

Contemporary Australian Studies

Literature, History, Film and Media Studies
in a Globalizing Age

Edited by
Yasue ARIMITSU and Yuga SUZUKI

Otowa-Shobo Tsurumi-Shoten

Contemporary Australian Studies

Literature, History, Film
and Media Studies
in a Globalizing Age

Edited by

Yasue ARIMITSU and Yuga SUZUKI

Otowa-Shobo Tsurumi-Shoten

Contemporary Australian Studies
Literature, History, Film and Media Studies
in a Globalizing Age

Copyright © 2016
by Yasue ARIMITSU and Yuga SUZUKI

All rights reserved

ISBN978-4-7553-0292-3

Acknowledgement

This book is published on the basis of the "International Symposium" held at Doshisha University in 2012, which all the authors attended. The Symposium was partly subsidised by Doshisha University. We would like to express our gratitude to Doshisha University and all the contributors to this book.

We would also like to express our great appreciation to the Australia Japan Foundation (AJF), an organization of the Australian Government, who subsidised this publication and supported our project. Without their support, this publication would not have been realized. We would also like to congratulate AJF on the 40th Anniversary of its establishment.

We finally wish to thank the publisher, Mr Takashi Yamaguchi of Otowa-Shobo Tsurumi-Shoten, for his great assistance and patience in publishing this book.

own languages, but on the other hand, they are enclosed in their own world without assimilating to Japanese society, culture, and lifestyle. Suzuki also points out political aspects of the media. Residents from North Korea or China sometimes use the Japanese media in order to express their political views because freedom of expression is protected in Japan, and this is another issue which needs to be further researched.

Yasue Arimitsu

Contents

Acknowledgements.....	iii
Introduction.....	v
Guanglin WANG	
Translating Fragments:	
On the Sino-Anglo "Convolute" in Brian Castro's <i>Shanghai Dancing</i>	1
Shiao-Ying SHEN	
Facing the Global by Way of the Multicultural:	
A Look into Antipodean Women Storytellers	39
Yasue ARIMITSU	
"Subjectivity" and "Otherness" in Australian Literature	67
Kate DARIAN-SMITH	
Expanding Horizons:	
Australian Television and Globalization in the 1950s-1970s	95
Yeon LEE	
Multiculturalism and Media in Korean Society	121
Yuga SUZUKI	
Japanese Media and Multicultural Society	133
Contributors	149

Expanding Horizons: Australian Television and Globalization in the 1950s–1970s¹

Kate DARIAN-SMITH
University of Melbourne, Australia

In 1971, nine-year-old Dmetri Kakmi emigrated with his family from a small and remote Aegean island in Turkey to the city of Melbourne in Australia. Overwhelmed by the “thrumming megalopolis,” Kakmi recalled:

As my brain ticked away at the problem of how to locate myself within the city’s sprawl, I realized that the answer had stared me in the face all along: television. This fabulous invention was no mere abstraction. For someone who was used to living in his head, the images presented on screen were more real and contained more truth than reality. Discovering television when I did shifted the ground beneath my feet and influenced my life . . . (Kakmi, 22)

For migrants to Australia in the middle to late decades of the twentieth century, especially those coming from non-English speaking countries of origin, the everyday presence of television was to be influential in assisting their settlement into their host country. The content of early

Australian television, consisting of a mixture of locally produced and imported programs, the latter primarily from Britain and the United States, alongside advertisements and news, was to play a significant if not formally acknowledged role in introducing new arrivals to the values and nuances of the "Australian way of life" (White). For Kakmi, who as a child avidly viewed Australian and American children's television every afternoon after school, television programs also offered insight into ways of living that existed well beyond the boundaries of his family and neighbourhood in either his previous life in Turkey or his current one in Australia. From an adult perspective, Kakmi has reflected that 'the act of watching [television] expanded, rather than limited, my worldview" (23).

In the post-Second World War period, the expanding horizons offered through television programming were, of course, not just viewed by new migrants but by the Australian population as a whole. Television was introduced into Australia in 1956. This was a good decade after full-scale commercial television had become widely available in Britain and the United States, and half a decade after it was available in Japan; but it also preceded the introduction of television to many other nations, including parts of Europe and Asia. From its inception, television was to have a profound influence on how Australian audiences viewed their own society but also on how they became more conscious of some aspects of a wider world, including that of their immediate Asian region. Taking an historical perspective, this chapter will examine some of those links between television programming, consumption and globalization as these existed from the 1950s to the 1970s, in the period prior to the late-twentieth century introduction of newer media and communication technologies, such as the internet or the personal computer.

