1910); and Wilson’s large painting Melbourne, setting the bridge at the centre of the picture. A more intimate view of the bridge is Princes Bridge (1923) by Clarice Beckett. See Coote 2012, 23.
traversing the screen like a barrier between the viewer and the city. On the third visual plane, is the city with the buildings and the city skyline. The three variations of this view suggest different visual foci corresponding to the different place occupied in the narrative structure of the films.

In Marvellous Melbourne (fig. 90), the view appears in the second part of the film and functions as a transition out of the city. It is included between the more modern shots of Flinders Street Station and before moving to the beach and the port scenes. The choice of composition and light suggest a less dramatic opposition between city and ‘garden’. It is also a wider shot than the other two, Flinders Street Station (still under construction) is included in the image, even if the focus of this image is on the garden and the riverbank, which occupy most of its space. The bridge is in between city and garden but almost in a position parallel to the line of the garden and that of the city above, which is darker, unclear and barely visible. This image certainly hints at a possible ‘garden’ perspective already existing in 1910, even though it is proposed as an added feature. It does not set itself in opposition to the city, and no gardens are featured in the following scenes.

The initial view in Melbourne Today (fig. 91) has a different symbolic meaning. It is the first view of the city in the film, and acts as the viewer’s introduction to the city and presents a conceptual synthesis of 1930s Melbourne, coming after images of trees and gardens. The focus here is on the city occupying the upper half of the image and seen from a higher vintage point. The garden is reduced to the lower section, with many trees and a strong connection with the previous images (fig. 89). The bridge shows the traffic moving into the city. The higher position and the sunlight focus attention on the bridge and, following the direction of the traffic, towards the city, which is presented ambivalently. On the left the new neo-gothic spires of the cathedral hint at the city as a village. On the right the mass of buildings stand for a compressed and somewhat claustrophobic industrial modernity. Jacobsen, writing about the representation of high-rise buildings, describes an image “which visually masses the larger buildings together, giving the city the
impression of a more modern skyline that would not be possible from a northern perspective” (Jacobsen 2006, 64).

The third version of this view appears in the second part of Melbourne Today as it shifts towards the ‘city as a village’. Contrary to the two previous views this is not a transition shot; it underlines an existing visual reality. We are not exiting or entering the city, we are firmly out of it. The shot is edited in between two views and two traveling shots showing the greener opposite side of the same bridge seen from the south-eastern riverbank of the Yarra (fig. 91). The symbolic focus of this view is St. Paul’s Cathedral with the highest spire in construction, which is also the viewpoint of the opening shot. This view is taken from a closer viewpoint compared to the two previous examples, with a composition that increases the compression of structural lines. The image is framed by plants and trees, the river is visible, the bridge, seen from below, stands out illuminated by the sunlight. It creates a nice contrast of light and shade with the darker shape of the cathedral behind. The modern city has disappeared behind the bridge. Flinders Street Station is once again hidden from the shot, probably with the help of a darkening flag on the left side of the frame (fig. 89b).

This may seem to provide an over-reading of just a few seconds of these films but, as I have shown, the edited visual logic of the sequences is entirely coherent with the ‘visual interpretation’ of the city sustained by the films and a broader discourse around Melbourne. Some of these shots may not have been overly planned (as I doubt whether a storyboard was used). Nevertheless, what matters are the choices made in composition and on the editing table, and they are clear and consistent in promoting the perception of Melbourne as a ‘green’ city.

Melbourne Today opposes the idea of the industrial city with a positive and ‘greener’ iconic system. Dense city spaces are opposed to wider, more open spaces; street scenes are domesticated and framed by trees; the railway system disappears; instead of a tram phantom ride we have a hand-held camera movement into the Royal Botanical Gardens. The few leaves and branches that surface in the early city-images contrast with the luxurious vegetation of the parks of the Royal Botanic Gardens, where the second part of the documentary is set. Any reference to the industrial city (chimneys, smoke, workers) has vanished too. Melbourne – the film seems to say - is today a green city with gardens, boulevards and a river, a gently neo-gothic revisitation of a pre-industrial community.
Once entering the city grid the representation of bustling street life is reduced to two shots of Collins Street and a shot of Swanston Street with the Town Hall (fig. 92), all taken from the side of the street and framed by trees. In their fixity, these views of the CBD are opposed to the dynamic centrifugal movement of the car traveling along the boulevard. The position of the camera on the side of the road alerts us to the fact that the point of view of the street has shifted from earlier representations. Pedestrians have been pushed out of the road by the increased presence of cars, and are now confined to the pavement, losing sight of the axial perspectives of the grid. The composition of these street images avoids the axial view and shortens the space by blocking the lines of perspective with vehicles or pedestrians. The spaces of the grid are visualised and constructed through repetitive views that increase the density of the lines and hide the vanishing point of the perspective (fig. 92).

Most of the monumental iconic buildings shown in the film refer to a pre-1890s Melbourne. Parliament House (1856-1892) is shown in detail with a panning movement of the camera, also revealing the Windsor Hotel (1883) on Spring Street. The sequence of the landmarks is similar to that in Marvellous Melbourne, and would be further reiterated, with small variations, in the films of the 1940s and 1950s, incorporating the Royal Exhibition Building (1880) and the State Library of Victoria (1854).

One exception is Walter Burley Griffin’s modernist Newman College at the University of Melbourne (1918) which, however, would not re-appear in future Melbourne travelogues. This inclusion seems to respond to a repeating pattern of including one or two recent constructions, as markers of contemporaneity in new films to ‘update’ the litany of more traditional buildings. But, more than suggesting an appreciation of the modern, these inclusions act to absorb the new architecture within the traditional.

As previously noted, most of these ‘monument’ shots incorporate the presence of plants, trees and leaves (fig. 93) into the composition, and these usually appear in the foreground of the image. This ‘green’
coded imaginary will lead, in the second part of the film, to the other side of the Yarra and towards the Royal Botanic Gardens (fig. 94).

Entering the Royal Botanic Gardens the camera moves forward in a phantom ride, held on a traveling vehicle. The contrast between the modern city of the past and the greener city of the 1930s is made overt by accessing the space of the public garden\(^{138}\). This is an ambivalent space that is neither strictly urban nor rural, neither city nor country (fig. 94).

**5.1.4. Human characters and skyline**

City life in *Melbourne Today*, as in many Melbourne documentaries from the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s, is described from afar, with a relatively small number of shots for the time, and no attention given to the individual stories of the city’s inhabitants\(^{139}\). In the first urban street scene of *Melbourne Today* it is still possible to register a casual interaction between the camera and the people. In the second shot of Collins Street two passers-by are looking at the film operator on the left side of the frame. They are interested in the camera, but the camera does not really seem interested in them.

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\(^{138}\) As Foucault has argued, in his discussion of ‘heteropia’, public gardens “constitute a sort of counter-arrangement, of effectively realized utopia, of which all the real arrangements, all the other real arrangements that can be found within society, are at one and the same time represented, challenged and overturned; a sort of place that lies outside all places and yet it is actually localizable” (Foucault 1997, 352).

\(^{139}\) The few exceptions of ‘local stories’ can be found in the films produced by the Realist Film Unit for the Brotherhood of St. Laurence and the Housing Commission.
The camera is interested in people and urban spaces as long as a person inhabits the framed view. In one of the shots along the Yarra there is a picturesque view of Melbourne seen from upstream. An arc of trees, giving a wide vista of the river, frames the view of the city. The foreground of the riverbank is initially empty. Then a figure arrives from screen-left. Its features are darkened against the light emanating from the background. We notice a man, wearing a hat, who has an indistinct package under his right arm. He crosses the visual field and, once he has passed, our gaze is captured once again by the view he has interrupted and made more interesting (fig. 95).

In a previous shot, there are similar human presences. The camera tracks along the southern side of the Yarra and frames buildings on Flinders Street behind trees and benches in the foreground. On the benches the camera shows other men wearing hats, sitting quietly. Were they members of the unemployed workforce that reached record levels in those first years of the 1930s? What are they doing in a film dedicated to the promotion of the tourist image of Melbourne? Their ‘negative’ space in the frame suggests the possibility of a different, more dramatic reality.

Within the Melbourne travelogue, images such as this recur in significant ways. The image of the silhouette of a man standing or walking alone along the banks of the Yarra can be found in a number of films from the 1930s to the 1960s. It appears in Melbourne Today (fig. 94), The Melbourne Wedding Belle (1953) (fig. 98), Nearing the Melbourne Olympics (1955) (fig. 97), and From the Tropics to the Snow (1964) (fig. 104), which probably self-consciously ‘quoted’ this image as a cliché. The same image appears again in the opening of Life in Australia: Melbourne (1966), and three years later in the titles of Wallhead’s The Cleaners (1969) (fig. 96).

The small size of the lonely figure, the lack of recognisable features (often the man is seen from behind) and its proximity to the river with the skyline of the city behind, transmits a primary sense of

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140 See here my article in Senses of Cinema (Passi 2011).
singularity and alienation, recalling the solitary males whose absence on screen was denounced by *The Australian Worker* in 1925\(^{141}\). The unemployed, alcoholics, old men in dark coats, people asleep in the park, would all resurface later in the more personal cinema of the 1950s.

In 1945, ten years after *Melbourne Today*, the same skyline image would be used to introduce the city in *Know Your Melbourne* (1945). This is a captivating colour travelogue where the genre is borrowed to advertise a Melbourne removal company. The ad highlights some of the city’s ‘essential’ places for future new homeowners. *Know Your Melbourne* consciously produces an essentialist vision of Melbourne by localising some of its historical icons: the neo-gothic skyline, the view over the Yarra, the Scott’s Hotel (“with its longest running licence” says the voice over), the oldest house. At the same time, the shift from the city centre to the suburbs happens quite logically when filming the commuters entering and exiting Flinders Street Station. In less than two minutes the centrifugal direction of the visual montage concentrates the basic structure of the common Melbourne travelogue: a short pan at the beginning, a mostly static, horizontal camera, nicely framed views with trees and some vegetation, and no main characters. With *Know Your Melbourne*, the ‘city film’ enters the post-war period with the travelogue firmly positioned as the main genre in the representation of Melbourne.

### 5.2. Melbourne Post-War Promotional Films

After World War II, the production of promotional films about Melbourne increased. The Melbourne travelogues of this period can be grouped around three specific moments: 1947-9, 1954-56 and 1960-66. In 1948-9, a first group of films introduced Melbourne to national and international post-war audiences, following the creation of the Australian National Film Board and the institution of the State Public Lending Libraries network\(^{142}\). These included films such as *Batman’s Village* (Ivor Kershaw 1947), *Place for a Village* (Jack Allan, 1948), *Olympic Invitation* (Roy Driver, 1949)\(^{143}\), and *Around Melbourne with Terry Dear* (Geoffrey Thompson 1949).

In 1949 Thompson produced, directed and filmed *Around Melbourne with Terry Dear* (1949). It was a Melbourne film made for Australians, featuring commentary by Terry Dear, a popular Melbourne radio host on 3AW. The film was part of the *Australian Review*, a regular cinema program shown before feature film

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\(^{141}\) *The Australian Worker* (June 10th 1925, p. 11).

\(^{142}\) The creation of the Film State Public Lending Libraries in Australia helped distribute in the major cities a selected corpus of documentary films sourced from the UK, USA, Canada, Germany and the Soviet Union. See Bertrand 1981; Williams 1999 and 2008.

\(^{143}\) The film was one of the great successes of Herschell’s Films, a production film company from Melbourne born out of the Pathé experience in Australia (Long 1999, 114). Driver, the director and chief-operator, was with the company from its foundation in 1925.
screenings. Thompson demonstrated an attention both to the touristic and the social side of Melbourne. On screen we are shown the Melbourne good life: Collins Street, shopping at Myer’s, shop windows, the fashions just arrived from Paris, London and New York. We move on to one of Thompson’s main interests: traffic and transport, with images of trams, trains, buses, cars and taxis, “transportation to pick up quickly the shopping crowd”. He also shows relatively recent architecture with the purpose of connecting it with social services: the modernist 1930s Melbourne Hospital; and the Russell Street Police Headquarters (1940-1943), designed by Percy Everett in the style of New York’s Empire State Building. The documentary proceeds to show both the positive and the somewhat less laudable: Phar Lap, the overcrowded schools, the Royal Botanic Gardens, residential houses, and substandard housing (shown in a number of very brief shots), neon lights at night, music and restaurants. Then there are shots of hockey, drinking, swimming pools, beaches and a closing view of the Yarra River with the words: “Garden city of Down Under, Queen city of the south”. What is interesting in About Melbourne with Terry Dear is the localised circuit of spectatorship. In the absence of television and localised urban feature films, small local documentaries included in a program strand like The Australian Review were the main opportunity for self-representation. This was the main way people could see Melbourne on screen. Thompson’s portrait was certainly partial, reassuring and complacent, but it contained a certain degree of truth and some verbal irony in communicating the way people imagined their city. It was a Melbourne still imagined as a green village but not completely outside of modernity. A sporting city, in contact with the latest fashions, but not totally neglectful of culture. All this is contained in ten minutes of film, edited with a fast pace touching briefly on each topic.

Place for a Village and Batman’s Village marked an acknowledgment of the ‘village-image’ that had characterised Melbourne’s imaginary for the previous twenty years. Davison (1998, 146) points to Place for a Village, filmed for the Commonwealth Department of Information144, as the exemplary product of a wider selection of promotional films. Davison retraces in these films the three classic motifs of the image of Melbourne: ‘the pastoral landscape’, ‘the street scene’ and ‘the well-ordered city’ (‘the city built to a plan’ as seen from above)145. The film opens with images of the city’s landmarks, then shows the sports venues and events, and finally the suburbs and the industrial areas (Davison 1998, 146). Davison comments on the cosmopolitan imagery of Melbourne as shown on screen, linking it to British and American aspirations. This

144 “The Commonwealth Film Unit operated from 1940 until June 1973. The Unit was also known as the Film Division. Until 1950 it was part of the Department of Information and from 1950 until 1973 it was part of the Australian News and Information Bureau. In 1973 the Film Unit was superseded by Film Australia. The Commonwealth Film Unit, which operated from Sydney, was the successor of the Cinema and Photographic Branch located in Melbourne. The Film Unit was created in 1940 to coordinate government and commercial film activity and to mobilise the production of film for the war effort. While the Melbourne branch continued producing non-theatrical film, by the late 1940s the Sydney branch was the focus of all film production. In 1954 the Melbourne branch closed. The Unit’s records are held in the Sydney Office of the National Archives.” (Source: Fact Sheet 25, National Archives of Australia). [Retrieved online at http://www.naa.gov.au/collection/fact-sheets/fs25.aspx (accessed 10.5.2013)]

145 Similar motifs are traceable in Melbourne paintings and photography (cfr Ch. 2).
film, like others later, was made “with an eye to attracting tourism and investment from both Britain and the United States. Its rather schizoid character may derive, in part, from the desire to meet the expectations of those two different audiences.” (Davison 1998, 148)

A common characteristic of these films is the sharing of a repetitive stock of city images, mostly presenting monuments, popular streets, city skylines and aerial views in the fashion of filmed ‘postcards’. These films feature a slow-paced style of filmmaking conveying a sense of timeless provincial life: single static shots of the city, rarely combined with counter-shots or close-ups of people. A recurrent iconography is the previously analysed leitmotif of the ‘village image’ embodied by the city’s neo-gothic skyline (figs. 98 centre and left), (fig. 97 centre and left), which usually appears at the beginning or at the end of the film. Another motif is the use of aerial shots in opening sequences, an update on previous opening panning shots, which mimics the arrival of the traveller to the city; at that time arrivals were mostly centred around Essendon Airport. After the opening it was common practice to introduce the most recent buildings and then move to the classic set of shots of traditional monuments. (fig. 98 right). An exception was represented by the Olympic films, pervaded by a stronger sense of modernity, also showing centrifugal suburban settings such as the Olympic Village in Heidelberg West (fig. 97 right). The creation of the village and the participation of many suburban families in the hosting plan increased the visibility of the Melbourne suburbs, which gained a burgeoning but small place in these postcard-like shots. Melbourne Olympic City (1955) features two of these suburban shots of family houses (fig. 100), filmed with the same angle and light as the rest of the buildings on display.

This combination of routine images became a repetitive pattern cementing an apparently one-dimensional cinematic vision of the city with very few variations in terms of style or choice of subjects, at least up to the mid-1960s when films like From the Tropic to The Snow critiqued this lack of visual innovation. As Davison has observed,

_Melbourne’s post-war journalists and photographers inherited a repertoire of stock urban images from their colonial predecessors. Over the next twenty or thirty years these would be_
reproduced and re-circulated, with apparently only minor changes from year to year. Hard up against deadlines and budgets, or just stumped for alternatives, journalists and filmmakers shuffled much the same stack of pictures postcards. What makes their image-making interesting [...] is not the originality of the images, but the way in which they were selected and combined to give a distinctive inflection to the conventional narrative. (Davison 1998, 146)

Control over the images appears to be complete. The repetition and conventionality of the images was not casual but designed to limit the spectacular, extraordinary and the unusual in preference for the production of ordinary postcard images. The repetition of the images, combined with the repetition of the words associated with those images in the voice-over commentaries produces, after a few screenings, a profound sense of déjà vu.

The brief given to the Commonwealth Film Unit was to interpret and project the country and the city for local and international spectators. The desire was to create national awareness and build an image of Australia where ‘projection’, writes Moran, “means advertising on behalf of the nation” (Moran 1991, 135).

The result was mostly a ‘normalisation’ of the ‘visual motifs’ of the city and its urban space used in official representations. The production of city-images of Melbourne left little room for individual stories and differences146. These films created a programmed visual reality close to propaganda cinema. The city views were homologated in an established catalogue of shots promoting a ‘projected’ visual normality and reducing the complexity and contradictions of the actual city. This system of representation was employed to avoid an ‘excess’ of reality and dismiss the possibility of difference and chance. It achieved this both by excluding, for instance, the centripetal spectacle of rapturous camera-car movements and, conversely, avoiding an ‘informal’ use of the camera that would have appeared too realistic147.

Fig. 98. (The Melbourne Wedding Belle 1953), screenshot. National Film and Sound Archive, Canberra, acc.no: 65847.

The normalising presence of this postcard-like visual coding is made clear in The Melbourne Wedding Belle, one of the few films produced by the Department of Information and the Commonwealth Film Unit (CFU) where a ‘critical visual irony’ is brought to the fore. The film was a singing ode to Melbourne

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146 See in Ch. 6 the analysis of works expressing different and stronger individual points of view.

147 An example of a more ‘informal’ approach can be seen in Sunday in Melbourne.
directed by Colin Dean to test the new Ferraniacolor stock\textsuperscript{148} before it was used to film the arrival of the Queen (Verhoeven 2011). The film has an overtly light and ironic tone, clear in its choice of texts and music to forming its musical commentary. The visuals seem to play within the conventions of the travelogue so popular in other promotional films. The postcard images of Melbourne are the same as elsewhere so much so that CFU main cinematographer, Reginal Pearse, is employed. But in The Melbourne Wedding Belle the excellent colour saturation of the Ferraniacolor film, the precise and spectacular framing of these ordinary images, and the ‘virtuoso’ sound editing have the capacity to further alienate the cold conformity of these images. Most shots in The Melbourne Wedding Belle are so ‘perfectly’ and conventionally framed as to appear dissonant when commented upon by the music and words. An example is the ‘village’ image with the lonely man (fig. 98), which is commented on by the voice-over with the lyrics “along the Yarra, to the city that is ours”. These lines, combined with the uncanny dreamlike composition of the image, instead of producing an effect of comfort, highlight for me the unrealistic falsity of the visual settings. The effect is so spectacularly ordinary as to reverse the point of attraction and denounce or question the rhetorical mechanism. The focus shifts from the overly controlled landscape to the ominous and illogical presence of the lonely man (what is he doing there?). It is an operation of rhetorical ‘distanciation’ achieved through an excessive stylisation of the visual components (Willemen 1971, 63-67).

Fig. 99. The subtle modernity (Nearing the Melbourne Olympics 1956), screenshot. National Film and Sound Archive, Canberra, acc.no: 63877.

Between 1953-56, with the imminent staging of the Olympics, the Commonwealth Film Unit produced a few documentaries for the Department of Information that focused on promoting Melbourne and this coming global event. Melbourne Prepares for Olympic Games (ACFU 1955), Melbourne Olympic City (Driver 1955), Nearing the Melbourne Olympics (ACFU 1956) propose Melbourne as an international city and reiterate its metropolitan aspirations as a sports capital of the world. These films contain shots with

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{148} “By 1953, Ferrania Colour (part of the family of film stocks derived from Agfa processes such as Ansosolor and the later Fujicolor) had been widely used in Italy, featuring in some 20 productions and winning awards for the quality of colour, but was only just beginning to be used outside its country of manufacture. Much cheaper than Technicolor, Ferrania Colour’s convenience was tempered by limitations in reproducing some colour ranges. Such as (bridal) white.” (Verhoeven 2008). Unlike Verhoeven, I have used the Italian trademark name ‘Ferraniacolor’. As it is stated in “A brief history of Ferrania” from the company website http://www.filmferrania.i (accessed 20.10.2017), Ferrania was funded in 1882 to produce explosives but after 1917 production was converted to black and white film stock. The company became the main producer of film stock for Italian Film production. “The first color emulsion, Ferraniacolor, dates back to 1952, and was pretty much hated by directors of photography for the lack of sensitivity in its early versions. Ferraniacolor would require several more years to perfect and finally get to the level of the primary competitors, Agfa and Kodak”
\end{itemize}
locked-off framing, controlled editing, postcard views, and no camera movement aside from the aerial view over the city. The sequence of twenty-four shots that open *Melbourne Olympic City* exemplify this trend (fig. 100). The style and narrative of this film, moving from traditional view, to aerial view, to postcard views, to the CBD crowd and finally to the city’s gardens, is similar to other Melbourne documentaries of the period. The only novelties are the two suburban shots, justified by the fact that many families offered their vacant rooms to Olympic athletes. Alongside these conventional images, a few modern buildings and some of the modernist sporting venues (see the image of Peter McIntyre’s new swimming pool [Fig. 99 centre-right]) were introduced.
Two specific documentaries on the event were also produced during and after the Olympics: *Olympic Games 1956* (Whitchurch 1956/2000) and *The Melbourne Rendezvous* (Lucot 1957). The story of the two official films of the Melbourne Olympics is symptomatic of the ambivalent and counter-productive strategy in promoting Melbourne during this period. After a long dispute, the discussion between the Australian organisers of the Melbourne Olympic Committee (MOC), asking for a fee to film the games, and the television and news networks, wanting the rights for free, came to a ‘stalemate’ (Wenn 1993, 39). As a result the 1956 Melbourne Olympics produced a local Australian film and an official international French version. The first was shot and directed by the Australian filmmaker Peter Whitchurch who obtained the rights for local distribution. The international rights were acquired by a French production for what became the official international film of the 1956 Melbourne Olympic Games, directed by René Lucot. The sale of the rights and Lucot’s film are not mentioned in two main Australian accounts of the story, concentrating on the dispute (Wenn 1993), and on Whitchurch’s film (Hughson 2010). *The Melbourne Rendezvous* is still today the official international version of the 1956 Melbourne Olympic Games. The French production premiered at the Venice Film Festival under Australian nationality according to the historical record of the Venice Film Festival, and had a wider international distribution through the Trans-Lux distribution network.

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149 The films were the outcome of a heated debate about the concession of the image-rights to newsreel companies and television. Whitchurch filmed most of the footage and had non-exclusive rights to the footage of the Olympics limiting its distribution mostly to Australia (Hughson 2010, 529). The DVD re-release of the official film in 2000 contained thirty minutes of extra footage (Gordon 2001, 8-9). Wenn writes “Administrative officers from the Australian Broadcasting Commission, the British Broadcasting Corporation, Fox-Movietone News, Cinesound Review Newsreel, NBC and United Press attended the meeting. A proposal which drew unanimous support was forwarded to the MOC. Newsreel access to the Games, it bluntly stated, should be free to all” (Wenn 1993, 42).