In its initial decades, television—then a new media form, but one that is now classified as old media—did play an important role in both assisting in the settlement of new migrants and in maintaining a connection with a distant "homeland" for diasporic communities in Australia. The mass migration schemes of the 1950s through to the 1970s were accompanied by the gradual dismantling of the White Australia Policy, and its racial restrictions on immigrants, and the rise of multiculturalism as an official policy under the Labor government of Gough Whitlam (1972–75). The Australian population grew at an astonishing rate from 1945, rising by 40 per cent to reach 10.5 million in the 1961 census (Tavan, 109). This growth was the result of the increased birthrate of the post-war "baby boom," and an open immigration scheme with government assistance for many migrants from Britain and other select countries, including for certain periods with migrants from Italy and Greece. Although Australia remained predominately British in the origin of its people and its cultural practices, the arrival of substantial numbers of migrants from central and southern Europe, and by the 1970s from the Middle East and then Vietnam meant that there were discernible ethnic changes amongst its population (see Jupp).

From the late 1950s, Australian, British and American programs predominated on television, and their collective emphasis was on the histories and cultures of the English-speaking world. Despite some national variations in language or lifestyle or geographic location, there were more similarities than differences between local Australian programs, and British or American imported programs, in their presentation of social and cultural values. The shifting ethnic demographics of Australian television audiences were not reflected on the screen, with the casting of television personalities and actors in locally produced

television dramas generally limited to those of Anglo-Australian backgrounds. In this sense, the depictions of Australian society on television were selective rather than representative of Australia's increasing cultural diversity; this was a situation that was to be ongoing and led to a number of government and industry reports (Bell, Goodall, May, Nugent *et al*).

Drawing on a larger study of the history of television and immigration, and an associated oral history project, this chapter traces some ways that early television in Australia contributed to the formation of a national and international sense of belonging among its diversifying audiences.² Although there have been studies about the vital role of the media in creating a sense of identity and belonging for migrants to Australia during the late twentieth century (Cunningham and Sinclair), little scholarly consideration has been given to what television meant for migrants in earlier decades. I will investigate that gap, and also examine the impact of television in assisting migrants in the process of settlement in their new country. I will also look at the influence in Australia of two popular television dramas about Asian societies as illustrative of the relationship between the Australian television and the globalizing flows of media production, circulation and consumption within and across the Asia-Pacific region.

Television Comes to Australia

Television is both a ubiquitous and powerful presence in everyday life. The content of its programs have deeply penetrated our cultural imaginations, and program scheduling and viewing practices serve to

structure our daily routines and behaviours. The intimacy of television as a domestic medium situates it within the mundane and subliminal "ordinariness" of our lives, in ways that may be perceived to be outside the realm of national history and historical processes. Yet, from its technologies to its programming production and audience reception, television is an historical phenomenon, and the complexities of television culture can only be understood within their historical moment.

This history of television is relatively short in Australia. Television initially was transmitted in 1956 in the two largest cities of Sydney and Melbourne, just in time for the viewing of the Olympic Games in the latter. The Melbourne Olympics were a key moment for post-war Australia, and by hosting the world's famed sporting competition it was felt that Australia was taking a rightfully elevated position in international affairs and would continue to develop its global influence (Davison). The presence in Melbourne of journalists and film crews from around the world to cover the Olympic Games spurred the necessity that domestic audiences have television access to an event that was simultaneously international in its reach and participation and national in its execution and location.

However, it was not until 1959 that television was available in the other state capitals of Adelaide, Perth, Brisbane and Hobart. Access to a clear transmission signal was to take much longer still in non-metropolitan areas. Almost everyone's first experience of television was communal, as it was watched with friends, relatives and neighbours in both private homes and domestic spaces prior to the mass-purchasing of individual sets. However, by the early 1960s Australians had embraced the new technology with great enthusiasm, and, where there was reception, the vast majority of homes either purchased or rented a

television set.