150 As it is reported in the NFSA record of Lucot’s film: NFSA acc.no: 405089.

151 Source: ASAC Database Venice Biennale.

152 It opened in the Trans-Lux network cinema on Broadway, New York on October 1957.
The Melbourne Rendezvous stands today as an example of the contradictions that have affected the international and foreign cinematic representation of Melbourne’s urban space. As for other foreign productions (Lumière, Kramer), Lucot’s film has attempted a spectacular representation of the city spaces in response to the perceived low-key character of its urban design. The Melbourne Rendezvous was filmed in lavish Agfacolor\(^{153}\) with a symphonic score and ran to over 100 minutes. The French production filmed his own footage with four cameramen. In the film’s introduction to the city, Melbourne is characterised as ‘provincial’, ‘improvised’, ‘ad-libbed by an English traveller’\(^{154}\) and as inferior to other international capitals. The film’s commentary is merciless about Melbourne’s world ambitions while the mise-en-scène produced a spectacular visual homage to the city and its suburbs. The film, restored and transferred to High Definition, demonstrates the difference between an actual theatrical ‘foreign’ point of view of the city and the more subdued local ‘international’ look of the Melbourne travelogues. In the French production there are plenty of shots and camera movements which are at odds with the tradition of Melbourne’s ‘stock images’: a tracking shot from a moving bus, a god’s eye viewpoint over a CBD street (fig. 101), a dynamic composition view two-point perspective on the corners of buildings (fig. 102), and a very low viewpoint at a bowling match. The sequence of the marathon won by French athlete Alain Mimoun, has the dual function of showing unseen suburban views of the city (fig. 102) as well as presenting cinematic sports action.

\(^{153}\) The French film became the official international film of the Olympics and it is featured as such on the Olympic Committee (CONI) Website. The film has been retrieved from a 35mm copy from the NFSA, and in a restored version from youtube CONI page: https://youtu.be/EDA5BvvtDsM (accessed 6.11.2015)

\(^{154}\) The transcribed text of the selected film commentary (starting at 2min38’) is “Australia. What is it exactly? A continent? An island? Almost as large as the United States, it has fewer inhabitants than New York City. Is it really a continent? [symphonic music] And Melbourne? Like the previous sites of the Olympic Games, is it an international capital? Like London, Los Angeles or Berlin? Melbourne is hardly more than a provincial town, capital of Australia’s smaller state. Population? Just over a million. Named after a British prime minister, [music] It is just a town improvised, ad-libbed by an English traveller. Ad-libbed by John Batman, exactly one hundred and twenty years ago. John Batman fought off a thousand types of wild animals and built a village, original name? Dutergalla, today [music] Melbourne! This year, the world’s oldest celebration is taking place in the world’s youngest city. Now for the first time in history the games will be played in the Southern Hemisphere. And when they are through? …Christmas! Observed outdoors in the heat of summer. [music] Instead of coming down chimneys Santa Claus rides ashore on a surfboard. [music]. There is another thing about Melbourne: no backstreets. But there are suburbs: miles and miles of suburbs spreading in all directions.” (The Melbourne Rendezvous, 1957).
Travelogues would return in the 1960s with productions aimed at tourists and migrants. In this era, a younger generation of filmmakers attempted to change their repetitive formula. *From the Tropics to the Snow* (Mason and Lee 1964) was the best attempt to improve such formulaic productions “because it broke with the dominant stylistic norm of the organisation [CFU]” (Moran 1991, 18). Moran writes that the film “grew slowly, searching for a shape as it went along” (Moran 1991, 22). The film’s production was “marked by a good deal of contestation and negotiation between the filmmakers and the organisation [CFU]” (18). The story uses this debate as the main idea for a promotional film about Australia. It shows the making of two alternative promotional films advocated by two producers with opposing ideas. In *From the Tropics to the Snow* the critique is overt in the theme of the film and Melbourne plays its role as a conservative setting featuring conventional tropes: views of the Yarra, shopping on Collins Street, the boulevard ‘threatened’ by a high-rise building (fig.103). As a result Melbourne appears more conventional than it would two years later in *Life in Australia: Melbourne* (White 1966) another CFU film production, and part of a much larger project called ‘Life in Australia’.
Twenty minutes long and shot on 35mm and in Eastman Color, just like a feature film, *Life in Melbourne* has higher production values than all of the previous CFU films discussed. The film is beautifully photographed by Tom Cowan (who also shot and directed *Nimmo Street* in 1964), and has a great musical score by George Dreyfus. It is probably the last work to celebrate the ‘village’ period, while attempting to develop a new approach to the representation of Melbourne, which appears much more ‘American’ in tone.

The small story of two young workers meeting for a night out and taking a stroll around the city draws visually on American movies, with a couple walking through New York-like settings (fig. 106). The image of Melbourne, while still traditional and conservative, opens up to a gentle modernity (fig. 105). The new skyline behind the horses and their riders is modern, the new high-rise public housing is modern, and is matched by the modernist design of some of the buildings (fig. 104). The atmosphere seems reassuring, and some well-known icons return, such as the clock tower in Elizabeth Street (fig. 105). Less reassuring is the relative emptiness of this view, which evokes a similar shot in *On the Beach* (1959). But thanks to the lack of a voice-over commentary, to the longer duration of the shots, and in large part to the quality of the work undertaken by the filmmakers, here the promotional image of Melbourne is able to go beyond the usual theatrical postcard effect to achieve a more original urban portrait. Even within the formalised setting of the series, *Life in Australia: Melbourne* is able to look with more interest at the city, to linger longer over descriptive scenes and film the life of the city unfolding.
This quality of ‘lingering’ on the scene is precisely what is missing in the three promotional travelogues shot by Geoffrey Thompson for a Melbourne tourism campaign in 1960–1963. These films: *Wintertime in Melbourne* (Thompson, Cine Service, 1960), *Summertime in Melbourne* (Thompson, Cine Service, 1961), and *Springtime in Melbourne* (Thompson, Cine Service 1963) were aimed mostly at the American tourist market (as was the case with *From the Tropics to the Snow*, which featured an American family as its main protagonists). The formal structure of the Thompson’s films repeats that of the travelogue, adding in various sporting venues and suggestions for excursions out of the city.

### 5.3. Planning Melbourne on Film

In 1954 the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW) sponsored Geoff Thompson and Cine Service to produce and direct *Planning for Melbourne’s future* (Thompson 1954). The films outline the
proposed plans for the future city released in 1953. In 1948 the Town and Country Planning Board, established in 1944 by the State Government, recommended that the MMBW be given planning authority for a future Metropolitan Melbourne. The outcome was important as “it was the first introduction of mandatory land-use planning powers in Victoria, […] a turning point in the history of planning in the state” (Lewis 1995, 113). The Board under the direction of E. F. Borrie, Engineer of Sewerage, took over three years to complete the surveys and the planning, releasing an official planning document in August 1953. For Freestone “it was a cautious, practical response to problems of low-density sprawl, the need to decentralise industrial employment, traffic congestion, use zoning, and the Cold War concern about protection of the population from the effects of aerial warfare” (Freestone 2008). After discussion and delays over the “statutory three months display of the plan”, the document was made visible for public discussion from the 21st of July to the 21st of October 1954, when over four thousand objections were registered, mostly related to land property acquisition (Lewis 1995, 114).

Planning for Melbourne’s Future (fig. 107) was produced and presented in this context, with the goal of attempting to communicate the key concepts of the plan to the Melbourne citizen. The director had a record of producing films about sensitive social aspects of Melbourne life. One of his first commercial works was Message to Motorists: Death on Roads (Cinesound 1946), a bleak road safety message underlining how Australians had suffered more casualties on the road than in the war.

Planning for Melbourne’s Future has a promotional message, balancing static images of the newly proposed plan with views of the 1930s city. The main audience were citizens fearful of losing their property and privileges. The documentary opens with the old city. The first image is of the city-village skyline over the Yarra, featuring the traditional silhouette of churches and spires. The film then highlights the city’s structural problems, before introducing the function and main perspectives of MMBW’s works and plan.

started his own production company, Cine Service, where he worked first as a producer/director and then as producer until the early 1980s.
Hannah Lewi notes how the promotional strategies of the film are borrowed from previous British examples of the 1930s and 1940s\textsuperscript{156}. Procedural practices used to present research on the data, including talking-head experts, maps and models were adapted “to the Australian urban context to show how planners – emboldened with ‘civic knowledge and responsibility’” – have ‘collected the facts’ that informed the making of a new operative planning solution to construct an ‘efficient and controlled’ Melbourne in the future” (Lewi 2013, 282).

In reality, if we compare \textit{Planning for Melbourne’s Future} (1954) with popular promotional films supporting earlier British plans such as \textit{Proud City: A Plan for London} (Keen 1943) and \textit{The Way We Live} (Craigie 1946), it is possible to see that besides the similarities there are important stylistic differences. The British films closely follow the dramatised documentary model theorised by John Grierson\textsuperscript{157}; they imbed the planning message by narrating an exemplary story intercut with historical footage. The city and the planners are presented as the main characters in a story: the lighting of the sets, the camera movements, the proximity of the human figures to the camera, the symphonic music, the rehearsed dialogue (sometimes with characters talking directly to the camera), all speak of a well-constructed theatrical mise-en-scène. On the contrary, to promote the planning scheme, \textit{Planning for Melbourne’s Future} picks on the more popular structure of the travelogue, deprecated by Grierson as mere ‘entertainment’\textsuperscript{158}. The structure of \textit{Planning for Melbourne’s Future} is more \textit{presentational} than \textit{representational}. Images of the city are simply shown, like static postcards. The film cuts from images of the city to images of the new plan, to people showing the maps, recalling the way the travelogues cut to buildings and cityscapes.

In 1954 the travelogue film had not changed in essence since \textit{Melbourne Today}. The images selected by Thompson show a city still anchored in the past, with buildings mostly erected before 1930. On the other hand, the images of old buildings are used as a visual strategy to outline the necessity for change. Despite this, the ‘stock’ of city-images used by Thompson is remarkably similar to that of other Melbourne travelogues. For seventeen minutes the film moves back and forth between maps and traditional images, models and residential housing. Even the use of images of children and schools as metaphors for the future city is predictable, lacking the verbal irony of Thompson’s previous effort \textit{Around Melbourne with Terry Dear}.

\textsuperscript{156} The British titles were: \textit{Proud City: A Plan for London} (Keene 1946); \textit{The Way We Live} (Craigie, 1946); \textit{Land of Promise} (Rotha 1946); \textit{A Plan to Work On} (Mander 1948).

\textsuperscript{157} Grierson expresses a first formulation of his ideas in “First Principles of Documentary (1932-34)” in which he pushed for the creative and poetic capacities of the form: “Documentary would photograph the living scene and the living story” but as exemplified by \textit{The Drifters}: “as the bravery of upstanding labor came through the film, as I hope it did, it was made not by the story itself, but by the imagery attendant on it” (1976, 27).

\textsuperscript{158} The travelogue genre is amongst the lecture-films criticized by Grierson: “These films, of course, would not like to be called lecture films, but this is, for all their disguises, what they are. They do not dramatize, they do not even dramatize an episode: they describe, and even expose, but, in any aesthetic sense, only rarely reveal. Herein is their formal limit, and it is unlikely they will make any considerable contribution to the fuller art of documentary. How indeed can they? Their silent form is cut to the commentary, and shots are arranged arbitrarily to point the gags or conclusions. This is not a matter of complaint, for the lecture film must have increasing value in entertainment, education and propaganda.” (Grierson 1976, 20)
5.4. Public Housing Films

The question of the quality of housing standards and the need for public housing became the topic of a series of media campaigns in Melbourne from the 1930s to the 1960s\(^\text{159}\). What concerns me here is how the films used in these campaigns constructed a cinematic identity of place. I am interested in evaluating the urban iconography employed to establish this identity, together with the representational outcomes of these films.

I am particularly interested in analysing these works as a case-study of local city-images. As in previously analysed local films (*Living Hawthorn A Thriving and Prosperous Suburb. Bird’s Eye View of Footscray*), this type of representation revolves mostly around single suburbs: here mostly Fitzroy and Richmond. The main difference between these and previous films is that Fitzroy is used here explicitly as a localised metaphor for the whole city; as ‘pars pro toto’ for specific city issues. The shift from part (suburb) to whole (city) is evident also in the titles of the films (*Beautiful Melbourne*, etc.) that refer to the city and not to the single suburb, in order to posit their argument on a wider scale. My claim is that these films remain ‘local films’ in conception and in their systems of visual representation. They are not aimed at a ‘foreign spectator’ but mostly at local, city audiences.

The first films about slums and public housing were produced by the Realist Film Unit and sponsored by the Brotherhood of St. Laurence. The Brotherhood had a history of social interest in the debates around public housing, having moved to the suburb of Fitzroy in the 1930s. The Brotherhood films produced between 1946 and 1951 denounce the ‘sub-standard’ living conditions in inner suburbs such as Fitzroy, and promote the activity of the organisation, while demanding action for the construction of public housing.

The films produced by the Brotherhood were: *Gaol Does Not Cure* (Fitzsimons 1946); *Beautiful Melbourne* (Realist Film Unit 1947); *These Are Our Children* (Realist Film Unit 1948) and *A Place to Live* (Realist Film Unit 1946-50). The films sourced and adapted their style, directly or indirectly, from the social-realist aesthetic. In particular, the Melbourne Realist Film Unit and its co-founder Ken Coldicutt were influenced by the films of Britain’s realist filmmakers, and films from Germany and the Soviet Union. These films were made available through organizations such as the German “International Arbeith-Hilfe” (IAH), known in English as the “Workers International Relief” (WIR)\(^\text{160}\) (Williams 2008, 20).

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\(^{159}\) Since the early 1930s films have been employed to denounce and defend housing policies. The cinematic campaigns in Melbourne followed examples from Germany (*Der Stadt vom Morgen, ein plan fur Städtebau* [1930]), Britain (*Housing Problems* (Elton and Anstey 1935], and America (*Housing in Our Time* [1930s] and *The City* [1939]).

\(^{160}\) The WIR was a section of the Communist International active in 1920s and early 1930s in Germany. It initially channelled help to the Russian workers, who received funds from other national organisations of workers, and later assisted workers in need from different countries. WIR was initially based in Berlin where it became involved in the production of social and propaganda films (Kepley 1983, 10).
In response to the cinematic campaign of the Brotherhood, the government commissioned a series of commercial films, sponsored by the Victorian Housing Commission, to promote the progress achieved in the construction of public housing. These were films such as *A Home of Their Own* (Daniell, 1949), *Coordinated Housing* (Jennings 1953), *The Story of the Holmesglen Concrete Housing Project* (Hershells 1959), and *The City Speaks* (Crawford Productions 1965). They were commissioned from local Melbourne production companies and employed standard and dominant documentary forms to promote public housing. These commercial and public promotional documentaries were influenced by British and American government productions about social housing, which were made widely available through government-funded public lending libraries\(^{161}\).

### 5.4.1. The Films of the Brotherhood

The films distributed through the Brotherhood were the result of a non-governmental combined effort involving the Anglican organisation, film enthusiasts and social activists in Fitzroy. According to FitzSimons, a member of the Victorian Amateur Cine Society, the Society suggested to the Brotherhood the use of film to inform the community about the problems of alcoholism, poverty and poor housing conditions. Three films were proposed: *Gaol Does Not Cure; Beautiful Melbourne;* and *These Are Our Children*. A fourth film, *A Place to Live*, not involving FitzSimons, was produced separately. The films were shown at special screenings at the Brotherhood headquarters and in connected circles to help raise awareness and generate discussion. All the films were silent, with live commentary by members of the Brotherhood to help combat the alcoholism, homelessness and health issues in young people associated with the Fitzroy slums.

Housing was a big problem in Melbourne in terms of both quantity and quality. There was a shortage of dwellings that became more critical with the conspicuous arrival of a large number of migrants in the 1950s. At the same time, old residential areas of the inner city such as Fitzroy lacked infrastructure and basic sanitation and they had been labelled as ‘slums’\(^{162}\). In the 1930s, under pressure from a series of social reform campaigners such as F. Oswald Barnett\(^{163}\), the Victorian Government commissioned a report and instituted the Housing Investigation and Slum Abolition Board. In 1937, the “Slum Reclamation: Housing for the Lower Paid Worker - First Progress Report”, was released. The same year the Victorian Housing Commission (VHC) was created.

The Brotherhood of St Laurence, named after the patron saint of the poor, moved to Fitzroy in 1933 to intervene where the problem of poverty was most intense. The Brotherhood had been co-founded in

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\(^{162}\) See cit. *The Australian Worker*, 10.6.1925, 11

\(^{163}\) F.O. (Oswald) Barnett was the “eventual founding father of the Victoria Housing Commission” (Birch 2004, 2).
Newcastle, NSW by its co-director, the Anglican priest Father Gerard Tucker. Its declared objective was to support the poor and the victims of the Depression. In Victoria, the organization declared war on poverty and slums and lobbied the government to supply appropriate housing, denouncing the conditions suffered by many families. In the influential 1954 publication, *What’s Wrong with Australia’s Public Housing Programme?*, the Brotherhood revealed that in the 1950s there were still “7,500 dwellings in inner Melbourne which were so inadequate or so deteriorated as to endanger the health, safety and morals of its inhabitants” (McDonald and Brownlee 1993, 4)164.

5.4.2. Gaol Does Not Cure

The first film, *Gaol Does Not Cure*, is a dramatic and involving 8-minute film, with an original point of view on Melbourne (fig. 108). Produced by Jack FitzSimons in collaboration with Irene Mitchell, the film documents episodes of alcoholism in Fitzroy and around Melbourne. The argument was that prison does not help stop alcoholism, instead alcoholics require assistance and re-education. From a visual point of view the film is striking and remarkable. The introduction to the main story documents episodes of drunkenness in the city. This provides a unique early moment of *cinéma vérité* in Melbourne cinema, with footage of drunken people along Brunswick Street in Fitzroy. Thanks to the basic editing and the hand-held camera, the images have a remarkable immediacy and a strong sense of reality (an impression further sustained by the low budget level of the production). These early scenes are rough documents of a social, as well as a filmmaking reality. No other filmic documents of Melbourne in this period, whether institutional or independent, fictional or non-fictional, have a similar effect.

164 Since the 1930s the denunciation of conditions in suburbs like Fitzroy involved the use of “modern” media ‘tools’ such as photography and film. There were photographic media campaigns organized by the reformer. As Birch has shown, the representation of the slums of Fitzroy referred back to a larger discourse on the representation of social evils in modern society (Birch 2004, 5). Presenting images of poverty with onscreen text and didactic commentary produced a narrative of a corrupt city. The representation of Fitzroy was constructed through an allegory of types: the drunken man, the bugs on the bed sheets, the broken walls, the unwashed kids on the street. Furthermore, those images of the poor “were utilized to represent a much wider agenda than the evils of the Fitzroy slum. Most often the use of the institutional slum image helped the growth of the institution itself, the authority of the reformers and particularly, in the post-war era, wider mechanisms of state intervention and control” (Birch 2004, 5-6).
It is possible to perceive the tension of the cameraman in approaching the subject, and his fear of being uncovered. There are a few dramatic shots taken from a window on the first floor of a house. In one, the camera follows a woman along the road until she collapses unconscious halfway between the sidewalk and the road. Nobody seems to take notice or care. The scene is edited with two rough jump cuts within the same scene. The conditions of filming and the unusual and rare point of view from a window on the first floor, create an extraordinary document that illustrates ‘real-life’ cases of chronic alcoholism in Melbourne. These views unveil a different way of looking at Melbourne. The informal, hasty style increases the verisimilitude, providing a sense of being present, even after so many years. The camera is mostly hand-held, and the framing is wider, allowing the camera to follow the unforeseen movements of the drunken subject. The Fitzroy area emerges in all its roughness through images of the stairwell of the council building, the structure of the metal portico along the street, the narrowness of the urban space between the frame of the window and that of the building in front. The view offers a great deal of information about the urban space: the width of the street, the point of view of the camera, the structure of the buildings, the movement of the people within the space itself. The sequences are filmed with long takes and unwittingly give more attention to the urban context. The filmmaker is not just presenting examples or types but is looking for an event, a drama, which involves the space around the bodies of the people being filmed. Not all the film is of the same quality. The second part, filmed inside the house of an alcoholic, unveils the planned strategy of the film, from the use of artificial light, to elaborate framing and editing, which is unable to hide an educative and rhetorical intention in combining the shots.

Nevertheless, the identity of place expressed by the system of representation of *Gaol Does Not Cure* is very tightly informed by the urban reality captured on film. People, streets and buildings are deeply
connected here and express a strong sense of place. The negative nature of the subject does not stop the spectator from identifying with the place.

5.4.3. The Realist Film Unit

For the next set of films Jack Fitzsimons was joined in producing, shooting and directing by Ken J. Coldicutt and Bob Mathews, both of whom had previously formed the Realist Film Unit in 1945 (Williams 2008, 23). The unit was inspired by similar workers’ units (like the German WIR) active in Germany, the Soviet Union and Britain in the 1920s and 1930s. From the start, the Realist filmmakers were “imbedded in a larger left political and cultural milieu”, which included theatrical productions, film criticism and screenings of social films through the Realist Film Association. The Realist Film Society is also credited with initiating the culture of Melbourne film societies and the formation of the Australian Council of Film Societies, which spread after the creation of the Victorian State Film Centre and the introduction of the state-based film lending libraries (Williams 2008, 22-34).

Beautiful Melbourne was the first film to be produced by the RFU and by the Brotherhood. It focused on the unhealthy conditions of the so-called ‘slums’ in which children were being raised, and advocated the construction of public housing as a solution. The film had an obviously ironic title, referring to ‘turn of the century’ travelogues such as Marvellous Melbourne. The message was built around a simple structure: showing the conditions in which many children lived, and comparing them with acceptable if basic conditions. The film opens by looking at the urban context surrounding those poor conditions. Since the intent is metaphorical, there is no attempt to describe a real place, but rather the intention is to construct the idea of a dysfunctional urban space. Therefore, details of houses, street views, roofs, chimneys, people passing by, framed against walls, and children playing in the streets are shown with little attention to their reality, but function instead as symbols, as visual proof of an idea of poverty. The suburban space is filmed with a series of brief static shots, usually unconnected with one another topographically. Only on a couple of occasions is it possible to glean more information about a specific street or house. When two children are shown inside a terrace, the view is shot from outside, and by comparing a few details it is possible to identify one of the side streets of Fitzroy.