Television not only shaped the cultural and social lives of Australians in the late 1950s and 1960s, but also was highly influential as a source of news and general perspectives on the wider world. In the aftermath of World War II, Australia's international relations had shifted. The war had forced Australians to be alert to their geographical location in the Asia-Pacific and the implication of this for trade, communications and regional security alliances. Percy Spender, Minister for External Affairs in the Liberal government of Robert Menzies that came to power in 1949, argued that in the post-war period Australia's "centre of gravity" in the world had shifted to its immediate region. This was evident in the Australian support for regional economic development, including investment in such schemes as the Colombo Plan, which sponsored international students from the Asia-Pacific to study in Australia in order to gain new skills to take back to their own countries. In a speech given on March 1950 to the Federal Parliament, Spender laid out the foundations of a new Australian foreign policy that was to dominate the following decades:

We are indeed a Pacific power. . . . We have similar interests, strategic and otherwise, in the South and South-East Asian area. No nation can escape its geography. . . . Even though our cultural ties have and will remain predominantly with Europe . . . we live side by side with the countries of South and South East Asia and we desire to be on good neighbour terms with them.

(*Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates*, 621–40)

Australia's cultural ties with America, not to mention links related

to trade and security, had also strengthened in the aftermath of World War II. Spender was instrumental in Australia being a signatory to the ANZUS Treaty with New Zealand and the United States in 1951. This signaled a significant shift in Australia's alliance with the United States, and both nations shared a fear of Communism and believed in the "domino principle"—that is, that the 1949 Communist victory in China would lead to communist insurgency throughout South-East Asia. The Cold War and conflict in Korea and Vietnam underpinned Australia's relationship with America in the 1950s and 1960s. So too did the expansion of economic and cultural interactions between the two nations, which was evident in the influence of American popular culture.

In Australia, the introduction of television in 1956 coincided with an unprecedented period of industrial expansion and high export prices. By the second half of the 1950s, this had resulted in increased prosperity for most Australians. The increased birth-rate and the surge in population due to migration led to substantial growth in infrastructure, commercial and industrial facilities, and new housing within Australian cities. These factors contributed to the spread of suburbia, with its accompanying and highly prevalent social aspirations for home ownership—ideally of a family dwelling on a quarter-acre block. This meant that television also arrived in tandem with, and indeed spurred on, the rise of a modern consumer society in Australia which was centered on the home and the suburb. The availability of television, and its visualization of modern life, both facilitated and reflected what Michelle Arrow has called "Australia's transformation from a production to a consumption-oriented society" (144).

Aligned to both the growth of suburbia and consumerism in Australia's postwar decades was a renewed and politicized interest in the role

of the family within the community, and by extension within the nation (Levi and Nichols). In this context, the impact of television on family interactions, and on the social and physical development of children, was to be widely and vigorously debated by educators, politicians and the media. Just as children and teenagers were to become new market-segments for the promotion and expansion of consumer goods in the 1950s, they also comprised audience categories for television programs and advertising. Television was criticized by some as a deterrent to a stable and productive family life—through both the family practice of watching television and the unwelcome influences conveyed through the content of its programming (Darian-Smith, Spigel). But it was more generally seen as a positive force on the recreational and educational activities of Australians, and as a visual extension of the programs that had been popular on radio: news, sports, variety and games shows and serial dramas.

Programming on Australian television during the 1950s and 1960s was dominated by imported shows from the United States and United Kingdom, continuing a practice of imported films shown in the cinema that dated back to the 1920s. Just as Hollywood films had often been criticized in Australia for contributing to the “Americanization” of Australian culture—a phenomenon seen as undesirable by many intellectuals and commentators—so too were American television programs. In the very first years of Australian television, programs from the United States predominated on the commercial channels, and it was largely the national broadcaster, the Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC), that provided some British and Australian alternatives. Early television programming served to highlight the significance of imported global programs over those that were made within Australia. At the same

time, television advertising was often so highly localized to its regional town or city that it also functioned to obscure the place of a national identity formed through television content. By the 1960s, this was to change with increased Australian content on commercial channels as well and subsequent decades witnessed a growing sense of ‘the nation’ in television programming across all genres, from drama to news to comedy (Turner).

One sizeable constituency that has not been addressed in the existing histories of early television in Australia has been that of its migrant groups: the initial postwar intake of European refugees, the next wave of migrants from the Mediterranean and the large numbers of arrivals from Britain. Indeed, the existing scholarship on the history of television has also ignored what we might think of as a prehistory of television viewing, including the prior knowledge and experiences of television that migrants brought to Australia from other countries.