Contrary to the opening of the previous Gaol Does Not Cure, the initial images of Beautiful Melbourne do not seem to produce a sense of place. The films come across as highly constructed, marked by the juxtaposition of faces and objects unable to speak for themselves. The edited images when seen today without the live commentary by the brotherhood’s speakers165, are not very expressive. For example, the opening section describing the urban context is interesting enough, but generic. The main section denouncing

165 As Williams explains “these film were made without soundtrack for financial reasons and also so that the Brotherhood’s Father Tucker could provide ‘live’ spoken commentary. Apparently all three [films] were shown in one program, as The course of the slam”. (Williams 2008, 37)
the living conditions in these houses fails to communicate a sense of being in a specific place. It shows images of beds full of insects, the effects of these insects on children, dirty toilets, underfed mothers with children, broken walls, ruined carpets; an iconic taxonomy of poverty composed of images grouped together through very basic editing. As Williams has noted, these images work by establishing a visual ‘typology’:

_The repetition of class-determined typology of images in These are Our Children and of specific images in Place to Live and Beautiful Melbourne is very suggestive. The Realists seemed to have relied on a certain ‘type’ of image to represent the ‘working class’, while the images used to represent the ‘upper class’ are distinct in each of these films._ (Williams 2008, 40)

For Tony Birch those images were used to construct a discourse on poverty by relying on an existing iconography shaped by several photographic campaigns made first by Oswald Barnett in 1931 and subsequently by Father Tucker and the Brotherhood after 1933 (Birch 2004, 4). Images that appear in Beautiful Melbourne, such as the grouping of a few children on a single bed, are similar, in the way these films are lit and composed, to photographs of 1930s campaigns, and the campaign ‘In This Proud City’ published in 1952 by the Melbourne Herald (Birch 2004, 13). Birch’s suggestion that “both Barnett and Tucker understood that the authority of the slum image lay in its ability to ‘construct an imaginary world and pass it off as reality’” (12) can be used to frame the content and representational system of Beautiful Melbourne. The RFU documentary adopted a similar system of ‘authority’ with its images of Fitzroy. The impression of reality, the claim to truth of these symbolic images, was not inherent to the images themselves, but relied on the ‘system of authority’ of the institution of the Brotherhood and on the archive of images of the slums that the Brotherhood helped to construct around them. As Birch notes

_The slum literature and photographs of Fitzroy serve therefore to heighten a belief in the normalisation process which occurs in the child saving institution, and justifies what might otherwise be regarded as a drastic measure, removing children from their own home and community._ (Birch 2004, 13)

_These Are Our Children_, directed by Coldicutt (1948), used a similar system of representation as in Beautiful Melbourne, based on the symbolic exemplarity of the images. The story of two siblings ‘ruined’ by the evils of the slums is shot almost entirely indoors. The context is not clearly specified. The portraits of the children are shot against brick walls, wooden palisades, corrugated iron, or a shop window, recalling buildings and alleys of well-known Melbourne working class suburbs. The location of the action is hinted at more than shown. The only concession to situating the suburban space is the wider shot of the Fitzroy kindergarten taken from a higher viewpoint. It reveals the contrast between the wider spaces of the kindergarten and the density of the houses around it, thus suggesting a more balanced spatial distribution than the one implied by the film’s overriding message.

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166 Birch notes how Barnett made use of photographs already in his Master of Commerce thesis ‘The Economy of the Slums’ (University of Melbourne, 1931) (Birch 2004, 6).

167 See here Sekula 1986, 6.
The RFU’s final collaboration with the Brotherhood, *A Place to Live* (1946-1950), is in my view their most accomplished cinematic effort. The film was conceived in 1945 and was kept going as a side project, to be finally released in 1950. It includes footage from various sources, some of the material was already shot for and included in *Beautiful Melbourne*. Williams finds the two films very much alike even though “while both films contain some of the same footage, their arguments are posed differently. While *A Place to Live* roughly adheres to the Soviet montage practice by contrasting images of Melbourne accompanied by assertive intertitles, *Beautiful Melbourne* has only one sequence where it departs from imaging slum living” (Williams 2008, 38). The difference relays mostly in the aims of the two films: *Beautiful Melbourne* was “to be employed in conjunction with Tucker’s direct address” at the Brotherhood (Williams 2008, 38), while *A Place to Live*, was supposed to stand by itself when screened. In my view, this difference between the two films has acted to modify the way they have been edited and directed. *A Place to Live* compares two housing realities, middle class and working class, observing how the communities exist almost, face to face, on two opposite sides of the Yarra River. The film is silent and includes intertitles, but the style is more confident and the message more nuanced.

*A Place to Live* is closer to an essay than to explicitly didactic propaganda. The film seeks to document the poor housing conditions in the years after the war and demonstrates greater attention to composition, details and characters. Despite the lack of identifiable buildings around them, the characters solicit more empathy and are able to develop stronger local identities. The link between character and urban environment (fig. 109), while still fractured, is able to construct a dialogue and imply a relationship between the two.
Moreover, while separated within the frame, the city’s urban spaces and the young characters are interconnected through editing (fig.110). A girl standing in the middle of a lane holds a puppy close to her face as she looks at the camera; a girl shown knitting on her bed refuses to look at the camera; a boy squatting on the sidewalk with his back against the wall looks straight back at the camera (fig. 110). These children are photographed in their own environment for the first time as central figures, as the protagonists of their own stories. Their composure is fatigued but confident. The extended duration of the shots permits the spectator to engage with the content and the flow of the sequence, instead of simply observing the images. The images of the children looking back from the road are able to engage with the spectator, with a stronger, newer form of staging. The returned (and unreturned) gazes of the children are not sentimental but challenge the gaze of the camera. The characters seem to demand authority over the space of the frame. In these moments, the weight of the ‘system of authority’ in the representation shifts back from the images of the archive to the relationship between the character and its staging.

The three portraits are all framed frontally against a rough surface: an uneven road, a peeling plaster wall, a worn brick wall. It is not possible to know anymore about those faces: did the first girl love her puppy? Probably. Did the second girl enjoy knitting? Is the last boy unhappy about being observed by the camera? Probably. Is the filmmaker trying to exhort compassion in the viewer, or is he using these shots at the film’s conclusion because they have a stronger impact? Probably both. None of these questions has a definitive answer. What can be analysed is what is on screen: the composition of the frame, the relationship between one shot and the next, the position of the body in space. So what is the difference between these portraits and others filmed by the Realist Film Unit? How do these portraits relate to other portraits of children in films of Melbourne? The images appear less constrained by the necessity to deliver a quick social
message and the filmmaker has the time to enter into relation with the characters, instead of just using them as symbolic tokens. The gazes of the children ‘looking back’ at the spectator show an awareness of the intrusive presence of the camera and request privacy or empathy. These gazes break the theatricality of the settings, anticipating the unprivileged camera style, as David MacDougall labels it, writing about documentary and anthropology in the late 1950s and 1960s, which is “based on the assumption that the appearance of a film should be an artefact of the social and physical encounter between the filmmaker and the subject”. (MacDougall 1982, 9)

The final film about the housing crisis sponsored by the Brotherhood is contemporaneous with the release of the first film sponsored by the Victorian Housing Commission (VHC): A Home of Their Own (Daniell 1949). This film aimed to show that something was being done, that the commission was actually working, despite the increasing demand for housing. It is similar in style to other government promotional films of the period. Contrary to the low budget productions of the Realist Film Unit, the VHC films were contracted out to professional local film production companies, and followed the Griersonian school of documentary in that they mixed individual stories with an institutional point of view. A Home of Their Own opens with a novel helicopter-shot of Melbourne descending towards a group of terrace houses. The visual language used is simple and didactic: the voiceover introduces the problematic social situation, while the aerial shot is followed by a ground-level shot of a street in a ‘substandard’ area. The film is informative, showing architects and the planning process, new houses that have been built, and images of the construction plant making concrete walls for pre-fabricated houses.

5.4.4. The Films of the Victorian Housing Commission

In 1953 the Victorian Housing Commission (VHC) sponsored the documentary, Co-ordinated Housing (Thompson, 1953). The film specifically promoted the Heidelberg Housing Commission project which, after the Olympic Games, would convert the structures built to house the Olympic athletes into public accommodation. In 1959 VHC produced a similar technically oriented documentary, The Story of Holmesglen Concrete Housing Project (Hershells), aimed at highlighting the developments in concrete housing construction that sustained the new planned public housing. Six years later the VHC sponsored a much more ambitious film, The City Speaks (Crawford Productions, 1965) to promote the policies supporting the construction of a wide range of high-rise public housing (fig.112). By looking at this later film it is possible to evaluate the paradigm shift in the city’s ‘filmic consciousness’ relating to the

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168 One of the best works in this genre is A Place to Live (Lerner, 1941), based on a survey of the Philadelphia Housing Association. The story, acting, titling, cinematography and narration are all reminiscent of the American feature films of the period. This type of film set an example for Australian commercial production and while unreachable in terms of production costs and level of technical skill, it was imitated in terms of structure and narrative tone.
construction of a new housing identity and its relationship to place. Much of the novelty of the film stems from its producers. *The City Speaks* was created by Crawford Productions\(^{169}\), a Melbourne-based production house working both in commercial documentaries and in successful fictional radio and television productions. Crawford was generally more innovative, resourceful and original than many of its competitors, and had a modern visual style, often influenced by representations of urban America in cinema, TV and radio\(^ {170}\).

*The City Speaks* introduces many formal novelties to the promotional documentary about Melbourne, making it much more theatrical and iconic, and reaching a level of representation that merges with blatant advertising. As Nichols observes, *The City Speaks* served as a propagandistic instrument for the powerful HCV, in a particular moment in urban planning when slum clearance was no longer considered a priority. The publication of Jane Jacobs’ *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1960), in parallel with the Townscape movement emerging in Britain, marked “the case for the retention of older, adaptable streetscapes and neighbourhoods, and for the rejection of prospective zoning” (Nichols 2007, 3)\(^ {171}\). With *The City Speaks*, the image of public housing moved away from the British propaganda model of the 1930s and 1940s documentaries to embrace a more dynamic, glamorous and modernist image. Symbolic of this shift is the contrast between the first shot of the traditional neo-gothic skyline with the spires of St. Paul’s Cathedral (fig. 111), later superseded by images of the first truly high-rise buildings (fig. 112).

![Fig. 111. Opening shots. (*The City Speaks* 1965), screenshot. National Film and Sound Archive, Canberra, acc.no: 382912.](image)

After the opening sequence, followed by an aerial shot over the city’s port and the industrial area, the film moves on to establish Melbourne as a modernist city, with several shots in which the camera augments and highlights the vertical perspectives of the buildings (fig. 113). The film adopts the spectacular aesthetic

\(^{169}\) *The City Speaks* has no titles to indicate a specific director or an individual producer, nor is the information available in any of the film libraries that have archived the film. Crawford Productions and its owner Hector Crawford are here assumed as the authors.

\(^{170}\) Crawford produced two of the largest successes of Australian television in the 1960s, both of which were connected with stories of Melbourne and with the representation of the city: *Consider Your Verdict* (1961-1964), running for 160 episodes, and *Homicide* (1964-1977), which was one of the most successful shows in Australian television history. Source Crawford website http://www.crawfords.com.au/library/special/crawfhistory.shtml (accessed 15.5.2013)).

\(^{171}\) On this topic see here the more recent Howe, Davison and Nichols 2013.
of the American metropolitan city, which Crawford Productions had already introduced through the successful television series *Homicide* (1964-1977). Here Crawford Productions creates a heightened representation of the identity of place, mostly imported from American cinema and television. Such overt theatricality had long been alien to representations of Melbourne, aside from a few distinct exceptions\(^{172}\), and would later appear almost exclusively in advertising. Buildings in construction are filmed from several points of view with wide-angle lenses, intercut with close-ups of construction workers portrayed as protagonists.

![Fig. 112. Opening shots. (*The City Speaks* 1965), screenshot. National Film and Sound Archive, Canberra, acc.no: 382912.](image)

The film has been edited carefully and precisely, matching different frame compositions to suggest a strong sense of presence and identity of place. For instance, in different shots the editing matches up the converging lines of the buildings, with the worker’s head at the centre of the image. This is a sophisticated methodology of persuasion employed to serve HCV’s promotion of the public housing strategy.

![Fig. 113. Men at work. (*The City Speaks* 1965), screenshot. National Film and Sound Archive, Canberra, acc.no: 382912.](image)

\(^{172}\) See the films of Giorgio Mangiamele discussed in Chaper Six.
The use of a theatrical and spectacular mise-en-scène is successful in constructing an artificial and promotional image of modern Melbourne. It must be noted that while the subjects of The City Speaks are mostly suburban environments, the typology of the representation is directed not at a local audience but at a civic and national audience. The basic iconography of the identity of space, connecting gaze, body and place, so rare in most films about Melbourne, is employed here with unusual generosity, underlining the promotional nature of the product (fig. 114). The faces and bodies of the workers and the children are frequently framed with the buildings to construct a virtual sense of spatial belonging. Despite this, the effort to refashion the visual reality into a stronger unity of place reaches moments of paradoxical irony. For example, the scene showing children as they race around the new buildings (fig. 115), scored by the music from the Russian ballet The Seasons by Alexander Glazunov, is reminiscent of images of Russian propaganda.

Conclusion

This chapter has analysed a large selection of promotional films about Melbourne and its suburbs commissioned and made between the 1930s and the 1960s. They have been grouped mostly into two main types and genres: ‘travelogues’ and ‘planning or public housing promotional films’. The travelogues from Melbourne Today to Life in Australia: Melbourne, aimed principally at tourists and migrants, were the main vehicle of promotion for the city of Melbourne on the international stage. They reveal different approaches to the representation of the city proposing a greener ‘city-village’ image up to the end of the 1950s, and slowly updated to embrace a refashioned modernist image in the 1960s. The close analysis of the composition of the various films in combination with the history of city planning in Melbourne has revealed
a higher than expected degree of specificity in the most effective representations, even when the more conventional form of the travelogue is employed. Some of these promotional films (Melbourne Today, About Melbourne with Terry Dear) were indeed capable of demonstrating, on a few occasions, a strong identity of place that connected the filming practice with the city’s urban history by using, for instance, new vantage points suggested by recent architecture. On a different level, films such as The Melbourne Wedding Belle or From the Tropics to the Snow were able to convey a critical discourse about the limited variations possible within the conventions of city-views, either through visual ‘distanciation’ or narrative irony. Moreover, analysis of the iconography also perhaps suggests a less conscious reference to the many unemployed men living in Melbourne at the time (through the recurrent image of the lonely man walking along the river), thus underlining a pressing social reality. Finally, films such as The Melbourne Rendezvous, the French production chosen as the Official film of the 1956 Melbourne Olympics outside of Australia, reveal a deeper ambivalence between the local and international image of the city.

The second section of this chapter covered films about city planning and public housing in Melbourne in the 1940s and 1950s, the other main genre of films about Melbourne that were popular in this period. Planning for Melbourne’s Future produces a hybrid between a travelogue and a planning film in the British tradition. The social and public housing films are more interesting for the variety of outcomes they produced. The (local) social film Gaol Does Not Cure created a strong impression of reality and identity of place through the use of an informal camera style and editing. The realist films of the RFU (Beautiful Melbourne, Prices and the People and These are Our Children) borrowed iconography from international social realist cinema and adapted modes of representation typical of photographic campaigns capturing slums in the 1930s. A Place to Live showed that it was possible to promote a local point of view within such a tight genre by exploring fractures in the dominant representations of place. A Place to Live produces a deeper social impression, overcoming formal repetition and connecting with some of its young non-professional actors. Finally, the campaign of the Brotherhood was followed by a series of more commercial institutional films produced by the Housing Commission of Victoria (HCV) to promote the construction of public housing. These films were aimed at sustaining government policies towards public housing and abounded with visual rhetoric initially inspired by Grierson’s interpretation of social documentary, evident in A House of Their Own. Later HCV films (Co-ordinated Housing, The Story of Holmesglen Concrete Housing Project and The City Speaks) were more pragmatic in advertising single projects, and in so doing tended to embrace the dominant system of representation of place-identity that was popular in advertising and carried strong influences from American television.

In the following and final chapter I will explore the representation of Melbourne in ‘non-promotional’ films. While some of these films were still partially funded by state institutions such as the University of Melbourne and the State Film Centre, these films allowed the expression of more personal voices, filling many of the gaps left open by previous representations of Melbourne on screen.
CHAPTER SIX

Personal City Documentaries and Fiction Films

Between 1953 and 1959 a group of films and filmmakers produced works that challenged the dominant image of Melbourne previously promoted by government-sponsored films. They created new cinematic city-images, stemming from different production histories, and proposed more personal points of view on city life. Most of the Melbourne filmmakers of the 1950s and 1960s were interested in expressing emerging aspects of the city, and communicating the personal feeling of living in the city. Some of these works avoid the use of descriptive voice-over, which was used in most government-sponsored films, and employ different stylistic devices. They often prefer to associate urban images with music and poetry, as in *Late Winter to Early Spring* (Brealey 1954) and *Sunday in Melbourne* (Brealey and Olsen 1958), with essayistic texts as in *Your House and Mine* (Boyd and McIntyre 1954), and with the local reality of migration, as in the realist fictional work of Giorgio Mangiamele (1953-1963). Other short films were produced through the universities and some, like the surreal fiction *Le Bain Vorace* (Dial P for Plughole) (Munro 1954), were raised to the status of cult film, and created an original setting from the inner-city streets.

These occasional films did not have the strength to be a new wave in Melbourne filmmaking but marked the emergence of topics and themes which remained under-represented. Amongst other factors, these films responded to the long absence of fiction film production in Melbourne that reached an historical low level in the 1940s and 1950s. The arrival of the American production of *On the Beach* (Kramer 1959) partially filled this void. The analysis of the way Melbourne was staged as ‘last city on earth’ will be compared to the previous and rare occasions when Melbourne’s streets provided the mise-en-scène within fiction feature films.

The authors and the films discussed in this chapter do not share a common upbringing or school. They communicate, in different ways, the need to express individual voices outside of dominant production systems. What they do share is a sensibility towards the exploration of ordinary or everyday city life. The group includes names and biographies that have in common an interest in showing, for the first time, a different and more private Melbourne. This is a city that is subjective, vulnerable and more impressionistic, a far cry from the Melbourne shown in the travelogue or in the propagandistic films discussed in the previous chapter. What emerges from these films is a more intimate city that is often experienced from a personal, more human point of view. In these stories, the position of the human figure is central to the representation, in that it expresses not just a relationship with the architectural environment, but also the state of mind of those living and existing in the city. Existential questions about
lived space and qualities are raised. They often result in the production of images characterised by an urban void that, at moments and by extension, seems to suggest a sense of human placelessness.

Fig. 116. Mark Strizic. 1950s solitudes, *(Melbourne: a Portrait 1960)*. State Library of Victoria, Melbourne.

In these films, the lonely figure of the solitary man, who appeared at the margins in the travelogues, and in *Gaol Does Not Cure* returns more prominently. He is without a known story, frequently dressed in dirty, worn, brown clothes, and a hat. He is an icon of desperation and depression, but nevertheless an important character in the life of Melbourne from the 1920s to the 1950s. This character is generally faceless, does not appear on film until the 1930s, and is featured regularly in the films and photos of these filmmakers and in the work of photographers such as Mark Strizic (Strizic and Saunders 1960). The lonely figure and the street are two interconnected elements of city life in public urban spaces. In a close visual relationship with these lonely figures, views of empty streets started to appear on film, both local and foreign, in the mid 1950s, suggesting economic uncertainty, existential alienation, urban depopulation and nuclear menace.

Fig. 117. Mark Strizic. Lonely figures *(Melbourne: a Portrait 1960)*. State Library of Victoria, Melbourne.

This chapter will analyse the work of a generation of filmmakers who started their activity during the 1940s and 1950s. Their work offered a different, more intimate and existential experience, which in some cases can be considered alternative and deliberately different from the promotional image of the city in the 1950s. My cut-off point for this analysis is the beginning of the 1960s, because I feel that the next generation of filmmakers emerging in this period deals with a different visual perspective and a
‘different’ Melbourne; a city that is more modern, less isolated and less willing to celebrate its past. As Davison has written, this was a city that shifted from predominantly British to American influences (Davison 1998, 148). The early 1960s heralded the arrival of new filmmakers filming short stories or short essays set in some of Melbourne’s suburbs. Directors and films such as Tom Cowan (*Nimmo Street* (1964), Peter Tammer (*On the Ball*, 1964; *Iron Lace*, 1965), Nigel Buesst (*Fun Radio*, 1962), Malcolm Wallhead (*Shelter*, 1965, *The Cleaners*, 1969), Peter Elliott (*The Melting Pot*, 1966; *The Girlfriends*, 1968), Chris Lofven (*Forgotten Loneliness*, 1965), John Kingford-Smith (*Early Melbourne Mansions*, 1965), and Brian Davies (*Pudding Thieves*, 1967) deserve to be investigated through a specific study targeting the visual culture of the 1960s and 1970s in Melbourne\(^\text{173}\). Nonetheless, by looking at most of these films, I do not think that the main characteristics of Melbourne’s representation in film have changed much in the 1960s or after. The critical representation of the urban space is confined to single shots or scenes, or to short films such as *Nimmo Street* shot in Port Melbourne, or *The Cleaners* filmed in the CBD.

### 6.1. Giorgio Mangiamele

Giorgio Mangiamele was one of Melbourne’s first truly independent filmmakers. He worked as a professional photographer within Melbourne’s Italian community and as a semi-professional film director. All his films are independently financed, because he was unable to obtain any form of public funding. He was amongst the first filmmakers to shoot realist stories on the streets of Melbourne\(^\text{174}\), particularly in the suburb of Carlton: *Il contratto*, the two versions of *The Spag* and *Ninety-nine Percent*. These films told stories and showed Italian migrant characters and were set in the context of the urban spaces in which they lived. Mangiamele’s style brought to Australian cinema an unrepresented attention to the close relationship between characters and urban space drawing on the sense of immediacy and composition of Italian neo-realism\(^\text{175}\). In his later films, such as *Clay* (1965), he moved into a post neo-

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\(^{173}\) On Melbourne’s 1960s film culture see Danks’s account of the Melbourne University Film Society (Danks 2005, 101-114) and Jacobsen’s arguments about the point of view of the Melbourne’s filmmakers from the 1960s and the 1970s (Jacobsen 2006, 97-113)

\(^{174}\) Only Brealey has produced a fictional story of equal standing set in East Melbourne and the Fitzroy Gardens, with *Later Winter Early Spring* (1954).

\(^{175}\) The ‘neo-realist’ qualities of Mangiamele’s cinema are evident. Australian commentators have been keen to underline these aspects which were considered mostly lacking in Australian film. In *Ninety-nine Percent* Danks sees a Carlton where the “characters seem to wander through the kind of bombed-out streetscape that is more Rossellini’s Rome than Melbourne” (Danks 2012, 20). I believe that the main contribution of Mangiamele’s films belongs to a later, more existentialist phase of Rossellini’s realism pointing at the irreemediable incompatibility between character and urban landscape, which becomes an “allegorical circomlocution” of the character’s state of mind. (Steimatsky 2008, 74).
realist phase and focused outside of the inner city, as he sought to share and communicate the sense of rejection and malaise he experienced as an outsider (Passi 2011). His style often employs visual metaphors linking him to the ‘cinema of poetry’ whose chief proponent was Pier Paolo Pasolini (Rando and Moliterno 2011, 73).

Mangiamele’s practice of filming fictional street scenes in the 1950s and 1960s led to the production of a unique body of work documenting Melbourne’s suburban life. His cinema was among the first to truly address the theme of migration and its psychological impact, in terms of loneliness, dislocation and isolation. He overcame traditional perceptions of migration, shifting towards a shared consciousness of diversity (Clay 1965). While he linked the experiences of Italian migrants with strong images of claustrophobia and melodrama, he also elaborated further on “social justice, social responsibility and a wider number of existentialist themes, in particular that of the outsider” (Rando and Moliterno 2011, 52). Most studies (Tuccio 2009, Rando and Moliterno 2011, Lampugnani 2011) have focused on the social content of his films and their relation to the migrant experience. Less studied is the cinematic urban identity found in Mangiamele’s films.

The novelty of Mangiamele’s films and images within Australian cinema was their accent on formal aspects of light and composition, and the lesser attention he gave to the verbal and aural aspects of the story. The prominence he gave to the image, as a relatively self-sufficient text, was inherited from Italian popular oral and visual culture176.