Migration, Memory and Television

The arrival of television to Australia from 1956 coincided with massive demographic and economic change across the nation. The rapid expansion of industry and infrastructure, and high prices for primary exports, meant that by the late 1950s Australians had entered a “long boom” of economic prosperity. The mass-scale migration scheme launched by the Australian government after World War II brought waves of migrants from Central, Northern and Southern Europe to work in the expanding manufacturing sector. While the largest groups of migrants came from Britain, by the early 1960s there were substantial communities of new

arrivals from non-English-speaking countries, particularly Italy and Greece.

For British migrants—many of them sponsored on the “Ten Pound Pom” immigration scheme—television in Australia offered a mix of familiar and unfamiliar programming. Alistair Thomson’s study of British women who moved to Australia during the 1960s and 1970s reveals that for these migrants the screening of British television shows provided a “potent” link with their family and friends left behind (121). In a letter “home” to England, one woman wrote of the American as well as British programs that were available: “television out here is like the BBC in England. We have *Mickey Mouse*, *Z Cars*, and *Sooty and Sweep*, *Steptoe and Son*” (40).

The exchange of views and news about British television serials expressed through correspondence between British migrants in Australia and their families in Britain maintained a sense of connection, collapsing the distance between the two nations. The popularity in Australia of British television serials such as *Coronation Street* also meant that British migrants could share their expert knowledge of contemporary British life with Australian neighbours and friends (Thomson, 121).

But television also offered British migrants—as well as other new arrivals—a point of entry into Australian cultural life and sensibilities. The language and gags of local advertisements and variety programs, as well as television personalities such as Melbourne’s Graham Kennedy and Bert Newton, highlighted a particular sense of Australian values and humour (Thomson, 121).

Australian news, and current affairs programs, also aired political and social issues of national importance, and in doing so conveyed to new migrants a sense of Australia’s place within the wider world and

the key domestic issues and political concerns. In the 1950s and 1960s, Australia’s international links focused on the strengthening of diplomatic, security and economic ties with the United States, and the continued maintenance of the long-established relationship with Britain. Indeed, the enthusiasm of Australians for Britain can be seen in the extraordinary responses in 1954 to the Royal Tour of Queen Elizabeth II throughout the continent. Once television commenced, the national broadcaster ABC television screened much British content. The popularity of the British royal family extended to non-British migrants, who equated this with a demonstration of Australian nationalism. For instance, the Verins family, Latvian migrants who had arrived in Australia in 1951 and made a home in the inner Melbourne suburb of Brunswick, bought their first television in time for the televised royal wedding of Princess Margaret in 1960—an event greeted with much interest and excitement in Australia (Irene V and Nina V).

In comparison with the United Kingdom and the United States—where television broadcasting commenced in the 1930s, was interrupted by World War II and resumed in the 1940s—early Australian television was relatively undeveloped in its initial production and transmission technologies. Television was certainly not a novelty for migrants from Britain. It is likely that the majority had direct experience of television ownership within their immediate or extended family prior to migration, and in any case British migrants were well acquainted with domestic television etiquette.

Moreover, the rapid take-up of television in Australia after 1956 resulted in an initial shortfall of experienced technicians able to install and repair sets. In order to meet this shortage, skilled technicians were sought from the United Kingdom, not just to work in suburban businesses

and for companies like Astor, but also to provide the knowledge in the production areas of the ABC and the commercial television studios. The Commonwealth Department of Immigration, responsible for the promotion of Australia to potential migrants, documented profiles of successful British migrants who worked as technicians within the growing television industry (National Archives of Australia). Such profiles were intended not only to lure other potential British migrants to Australia, but also to address the shortage of skills needed in a modern media industry.

In contrast, while British migrants "knew" television, those from Italy and Greece in the 1950s and 1960s generally had little or no direct experience of its domestic viewing prior to their migration to Australia. Television broadcasting, which operated under state ownership, began in Italy in 1954 but with a reach that was expensive and limited. The 1950s were a period of reconstruction and social and industrial transformation in Italy, with millions of Italians moving within the country: from Southern to Northern Italy, from small villages to large cities, and from occupations in agriculture to those in industry. In this environment, and contrary to the expectations of intellectuals and politicians, television was to become an immediate success. At first, for most Italians, television sets were too expensive for the average family. This meant that television was viewed in a public setting such as in bars and cafes, in cinemas and even in churches. By 1958, there were around thirty people watching every television set in Italy, attesting to the communal nature of the medium (Buonanno, 15). In 1961, a second channel, also state owned, was introduced and by the mid-1960s television in Italy had a nationwide audience, with sets increasingly purchased for the home. In a country still characterized by a high level of illiteracy, with a

traditionally low circulation of the daily press (among the lowest in the world) and irregularity of school attendance, television quickly became the most widespread form of media in Italy.



Image 1:
Mr Angelo Revello, a migrant from Turin, Italy, at work editing a film for Australian television. NAA: A12111, 1/1958/16/72, 1958.

In Greece, the situation was somewhat different. With an agricultural economy and a long period of rebuilding after World War II, television was not introduced until 1966, with limited viewing under a state-owned monopoly. In 1968, a second channel, under the control of the military junta government, was opened. However, television transmission remained unavailable to many Greeks living outside Athens and other cities and towns until the early 1980s. In Greece as in Italy, television was also initially often watched in a communal setting, and took time to become commonplace in individual homes.

Therefore, of the hundreds of thousands of Italians and Greeks who came to Australia, the vast majority had never owned a television set and many had never seen television—or if they had, it was in a bar

or other public place. For those with little education, the image-based nature of television proved a boon to learning English, whether this was a conscious acquisition or not. This was particularly effective for children, including those of pre-school age, whose parents spoke no English in the family home. Nicholas V recalled that when his family came from Greece, he was aged five and had several younger siblings. English was learnt once they started school, but "having another source of English [on television] would have assisted immensely." There was also incentive to learn English so as to follow and enjoy the plotlines of favourite television series (Nicholas V).

The influence of the American and British accents that were heard in imported television programs on the acquisition of English language by migrant children and adults is difficult to assess. Francesco G, who migrated from Sicily as an adult, and had some education and an interest in politics, recalled that he taught himself English by listening to the broadcast of Australian parliamentary debates on ABC radio. He found that the images on television were a distraction, and that he did not have to concentrate so hard to understand the thrust of the story (Francesco G).

For schoolboy migrant Dmetri Kakni, "television was no mere entertainment" but "a benevolent tool of the government, an electronic medium that inducted new arrivals in local rituals and habits." He reasoned that, "if one acted on the lessons imparted by the all-knowing box, one would assimilate very quickly" (23).

Ownership of a television set could serve as an important marker of social and economic status. Maria's family, who came from Calabria and settled in western Sydney, had saved up carefully for a television. Once they were accustomed to the television as a feature in the lounge

room, it was turned on constantly, and competed with the highly voluble Italian family conversations (Maria G). Armanda also recalled that her father drew television into a family narrative of migrant success in Australia, often telling the story that he was "the first in the street to buy a television." She remembered that many Italian migrants always had their set turned on in the family home, and watched it for lengthy periods and often in social groups (Armanda S). For Nicholas V's large Greek family, a television set was a prized possession:

We didn't have a television until we moved into our own house in North Richmond and that's only because my siblings and I would go and watch TV in the showroom of a furniture shop in the main street, in Victoria Street. . . . And then one of my aunts who lived nearby and was newly married bought a TV, and we used to go and watch it there. So eventually my father bought a cheap secondhand TV that didn't work very well to the point that one of us used to have to sit underneath a table to balance the floor so it would get good reception. Eventually he bought a [new] TV on hire purchase, a Thorn Atlas, which he paid off over a number of months or years. That took pride of place in our house. (Nicholas V)

The parents of Nicholas V never watched television or listened to the radio during the 1950s and 1960s, although they did play records and had an active social life within community and ethnic organizations. This was because they both worked long hours in factories, leaving little time to settle in front of the television or to learn more than rudimentary English. Indeed, prior to 1964 only 2.5 per cent of all media content in

Australia could be broadcast in languages other than English, which then required an immediate translation to avoid complaints to the Australian Broadcasting Control Board (Ang, Hawkins and Dabboussy, 15).

Gradually, however, the rules were relaxed and both commercial and community radio played a part in the development of "ethnic" content. By the 1970s, the official policy of multiculturalism spurred the establishment by the Whitlam government of two Ethnic Australia radio stations, which provided news and other programs in languages other than English as a service for migrant communities. The popularity of the broadcasting of Ethnic Radio led to the establishment of the Special Broadcasting Service (SBS), which by the 1980s was responsible for the development of a multilingual television network that was to expand television's reach even further into Australian homes (Ang, Hawkins and Dabboussy, 8–9). The impact of television programming, including drama serials, variety shows and news services, in languages other than English was to have a remarkable effect on some migrants. "When I first saw SBS television," wrote Italian-Australian Anna Maria Dell'oso, "I cried . . . because I felt some part of my story had finally been officially placed into the jigsaw puzzle that is society, Australian life . . . in the language of my parents" (O'Regan, 121).