In her dissertation on Mangiamele (2009), Tuccio is very attentive to Mangiamele’s images, even though she mostly refers to them in terms of metaphors and without an adequate analysis of their composition. She touches on two key elements of Mangiamele’s aesthetic: the relationship of the figure with the background and the importance of the figure shown in movement. Looking at Mangiamele’s output as a photographer, Tuccio points out that

both the lonely figure and the gathering of people are framed as significant elements against a specific landscape. Whilst elements of the landscape, like rain clouds or the uprooted trees, contribute to the tone of the picture, it is the delineation of the human figure in relation to the landscape, as for example the person with umbrella amongst the rain clouds, which determines the overall tone. (Tuccio 2009, 192)

Tuccio here correctly underlines the importance of the interaction between the group and the individual, and their relationship with the background. To provide a deeper analysis of the relationship between figure and landscape in Mangiamele’s work, it is useful to go back to the image of “the person with umbrella amongst the rain clouds, which determines the overall tone”, cited by Tuccio. This example is also a good starting point for analysis of the relationship between Mangiamele’s human figures and Melbourne’s urban space, both in his photography and films. The photo of the person with an umbrella cited is a photo of Dorotea, Mangiamele’s first wife, standing in O’Grady Street in Carlton around 1963.

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176 By 1961, 9% of the Italian population was still illiterate (De Mauro 1986, 345).
The atmosphere of the image is surreal, but also expresses a social and emotional reality. In part the photo expresses an attraction towards a luminous transcendence. A female figure stands in the middle of a lane that is backlit by what appears to be the nocturnal light of the moon. She is standing in the middle of a wet, unevenly asphalted street where puddles of water fill holes in the road’s surface. The figure stands just off-centre, not ‘amongst the clouds’, as Tuccio claimed, but against the urban scenery, precisely the end of O’Grady Street, in Carlton North, at the corner of Rathdowne Street.

At the time the photograph was taken the wall to the left of the woman belonged to Giorgio and Dorotea Mangiamele’s studio and family home. The photographic studio was housed on the ground floor, and the family home was above.

The image of the standing woman has several meanings. Firstly, it replicates the traditional neorealist iconography of the character standing on the road, with the combination of body and urban space. Interestingly, this iconography is rendered here through a negative relation between the dark shape of the body against the well-lit street and umbrella. The presence of the body is revealed by the lack of light within the urban space. Moreover, on closer inspection, it is possible to note that the image is illusionary, unreal and, ultimately, the product of a photographic ‘montage’. The real light of the scene is produced, probably, by a street light, or by underexposed sunlight. The ‘cloud effect’ comes from a different photograph, which has been developed from a different photo, or is the result of exposing two images on the same portion of film. The trick is clever and hardly noticeable in the photograph. The result is not therefore a realist image but a hyperrealist one, not so much a document of a place, as a document of a state of mind.

The image unifies and summarises Mangiamele’s image-making practice. Woman with Umbrella sits between the shift from the social realism of Il Contratto (1953) and The Spag (1962), to the oneiric
parable *Clay* (1965). The image connects specific traditions of Italian realist cinema with Mangiamele’s increased interest in capturing a more surreal Australian reality. On the one hand, this sparsely populated city scene is potentially a naturalistic image, but on the other it is resolved in a non-naturalistic way and is turned into an almost metaphysical image.

Before 1963, Mangiamele’s cinema was mostly concerned with real-life urban stories, even though it did also express, at moments, an early gravitation towards images appealing to deeper, more existential meanings. *Il contratto* (*The Contract*, 1953), his first work (unfinished and without sound or dialogue), moves from early social-realism, following the social reality of the character, to an ending with an image of female transfiguration, closer to Rossellini’s transcendent realism in *Germania anno zero* (1948) and *Stromboli* (1950) (Bazin 1969, 96). *Il contratto* is possibly Melbourne’s first truly suburban film narrative. It moves centrifugally from the city centre to the fringes, where the suburbs merge into rural space. The story follows a group of male Italian migrants who have just arrived in Melbourne looking for work, having signed a work contract in Italy. They have been promised jobs that turn out to be non-existent, and they are forced to bond together to survive. The story is filmed mostly on the road, following the group’s attempts to secure jobs around Melbourne. In this film, Mangiamele develops a pattern of connecting characters to the urban landscape. On their arrival in Port Melbourne the actors are framed in front of the ship. Then their transit across the city centre is narrated through a single, brief, tracking shot, using a shaky hand-held camera from a car moving along Elizabeth Street heading towards Flinders Street Station (fig. 119).

![Fig. 119. Elizabeth Street (*Il contratto* 1953). DVD screenshot.](Giorgio Mangiamele Collection. NFSA and Ronin Film, Canberra, DVD, 2011.)

The shot is remarkable for being the only shot in Mangiamele’s films showing the city centre of Melbourne (or any main city centre). Also remarkable, given the planning of Melbourne’s city grid, which is dominated by perpendicular streets, is the decision to represent a more intimate theatrical space, the T-intersection between Elizabeth Street and Flinders Street opens on three sides. This appears on screen as enclosed on three sides by buildings.

As we watch the images unfold in *Il contratto*, it is possible to experience the centrifugal ‘loss’ of space experienced by Mangiamele, as a newcomer to Melbourne. In a later sequence, the road is blocked
by passing sheep, a rural situation that seems to highlight the ‘village-like’ impression of the new city. The central section of the film is dedicated to the pursuit of jobs in different suburbs around Melbourne. Here the camera often frames the main characters in front of buildings, houses or structures, marking the surrounding urban space. In these shots the characters are often deliberately framed against the urban structure behind (fig. 120).

These types of iconic ‘identity’ shots locate the characters within the urban environment. They identify the human figure in connection with the urban space and the buildings surrounding him or her. The overlapping of character and architecture constructs an iconic reference, which can be reinforced through association with an iconic monument as in the last shot of *Roma città aperta*, or (even more so), in the shot linking the image of Marcello with Pierluigi Nervi’s Olympic sport Stadium in *La dolce vita* (fig. 121). This is an unusual point of view in Australian cinema and an unusual means of depicting the urban space of Melbourne, where characters are mostly depicted closer to walls, framed by a non-identifiable urban background, or standing, small in stature, within the wide shot of a perspectival street view.

In *Il contratto* Mangiamele carefully encloses the characters in human-sized spatial perspectives, avoiding wide shots. He obscures the vanishing points with trees or with the same human figure, thus protecting the image and the spectator from a sense of spatial openness.
The pictorial space in *Il contratto* is therefore a liminal space between memory and reality. It is a space with a transitional quality that moves from the compositional memory of Italian urban space (the shot of Elizabeth Street [fig. 119]). It centres on the neorealist tradition of following and staging the character within the urban space (fig. 120). It later opens up, having experienced ‘new’ wider spaces, to a different way of composing the suburban city-space in the final scenes (fig. 123). The cinematic place changes towards the end of the film. The group of men move to the periphery, where the suburban landscape blends into the countryside. The film’s visual style opens out to embrace the rural spaces and the river. This is a sequence where Mangiamele goes beyond the aesthetic of urban realism towards a more impressionistic point of view (fig. 123). This scene marks a change in the spatial patterning of the film and in the approach of Mangiamele’s filmmaking that will resurface only ten years later in *Clay*, shot in the suburban and rural area around Montsalvat, located in the north-east Melbourne suburb of Elthan.

In the concluding scenes the girl is told, jokingly, she has been left behind (“He is gone, he has left you” they seem to be saying). The woman appears to be lost. She runs away along the river, her gaze framed against the sky. She sees the face of the man superimposed on the river and is about to jump when he reaches her and takes her in his arms. The whole scene moves beyond a realistic representation of place and evokes a sense of existential loss, of an emotional human vacuum. The lack of reference to a tangible urban reality, the superimposition of the character’s face against the sky and the water, suggest a sense of detachment. The iconography of the scene references European art films. The superimposition on the water is reminiscent of images in Jean Vigo’s *L’Atalante* (1934) and Jean Renoir’s *Partie de campagne* (1936), while the focus on the female figure in relation to the environment has an immediate reference to the end of Rossellini’s *Stromboli* (1950).  

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177 Rossellini’s *Stromboli* was released in Melbourne at the Capital Theatre in October 1950 (*Weekly Times*, 27 September 1950, 58).
In directing and acting in the impressionistic river sequence, Mangiamele seems more at ease. It is maybe because, in contrast to the fluidity of this non-urban ending, the city images in Mangiamele’s films communicate a sense of urban frustration and claustrophobia. While the early images of *Il Contratto* often frame the characters within the skyline of the urban fabric (fig. 120), thus suggesting a possible sense of belonging, in *The Spag* and *Ninety-nine Percent*, filmed nine or so years later, the possibility of this kind of identification of the protagonist with the city seems to have been lost. In the closing sequence of *The Spag* (1962) the outcast, played by a young Italian boy, is often represented in isolated spaces (fig. 124, frames 2, 3, 6, 11, 12, 13 and so on), while the other boys, following the iconography of belonging, are visually connected to the houses (fig. 124, frames 1, 5, 9, 10).
The boy is not framed against a clearly identifiable urban background, as the local girls and boys are. He is surrounded by a visually neutral area made up of asphalt, or a neutral space amongst the buildings (fig. 124). Only at the very end, before he is hit by a car, is the boy framed in a very ‘readable’ way against a white wall, with the word ‘Lager’ written on it. For Mangiamele’s troubled characters there seems to be little chance of finding their identity within the landscape of the Melbourne suburb, which constantly de-centers the frame and questions any sense of belonging.

Even in the opening sequence of Ninety-nine Percent (fig. 125), the main character is shown in terms of a lack of identification with the surrounding urban environment. The confrontation between him, the migrant, and a drunk man takes place in a kind of urban void, underlined by the lonely shadows of the two characters, by the detached higher point of view of the camera observing the scene, and by the use of a distorting lens for the close-ups. The cut from wide shots to extreme close-ups exemplifies the distance between people, with very little middle-ground between the observer and observed.

Fig. 125. Opening Sequence (Ninety-nine Percent 1963). DVD screenshot. Giorgio Mangiamele Collection. NFSA and Ronin Film, Canberra, DVD, 2011.
6.2. Robin Boyd, Peter McIntyre and the University Films

A different cinematic representation of Melbourne is proposed by two short films produced through the Melbourne University Architectural Graduates Society: *Mouldies* (1953) and *Your House and Mine* (1954). They were the products of the collaboration between architect and lecturer Robin Boyd and the student of the Faculty of Architecture at the University of Melbourne. Boyd was a prominent Melbourne public figure, essayist and architect. Besides his university commitments he partnered in 1953 with Roy Grounds and Frederick Romberg to constitute one of Melbourne’s most innovative architectural practices. He was the director of the Small House Design Service, an architectural advisory bureau run under the umbrella of the Royal Victorian Institute of Architects (RVIA) in conjunction with *The Age* newspaper. He had published *Victorian Modern: 111 years of modern architecture in Victoria* (1947) and *Australia’s Home: Its Origins, Builders and Occupiers* (1952).

Both films were written by Boyd, directed by the young architect Peter McIntyre and filmed by cinematographer Eric Kerr. These short films share, with the films by Giorgio Mangiamele and Gil Brealey, an urgency in presenting a view of Melbourne that is different from that of the promotional films.

Fig. 126. (*Mouldies* 1953) DVD screenshot. DVD, 2011, Melbourne School of Design, University of Melbourne.

The 7-minute short *Mouldies* is a satirical promotional film for an imaginary cereal brand that mimics dominant representations of Melbourne. What is interesting for the purposes of this study is the way, however briefly, Melbourne is introduced at the beginning. For David Nichols the “film was modelled on (and parodied) the short advertising films which typically sat between the two feature films that made a conventional night out at the movies for Melburnians” (Nichols 2011). The parody showed repeated images of city people at leisure and playing sport: a golf course, a racecourse, a football game, a

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178 The Architectural Graduates Society produced several filmed ‘revues’ in the years between 1953 and 1967. Some, like *The American* (Fitzpatrick 1959), were shot in the streets of Melbourne. Most were filmed on the campus. Other reviews were: *The Formative Years - Don’t send your son either* (Hagg 1960), *Autumns of Morality - Loose Zeus* (Hagg 1961), *A Day in the Life of Robert Beckett* (Wilson, Eggleston, Bastow 1963), *Façade* (Edmond, Hipkins, Ingleton, Jones 1964), *John is an Architecture Student* (Turnbull 1965), *Daydreamer* (Martin 1966), and *Waltzing Matilda* (Martin and Martin 1967).

179 For more information about the cultural background of these university productions see Jacobsen 2006, 109-11.
sailing race, a netball game, all visually detached from references to a specific location or building. These images of leisure and sport are soundtracked by a hyperbolic voice-over commentary satirising the one-sidedness of official discourses about Melbourne. These images of an overly idyllic city (without visible buildings) are then contrasted with a set of images of social discomfort introduced by the words “but in this Australia not all men are comfortable”. The images show lonely men laying exhausted under the sun, or on benches, or on the ground, or pulling carts filled with waste (fig. 119).

![Fig. 127. Lonely figures (Mouldies 1953) DVD screenshot. DVD, 2011, Melbourne School of Design, University of Melbourne.](image)

These kinds of portraits of sadness and loneliness were mostly unseen in Melbourne films in the early 1950s, particularly outside the social circles of the films produced by the Realist Film Society in collaboration with the Brotherhood of St. Laurence.

In Mouldies the dark shapes of these men are filmed in colour and often in sunlight, contrasting with the traditional iconography of the lonely and derelict, who usually appeared up to then, in black and white newsreels and within a gritty urban context. The images of these men in colour gives them an almost hyperreal appearance. This effect would be out of place if it were not exactly the point of the film, playing against the canon of advertising images. Some of the shots are static. The locked off camera position produces the effect of highlighting their loneliness. There is a body on the grass, another lying on a bench, a third asleep on some stairs. Their dark and brown shapes are so evident in the sunlight that their abandoned presence seems, at first, an unrealistic reality turning, later, into something painfully real. The fact that these images are not easily associated with a social realist iconography makes them even more real, as they are not easy to categorise and dismiss.

These men are an incongruous apparition in such a colourful visual context. And these lonely figures of men lost in the city (and in life) also appear in the films of Mangiamele and Brealey. They are among the little seen protagonists of Melbourne’s urban cinema of the 1950s. Their urban loneliness and despair are apparent in Sunday in Melbourne, and return more frequently in the photos of Mark Strizic published in Melbourne a Portrait (1960), and in Mangiamele’s short films, The Spag and Ninety-nine
These images of solitary existence had been largely marginalised from official and institutional cameras.\textsuperscript{180}

In 1954, Boyd, McIntyre and Kerr returned to filmmaking with Your House and Mine. This 23-minute filmed essay on residential architecture was produced with the support of the Architectural Graduates Society of the University of Melbourne and aimed to provide an accurate, if often satirical, account of domestic architecture in Melbourne. This film shows also a reaction against the broad commercial imagery of Melbourne projected by film and advertising. The film stands out as an independent voice at a time when there was very little independent production, and television was yet to arrive.\textsuperscript{181} The project stemmed from Boyd’s writing and teaching on Australian domestic architecture. Boyd had published widely on the subject in his books *Victorian Modern* (1947), *Australia’s Home* (1952) and in ‘Small Home Services’, the weekly column he wrote for *The Age* to help provide affordable house planning. This documentary shot on 16mm can be divided into three parts. The first part is an introduction, giving a brief but insightful historical account of the development of Melbourne’s domestic architecture; this is followed by a main section profiling and satirising the extraordinary variety of architectural styles apparent in the city’s suburban houses; and a final part praising and illustrating the virtues of modern architecture as exemplified by the ‘international style’ endorsed by architects Boyd and McIntyre. The film is uneven in style and tone but insightful in its critical approach to suburban housing and to the debate about domestic architecture in the 1950s. As Nichols notes, “the satire was savage because the belief in international architecture was so strong” (Nichols 2011). It expressed the attitude of a new generation of architects who were convinced that architecture, and modernist architecture, could save the world and, as the young McIntyre writes, “overcome all social evil” (Serle 1996, 105).

*Your House and Mine* is most successful in its critical unveiling of Melbourne’s almost manically eclectic range of architectural styles. Boyd did anticipate the topic in the introduction to *Australia’s Home*:

\begin{quote}
FROM THE EARLY COLONIAL DAYS MOST OF THESE HOUSES WERE DESIGNED BY BUILDERS ON COMMISSION OR ON SPECULATION FOR RENTAL OR SALE; THUS IN DIRECT OR INDIRECT RESPONSE TO THE TASTES OF AUSTRALIAN WOMEN AND THEIR HUSBANDS. THEY WERE BUILT WITHOUT KNOWLEDGE OF ARCHITECTURAL PHILOSOPHIES BUT WITH KEEN ATTENTION TO SUPERFICIAL ARCHITECTURAL FASHION, WHICH THE BUILDERS TRANSLATED WITH LIMITED LANGUAGE OF HEREDITARY CARPENTRY AND BRICKLAYING PRACTICES. (BOYD 1952, 1)
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{180} The problem of alcoholism is dealt with directly in *Goal does not Cure: The case of the chronic alcoholic* (Fitzsimons 1946) (see Chapter Five); while in some promotional films the solitary and dark figure of a lonely man seems to surface as a peripheral character.

\textsuperscript{181} Australian television did not guarantee independent voices either. Despite its qualities, *Your House and Mine* was later judged stylistically unfit to be shown on the ABC, but it did screen on the American Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) (Nichols 2011).
But if one looks carefully at the way the film is made, it is also possible to note a certain eclecticism in its style. The film moves from the more traditional pace of the historically focused introduction, to a closer and faster montage of portraits of houses in the main central part. The city is initially represented with naturalistic views of people in parks and in moments of leisure, counterpointed with shots of modern and older buildings. People and buildings are rarely in the same picture. When they do overlap in the same image, the architecture is very consciously present, while people appear as small figures entering or leaving much larger buildings. This element has a compositional analogy with promotional films and with most films shot in Melbourne where the human figure is rarely combined with the urban setting and, when it is, is mostly dominated by its imposing structure.

*Your House and Mine* is in essence an architectural film essay about the state of Melbourne’s residential housing. Residential houses are the main subject. They are shown mostly with a single shot for each house, lasting just a few seconds, showing a frontal or detailed view. The sequence conveys the effect of flipping through an illustrated book. This section of the film lacks a ‘lived’ perspective, aside from a few shots of construction workers. There are very few people in it, thus partly reinforcing the discourse about the visual separation occurring in Melbourne cinema between people and urban settings.

From the university film reviews came also Colin Munro and Barry Humphries’ brilliantly surreal *Le Bain Vorace (Dial P for Plughole)* (Munro 1954). The short presents an early post-war narrative example of coherent fictional mise-en-scène of the city inner urban settings. While *Il Contratto*, is the first narrative film to build a successful suburban city setting in the 1950s, *Le Bain Vorace (Dial P for Plughole)* is the first capable of proposing a successful fictional mise-en-scène of inner Melbourne. The film creates a surreal urban location with few well-constructed outdoor scenes. A man appears from a misty road, next to a park; other men walk furtively along a brick alley; then a shot of a Victorian industrial lane lit from above with no escape; then an anonymous city road with two telephone boxes; a man crosses a decentred Princes Bridge; finally, the Yarra Rowing Club, along the river introduces the last scene, leading to the bathroom and the bathtub. Each location is characterised by a diffuse winter light, the photographic mise en scéne of the urban spaces achieves a surreal ghostly feeling, isolating the spaces in what appears like a ‘fog’ made of light which hides as much as it is reveals. In these images the urban space of Melbourne gains a fictional Victorian identity, more mysterious and phantasmal than the representations of Melbourne seen in travelogues.

6.3. **Gil Brealey**

Of the Melbourne filmmakers of the 1950s, Gil Brealey was probably the first to look at the city (in 1954) with a modern, personal and intimate point of view. His ‘Melbourne’ filmography is limited to titles he directed between the ages of 22 and 26 years: *Late Winter to Early Spring* (1954), *The Greatest Game on
Earth (1956), Sunday in Melbourne (1958, with Paul Olsen) and A Queen Who Returned (1958), all important for defining new aspects of the city’s identity on film182. None of his films are easy to classify. They shift from fictional poetry (Late Winter to Early Spring), to sports fiction (The Greatest Game on Earth) to a collaborative film on urbanism and solitude (Sunday in Melbourne), to a documentary on royalty in Melbourne, A Queen who Returned (1958), featuring an opening statement about the new modernity of the city.

Brealey entered the University of Melbourne in the early 1950s when the film lending system was becoming increasingly popular, and joined the Melbourne University Film Society (MUFS), which had been established in 1948183. Brealey’s Melbourne productions and their circulation are directly linked to this context, which brings together university film circles, state libraries, MUFS and the new Melbourne Film Festival launched in Olinda in 1952. Compared to other documentary filmmakers of the 1940s and 1950s, including Mangiamele, Brealey represented a new cultural character, formed in the intellectual crucible of university film circles. He was also culturally close to the world of the university film review, like Boyd, McIntyre, Munro and Humphries, Brealey used the cinematographer Eric Kerr to shoot his early films. Support came also from other students such as the actor/architect Amos Raport, who appeared in Late Winter to Early Spring (see Jacobsen 2006, 109). A young and talented university student, Brealey was able to obtain funding from the State Film Centre of Victoria for his films, which were then screened at the Melbourne Film Festival.

Late Winter to Early Spring (1954-7) is a poetic venture filmed in black and white in the Fitzroy Gardens. It gives new attention to the minimalist variation of light and human gesture, seeking to chronicle the change of season one afternoon in the park. This degree of sensibility towards light and urban nature was new to cinematic representations of Melbourne. In the short film, people arrive and depart. A boy with his nurse, two couples, a businessman, all occasionally glance at each other while the park moves from the rain of winter to the shining blooming flowers of spring. The title, Late Winter to Early Spring, conveys a desire to locate nature within the city. The film is attentive to the passing of time

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182 Gilbert Brealey would move to a position as producer within Film Australia, becoming the head of the South Australian Film Corporation (SAFC).

183 The Melbourne University Film Society (MUFS) is one of the oldest and largest film societies in Australia, still operative today in the city under the name of the Melbourne Cinémathèque. Brealey also made films for MUFS, such as the satire Say Bow Wow (1964)
and the seasons, and to changes in weather patterns; the movement of clouds reflected in a pool of water in the park, or the sun shining through the trees. The film is influenced by city symphony films and more precisely by the works of Arne Sucksdorff such as Rhythm of a City (1948)\textsuperscript{184}.

*Late Winter to Early Spring* does not immediately show Melbourne in a recognisable fashion. And this way of ‘unseeing’ the city, of purposely ignoring its best known urban features to produce a less identifiable portrait is a common characteristic of almost all these films. The city representation shifts between here and elsewhere, between a place that may be Melbourne, or may be other cities, other places. The built environment is perceived as an elusive presence from within the neutral space of the park. No modern buildings can be seen either outside the park or from within it. Only the top of the spires of St. Patrick’s Cathedral, which appear as darker shadows above the tops of the trees, remind us of the buildings surrounding the park. The settings may appear similar to the second part of *Melbourne Today*, which showed people inhabiting a park, a green area, while excluding the urban environment. Yet here the city is fully ‘outperformed’ by the park and its inhabitants. The park and the people within it are the main characters. There is no nostalgia for the village city, no idealisation of the park, and no direct contrast with the industrialised city. At the centre is the existential melancholy of the camera’s gaze. The identity of this transitional cinematic place works across time (the change of season), and across space (the urban ambivalence of Fitzroy Gardens; both inside the city and liminal to the built-up area).

In 1958 Brealey directed *A Queen Who Returned* (1958) and formed, with Paul Olsen, the Melbourne Repertory Film Unit, co-producing with the State Film Centre the subsequent *Sunday in Melbourne*. This time it was the city centre itself that was under visual scrutiny and the two films can be regarded as showing two sides of the same city: the present-future and the present-past.