The Samurai and Kung Fu: Imagining Asian Cultures

Television served as a bridge between Australia and the wider world in the 1950s and 1960s, but this was a world that was generally restricted to the United States and Britain if it is to be measured by the origin and the content of the programming that was available. News services and

documentaries were more expansive in their coverage of other countries and international events, but overall were Anglicized in their outlook. In this last part of this chapter, I explore how television was to play a unique and often forgotten role in providing insight into the histories and cultures of Asia and more specifically into the past cultures of Japan and China.

My focus is on high-rating popular television serial dramas, rather than movies or other one-off documentary programs. It is certainly worth noting, however, that during the 1950s to 1970s there was a steady stream of highly patriotic American and British movies shown on Australian television—often on Saturday afternoon or evening—about World War II, including war in the Pacific theatre. Such movies provided Australians with dramatic representations of an historical event that was still very present within living memory, and often incorporated negative images of Asia and Asians (and in particular the Japanese) in this wartime context.

In 1964, in an extraordinary venture, the commercial Channel 9 broadcast *The Samurai*, the first Japanese television serial ever shown in Australia. Made by Senkosha Productions, with its Australian screening dubbed with American-accented English, *The Samurai* depicted the exploits of a roving samurai warrior in eighteenth-century Japan, with story arcs including lost treasure, ninja warfare and much horse-riding and sword-fighting. It was to prove an unexpected success, despite residual anti-Japanese sentiment in Australia in the aftermath of World War II. The drama was particularly popular with "five- to fourteen-year-olds," and was screened at the weekday prime slot of 5.30 p.m. so that it could be viewed after the school day (*A. Australian Women's Weekly*). By 1965, *The Samurai* had become Channel 9's most successful

children's television program, even surpassing the popular The Mickey Mouse Club, which was imported from the United States.

The surprise hit of *The Samurai* was to generate the first visit to Australia by a Japanese "celebrity" in the postwar decades. In the summer of 1965–66, its star, the Japanese actor Ose Koichi, toured Sydney and Melbourne where he appeared in a sold-out stage show based on the series that was held at the Sydney Stadium and Melbourne's Festival Hall (B. *Australian Women's Weekly*). Around 7,000 people, including many children and teenagers aged between 9–14 years, were dressed as ninjas when they greeted Koichi at Essendon Airport in Melbourne. This huge crowd of fans was estimated to be a larger than the screaming throng who had welcomed the Beatles when they flew in to Melbourne on their 1964 tour (Simigaglia).

The televised screening of The Samurai series was not without controversy. In 1965, the *Daily Mirror* newspaper reported that Rex Morgan, the headmaster of a Sydney preparatory school, Pittwater House, had "banned Shintaro [swap] cards and any association with the cult." Denying he was a "right-wing reactionary," Morgan asserted:

I question the mental health of a nation which permits its schoolchildren to be exposed to the current cult of Japanese sadism and cruelty in the guise of a TV hero. I should have thought we had enough of this sort of thing during the war without glorifying such attitudes by the present TV representation. . . . This type of programme is producing sick, soft and unmanly attitudes in Australian society. (A. *Daily Mirror*)

A *Daily Mirror* reader was quick to defend the values of *The Samurai*:

I am the father of three boys from 4 to 7½ years. The three of them watch the show as well as myself. All of us are attracted by the beauty of the art direction, camera work and general presentation of the series which is a fairly honest portrayal of life in early Japan. To see my boys running, jumping and only very occasionally standing still in emulation of the physical feats of the good or bad, seems quite the reverse of soft and unmanly. (B. *Daily Mirror*)

This debate about *The Samurai* is illustrative of the complexities of the histories of the early years of television in Australia, and in particular illustrates the ways in which television influenced audiences to appreciate

Image 2:

Australian Women's Weekly, Wednesday 18 August 1965, p. 16. Reproduced with the permission of Bauer Media Limited. National Library of Australia.



both Asian cultures and the nation's geographical place in the region. With the escalation of Australia's role in the Vietnam War, South-East Asia was to appear regularly in television news. There is certainly more research to be done on how Australians learnt about their region through news of the Vietnam War, which was more heavily censored in Australia by the government than in the United States (Anderson).