*A Queen Who Returned* is an official account of the visit of the Queen Mother to Melbourne in February and March 1958. The 28-minute film “about a city, its people and the Queen who visits them” opens with an ‘impressionist study’ of modern Melbourne. The visit of the Queen Mother is introduced by images of people at work on modern construction sites (fig. 122). For Jacobsen, this is perhaps

\[\text{the film that most overtly celebrates the advent of high-rise architecture, with its connotations of urban renewal and a newly found civic energy that was revitalizing the city of moribund tradition (Jacobsen 2006, 73)}\]

Brealey’s film intentionally introduces the history of Melbourne with conventional imagery before the commentary declares it is time for a change:

\[\text{Now it is our turn. New men, new faces, new equipment, but still with plans and still with courage and vision. // We are building a new city, a new Melbourne. A city of glass and steel and concrete.}\]

\textsuperscript{184} The film also became popular because it won an Academy Award for Best Short Subject, One-reel in 1949. Indeed, Sucksdorff’s films have a significant place in the State Film Centre catalogue which holds eleven of his films produced before 1953.
The film provides rare views of contemporary architecture in Melbourne (buildings that early the next year would be excluded from Stanley Kramer’s ‘anti-modern’ *On the Beach*). We are shown the relatively small but significant Gilbert Court at 100 Collins Street (1954-55), “the first high-rise glass-box in the city and one of the earliest in Australia” (Goad 2009, 156), and the ICI House in construction (1955-1958). This building was the first to be constructed after the ban on high-rise buildings (132ft/40m) was lifted, a policy that had protected the skyline dominated by church spires for 40 years. Other modern buildings featured in the introduction are the ANZ Building and the Allans Building (1956-57).

![Image](image.jpg)

Fig. 129. An iconic shot (*A Queen Who Returned* 1958). 16mm film screen photo. Australian Mediatheque, ACMI, Melbourne, acc.no: 308662.

The film therefore clearly sets the popular ‘village-image’ in contrast with the new modern image, showing the slow but steady construction of more and more buildings that would ‘intrude’ on the “village” skyline. For Jacobsen

> the historical narrative that is presented in the film is one that contrasts two eras of the city’s history, both marked by a civic energy that found expression in a building construction boom. (2006, 73)

*Sunday in Melbourne* is another significant cinematic essay which gained a ‘special award for experimental film’ from the jury of the 1958 Melbourne Film Festival (MFF). The short was described in the 1958 MFF catalogue as ‘an experiment in the creative use of colour visuals, natural sound and dialogue commentary, the film shows the loneliness of the aimless wanderers in the city streets contrasted with those who have companionship in their Sunday’¹. The film sets up a contrast between the city’s deserted urban spaces and its ‘aimless wanderers’ (fig. 126) and the social life of the parks and gardens, populated mostly by new migrant families. The film is also important because it depicts traditional Melbourne and its representation in a moment of change. In 1958 it captures a period in the city’s history when the central grid was turned into an almost lifeless desert on Sundays in a shift from residential to

¹ The base of the building would be used as background for the opening sequence of *Homicide*, one of Melbourne’s most important television series, created by Crawford Productions in 1964.

working area. The city centre was emptied by the progressive move towards better housing in the suburbs, fostered by the popularity of cars and public transport (Lewis 1995, 128). The grid had become the main working district for the large majority of office workers. Flinders Street Railway Station was processing thousands of commuters in the morning and re-absorbing them in the afternoon. In a slow tide, common to many post-industrialised cities, the city centre was progressively made vacant by workers. As Rybczynski has written, describing *The New Downtown*,

*personal mobility molded American cities and towns in a way that was impossible to imagine in Europe. Not only was car ownership higher, but American physical mobility was combined with a high degree of social mobility and the space to exploit the advantages of rapid, easy movement. Only in Canada, New Zealand and Australia were these conditions duplicated, and it is no accident that urbanism in those countries took a similar course.* (Rybczynski 1995, 202)

Fig. 130. Empty Streets, opening images (*Sunday in Melbourne* 1958).
Tv Screen Photo. Australian Mediatheque, ACMI, Melbourne, acc.no: 010431.

Fig. 131. Closed shops in (*Sunday in Melbourne* 1958).
Tv Screen Photo. Australian Mediatheque, ACMI, Melbourne, acc.no. 010431.

In the tradition of the city symphony film, *Sunday in Melbourne* is structured around the theme of ‘a day in the life of the city’, from dawn to sunset. Here instead of a symphonic soundtrack, Melbourne’s portrait is leavened with jazz, and a musical score that remains sombre and melancholic. The film contains a concentration of iconographic tropes that represent the ‘non-promotional’ Melbourne and it stands as an important realistic reference to life in the city in the 1950s.

*Sunday in Melbourne* opens with images of streets that are mostly empty or depopulated. The shops are closed and the urban space is occasionally traversed by solitary figures. The camera composes

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187 Here *Sunday in Melbourne* has a pace and tone mostly different from other ‘white’ American city-films using jazz music in the 1950s, such as the accelerated rhythm of D.A. Pennebaker’s *Daybreak Express* (1953), set in New York City and based on the homonymous piece by Duke Ellington.
balanced frames of deserted urban exteriors. Kerr, the cinematographer, frames the street by decentring its axes, and by enclosing and reducing the scale of the urban spaces. What stands out in these early Sunday images is the ‘grittiness’ of the urban fabric. Shops and streets are not as attractive now that they are closed or deserted. The harsh morning light underlines every detail. Brealey and Olsen expose the inhospitality of these closed shop doors (fig. 127), combining them with images of impotent shoppers, forced to stand and look at the closed shop windows (fig. 128). As the hours of the day pass by, *Sunday in Melbourne* moves towards more social areas such as parks and riverbanks. Here, where the city’s buildings are less present, there are more people. Couples and families, mostly migrants, gather to stroll, chat and take the boat. On a different side of the city a group of jazz musicians plays to a young audience. With the arrival of evening there is only enough time to listen to a man preaching on the street. From morning to night the film charters the deserted city streets, the populated gardens and the crowded interiors of pubs.

Fig. 132. No shopping day (*Sunday in Melbourne* 1958).
Tv Screen Photo. Australian Mediatheque, ACMI, Melbourne, acc.no: 010431

Danks warns against the ways that the 1950s has been commonly caricatured:

*Melbourne of this period is often seen as backward, isolated, and behind the times. A superficial view given some credence by such institutions as the “six o’clock swill”, the kind of piousness and religiosity captured and critiqued in a film like *Sunday in Melbourne* (Danks 1999, 178)*

Nonetheless the portrayal of the ‘emptiness’ of the urban centre is still one of the film’s most noticeable traits for the contemporary spectator. In one of the few available commentaries, Jake Wilson writes in *The Age*: “*Sunday in Melbourne* might be the first film to treat the city as a non-place defined by its absences - a year before *On the Beach* (1959)”, and compares the city in the film to T. S. Eliot’s ‘wasteland’ “a shattered city, with shattered men” (Wilson 2011). This judgement appears to be only partially correct. As has been shown in the previous chapters, Melbourne’s tendency to appear as a ‘non-place’ is part of its iconographic history. It is true, nevertheless, that *Sunday in Melbourne* focuses, at the beginning, on ‘wasted’ Melbourne inner city streets, revealing a reality which usually goes unnoticed in the crowded streets of the weekdays.
The film almost offers a compendium of urban absence. In the compositions people and buildings rarely inhabit the same frame. Social gatherings mostly take place in the park, in the pub or at music venues, while the image of the road is seldom dominated by a human character. In describing the visual character of Sunday in Melbourne, it is useful to compare it to one of its main references: Rhythm of a City. The Melbourne film borrows details from Rhythm of a City, such as the long black shadows of people crossing the street, or legs walking on the sidewalk, but differs in the way people and city are portrayed. Sucksdorff often places the bodies and faces of the characters at the centre of the composition, in a prominent but unnatural, theatrical position (fig. 133). Brealey, Olsen and Kerr on the other hand mostly avoid close-ups of people within urban settings. They prefer to film people using a full figure shot or a wide shot. These shots appear more realistic than in the Swedish films, and in general people are diminished rather than enhanced by the composition. Moreover, these shots are mostly bi-dimensional, setting people against a surface. As it is possible to see from the selected frame enlargements (figs. 130, 131 and 132), the human figure is composed against flattened spaces (fig. 132). In the few cases when the larger space of a street is introduced, the lack of intermediate human figures reduces the spatial depth (fig. 130). On other occasions, human figures are posited in a way that obstructs the perspective’s vanishing points, once more flattening the composition, rather than enhancing it (fig. 131). Sunday in Melbourne is, therefore, extremely significant in coherently summarising the way Melbourne has found alternative ways to represent its city spaces and characters. For the first time a local celebratory and identity-making film about Melbourne is entirely focused on a different type of city character and shows the city spaces in a different timeframe. Unfortunately, this kind of novelty has not been matched by an equal critical interest as both the film and its authors lack a specific study.

To conclude, it is worth remembering that the migrants filmed in the park in the film will be the new inhabitants of some of those empty spaces. In the 1960s and 1970s migrants and students moved to large sections of the inner-city suburbs left vacant by the middle class. This unprecedented shift transformed and reactivated suburbs like Carlton, Fitzroy, Collingwood thanks to the arrival of a new community of outsiders. As Howe, Davison and Nichols comment “if the inner suburbs eventually became ‘trendy’ it was because the outsiders increasingly became insiders” (Howe, Davison and Nichols 2013, 9).

Fig. 133. Rhythm of a City (left) and (centre and right) (Sunday in Melbourne 1958). TV Screen Photo. Australian Mediatheque, ACMI, Melbourne, acc.no: 010431.
6.4.  *On the Beach* and Melbourne’s Fictional Image

This US film is an adaptation of the 1957 novel written by British-Australian author Nevil Shute. Shute migrated to Australia in 1950. The best-selling book was set in Melbourne, the ‘ultimate’ southern city, the last city on earth to be reached by the radioactive cloud from a nuclear explosion. The story recounts the last days of the condemned Australian community.

6.4.1.  Looking back at fictional films of Melbourne

To capture the importance of *On the Beach* to cinematic representations of Melbourne, it is necessary to step back for a moment and look back briefly at fifty years of representation of the urban space of Melbourne in fictional cinema. From *The Story of the Kelly Gang* in 1906, the first feature film shot in Melbourne and in Australia, to *On the Beach* in 1959, it is difficult not to notice that the continued absence of images of the local urban space constitutes a characteristic trait. The perception of this absence is connected both to a ‘quantitative’ limited availability of urban images, and to a ‘qualitative’ iconic lack. This means that there are few images of the urban spaces of Melbourne in fiction films, and that even where they do exist, these images are neither very specific nor memorable. Confirming a trend registered in non-fiction films, the fictional representations of Melbourne can mostly be identified with private rooms, internal public spaces, parks, gardens or unbuilt environments, and with non-identifiable external public places. Characters are rarely seen in combination with iconic and well-identified external public places. This is a trend which continues to this day. Even films declaring the specificity of their settings limit their representation to a view, a series of brief shots, often confined in the opening sequences.

This phenomenon is only partially justified by the long gap in feature film production local to Melbourne. When, from the years 1906 until the early 1930s, a Melbourne film industry was still in place, films were mostly shot indoors. Both period films and contemporary stories, often set overseas, barely portrayed public spaces (Jacobsen 2006, 57). An example, in this sense is the work of Melbourne film director and playwright William Joseph Lincoln who directed 23 feature films in the city between 1910 and 1916, of which only one, *The Sick Stockrider* (Lincoln 1913), is known to have survived. Lincoln is

188 Lincoln’s filmography as film director includes: *Moonlite* (1910) based on his play *Captain Moonlite*; *Captain Midnight, the Bush King* (1911) based on his play; *It Is Never Too Late to Mend* (1911) based on his stage adaptation of the novel; *The Mystery of a Hansom Cab* (1911); *The Luck of Roaring Camp* (1911); *Called Back* (1911); *The Lost Chord* (1911); *The Bells* (1911) based on his stage adaptation of the play; *The Double Event* (1911); *After Sundown* (1911); *Breaking the News* (1912); *Rip Van Winkle* (1912); *The Sick Stockrider* (1913); *Moondyne* (1913); *The Remittance Man* (1913); *Transported* (1913); *The Road to Ruin* (1913); *The Crisis* (1913); *The Reprieve* (1913); *The Wreck* (1913); *The Life’s Romance of Adam Lindsay Gordon* (1916); *Nurse Cavell* (1916); and *La Revanche* (1916) (source Pike and Cooper 1998, 1-66).
a Melbourne director deserving a further study. Given the impossibility to access images of urban space of its most significant films, Lincoln will be here only briefly mentioned. Most of his films are reported to have been indoor ‘photo-dramas’ where the city was not cast as a character, or as a lived setting. Only on a very few occasions is Lincoln reported to have filmed in external Melbourne settings (Shirley and Adams 1989, 42).

The main feature film of this period reported to screen significant scenes of Melbourne’s urban life is Lincoln’s *The Mystery of a Hansom Cab* (“the first Australian feature to use a predominantly urban background” (Shirley and Adams 1989, 41). It was produced in 1911 by the Tait brothers and filmed by Orrie Perry, assisted by Johnson and Gibson. The people behind *The Mystery of a Hansom Cab* were the same group that put Melbourne on screen between 1905 and 1910. The cinematographer Orrie Perry was the son of Joseph Perry who ran the Limelight Department film unit. Johnson and Gibson and the Tait brothers formed Amalgamated Pictures, a Melbourne company created in March 1911, for the release of *The Mystery of a Hansom Cab*. The company merged the following year with West Pictures, which became part of Spencer Pictures, to create the General Film Company of Australasia. With the disappearance of Amalgamated Pictures from Melbourne, Lincoln created his own company, Lincoln-Cass Production, with actor Godfrey Cass in July 1913, taking over the St. Kilda studio lease (Bertrand 2010, 71). They produced eight films in 1913 but the enterprise failed, partially due to Lincoln’s problem with alcohol. Lincoln will self-produced two more films in 1916 and die in 1917 (Pike and Cooper 1998, 12).

The 1911 version of *The Mystery of a Hansom Cab* has left no visual record of its filmed settings. No footage or still photos from the film’s urban settings seem to have survived. The little information we have is sourced from newspapers of the time. Pike and Cooper write that the staging of the main steps leading to the solution of the crime was set in Melbourne’s popular landmarks including the Oriental Hotel, the Melbourne Hotel, the St. Kilda Esplanade, the Melbourne Gaol and several known Melbourne houses (Pike and Cooper 1998, 14). The narrative structure of the film (“stirring episodes of the story”) and the locations are listed in an advertisement published on the Brisbane magazine Truth (April 9th, 1911, 7):

The list of some the locations (Gunsler’s Café, Collins Street; Frettleby’s Mansion, St. Kilda; Possum Villa, Grey Street, St. Kilda; The Orient Hotel, Bourke Street; The Melbourne Club, Collins Street; Austral Hotel, Bourke Street; The Esplanade, St, Kilda) in connection with the name of specific streets suggests at least an opening location shot or a view. In other cases, the mention of name of the location alone (Reems Street, East Melbourne; The Cab Stand; Scots Church; Drive to St. Kilda and the Fatal Drive; Little Bourk Streets) suggest longer scenes shot consistently in the street.

A review, appearing in the Melbourne Argus on March 6th 1911, the day after the opening, add some information on the way some scenes were filmed. The article reports that

with the exception of one country scene, the location is Melbourne’s main thoroughfares, clubs, hotels and lodging houses, the fine avenue of St Kilda Road, and the seaside suburb of St Kilda. The familiar streets and buildings were welcomed with applause by a crowded audience in the Glaciarium on Saturday evening, when the drama was presented as the chief item. The picture took over an hour to throw on the screen, but the keen interest of the audience was held throughout. A noteworthy point was the realistic manner in which the drive of the cab from Scots Church, Collins street to the St Kilda Esplanade and the chloroforming of the drunken Whyte in the cab by Moreland was shown. Other well-acted scenes were the opening episode at Gunsler’s Café and the meeting of Frettleby and Rosanna Moore, the slum abode of Rosanna’s mother and the appearance of Moreland at Frettleby’s home to blackmail him. The film was explained by Mr Herbert Leigh in a descriptive lecture. (The Argus, March 6th 1911, page 9)

The city settings in The Mystery of a Hansom Cab are one of few exceptions in Lincoln’s filmography, which is devoted mainly to ‘theatre’ pieces shot in studios. Urban settings have been detected in The Double Event (Lincoln 1911, [lost film]) filmed that same year by Arthur Higgins, which supposedly contained a few scenes located at the Flemington Racecourse and in the city (Pike and Cooper 1998, 27). Breaking the News (Lincoln 1912, [lost film]) contained a scene shot at the Melbourne Stock Exchange (Pike and Cooper 1998, 32). The Road to Ruin (Lincoln 1913, [lost film]), a story of financial decline with few identifiable locations, was reported to be “a panoramic picture story of Melbourne views, embracing The National Bank, The Vienna Cafe, Collins Street East, Stewart Downer’s corner, The Princess Theatre, the Prince of Wales Hotel, St. Kilda, the Caulfield racecourse, the Athenaeum club” (The Cairns Post, 16 Jul 1915, p. 4).

6.4.2. Sydney and Melbourne in early fiction

Cinematic images of Melbourne’s streets are said to appear in a few films from this period. If the Huns Came to Melbourne (Coates 1916, [lost film]) contained a few scenes shot around Albert Park where the studio was located. The Hayseeds’ Melbourne Cup (Smith 1917), fourth film of the Hayseeds
series, was shot entirely in Melbourne and opened on January 18th (Pike and Cooper 1998, 74). More street images are reported in Jewelled Nights (Lovely and Welch 1925), in The Man Who Forgot (Harwood 1927), and in Caught in the Net (Marshall 1928).

The lack of reference to the city in surviving stills and film reviews suggests that there were, at best, only a limited number of ‘location’-derived shots. In the surviving The Far Paradise (McDonagh 1928) the opening images of Melbourne are used to introduce the Southern capital of ‘Kirkton’, which is later also represented with images of Sydney. The film initially portrays Melbourne, shot from an unusually high viewpoint and later re-locates to Drummoyne in Sydney and to the Blue Mountains. This is another example of the use of the urban space of Melbourne as ‘any town’. For Jacobsen “Not only does McDonagh erase the identity of Melbourne by renaming it, she also helps to erase the visual qualities of the city (in kind) by filming it from an unusual vantage point and then making it evaporate and appear superfluous to the narrative by shooting the rest of the film in Sydney interiors or on location in the Blue Mountains (Paradise Valley)” (Jacobsen 2006, 59).

The trend of minimising city locations in fictional Australian stories was, and would be, a common practice in subsequent film and television productions (O’Regan 1996, 266). One of the reasons is the rivalry between the cities, and the possible ‘resistance’ of early urban Australian audiences to watching a film set in an Australian city that was not their own. Pike and Cooper report that for Townies and Hayseeds (Smith 1923), the sequel to Hayseeds Come to Sydney (Smith 1917), director and producer Beaumont Smith edited an official version with Sydney locations. But for the Melbourne release, “Smith reconstructed the film, replacing Sydney references with Melbourne equivalents. New scenes were shot only a few days before the Melbourne opening at the Melba Theatre” (1998, 118). Fifteen years later, Ken G. Hall, director of Dad and Dave Come to Town (Hall 1938), “moved the main location of the plot to a bustling modern city (unnamed to avoid Sydney-Melbourne rivalries)” (1998, 183).

Despite this general ‘non-specific’ trend in popular films and television it is worth remembering that Sydney’s streetscapes, more than Melbourne’s, have a significant and specific fictional filmography that began with early cinema. This is exemplified in films such as The Enemy Within (Stavely and Barrett 1917) shot in the Domain area, and Longford’s The Sentimental Bloke (Longford 1919), which transposed a fundamental Melbourne story to Woolloomooloo in Sydney, with plenty of street shots. The same Woolloomooloo area returns in Sunshine Sally (Harris 1922) and The Dinkum Bloke (Longford 1923).

189 The Hayseeds was a series of popular films directed by Beaumont Smith including Our Friends, the Hayseed (1917), The Hayseeds Come to Sydney (aka The Hayseeds Come to Town) (1917), The Hayseeds’ Back-blocks Show (1917), The Hayseeds’ Melbourne Cup (1917), and later Townies and Hayseeds (1923), Prehistoric Hayseeds (1923), and The Hayseeds (1933).

190 Only a few indoor scenes remain of this film (Jacobsen 2006, 59), which is mostly set and partly shot in Tasmania.

both quite popular films (Pike and Cooper 1998, 114-5). Finally, The Kid Stakes (Ordell 1927) was another film set in Woolloomooloo and Potts Point, telling stories of street children in the area. Suburban stories of resourceful children in poor suburbs are absent from Melbourne’s filmography; there is no equivalent other than the post-war films produced by the Brotherhood of St. Laurence and by the Realist Film Unit, which were made under different circumstances. Sydney has remained the most frequently represented city in Australia, not only for the number of films made in the city, but particularly for the iconicity of its views. Sydney is often introduced through the Harbour Bridge (Summer of the Seventeenth Doll [Norman 1959]), or feature a stronger and more iconic representation of Sydney, as in The Siege of Pinchgut (Watt 1959). This film, as Jacobsen has observed, points at Sydney’s more engaged attitude towards the representation of modernity “presented as an active potentially explosive force that threatens to tear whole suburbs apart” (Jacobsen 2006, 94).

The relationship between Sydney and Melbourne in fictional films remains complex. Often it was not just a case of mere rivalry but of a necessary cooperation, since Sydney had better studios and facilities, while some of the stories were set in Melbourne. Danks - considering the changed Sydney setting of Melbourne stories such as The Sentimental Bloke (Longford 1919) and Summer of the Seventeenth Doll (Norman 1959) - saw an “on-going process of transferring iconic, identifiable and essentially Melbourne stories to Sydney; illustrating a preference for the more familiar, physical, and picturesque aspects of Sydney’s cityscape, landscape, harbour and weather.” (Danks 1999). In 1924, the Tasmanian actor and director Arthur Shirley “formed a production syndicate in Melbourne”, and with the funding from a group of Melbourne businessmen acquired the screen rights to Fergus Hume’s novel The Mystery of a Hansom Cab (Shirley 1925). Shooting began in 1924 with exterior locations shot in Melbourne and interiors in Sydney, at the Rushcutters Bay Studio (Pike and Cooper 1998, 125). Another ambivalent Sydney-Melbourne relationship is to be found in those films featuring the Melbourne Cup Carnival in their storyline. Frequently, the locations for the race were shot in Melbourne at the Flemington Racecourse and the rest of the film was shot in Sydney. Cinesound’s Thoroughbred (Ken Hall, 1936) limited most of the city views to the Flemington Racecourse, filmed for the first time in Australia using rear-projection (Danks 2012b, 16). In this film set in Melbourne, the city centre is only briefly visible in a transitional shot when a tram is shown moving along Swanston Street. More spectacular city views, favourable government policies and better facilities coalesced in making Sydney more visible than Melbourne.

By the 1950s making a feature film in Melbourne had become a daunting affair due to the lack of studios, distribution, government funding and even audience support. The likelihood of getting a small budget film produced in Melbourne was so against the grain that it became news when it happened. A new film production, Night Club (Harwood, 1952), was announced by The Age under the headline: “First Australian feature-length film produced in Melbourne since 1934 has been completed” (The Age 25.10.1952, 14). Despite a somewhat illustrious cinematic past (see, for example, ‘St. Kilda Studios’), the
city lacked adequate film facilities. The label ‘produced in Melbourne’ meant that the film was shot inside the suburban Park Orchards Cabaret, near Ringwood. Additional shooting was done at a country club, at the races and interspersed with a few shots of neon-signs from the quiet Melbourne night. Even imagining Melbourne in a feature film was difficult at the time. The Australian film spectator was mostly used to rural settings in local films. Other articles about Night Club commented on how surprising it was in 1952 to have an Australian film story without “cattle, dust, desert tracks or extravagant local characters” (The Argus 1.7.1952, 3). A similar comment on the lack of rural character was humorously echoed by Adelaide’s The Mail (“Wot, No Cattle!”) reporting from Melbourne that “An Australian feature film without cattle, drought, kangaroos or natives is to be made here” (Saturday 12 July 1952, p. 7). The film had a limited release, mainly in Victoria, and did not have much success at the box office (Pike and Cooper 1998, 271). Moreover, although the press review identified Night Club as ‘Made in Melbourne’ (The Age ran the title “Melbourne-Made Film Full of Laughs” 1.7.1952, 3), it showed no definite markers of location. In Night Club, Melbourne is, once more, introduced as an anonymous modern city and not as an identifiable place.

In conclusion, before On the Beach there were very few occasions in which the city appeared in feature films and none foregrounded the city’s urban space or made it an important part of the story, as was often the case with Sydney. The only probable exception is The Mystery of the Hansom Cab, which has unfortunately not survived in either of its two versions. Until the 1950s the fictional cinematic image of Melbourne was made up of ambivalent fragments, seldom even full scenes. This ambivalence seems to point to the fact that the city appears briefly as long as the view does not draw attention to itself. The ‘privacy’ of this image is not easy to explain, even though it seems to be an element linked to the same object of representation, the city itself.

6.5. Melbourne in On the Beach

Perhaps what is most revealing in a film like “On the Beach” is less what it does represent than what it doesn’t. (Danks 1999, 182)

The portrayal of Melbourne in On the Beach deserves attention, as this is the first fictional sound film to engage with the city’s urban space as a whole. It is also the first occasion in which the city becomes a dominant character in terms of location. As Danks put it, “there are virtually no feature films made in Melbourne or which represent Melbourne during this period and the curious, ironic though strikingly identifiable images of Melbourne in On the Beach are pretty much all we have” (1999, 175). For Broderick, the film ushers in a series of antipodean films dealing with ‘nuclearism’ (Broderick 2016).
In the film Melbourne is the last living city, following a nuclear conflict that will ultimately destroy all life on earth. An American submarine reaches Melbourne and the story follows the local community’s last days of survival. In setting a future ‘1964’ Melbourne in the city of 1959, the American film surprisingly downplays the modern and modernist aspects of the city to concentrate on a more traditional and provincial view of Melbourne. As Danks has commented the film “uses the largely Victorian edifices of Melbourne’s staid, one could say ruined, architecture to plot a blandly ‘distinctive’ sense of place and backwardness.” (Danks 1999, 179). While respectful of Melbourne and of its topographical locations, On the Beach channels the perception of the Australian city though the image of a reassuring ‘any city’, referencing previous cinematic representations of north American small towns, as well as revisiting the established ‘village image’. As Danks has pointed out “the reliance upon Victorian-style architecture, its decay and its signifactory capabilities, is a key factor in many representations of Melbourne’s cityscapes as time-coded anywheres”(1999, 181).

Melbourne in On the Beach is therefore ‘visible’ through many of its most popular and traditional views: Elizabeth Street, Swanston Street, Lonsdale Street, Bourke Street, Flinders Street Station, and Williamstown (with many key older buildings appearing in the film); the port, the beaches and the suburban roads. But the impression is that the city is also somewhat absent as “Melbourne emerges as less a set of buildings and random spaces than as an ‘idea’, a collection of spatial and temporal phenomena that never quite congeal into something totally solid” (Danks 1999, 174). Most of these non-iconic locations, lacking in themselves a distinctive architectural character, are delivered through an iconic mise-en-scène. The result is that most representations of locations in Melbourne, despite being constructed as ‘spectacular and iconic’ actually still tend to appear as flat or less than iconic. For Danks, a long-time Melbourne resident, the ‘flatness’ is due to the fact that the film is not able to get ‘deep enough’ into the history of the city:

The sites of On the Beach are treated as little more than facades, and there is no attempt to encounter their representational, functional or everyday histories. In fact the film has little interest in the history of Melbourne and treats it rather vaguely as a city with some kind of heritage but devoid of much specificity (1999, 181).

Jacobsen is of a different opinion and suggests that “the images have an undoubted specificity” (2006, 88), as the story of the film portrays Melbourne as an anti-modern Victorian city confronting the arrival of modernity:

If one reinterprets the ‘nuclear cloud’ that is descending on Melbourne as an allegorical device in which the radiation is a miasmic modernity, rather than exclusively a by-product of a mutually destructive war, the Melbourne that is represented becomes a city about to be transformed, not through the population being wiped out, but through a social, cultural and architectural revolution heralded by the advance of an all-conquering modernity. (Jacobsen 2006, 89)
It is a fascinating but, I think, implausible interpretation. Melbourne is, indeed, represented as a ‘village’ but the nuclear cloud is not the architectonical future but an anxiety coming from the recent past.

6.5.1. On the Beach: Shot Design as Cultural Viewpoint

The American film offers a ‘foreign’ point of view of Melbourne as a peripheral city, while also being “partly, though somewhat subconsciously, about the joke of Melbourne and its cosmopolitan and metropolitan pretensions” (Danks 1999, 174). To underline the differences between ‘international’ and local viewpoints in the representation of Melbourne I will analyse the specific creation of cinematic place in the mise-en-scène of several key scenes of On the Beach. These occur towards the opening of the film with the ‘crane shot’ of Elizabeth Street; the ‘walk and talk’ scene with Moira (Ava Gardner) and Dwight (Gregory Peck) on Swanston Street; the ensuing scene of Moira in front of Flinders Street Station; and the scenes of a deserted San Francisco linked to the closing scene showing a deserted Melbourne. The analysis of these fictional scenes will help to better define the construction of the cinematic identity of place in Melbourne, which shifts between a foreign or external, and a local point of view. Analysis of the composition and the design of the shots will help clarify the relation between local and international modes of representing Melbourne. As David Bordwell has shown, the style and design of the shot define, within a film, a specific cultural point of view (Bordwell 1997, 2006).

6.5.2. The ‘Crane Shot’

The film opens with the US submarine Scorpion emerging from the ocean. The spectator enters the story with the American crew of the submarine and its captain Dwight Towers (Gregory Peck). Then the film cuts to the family home of young Lieutenant-Commander Peter Holmes (Anthony Perkins) of the Royal Australian Navy and his wife (Donna Anderson) with their newborn child. In the film Melbourne is introduced verbally with the last lines of Donna’s dialogue (“if you’re going to be in Melbourne by 11:00, you’d better hurry”). This is the first of three times the name of Melbourne is mentioned. The ensuing scene in the film shows Holmes arriving by tram at the Royal Australian Navy’s Headquarters in the inner city. The original scene in the book does not contain specific descriptions or references to Melbourne, thus producing an indistinct urban space to be filled in by the reader’s imagination with images of Melbourne or of other cities:

He got to the city in about an hour and went out of the station to get upon the tram. It rattled unobstructed through streets innocent of other vehicles and took him quickly to the motor dealing district. Most of the shops here were closed or taken over by the few that

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192 Within this study the ‘international foreign’ point of view of Melbourne (shared as well as by the French Melbourne Cup films by the Lumière company and by The Melbourne Rendezvous), is distinguished from the ‘international and local’ point of view of the travelogues about Melbourne, and from the ‘local’ point of view of the local films about Melbourne.
remained open [...] He took the tram back to the Navy Department, carrying the wheels tied together with a bit of rope. (Shute 1957, 8)

The same scene translated to film is more specific in reference to the location of places than to the relationship between the city and the characters. After the family conversation cited above the film cuts to a tightly-framed shot of a footpath in the inner city. People walk by, a car parked on the left-hand side seems abandoned (fig. 134). This initial composition gravitates towards the vanishing point of the road that is obstructed twice: by a now useless parking meter which is at the centre of the composition, and, immediately behind, by the open door of a ‘ghost car’. A few seconds into the scene an irritated passer-by enters the shot and attempts to close the door of the car, pushing it with an umbrella. The white door closes without locking and bounces back to its former position\(^\text{193}\) (fig. 134). The movement of the door bouncing back, like a spring, initiates the gentle rising of the dolly and shifts left into a travelling shot which by elevating the view finally reveals an Elizabeth Street full of people but without moving cars. There are many people walking, cyclists and people riding horses. A tram draws near, Holmes descends from it, lets the tram pass and turns towards a large neoclassical building, the fictional offices of the Royal Australian Navy.

[Image of a scene from the film]

Fig. 134. Opening Sequence (On the Beach 1959), Park Circus/MGM, 2000.

There are a few elements worth paying attention to here: the introduction to the city, and the camera movement of the travelling crane shot linking the city to the character of Holmes and the view of Elizabeth Street. Firstly, the city is introduced here as a separate character from that of Peter Holmes who, in the book, is the sole protagonist of the sequence. The cinematic city here pre-exists the presentation of

\(^{193}\) It is a visual gag performed by an inanimate object. It seems a causal scene but there are more “inanimate” gags in the film. From the painting in the Melbourne Club that loses its balance every time the door closes, to the most memorable: the bottle of coke dangling from a curtain. Moved by the wind the bottle activates the Morse Code signal which will drive the submarine back to the US. In these scenes, the movement of inanimate objects seem to echo the fear of death, of becoming inanimate, of a city where only the objects and the edifices will, somehow, remain.
the human character in the urban space, gaining a stronger identity as a location. It is the city that influences the character, not vice versa\textsuperscript{194}, and this is a pattern that will be repeated for most of the film.

Secondly, in this sequence, the staged movement of the rising camera in the crane shot\textsuperscript{195} links the view of the footpath, the arrival of the character of Peter and the view of Elizabeth Street (fig. 135). The crane shot revealing an urban view is a type of camera movement that was new for Melbourne, and trademarked in European and American urban cinema. The movement not only presents Melbourne but introduces the city through a spectacular point of view new to the representation of urban space in Australian cinema. With the exception of \textit{The Melbourne Rendezvous}, and \textit{Fez Please!}, there had been no significant traveling shots in the city centre for many years, at least since \textit{Melbourne Today}.

![Fig. 135. Opening sequence (On the Beach 1959). Park Circus/MGM, 2000.](image)

Finally, the film opens with a specific location and view. The location is Elizabeth Street with the G.P.O. on the left, at the intersection with Bourke Street. This is ‘ground zero’ in Melbourne; the point from which all the city distances are measured. Like most of the Melbourne locations in \textit{On the Beach} this is easy for a local audience to identify. The view looks at the G.P.O. from Elizabeth St. towards the clock tower of Flinders Street Station. Well-known and iconic, the Elizabeth Street view is still not a common view in Melbourne, as it presents the perception of a theatrically enclosed space dominated by an axial clock tower, a setting more common in European and American cities. The Flinders Street Station end, with the clock tower, framed/staged by the two sides of Elizabeth Street in a three-walled space, creates one of the few\textsuperscript{196} ‘theatrical’ spaces in Melbourne. A similar view of Elizabeth Street

\textsuperscript{194} In films such as Sergio Leone’s \textit{One upon a time in the West} (1968) it is the character who is presented first and the city is introduced with a crane shot afterward.

\textsuperscript{195} A ‘crane shot’ is a type of shot where the camera travels horizontally, vertically and with a panoramic movement, usually employing a dolly track with a crane mounted on it. The movement requires a team moving the dolly and the crane, while a separate person operates the camera.

\textsuperscript{196} Two other ‘staged’ theatrical spaces are the east-end of Collins Street with the Treasury Building, and the east-end of Bourke Street with the Parliament building.
appeared in a photograph from the 1920s (fig. 136), in *Nearing the Melbourne Olympics* (1956) (fig. 137) and at the beginning of Mangiamele’s uncompleted film *Il Contratto*.

The opening image of a crowded post-nuclear Melbourne with no cars in the street, functions as a visual device to contrast the crowded but living city with imminent doom. At the same time the dichotomy ‘crowd/desert’ calls for a comparison with previous representations of Melbourne. The *moving* dolly of the American fictional film plays against the static images of the promotional films of Melbourne, both are metaphors representing different approaches to the city in the 1950s. The combination of multiple elements in the scene design shows how Kramer’s film reads Melbourne through an American point of view while, at the same time, it is able to respond to the inputs offered by the architecture and urban design.

### 6.5.3 The ‘Walk and Talk’ on Swanston Street

The second main urban scene in *On the Beach*, is the evening conversation between Gregory Peck and Ava Gardner after their night out. This scene plays in ambivalent spaces, negotiating local specificity and international non-specificity within the same visual context. The couple’s walk at night, after having danced in a nightclub, is filmed as a ‘walk and talk frontal tracking shot’. In the 1950s the frontal version of this type of shot, used to follow the dialogue of two (or more) actors walking, could only be realised by skilled technicians using the proper technology. The shot involves a camera moving ahead of the actors and looking backwards while filming their dialogue. As Bordwell points out, this type of shot was used in silent films, but it became more popular in the 1930s with the introduction of sound, and the need to follow the dialogue of the moving actors. The traditional versions of the ‘walk-and-talk’ were shot ‘obliquely’, with the camera traveling on the side, as it was difficult for the actors to walk over the tracks of the camera. As Bordwell explains,
Usually such traveling shots from the 1930s and 1940s are shot obliquely to the actors. That is, the performers are seen in a ¾ view, and they walk along a diagonal path with respect to the frame edges; the camera moves on a similar trajectory. Sound cameras were mounted on dollies that usually ran on tracks. Framing the actors head-on raised problems with this gear. Performers couldn’t walk smoothly if they were stepping within rails, and there was a risk that the rails in the distance might appear in the frame. It was simpler to set the camera at an oblique angle so that actors could walk unimpeded and the tracks wouldn’t be seen. Directors continued to use this framing into the 1950s, as in Welles’ Othello (1952) and Fuller’s Forty Guns (1957). Both are unusually long takes. (Bordwell 2007) 197

The more refined version of the ‘walk and talk’ shot, like the one used in On the Beach, had the camera moving backwards right in front of the actors, and this meant that some sort of technology had to be employed to hide or avoid the tracks. In 1950s this was an innovative way of shooting urban-set dialogue characteristic of more spectacular American cinema (Stanley Kubrick used it in Paths of Glory, 1957). As was the case for the opening ‘crane shot, this type of camera movement suggests an American or Hollywood point of view of the Melbourne streetscape.

In Melbourne, the scene constructs a mostly non-distinctive place, subtracting information about the identity of the urban space. The main indicators of place are the shop signs of restaurants and other advertisements that appear above the actors’ heads. We do know we are in Melbourne but in this scene, but the ocular experience of the urban space suggests that we could be in many other American or Australian cities, including Melbourne.

Fig. 138. Moira and Dwight along Swanston St (On the Beach 1959). Park Circus/MGM, 2000.

The frontal version of the shot, such as the one filmed in the night scene in On the Beach, was much more difficult to achieve. It required not only a trolley and the track, but also a crane with an arm that could support and balance the camera and the operator. The framing also had to stay close to the actors and a short depth of field was required to avoid revealing the track on the side. At the time the frontal version of the shot, in night time urban settings as in On the Beach, was still a piece of technical

197 The article is only available online at http://www.davidbordwell.net/blog/2007/02/09/walk-the-talk/print/ (accessed 6.6.2013).
bravura. The street and the shops needed to be closed for the duration of the film. The whole space and length of the night scene had to be lit accordingly in advance, masking the ‘stage’ lights as natural lights. The way the scene establishes a ‘movement image’ in connection with Melbourne’s urban space was therefore, both in terms of the scale of production and the style of filming, quite new and foreign. The by-product is an image of Melbourne that is attractive and ordinary, foreign and local at the same time.

![Image](image_url)

**Fig. 139. Moira at Flinders Street Station (On the Beach 1959). Park Circus/MGM, 2000.**

### 6.5.4 The Flinders Street Station ‘Back Shot’

After their conversation, Moira leaves Dwight and walks alone towards Flinders Street Station. This is a significant place; it marks the point where Swanston Street, Flinders Street and Princes Bridge meet and is probably Melbourne’s most represented location on film. This brief scene (fig. 139) frames Moira and Flinders Street Station together in an iconic shot, which is one of the most popular images used for online reviews of the film. My interest in this shot is the fact that to achieve this level of iconicity the production had to redesign the urban space of the intersection, creating a different ‘cinematic place’. The new setting challenged and revealed the original and less iconic design of the intersection by creating a point of view that is quite unlike traditional representations of Melbourne, since its subject matter is familiar but the position of the character and the composition are ‘foreign’. As we have seen in previous representations of Flinders Street Station, the entrance to the station is sometimes axial with the point of view (fig. 140a), but it is never axial with the trajectory of the person entering the station (fig. 140b).

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198 Flinders Street Station probably comes as close to the idea of an iconic city building as Melbourne’s traditional city architecture allows. A masterpiece of Edwardian baroque, Flinders Street Station “was to be a major urban landmark worthy of the empire” (Goad 2009, 88). From *Marvellous Melbourne* in 1910, to silent newsreels of the 1920s, to 1950s films such as *On Time*, the shot of the crowd crossing Flinders Street during the working day became an established image of how Melbourne wanted to be filmed: crowded and purposely busy. Only films intending to downplay the role of railway communication in favour of cars (*Melbourne Today*, 1931) or planes (*An Olympic Invitation*, 1948) omitted to show the railway station.
Conversely in *On the Beach*, the composition of the shot has Moira walking straight across the intersection towards the station’s main entrance (fig. 139), which is set at a 45-degree angle between Princes Bridge and Flinders Street. The American film therefore ‘fictionalises’ the urban space by creating a very specific and theatrical cinematic place. The viewpoint of the camera is set on the other side of the intersection, close to St. Paul’s Cathedral, so as to frame Moira and the station in a single shot. In order to realise this scene, traffic entering the intersection had to be stopped and redirected to allow her to cross diagonally from St. Paul’s Cathedral to Flinders Street Station. Moreover, station and character are initially at the same height within the same shot. To create this unrealistic composition the camera is set at an unusual viewpoint a few meters above the ground. The entrance of the station is displayed in full frontal and Moira is composed in front of it, closer and at the same height as the camera.

What I wish to underline here is the creative and organisational work required to achieve this iconic shot framing the character and the station. This is a composition that is not ‘natural’ to normal conditions of shooting and needed to be constructed carefully. To achieve the desired composition the figure of Moira needs to be elevated to match the framing of Flinders Street Station.

### 6.5.5 Deserted Urban Spaces

*On the Beach* closes with a series of shots showing deserted views of well-known inner-city Melbourne streets. The last sequence of the film is preceded by a few views of a deserted San Francisco. This is a reminder that the cinematic urban space in *On the Beach* not only focuses on the city space of Melbourne but also includes, as a key reference, the urban space of the American city. Led by a laconic, repetitive Morse Code message, the ‘Scorpion’ travels back across the Pacific to verify whether anybody is still alive. The submarine enters San Francisco Bay and passes under the Golden Gate Bridge. We see the submarine passing under the bridge, as seen from the perspective of the city. It is an uncanny point of view, as it positions an external, post-human viewer looking at the American submarine. The ensuing shot is even more explicit in this sense: it shows a full frame view of the bridge empty of cars (fig. 141).
It is worth comparing the different ways San Francisco and Melbourne are represented in the film. After the Golden Gate Bridge shot San Francisco is explicitly introduced. In the first city view from the submarine’s telescope it is possible to read the sign ‘Port of San Francisco’. This is followed by the first shot of the city’s main street deserted of human life, but with all the cars parked along the sidewalk. The scene moves from an extreme long shot to a long shot (fig. 142). A similar scene is shown through a slightly different point of view, again initially using a medium lens and then blown up by the use of a closer lens. The image of San Francisco works here as a paradigmatic substitute for other American cities.

The last sequence in *On the Beach* shows a similar series of static shots of empty streets in the centre of a deserted Melbourne. The closing scene is one of the most effective in the film and has a darkly theatrical mise-en-scène. Each shot lasts slightly longer, effectively suggesting a sense of doomed eternity.

The shots of the sequence are all carefully composed. The first image is cross-dissolved with the water from the previous shot and, tracking back, the camera uncovers a street view with the sign, ‘Safety Zone’ ‘by direction of the Lord Mayor’. The second shot in the sequence shows Swanston Street seen from a high viewpoint above the Carlton Brewery looking south. There are no recent modern buildings in sight, and the lack of cars and the use of a wide-angle lens widens the space of Swanston Street. On the left we can see the elevated dome of the State Library. This, like the previous shot, is an unusual view of Melbourne, taken from a viewpoint that was rare both in films and photos of the city. The third view
shows Bourke Street with Parliament at the end and the spires of St. Patrick’s Cathedral behind it. While this is a more common view, it is rendered unusual by the use of a wide lens distancing a large portion of the visual field, giving a stronger impression of space and distance than normally perceived by the human eye. This is probably the reason it is not commonly used in photographs or films of Melbourne, where medium range lenses are preferred. The other image in the sequence follows a similar visual pattern: wide angle, no cars, and axial views of the streets from a low or a very high position.

In 1959, the sight of empty streets in post-nuclear or apocalyptic films was still a relatively recent visual trope⁹⁹. These empty streets in the city centre spoke cinematically of a possible nuclear menace but also evoked, at that time by visual association, the urban decline of many city centres, Melbourne included. Both in America and Australia, suburbanisation and urban sprawl moved the residents of metropolitan cities out of the city centres and into the suburbs (Rybczynski 1995, 202). As Olsen and Brealey showed in *Sunday in Melbourne*, the Australian city was no stranger to this phenomenon, and in keeping with this most of the urban shots created for *On the Beach* were filmed on Sunday to facilitate shooting. In 1959, a Cinesound newsreel aptly entitled *Melbourne Becomes a ‘Dead’ City* (fig. 143) showed images of a Sunday shooting on Lonsdale Street. The voice-over commentary is ironic about the contrast between the images and the real Sunday in Melbourne: “This is Melbourne on a Sunday afternoon, but the streets are deserted on purpose!” Film and urban design in *On the Beach* come

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⁹⁹ In the same year, 1959, an increasing number of images of unpopulated or deserted urban spaces with post-nuclear references appeared. Firstly, a deserted New York in *The World, the Flesh and the Devil* (MacDougall 1959), then *The Siege of Pinchgut* (Watt 1959) set in Sydney, finally the first episode of Rod Serling’s TV series *Twilight Zone*, “Where is Everybody?” (aired October 1959) showed a deserted small town. A November episode of *Twilight Zone*, “Time enough at Last” (1959) showed a man who remained alone on earth after such a catastrophe. In European cinema, subtler references were to be seen in the opening urban scenes of *Hiroshima mon amour* (Resnais 1959), in a scene from *La dolce vita* (Fellini 1960) showing a picture of “the mushroom”, the concrete water tower built in 1957 in the roman suburb of E.U.R. The roman “mushroom” would also provide an inspiration for several sequences of *L’eclisse* (Antonioni 1962). To close this post-atomic circle, the first adaptation of Richard Matheson’s “I am Legend”, *The Last Man on Earth* (Rabona and Salkow), was released in 1964.

After *On the Beach*, the nuclear ‘theme’ would return to Melbourne in 1963 in “The Bomb”, an episode of the children’s TV series *Sebastian the Fox* (1963) directed by Tim Burstall and photographed by Giorgio Mangiamele. Two years later, the fear of nuclear doom was the subject of *Shelter* (Wallhead 1965), a short movie set in and out Melbourne streets, with an opera singer looking for shelter after having erroneously believed nuclear war was imminent.
together in specific locations and at specific times to construct an ambivalent cinematic identity of space. Most of the eerie ‘urban truth’ experienced watching this film (and many others after this) comes from the productive morphing of urban reality and fictional fantasy. The representation of the imaginary post-nuclear Melbourne meets the real pre-modern Melbourne of the 1950s to construct a fictional place successfully linking urban memory to nuclear menace.