In the period of the Cold War during the 1950s and 1960s, China also was depicted to Australians primarily through the news. By the 1970s, however, images of an historic and culturally rich China came for the first time to Australian television with the screening of the highly popular American television series *Kung Fu*. This series was made between 1972 and 1975, and starred the actor David Carradine. His character was the Shaolin monk Kwai Chang Caine, the orphaned son of an American father and Chinese mother who had met in mid-nineteenth century China. Trained as a Shaolin priest and martial arts expert, Kwai Chang Caine was forced to flee China after killing the Chinese emperor's nephew. The series covered his exploits as a fugitive in the Old West of the United States, where he searched for his American relatives. Regular flashbacks in each episode to Kwai Chang Caine's training in the monastery in China were to emphasize the mental and spiritual power of the kung fu style of martial arts.

These flashbacks also provided the audience with images of China as a place and of Chinese culture, although both were relegated to a mystical past that bore little resemblance to contemporary China and its communist government. There was, however, an attempt by the creators to present the China of *Kung Fu* as an authentic re-enactment of an historic China. It was alleged that the American writer/creator of the series, Ed Spielman, had studied Mandarin and spent long periods of

time researching kung fu in New York's Chinatown.

The popularity of the *Kung Fu* television series in Australia echoed other developments in popular culture during the 1970s. The attraction of the drama was influenced by the growing audiences for Hong Kong cinema, and the mounting fascination in the West with the physical and spiritual dimensions of Asian martial arts. As with *The Samurais*, older children and teenagers comprised a sizeable segment of the audience for *Kung Fu*—and through its American values, transposed onto a China of long-ago, these young Australians came to imagine and interact with an imaginative sense of Asia and its peoples.

By the mid-1960s, television was becoming a firm and dominant presence in the daily routines of work, school and leisure for Australians. Apart from a brief initial period, television was watched and understood in the private realm of the home and the family. It coexisted with older media forms such as radio or the cinema, but was beginning to eclipse these in terms of influence. The physical replacement of the radio set with the television as the central recreational feature of the lounge room was symbolic of this shift.

Moreover, the content of television programs in the 1960s and 1970s, and its power as a visual media, was absorbed in varying and diverse ways into the imaginative and cultural regimes of adults and children. In this way, the stories of imported television serial-dramas such as *The Samurais* and *Kung Fu* increasingly both challenged and affirmed ideas about national values and Australia's place in the world—including in the Asia-Pacific region. By the 1980s, SBS television was purchasing programs from many overseas nations, primarily in Europe but also in Asia. In the 1990s, the ABC and even the commercial television stations were seeking to be more engaged with Australia's Asia-Pacific

region in terms of news coverage and some documentaries, though it proved difficult to shift the Anglophone focus of drama programs. By the 2000s, extraordinary changes to both media technologies and Australia's population—the largest non-English language spoken at home in the recent 2011 Census was Mandarin—has meant that there are new ways that diasporic communities interact with their home and host countries with, and bypassing, conventional television (Australian Bureau of Statistics).

Conclusion

My purpose here has been to sketch out an important historical dimension to the history of television within the broader cultural history of Australia as a global and globalizing society. In the 1950s to 1970s, television was to play a key role in the material, emotional and imaginative regimes of Australian viewers and their relationship with both national and international events, places and peoples. For recent migrants, television's imported content sometimes offered comfort and familiarity through it images and news of their past home and this was a situation commonly experienced by those who had come to Australia from Britain. Those who arrived from non-English speaking countries, including the thousands of migrants from Greece and Italy in the postwar decades, found that through television they would be informed, whether consciously or not, about the language, cultures and values of Australia as these were depicted in news, variety and current affairs programs as well as locally produced dramas.

But all Australians, whether migrant or locally born, would learn

about the United States and Britain through programming imported from those two great international powers. They could also learn about an idea—if less a reality—of Japan and China through imported television drama serials. Television programs such as *The Samurai* and *Kung Fu* were extraordinarily popular, especially with younger audiences, and perhaps part of that appeal was that the positive representation of Japanese or Chinese cultures bore little resemblance to the images of the Asian region that appeared on news broadcasts. In these ways, the “expanding horizons” provided by television in the early decades of its transmission were multiple and complex, contributing to how Australian audiences imagined and understood their nation, as well as the wider world.

Notes:

1 This is a revised version of a paper first presented at the Australian Studies Regional Symposium (Asia-Pacific), Australian Studies Association of Japan, held at Doshisha University, Kyoto, in September 2012. It draws on some material from Darian-Smith and Hamilton.