This view of the city streets without cars is at the same time terrifying and surreal. Its first impact is existential, asking us to imagine the possibility of the disappearance of humanity without showing any nuclear explosion.
A closer examination of the sequence’s streetscapes permits us to establish the actual location and realise that the selection of views mostly focuses on the Victorian city and what I have called the ‘village-image’ of Melbourne. There are little or no modern buildings in these scenes. Much of the city already seems old, forgotten and obsolete, which may seem a contradiction for a film set five years into the future. The views presented in their edited order are (fig. 144): 1) Bourke Street seen from the footpath looking west; 2) an axial view of Swanston Street looking south seen from a high viewpoint, close to RMIT; 3) a view of Bourke Street looking east, seen from the street; 4) a view of Flinders Street looking east; 5) another view of Bourke Street looking east, this time closer to the Parliament with a viewpoint on the right-hand footpath; 6) another view of Swanston Street, closer to the Melbourne Town Hall, seen from the ground; and 7 and 8) two views of the State Library on Swanston Street. If we compare these views with the opening of A Queen has Returned, it is possible to see that the sequence has purposely avoided the modern buildings erected on Collins Street, or the ICI building, well and truly visible at the time of shooting on the other, eastern side of Lonsdale Street (fig. 145). The still largely unchanged Bourke Street and Swanston Street are preferred, as is the western side of Lonsdale Street as opposed to the eastern side. There is something preposterous in these images of doom. The images of an empty Melbourne are the result of a series of carefully crafted screen images. Little is out of place, little seems improvised. Each of the final shots has been meticulously realised. These images (fig. 144), meant to communicate death on earth, and connected to Melbourne’s deserted Sunday, remind us of an artificial vacuum, images of place that “suck the aura out of reality like water from a sinking ship” - as Benjamin commented on Atget’s photos of deserted Parisian streets (Benjamin 2005, 518). The early morning mist shortens the distances and makes the images more mysterious and less readable in depth. In Atget’s empty Paris the city seems to have abandoned itself but left its essence due to the ghostly long exposures. In On the Beach, the lack of life seems to be suggested more by the montage of deserted urban images, by the length of their impression on screen, and from the mechanical alternation of viewpoints.

6.5.6. Reactions

How was the film received and subsequently remembered? On the Beach was shown simultaneously in Melbourne and in 17 other overseas capitals on December 17th 1959. The international
reception mostly failed to mention Melbourne. In the emblematic New York Times film review, Bosley Crowther writes of a crisis confronting “a group of people in Australia in 1964 as they helplessly await the inexorable onset of a lethal cloud of atomic dust”. He does not mention Melbourne once, but quotes every single American location briefly appearing on screen: Alaska, Point Barrow, San Diego, San Francisco (New York Times, 18 December 1959). Most of the non-Australian reviews at the time of the film’s release, and after the more recent DVD release, follow this pattern and fail to mention the role of Melbourne as the main location of the story.

In the Australian reviews “critics of the time perceived inevitable holes and absences in the film’s representation of the city but were generally positive about the perceptiveness and relative subtleties of the film’s treatment of Melbourne life” (Danks 1999, 179). In Australian Woman’s Weekly (January 6th 1960, p. 47), Ainslee Baker writes merely of a film that “Melbourne should be proud to be associated with” 200.

On a different level, looking at the publications and exhibitions about the film, one notices the attention given to the making of the film. In the book When Hollywood Came to Melbourne: The Story of the Making of Stanley Kramer’s “On the Beach” (2005), Phillip R. Davey is mostly concerned with the response of the city to the American film production. This attention on the making of the film is a way to appropriate the memory of On the Beach while mostly bypassing the mediated aspects of the film. Davey tells the story of the Shute-Kramer relationship, shows photographs of the shooting, and collects anecdotes associated with the film locations. The making of On the Beach becomes a transformational event, which, more than the Olympics, helped to propel Melbourne into a modern, mediated era.

To conclude, the representation of Melbourne in On the Beach is both strange and familiar to the city’s traditional representation. On the one hand, the ‘cinematic place’ created by the cinematography is quite foreign to the actual city. The modes of representation (camera angles, camera movements, composition) hint mostly at the American or Hollywood cinema and at the American spectator. The film sets the spectator in a visual environment familiar to an American point of view using iconic references to Hollywood cinema.

On the other hand, there is a familiarity with traditional representations of Melbourne in the choice of showing an older and more provincial city. There are also similarities between the representation of a deserted Melbourne as post-nuclear location and the lack of density of the city centre on Sunday, when many of these scenes were shot. As Danks points out, “On the Beach does produce quite an evocative and let’s say accurate sense of space, light, time and community. For example, the film goes out of its way to

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200 Baker is interested in the way the Australian characters are portrayed in the film. She analyses the accent of the actors playing Australian roles: “In general the accents in this film (except with those playing American parts) are cosmopolitan, with an occasional American speech-rhythm or intonation showing through. Ava, however, shows no sign of ‘American’ speech. She has the authentic ‘international’ accent” (Baker. Australian Woman’s Weekly January 6th 1960, p. 47)
be almost tedious about directions, time travelled and the basic spatial coordinates of the city” (Danks 1999, 181).

In *On the Beach* Melbourne is represented for the first time as a new character, but it is also, aesthetically, an ‘alien’, new Melbourne. It is a Melbourne ‘seen’ through the lens of American or international culture and technology, ‘seen’ also by Giuseppe Rotunno, the Italian director of photography, with references to Italian cinema. In the lack of fictional filmic representations of Melbourne this ‘alien’ image of the city has become a surrogate image of Melbourne. But the images of *On the Beach* cannot be entirely ‘assumed’. It is precisely in the process of this ‘assumption’, in the attempt to solidify local and international images of Melbourne, that much of the cinematic identity of place of the city is played out. What the film analyst is presented with is an exchange, a transition, the reiteration of a ‘tension’ between a local cinematic image of the city and a ‘borrowed’ international image that attempts to become ‘local’. But the two aspects of the cinematic image of Melbourne: the local (non-iconic, private, anti-theatrical and partial image), and the international (iconic, theatrical, celebrative and all-round image) cannot just be integrated into a single entity. What identifies Melbourne as a cinematic place is the tension between these local and foreign images. The search for an iconic representation of the city is repeatedly desired and frustrated. The lack of a full theatrical representation of Melbourne is at the same time lamented and enjoyed.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has explored the representation of Melbourne in fictional and personal films from the 1950s and early 1960s that did not officially promote governmental or social policies. These films were mostly shot by young filmmakers and did not have a wide circulation outside local film festivals and the small cultural circle that produced them. These works express, with few exceptions, individual points of view eager to share and visualise a diverse social awareness of Melbourne. Issues such as migration, existential discomfort, loneliness, unemployment, consumerism, and architectural criticism had in common a point of view about the city of Melbourne. A second section in the chapter is dedicated to an analysis of the American feature film *On the Beach* shot in Melbourne in 1959, and provides a brief review of the fictional image of Melbourne. The investigation looks at the film under different visual aspects, with a focus on the interplay between the international point of view of the film and its relation to the specificity of some of the local urban spaces portrayed in the film.

The films of Giorgio Mangiamele introduced Melbourne to a close visual relationship between the human face and body and the suburban fabric. In *Il contratto* the migrants’ bodies and faces are defined by their relation to space and by the buildings surrounding them. In the tradition of Italian neorealism, the
urban view becomes an exteriorisation of the internal condition of the migrant character. This trait of letting figures and buildings overlap and interact in the same urban landscape is still uncommon in Melbourne cinema, and does not appear to have had followers after Mangiamele.

The works of Peter McIntyre and Robin Boyd of the University of Melbourne are amongst the first to show, in colour, the effects of a dramatic social reality made up of poverty, unemployment and alcoholism, which remained mostly unseen in previous films outside of the work of the Brotherhood of Saint Lawrence. The bodies of tired, solitary men exhausted by fatigue or by alcohol surface in the early images of Mouldies, in later films by Mangiamele (Ninety-nine Percent) and in Gil Brealey and Paul Olsen’s *Sunday in Melbourne*. Together these films show the appearance of the solitary figure of an old man, at times blending with the social figure of the homeless. He emerges as a new character in cinematic representations of Melbourne in the 1950s. The representation of buildings and architecture is also directly targeted by two significant films: McIntyre and Boyd’s *Your House and Mine*, which combines satire and serious criticism in reading the Melbourne suburban home; and Brealey’s *A Queen Who Returned*, an official film introducing a new, high-rise, modernist Melbourne in construction.

In the second section of this chapter I analyse Kramer’s *On the Beach* and at the paucity of fictional cinematic representations of Melbourne in this era when compared to other cities, in particular to Sydney. This analysis has shown that until *On the Beach* the representation of Melbourne in fictional feature films was very limited, occasional and, arguably, never iconic. While pursuing its own iconic system of representation, *On the Beach* interacted with the traditionally subdued representation of Melbourne as a fictional cinematic city. *On the Beach* utilised a series of techniques of mise-en-scène that were new and ‘foreign’ to cinema in Melbourne: the ‘crane shot’ in filming the urban space of the street, the ‘walk and talk’ scene, and the use of a system of composition combining character and buildings in the same frame. The way these ‘foreign’ techniques of mise-en-scène adapted to the design of the urban space of Melbourne highlighted the role of urban design in influencing the representation of the city. The film’s last sequence, composed of static shots of the deserted inner city streets, is an example of the close iconographic relation between a post-nuclear desert and the effects of the urban sprawl on the urban centre of Melbourne.
CONCLUSION

The key objective of this thesis has been to analyse cinematic representations of Melbourne’s urban space in the years from 1896 to 1966. I chose to focus largely on how visual representations have re-organised the city’s lived urban spaces into ‘cinematic places’; giving urban spaces a further meaning through their cinematic representation. The added challenge was to identify a number of ‘processes’ and ‘relations’ in the formation of Melbourne’s cinematic identity of place that could better account for the specificity of those images, given the general “sense of lack, absence, and displacement” (Danks 1999, 173) associated with representations of Melbourne on film, reiterated by the existing literature on films set in Melbourne.

In the first chapter I drew the framework for my investigation, aiming at analysing patterns in the representation of Melbourne in film. The first area explored, the literature and the preliminary analysis of some of the films about Melbourne made clear that the representation of Melbourne in film was not an entity that could be studied alone, but needed to be examined alongside and in comparison with foreign influences. Therefore, on the one hand I have looked at links between the history of the city and the time of its representation to see whether specific representations corresponded to specific changes in the city’s design. And, where possible, I have compared these links with other representations of Melbourne from the same period, and from the pre-cinematic era. On the other hand, when needed, I have considered the relation between Melbourne and the representation of the modern city on film. In this sense, the first films of London by R. W. Paul screened in 1896, and the success of Living London in 1906 are just two of many moments when cinematic representations of the modern European city and the American city influenced cinematic representations of Melbourne.

Compared with an overall ‘lack’ of representation in feature films, surviving non-fiction films such as actualities, documentaries, travelogues and newsreels have revealed an uneven approach in representing the city’s urban spaces. My analysis has identified a few different cinematic representations of Melbourne characterised by an interrelation of ‘motifs’, some of which were already apparent in my review of the written records of early films of Melbourne. These include: a) the recurring prominence of specific ‘city locations’ such as Collins Street, Princes Bridge, Flinders Street Station, Bourke Street, and a few others; b) the emulation or reference to early camera genres such as the phantom ride and the workers leaving work, and film ‘genres’, such as the travelogue or promotional films; c) the existence of a difference between the more ‘theatrical’ or ‘representational’ modes of filming the inner city and a ‘less theatrical’ or ‘presentational’ mode of filming suburban settings; d) an ambivalence between the modern, industrial point of view and the ‘anti-modern’ point of view of the city imagined as a ‘village’; d) the comparison between local and foreign representations of Melbourne.

Chapter 2 looked at pre-cinematic representations of Melbourne. Painters and photographers have long adopted a plurality of foreign styles to represent the city life of colonial Melbourne through a
‘spectacular’ mode of representation, measuring the city against comparable modes of representation employed in London and Paris. This trend was particularly evident in the ‘spectacular’ city-views of Henry Burn and Henry Gritten, and in the ‘theatrical’ urban photography of J. W. Lindt. Parallel to this trend is the more informal style of representing city spaces, as exemplified by the drawings of S. T. Gill and the photographic work of Charles Nettleton. The latter, in particular, used a ‘presentational’ style that seems ‘anti-theatrical’ when looked at alongside more classical and balanced examples of the city’s representation.

The arrival of cinema in Melbourne in 1896, shortly after the economic depression of the early 1890s, pitted a city in crisis against the most realistic and spectacular images from modern London, Paris and American cities at the height of their development. In contrast there are no surviving filmed images of the streets of Melbourne in this period; almost all of the street footage of Melbourne filmed between 1896 and 1906 has been lost. Images of the Melbourne CBD are virtually absent until 1909/10. Nevertheless, some suburban views have survived in films showing Port Melbourne (1905) and Hawthorn (1906).

In Chapters 3, 4 and 5, analysis of the available footage from between 1906 and 1966 showed the importance in Melbourne of early ‘genres’ such as: the ‘city-view’; the ‘travelling shot and phantom ride’; the ‘panoramic shot’; and the ‘street life view’, which are particularly evident in Moving Melbourne (1906), Living Hawthorn (1906) and A Thriving and Prosperous Suburb. Bird’s Eye View of Footscray. These early film practices were combined with more traditional genres, of which the most important for Melbourne was the ‘travelogue’, whose structure and themes underlined subsequent cinematic representations of the city: Marvellous Melbourne. The Queen City of the South (1910), Melbourne Today (1931), Know Your Melbourne (1945), Batman’s village (1948), Place for a Village (1948), Around Melbourne with Terry Dear (1949), Olympic Introduction (1949), The Melbourne Wedding Belle (1953), Planning for Melbourne’s Future (1953), Nearing the Melbourne Olympics (1956), and The Melbourne Rendezvous (1957). Other significant genres are the social films of the Realist Film Unit, produced by the Brotherhood of St. Laurence, counter-balanced by the ‘propaganda’ films of the Housing Commission of Victoria: A Home of their Own (1947), Co-ordinated Housing (1952) and The City Speaks (1965).

As discussed in Chapter 6, the 1950s saw the appearance of now rarely seen ‘personal films about Melbourne, alongside the ‘institutional’ point of view of the previous films. These personal documentaries offered fictional and non-fictional impressions of street life, social conditions and modern architecture often unseen in previous productions. The films were created by Gil Brealey: Late Winter Early Spring (1954), Sunday in Melbourne (with Paul Olsen, 1958) and A Queen Who Returned (1958); Peter McIntyre and Robin Boyd: Mouldies (1953) and Your House and Mine (1954); and Giorgio Mangiamele: Il Contratto (1953), The Spag (1962) and Ninety-nine Percent (1963). Their films, together with Stanley Kramer’s foreign ‘event-film’ On the Beach (1959), disclose a new dramatic visual
iconography implying a sense of alienation and existential loss that connects the experience of public
spaces with the melancholy of modernity. In most of these films more modern buildings were made
visible and a stronger sense of progress was apparent. On the other hand, the depopulation of the city
streets became more prominent, as well as the marginalisation of the unemployed, and specifically
alcoholics. New characters to emerge were the migrant, the unemployed, the drifter, the loner, the passer-
by, and the pensioner. The figures of lonely men along the Yarra River were a recurrent iconography in
promotional films about Melbourne. These images were reminiscent in their loneliness of the people
marginalised from society who appeared in these latter films.

**Genres, Modernity and City Spaces**

The representation of Melbourne analysed in this thesis involves a limited number of city spaces
and landmarks, some of which, within the CBD, recur most frequently in representations: Princes Bridge,
Flinders Street, Elizabeth Street, Swanston Street, Collins Street, Parliament House, the State Library,
Treasury, and St. Paul’s Cathedral. Melbourne’s surviving suburban films made between 1906 and 1912
quantitatively outnumbered the surviving images of the CBD. Early suburban films had an informal
‘presentational’ mode, closer to non-staged performance. The widespread adoption of established early
local genres, such as ‘workers coming out of work’ were usually captured with little preparation and
shooting time, often in a single take, without interest in refined pace or timing. Most of these inner-city
and suburban films featured early ‘camera genres’ such as the ‘city-view’, the ‘panoramic shot’ and, at
times, the ‘travelling shot’. In most travelogues and inner city scenes the theatricality of representation is
more conscious, with the aim of mimicking the dominant spectacular and theatrical mode. On the other
hand ‘local suburb’ films are more focused on the human characters occupying the urban space of the
street: mostly children, workers, shopkeepers, passers-by, etc.

Early suburban films featured mostly inner suburbs such as Port Melbourne in 1905 (*Swallow and
Ariell’s Employees*), Hawthorn in 1906 (*Living Hawthorn*), Richmond and Studley Park in 1910
(*Marvellous Melbourne: Queen City of the South*), Footscray in 1910 (*A Thriving and Prosperous
Suburb. Bird’s Eye View of Footscray*) and St. Kilda in 1912 (in *St Kilda Esplanade; [Beach Scenes, St
Kilda, Victoria]; Williams Weekly Luna Park St. Kilda is Now Open Melbourne*). Later, after the 1930s,
of films dealt with suburban issues but rarely targeted specific suburbs. Moreover the name of the suburbs
represented scarcely appeared in film titles. The inner suburb of Fitzroy was often featured in realist films
between 1946 and 1950 as an example of a ‘slum’, Toorak appeared briefly in *The Melbourne Wedding
Belle*, and Carlton featured as the local environment in most of Mangiamele’s early films (*Il contrato,*
*The Spag and Ninety-nine Percent*. The outer suburbs Heidelberg and Holmesglen were the sites for two
housing commission projects (*Co-ordinated Housing* (1953), and *The Story of Holmesglen Concrete
Housing Project* (1959); but almost no suburban post-war images showed that same sense of community
‘presented’ by the early films about Melbourne, which showed crowded images of shoppers and shopkeepers, passers-by and children.

By contrast, the surviving representations of the CBD in early cinema are less numerous, when compared to those of the suburbs, but more spectacular and theatrical. Earlier film scenes such as the tram-ride in Marvellous Melbourne, Queen city of the South (1910), and the scene recalled in the press notices of the now lost Moving Melbourne (1906) used the travelling phantom ride through the city to convey a sense of modernity to Melbourne. The axial perspective in motion within the streets of the Melbourne grid created a rare sense of industrial modernity that connected St. Kilda Road, Princes Bridge, Swanston Street, Collins Street, and Bourke Street in a single, seemingly uninterrupted, tram ride. The representation of the spectacular modernity of that camera movement in Melbourne is unfamiliar today because that city-experience of the CBD has been ‘supressed’ for a long time. This is probably due to the development of a dominant ‘anti-modern’ sentiment in representations of Melbourne, with a ‘romantic and conservative’ aesthetic still evident (Davison 1998, 149). Modernity was superseded by a series of postcard-like images, what Davison (1998, 146) has called ‘a repertoire of stock urban images’ of Melbourne. The structure of Melbourne Today (1931), with its combination of panning and tracking shots moving the gaze out from the CBD and towards the Royal Botanic Gardens was paradigmatic in realising this change, as my analysis shows.

The subsequent promotional films celebrate a largely static CBD, characterised by an almost metronomic editing of a sequence of monotonous city views. These ‘travelogues’ usually open with an aerial view of the CBD and close with a traditional neo-gothic view of the city skyline over the Yarra River. In between, the common representational conventions combined garden views, unoriginal landmarks views and images of shopping. In visual terms, there is a successful attempt to normalize the urban space towards favouring a gentle, neutral imaginary of the ‘village-image’. The perceptual shocks, the camera movements and the thrilling framing typical of representations of modernity are generally avoided. Only on a few occasions will the partial expression of a more modern point of view be allowed in such later films as A Queen Has Returned, Life in Australia: Melbourne (1966) and The City Speaks (1965).

**Local / Foreign identities of place**

The colonial history of Melbourne, its rapid growth following the discovery of gold, its ongoing immigration and the city’s cultural ties have polarised the representation of Melbourne in film along a local / foreign perspective. Along this axis I have identified at least three ‘modes of representation’: the local films for a local audience (mostly suburban films), the local films for an international audience (mostly travelogue and promotional films), and the foreign film for an international audience (foreign productions filmed in Melbourne).
By ‘local films’ I refer to works produced by, about and for the local community of spectators. In Melbourne, these films tend to have a stronger identity of place, to be less iconic and to have a less theatrical mise-en-scène. ‘Local films’ at times rely on the informal borrowing of international ‘genres’ such as the previously mentioned ‘workers’, the ‘realist’ genre, and the ‘propaganda’ genre. Early examples were Swallow and Ariell’s Employees (1905), produced to draw people to the local Salvation Army Office, and Living Hawthorn and A Thriving and Prosperous Suburb. Bird’s Eye View of Footscray. Other ‘local films’ were those shot by the Realist Film Unit with the Brotherhood of St. Laurence, of which the most original in terms of a locational identity are Gaol Does Not Cure and A Place to Live. Most of the ‘author films’ shot in Melbourne in the 1950s can be grouped in this section. Brealey’s Late Winter, Early Spring and Sunday in Melbourne, can both be considered local films inspired by the tradition of European and American ‘city-films’. McIntyre and Boyd’s Mouldies and Your House and Mine are also ‘local films’; often informal with a low level of theatricality in the composition of the shots. Mangiamele’s films can be considered a transnational ‘sub-variant’ of the ‘local film’201. The system of representation in Mangiamele’s films is more theatrical than in the other ‘local films’ (given the importance in his films of the relationship between human figure and urban space). Nevertheless, the theatricality of the mise-en-scène in his films becomes progressively less marked over the years.

On the other hand there are the ‘foreign representations’ of Melbourne. These are films produced in Melbourne by foreign companies for Australian and international markets. Film such as the Lumière Melbourne Cup films, The Melbourne Rendezvous and Kramer’s On the Beach202. My analysis of selected sequences has shown that these films express a foreign point of view of the urban space of Melbourne. The system of mise-en-scène as well as the targeted urban references adopted are rooted in the respective French and American production systems. There is indeed a local influence on these films coming from the local urban design which these films must ‘respond to’ or ‘adapt to’. An example is the scene in On the Beach analysed in Chapter six, where Moira (Ava Gardner) is walking towards Flinders Street Station, which entailed redesigning the local urban space.

In between ‘local’ and ‘foreign’ films, there is the large number of locally produced films and travelogues created to show Melbourne to the outside (mostly British) world. They were mainly aimed at tourism, investment or migration. These were generally feature films and their fictional stories, which had a much wider distribution, and served to represent the city internationally203. The paucity of representations of Melbourne in feature films, first, and the lack of feature film productions in the 1940s

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201 When representing Melbourne in a local production, it would be interesting to consider the role of the director’s foreign urban training in another city; Mangiamele is a good example of this trend. Paul Cox’s films about Melbourne are another example of a refashioning of the local urban space in accordance with an upbringing in another European city. Often in films such as Man of Flowers (1983) or Lonely Hearts (1982) spaces are viewed from an enclosed viewpoint.

202 Later foreign urban films shot in Melbourne are Mr. Nice Guy (Hung 1997); Salaam Namaste (Anand 2005); Ghost Rider (Johnson 2007); Knowing (Proyas 2009); Killer Elite (McKendry 2011).

203 My first visual encounter with the urban space of Melbourne occurred through the images of Love and Other Catastrophes (Emma-Kate Croghan, 1996) screened in a cinema theatre in Rome.
and 1950s, later, has turned these promotional films into the official representations of the city in this period. These films were mostly financed by government bodies for the international and local scene. Beyond being promotional vehicles these films also performed the function of identity building for Melbourne and Australia. From *Marvellous Melbourne and Melbourne Today* and up to *Life in Australia: Melbourne* many of these films did not show Melbourne as it was, but the city as it wanted to be seen. And that ideal city was the location of an aspiration for a place more coherent and less contradictory that it was in reality. These films are mostly iconic, or at least they attempt to present Melbourne in a more iconic way for the international market.

Finally, what appears to be characteristic of cinematic representations of Melbourne is the fact that none of these points of view alone seem able to account for the city’s cinematic identity. Each point of view, the ‘local’, the ‘foreign’ and the ‘local-foreign’, mirrors the illusion of a stable cinematic identity. Each defers a full iconic representation of the city by demanding further definitions and considerations of other points of view. Each viewpoint alone is able only to ‘see’ a singular partial perspective. It is instead the relation of these three points of view: the ‘local’, the ‘foreign’ and the ‘local-foreign’ that makes up the full spectrum of Melbourne’s ‘system’ of cinematic representation. The cinematic identity of place specific to Melbourne therefore appears to be based on a hybrid, relational and nomadic process (Williams 2008, 144). And place identity, as Massey has shown, is defined by the evolving development of these interactions204 (Massey 1994, 155). Thus the identity of the cinematic images of Melbourne under analysis is not characterised by the fixed iconic representation of singular images but in the nomadic relation (back and forth) of multiple identities traveling from the local to the foreign, from the CBD to the suburb, from the village city to the modern city.

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204 “Any adequate explanation has to set the inner city in its wider geographical context. Perhaps it is appropriate to think how that kind of understanding could be extended to the notion of a sense of place. These arguments highlight a number of ways in which a progressive concept of place might be developed. First of all, it is absolutely not static. If places can be conceptualised in terms of the social interactions they tie together, then it is also the case that these interactions themselves are not motionless things, frozen in time. They are processes. [...] Perhaps this should be said also about places; that places are processes, too” (Massey 1994, 156).
FILMOGRAPHY

Legend: d.= Director; pr. = Producer; ph. = Cinematographer; sc.= Screenwriter; ed.= Editor
(For each film I have reported the main person responsible for the film and for its images. When no names are reported, they weren’t available. In most actualities and in travelogues the figure of the director did not exist, it was shared between the producer and the cinematographer. When the cinematographer was the maker of the film he is listed here as director.

Production: SFC= State Film Centre; ACFU = Australian Commonwealth Film Unit; NFB = National Film Board; RFU = Realist Film Unit; BSL = Brotherhood of St. Laurence; HCV= Housing Commission of Victoria; CFB = Commonwealth Film Board; CS = CineSound; UoM= University of Melbourne

Locations in square brackets indicate where the main shooting location was not in Melbourne.

FILMS SHOT IN MELBOURNE and AUSTRALIA

1896 Melbourne Cup [7 films] (d. ph. Marius Sestier, Lumiére, Fr., actualities)
- *Arrivée d’un train a Melbourne* [652] (Arrival of a Train, Hill Platform)
- *La foule* [418] (The Lawn Near the Band Stand)
- *Arrivée du gouverneur* [419] (Arrival of H.E. Lord Brassey and Suite)
- *Enceinte du pesage* [420] (Weighing-out for the Cup)
- *Sortie des chevaux* [421] (The Saddling Paddock)
- *La course* [422] (Finish of the Hurdle Race, Cup Day)
- *Présentation du vainqueur* [423] (Newhaven with his Trainer, W. Hickenbotham, and Jockey, H. J. Gardiner)

*Patineur Grotesque* [119] (d. ph. Marius Sestier, Lumiére, Fr., actuality) [Sydney]

*Passengers Alighting from the Paddle Steamer “Brighton” at Manly* (d. ph. Marius Sestier, Lumiére, Fr, actuality [lost]) [Sydney]

1897 [Melbourne Street Scene] (d. ph. Joseph Perry, Limelight Dept., Au, actuality [lost])
1898 [Early Test Film] (d. ph. Joseph Perry, Limelight Dept., Au, actuality [lost])

*Hungry Man Stealing Bread [And His Arrest By Police]* (d. ph. Joseph Perry, Limelight Dept., Au, actuality [lost])

*Prison Gate Brigade [Welcoming Released Prisoner at Gaol Gates]* (d. ph. Joseph Perry, Limelight Dept., Au, actuality [lost])

1900 *Soldiers of the Cross* (d. ph. Joseph Perry, Limelight Dept., Au, [lost, only slides survive])
1901  
*Inauguration of the Commonwealth of Australia* (d. ph. Joseph Perry, Limelight Dept., Au, actuality)

*Royal Visit to Ballarat* (d. ph. Joseph Perry, Limelight Dept., Au, actuality) [Ballarat]

*Federation Celebration. Sydney. 19.01.01* (d. ph. Joseph Perry, Limelight Dept., Au, actuality) [Sydney]

1904  
*Lazarus [The Raising of Lazarus]* (d. ph. Joseph Perry, Limelight Dept., Au, actuality)

1905  
*Swallow and Ariell’s Employees* (d. ph. Joseph Perry, Limelight Dept., Au, actuality)

1906  
*Moving Melbourne* (d. Tait Brothers, Au, actuality [lost])

*Living Hawthorn* (d. ph. Millard Johnson and William Gibson, Au, actuality)

*The Story of the Kelly Gang* (d. Tait Brothers, ph. Millard Johnson and William Gibson, Au, feature)

*Beautiful Ballarat* (pr. Messers Best and Baker, Au, actuality) [Ballarat]

1908  
*Independent Order of Rechabites Jubilee Presentation* (Au, actuality)

*Grand Memorial Service. The Funeral of Mayor Kenneth McLeod* (d. Joseph Perry, Limelight Dept., Au, actuality)

1909  
*Footy Final* (pr. Cozens Spencer, Au, actuality)

1910  
*Melbourne Cup, 1910* (d. ph. Millard Johnson and William Gibson, Au, travelogue)

*Marvellous Melbourne, Queen City of the South* (d. pr. Cozens Spencer, ph. Ernest Higgins, Au, travelogue)

*A Thriving and Prosperous Suburb: Bird’s Eye View of Footscray* (Pathé, Au, actuality)

*Picturesque Sydney* (pr. Cozens Spencer, ph. Ernest Higgins, Au, travelogue [lost])

1911  
*At Footscray a Church is Pulled Down* (Pathé, Au, newsreel)

*The Mystery of the Hansom Cab* (d. W. J. Lincoln, ph. Orrie Perry, Au, feature [lost])

*The Double Event* (d. W. J. Lincoln, ph. Orrie Perry, Au, feature [lost])

1912  
*St Kilda Esplanade* (Au, newsreel)

*St Kilda Beach Scenes, Victoria* (Au, newsreel)

*Luna Park St Kilda is Now Open* [Williams Weekly] (Au, newsreel)

1913  
*The Road to Ruin* (d. W. J. Lincoln, ph. Maurice Bertel, Au, feature [lost])

*The St Kilda Esplanade on Boxing Day* (Au, newsreel)

*Picturesque Tasmania* (pr. Cozens Spencer, ph. Ernest Higgins, Au, travelogue [lost]) [Hobart]

1914  
*St Kilda Esplanade 1914* (Au, newsreel)

1915  
*[Melbourne Cup, 1915]* (Au, newsreel)

*Melbourne Street Scenes* (Au, newsreel)

1916  
*If the Huns Came to Melbourne* (d. George Coates, ph. Arthur Higgins, Au, feature)

*City Traffic in Variable Moods* (Australian Gazette, Au, newsreel)

1917  
*Hayseeds Come to Sydney* (d. Beaumont Smith, ph. A. O. Sergerberg, Au, feature) [Sydney]
1918  The Hayseeds' Melbourne Cup (d. Beaumont Smith, ph. A. O. Sergerberg, Au, feature)
[Return of the ANZACS] (Au, newsreel)
The Enemy Within (d. Roland Stavely, ph. Franklyn Barrett, Au, feature) [Sydney]
1919  The Sentimental Bloke (d. Raymond Longford, ph. Arthur Higgins, Au, feature) [Sydney]
1920  Ireland Will Be Free (Au, documentary)
Tram Conversion in Collins Street (Australian Gazette, Au, newsreel)
[City Street Scenes] (Au, newsreel)
On Our Selection (d. Raymond Longford, ph. Arthur Higgins, Au, feature) [Sydney and NSW]
1922  Sewerage of a Great City: Melbourne (Au, newsreel)
1923  [Melbourne Early Traffic Scenes] (c. 1915-1923, Au, newsreel)
Flinders Street Station Melbourne (Au, newsreel)
Some of the Attractions at the St Kilda Fair (c. 1923, Au, newsreel)
The Dinkum Bloke (pr. d. Raymond Longford and Lottie Lyell, ph. Lacey Perceval, Au, feature) [Sydney]
[Sydney/Melbourne]
1924  Melbourne at Sport and Play (Au, newsreel)
Melbourne Cup (Australasian Gazette) (Au, newsreel)
1925  So This is Melbourne (Alfred Spence, Au, travelogue)
Armistice Day, Melbourne (Australasian Gazette) (c. 1925, Au, newsreel)
Parliament Opens the New Session (Australasian Gazette) (Au, newsreel)
Wheat Harvesting (c. 1925, Au, newsreel)
[Melbourne Newsreel: 1925] (Au, newsreel)
Footy Newsreel (1920 Au, newsreel)
The Mystery of a Hansom Cab (d. Arthur Shirley, ph. Lacey Perceval, Au, feature)
Jewelled Nights (d. Louise Lovely and Wilton Welch, ph. Tasman Higgins and Walter Sully, Au, feature)
1926  Traffic Chaos Caused by Fusing of Electric Tram Wires (Pathé, Au, newsreel)
1927  The Melbourne Cup 1927 (Au, newsreel)
The Man Who Forgot (d. Dick Harwood, ph. William Hallam, Au, feature)
In and Around Ballarat (Commonwealth Migration Office, documentary) [Ballarat]
The Kid Stakes (d. Tal Ordell, ph. Arthur Higgins, Au, feature) [Sydney]
For the Term of His Natural Life (d. ph. Norman Dawn, ph. William Carty, Joe Stafford, Harry Lloyd, Au, feature) [Sydney]
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Director(s)</th>
<th>Photorapher(s)</th>
<th>Production Type</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>The Far Paradise</em></td>
<td>d. Paulette McDonagh, ph. Jack Fletcher</td>
<td>Au, feature</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Delegates to the Victorian Labor Party’s 1928 Easter Conference</td>
<td>(Au, newsreel)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td><em>St Kilda Luna Park</em></td>
<td>(British Pathé, UK, newsreel)</td>
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<td></td>
<td><em>The Shrine</em></td>
<td>(Au, newsreel)</td>
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<td></td>
<td><em>Diggers</em></td>
<td>(d. F. W. Thring, ph. Arthur Higgins, Au, feature)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>His Royal Highness</em></td>
<td>(F. W. Thring, ph. Arthur Higgins, Au, feature)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td><em>[Apple A Day: Collingwood]</em></td>
<td>(Cinesound, newsreel)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1934</td>
<td><em>Victoria: 100 Years of Progress</em></td>
<td>(Au, documentary)</td>
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<td></td>
<td><em>Centenary Celebration of Melbourne</em></td>
<td>(Au, documentary)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1936</td>
<td><em>[Melbourne]</em></td>
<td>(Au, amateur film)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>The City of Melbourne: Premiere City of the South</em></td>
<td>(Au, amateur film)</td>
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<td></td>
<td><em>Fez Please!</em></td>
<td>(d. ph. Owen Brothers, Au, documentary)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1938</td>
<td><em>Thorougbred</em></td>
<td>(d. Ken G. Hall, ph. George Heath, Au, feature)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td><em>Dad and Dave Come to Town</em></td>
<td>(d. Ken G. Hall, ph. George Heath, Au, feature)</td>
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<td></td>
<td><em>The Melbourne Cable Tramway System 1888-1940</em></td>
<td>(d. Neville Govett, c. 1940, Au, documentary)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td><em>Death on the Roads</em></td>
<td>(d. ph. Geoffrey Thompson, Cinesound, Au, promotional)</td>
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<td></td>
<td><em>Gaol Does Not Cure!</em></td>
<td>(d. ph. J. G. Fitzsimons, BSL, Au, documentary)</td>
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<td></td>
<td><em>City in the Sun</em></td>
<td>(Alasdair Loch, Au, documentary)</td>
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<td>[Sydney]</td>
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<tr>
<td>1947</td>
<td><em>Beautiful Melbourne</em></td>
<td>(d. ph. J. G. Fitzsimons, RFU, BSL, Au, documentary)</td>
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<td></td>
<td><em>Batman’s Village</em></td>
<td>(d. Ivor Kershaw, ph. John Scott-Simmons, Factual Films of Australia, Au, documentary)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td><em>Place for a Village</em></td>
<td>(d. Jack S. Allan, ANFB, Au, travelogue)</td>
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<td></td>
<td><em>Prices and the People</em></td>
<td>(d. Bob Matthews, ph. Keith Gow, RFU, BSL, Au, documentary)</td>
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<td></td>
<td><em>These Are Our Children</em></td>
<td>(d. Ken Coldicutt, RFU, BSL, Au, documentary)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1949</td>
<td><em>Around Melbourne with Terry Dear</em></td>
<td>(pr., ph. Geoffrey Thompson, Cinesound, Au, travelogue)</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A Home of Their Own (d. Frederick and Una Daniell, HCV, TPE, Au, promotional)

Olympic Invitation (d. ph. Roy A. Driver, Herschells Films, Au, travelogue)

1950

1952
Road to Bali (d. Hal Walker, ph. George Barnes, US, feature)

Night Club (d. Dick Harwood, Au, feature)

1953
Co-ordinated Housing (d. ph. Geoffrey Thompson, CS, HCV, Au, promotional)

The Melbourne Wedding Belle (d. Colin Dean, ph. Reg Pearse, NFB, Au, travelogue)

Il contratto (d. ph. Giorgio Mangiamele, Au, feature)

Mouldies (d. Peter McIntyre, sc. Robin Boyd, ph. Eric Kerr, UoM, Au, short)

On Time (d. Eric Thompson, ph. Reg Pearse, NFB, promotional)

1954

Late Winter to Early Spring (d. Gil Brealey, ph. Eric Kerr, SFC, Au, short)

Planning for Melbourne’s Future (d. ph. Geoffrey Thompson, CS, MMBW, Au, promotional)

Your House and Mine (d. Peter McIntyre, sc. Robin Boyd, ph. Eric Kerr, UoM, Au, documentary)

Royal Tour: Tasmania and Melbourne (British Movietone News, Uk, newsreel)

Australia Hails Queen (British Movietone News, Uk, newsreel)

1955
Melbourne Prepares for Olympic Games (ACFU, Au, travelogue)

Melbourne, Olympic City (pr. Stanley Hawes, ph. R. G. Pearse, ACFU, travelogue)

1956
Nearing the Melbourne Olympics (pr. Jack Allen, ph. R. G. Pearse, ACFU, Au, travelogue)

Melbourne Olympic City (d. ph. Roy A. Driver, Herschells Films, Au, travelogue)

Olympic Games 1956 (d. Peter Whitchurch, ph Dennis A Hill, Au, doc, feature documentary)

Valley of the Yarra (pr. R. Maslyn Williams, ph. R. G. Pearse, ACFU, Au, travelogue)

1957
The Melbourne Rendezvous (d. René Lucot, ph. Pierre Gueguen, Trans-Lux, Fr, feature documentary)

1958
A Queen Who Returned (d. Gil Brealey, SFC, Au, documentary)

Sunday in Melbourne (d. Gil Brealey and Paul Olsen, ph. Eric Kerr, SFC, Au, short)

1959
The Story of Holmesglen Concrete Housing Project (Herschells Films, HCV, Au, promotional)

On the Beach (d. pr. Stanley Kramer, ph. Giuseppe Rotunno, US, feature)

City Life (d. Stephen Harsanyi, ph. Peter Dabbs, Modern Films, Au, travelogue) [Sydney]

Melbourne Becomes a Dead City (Cinesound Newsreel, Au, newsreel)

Summer of the Seventeenth Doll (d. Leslie Norman, ph. Paul Beeson, US/UK, feature) [Sydney]

The Siege of Pinchgut (d. Harry Watt, ph. Gordon Dines, UK, feature) [Sydney]
The American (d. Darrel Wardle, ph. Eric Kerr, short)

1960

Wintertime in Melbourne (pr. Geoffrey Thompson, ph. Arthur Browne, CS, Au, travelogue)

The Formative Years - Don't Send Your Son Either (d. Russell Hagg, ph. Eric Kerr, UoM, Au, short)

1961

Springtime in Melbourne (pr. Geoffrey Thompson, ph. Arthur Browne, CS, Au, travelogue)


Consider Your Verdict (pr. Crawford Production, 1961-1964, Au, TV series)

1961

Summertime in Melbourne (pr. Geoffrey Thompson, ph. Arthur Browne, CS, Au, travelogue)

1962

The Spag (d. ph. Giorgio Mangiamele, Au, short)

Nimmo St. (d. ph. Tom Cowan, Au, short)

1963

Ninety Nine Percent (d. ph. Giorgio Mangiamele, Au, short)

A Day in the Life of Robert Beckett (d. ph. Jim Wilson, Colin Eggleston and Mike Bastow, UoM, short)

1964

Façade (pr. Robin Edmond, Max Hipkins, Sue Ingleton and Peter Jones, ph. Nigel Buesst, UoM, short)

Fun Radio! (d. ph. Nigel Buesst, Au, short)

From the Tropics to the Snow (d. Richard Mason and Jack Lee, ph. David Muir and Keith Gow, ACFU, Au, travelogue)

Homicide (Crawford Prod. 1964-1972, Au, TV series)

1965

The City Speaks (Crawford Prod., HCV, Au, promotional)

Iron lace (d. John Kingsford-Smith, ph. Tom Cowan, Au, documentary)

Shelter (d. ph. Malcolm Wallhead, short)

Clay (d. ph. Giorgio Mangiamele, Au, feature)

John is an Architecture Student (d. Jeffrey Turnbull, ph. John Scott, UoM, Au, short)

Forgotten Loneliness (d. pr. ph. Chris Lofven, Au, short)

Australian Heritage Series: Early Melbourne Mansions (d. John Kingsford-Smith, short)

1966

Life in Australia: Melbourne (pr. Eric Thompson, d. Douglas White, ph. Tom Cowan, ACFU, Au, promotional)

The Melting Pot (pr. Peter Elliot, Au, documentary)

Daydreamer (d. Michael Martin, ph. Doug Hobbs, UoM, Au, short)

1967

Pudding Thieves (d. Brian Davies, ph. Sasha Trikojus, Au, feature)


1968

Moeru Tairiko (The Blazing Continent) (d. Shōgorō Nishimura, ph. Shōhei Andō, Japan, feature)

The Girlfriends (pr. Peter Elliot, Au, short)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Director(s)</th>
<th>Production/Producer(s)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>The Cleaners</td>
<td>Malcolm Wallhead</td>
<td>Au, short</td>
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<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>Bonjour Balwyn</td>
<td>Nigel Buesst</td>
<td>Tom Cowan, Au, feature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>Lonely Hearts</td>
<td>Paul Cox</td>
<td>Yuri Sokol, Au, feature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>Man of Flowers</td>
<td>Paul Cox</td>
<td>Yuri Sokol, Au, feature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Living Melbourne</td>
<td>Chris Long</td>
<td>NFSA, Au, documentary</td>
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<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Love and Other Catastrophes</td>
<td>Emma-Kate Croghan</td>
<td>Justin Brickle, Au, feature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Mr. Nice Guy</td>
<td>Sammo Hung</td>
<td>Raymond Lam, Hong Kong, feature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>The Friendly Games: The Official Film of the Melbourne Olympic Games [restored version]</td>
<td>Peter Whitchurch, [1956], Au, documentary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Salaam Namaste</td>
<td>Siddarth Anand</td>
<td>Sunil Patel, India, feature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Ghost Rider</td>
<td>Mark Steven Johnson</td>
<td>Russell Boyd, US, feature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Knowing</td>
<td>Alex Proyas</td>
<td>Simon Duggan, US, feature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Killer Elite</td>
<td>Gary McKendry</td>
<td>Simon Duggan, US, feature</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NON-AUSTRALIAN FILMOGRAPHY**

À bout de souffle (Jean-Luc Godard 1959, Fr) [Paris]

American in Paris, An (Vincente Minnelli 1951, US) [Paris]

À nous la libertè (René Clair, 1931, Fr) [Paris]

Ascenseur pour l’échafaud (Louis Malle 1958, Fr) [Paris]

Atalante, L’ (Jean Vigo 1934, Fr) [Paris]

Bellissima (Luchino Visconti 1952, It) [Rome]

Crowd, The (King Vidor 1929, US) [New York City]

Daybreak Express (D. A. Pennebaker 1953, US) [New York City]

Dolce vita, La (Federico Fellini 1960, It) [Rome]

Eclisse, L’ (Michelangelo Antonioni 1962, It) [Rome]

Funny Face (Stanley Donen 1957, US) [Paris]

Germania anno zero (Roberto Rossellini 1948, It) [Berlin]

Gigi (Vincente Minnelli 1958, US) [Paris]

Great Russian Empire, The (Tours of the World, 1907, US, travelogue)

Housing Problems (Arthur Elton and Edgar Anstey 1935, UK)[London]

Journey on the Canadian Pacific Railway Through Canada, the Rockies and the Niagara Falls, A (Tours of the World, 1907, US, travelogue)

I soliti ignoti (Mario Monicelli 1958, It) [Rome]
Indiscretion of an American Wife (Vittorio De Sica 1953, It/US) [Rome]
Italian Lakes, The (Tours of the World, 1907, US, travelogue)
Land of Promise (Paul Rotha 1946, UK)
Living London (Charles Urban 1904, UK) [London]
London Street Scenes (R.W. Paul 1896, UK) [London]
London (Patrick Keiller 1994, UK) [London]
Love in the Afternoon (Billy Wilder 1957, US) [Paris]
Man Who Knew Too Much, The (Alfred Hitchcock 1956) [London]
Modern Times (Charles Chaplin, 1936, US) [New York City]
Naked City, The (Jules Dassin 1948, US) [New York City]
Panorama du Gran Canal vu d’un bateau (Louis Lumière [Promio] 1896, Fr) [Venice]
Panorama du départ de la gare d’Ambérieu pris du train (temps de neige) (Louis Lumière 1897, Fr)
Panorama pendant l’ascension de la tour Eiffel (Louis Lumière 1897-8, Fr) [Paris]
Panorama du funiculaire de Bellevue, II (Louis Lumière 1897-8, Fr).
Partie de campagne, Une (Jean Renoir 1936, Fr)
Plan to Work On, A (Kay Mander 1948, UK)
Proud City – Plan for London, The (Ralph Keene 1946, UK) [London]
Robinson in Space (Patrick Keiller 1997, UK) [London]
Roman Holiday (William Wyler 1953, US) [Rome]
Roma città aperta (Roberto Rossellini 1945, It) [Rome]
Royal Wedding (Stanley Donen 1951, US) [London]
Saturday Night and Sunday Morning (Karel Reisz 1960, UK) [London]
Sortie de l’usine Lumière à Lyon, La (Louis Lumière, 1895, Fr) [Lyon]
Stromboli (Roberto Rossellini 1950, Italy/US)
Switzerland (Tours of the World, 1907, US, travelogue)
Way We Live, The (Jill Craigie, 1946)
Three Coins in the Fountain (Jean Negulesco 1954, US) [Rome]
To Catch a Thief (Alfred Hitchcock 1955, US) [Monte Carlo]
Umberto D (Vittorio De Sica 1952, It) [Rome]
View from the Engine Front - Barnstaple (Warwick Trading Company 1898, UK)
View from the Engine Front - Ilfracombe (Warwick Trading Company 1898, UK)
World, the Flesh and the Devil, The (Ranald MacDougall 1959, Us) [New York]
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