2 Further research on television and migration is ongoing, and is funded by the Australian Research Council: LP150100202 “Migration, Cultural Diversity and Television: Reflecting Modern Australia” from 2016–2018. I am also grateful to the University of Melbourne and Museum Victoria for initial funding under the McCoy Seed Grants in 2014.

References:

- Anderson, Fay. "The 'Uncensored Television War'? Memories and Experiences of the Australian Coverage of the Vietnam War." *Remembering Television: Histories, Technologies, Memories*. Ed. Kate Darian-Smith and Sue Turnbull. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012. 210–227. Print.
- Ang, Ien, Gay Hawkins, and Larissa Daboussy, eds. *The SBS Story: The Challenge of Cultural Diversity*. Sydney: UNSW Press, 2008. Print.
- Arrow, Michelle. "16 September 1956: 'It's Here, At Last!' The Introduction of Television into Australia." *Turning Points in Australian History*. Eds. Martin Crofty and David Roberts. Sydney: UNSW Press, 2009. 143–56. Print.
- Australian Bureau of Statistics. "Reflecting a Nation: Stories from the 2011 Census, 2012–2013." Cat. No. 2701.0, (2013). Print.
- Australian Women's Weekly* A. 27 July (1965). Print.
- Australian Women's Weekly* B. 12 January (1966). Print.
- Bell, Philip. *Multicultural Australia in the media: a report to the Office of Multicultural Affairs*. Canberra: Dept. of Prime Minister and Cabinet, Office of Multicultural Affairs, 1993. Print.
- Buonanno, Milly. *The Age of Television: Experiences and Theories*. Bristol: Intellect, 2008. Print.
- Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates*. Vol. 206. 9 March (1950): 621–40. Print.
- Cunningham, Stuart, and John Sinclair, eds. *Floating Lives: The Media and Asian Diasporas*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001.
- Daily Mirror* (Sydney) A. 14 December 1965. Print.
- Daily Mirror* (Sydney) B. 23 December 1965. Print.
- Darian-Smith, Kate, and Paula Hamilton. "Part of the Family: Australian Histories of Television, Migration and Memory." *Remembering Television: Histories, Technologies, Memories*. Eds. Kate Darian-Smith and Sue Turnbull. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012. 30–51. Print.
- Darian-Smith, Kate. "Children, Families and Nation in 1950s Australia." *Child's Play: Dorothy Howard and the Folklore of Australian Children*. Eds. Kate Darian-Smith and June Factor. Musiam Victoria, 2005. 19–40. Print.
- Davison, Graeme. "Welcoming the world: The 1956 Olympic games and the representation of Melbourne." *Australian Historical Studies*, vol. 27, no 109. (1997) 64–76. Print.
- G, Francesco. Interview with Paula Hamilton. 12 March 2011.
- G, Maria. Interview with Paula Hamilton. 12 March 2011.
- Goodall, Heather. *Racism, Cultural Pluralism and the Media: A report to the Office of Multicultural Affairs*. Canberra: Dept. of Prime Minister and Cabinet, Office of Multicultural Affairs, 1990. Print.
- Jupp, James. *From White Australia to Woomera: The Story of Australian Immigration*. Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1997. Print.
- Kakmi, Dmetri. "Night of the Living Wog." *Joyful Strains: Making Australia Home*. Ed. Kent MacCarter and Ali Lemer. Melbourne: Affirm Press, 2013. 19–31. Print.
- Levi, Hannah and David Nichols, eds. *Community: Building Modern Australia*. Sydney: UNSW Press, 2010. Print.
- May, Harvey. *Broadcast in Colour: Cultural Diversity and Television Programming in Four Countries*. Woolloomooloo, NSW: Australian Film Commission, 2002. Print.
- National Archives of Australia. "The Immigration Photographic Archive." 20 September 2015. <http://www.naa.gov.au/collection/fact-sheets/fs254.aspx>.
- Nugent, Stephen, Milica Loncar and Kate Aisbett. *The People We See on TV: Cultural Diversity on Television*. North Sydney: Australian Broadcasting Authority, 1993. Print.
- O'Regan, Tom. *Australian Television Culture*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1993.
- S, Armada. Interview with Paula Hamilton. 20 March 2011. Print.
- Simigliola, Marco. *Shinaroi! The Samurai Sensation that Swept a Nation*. Documentary Film. Sydney: Screenworld, 2009. Print.
- Spigel, Lynne. *Make Room for TV: Television and the Family Ideal in Postwar America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992. Print.
- Tavan, Gwenda. *The Long, Slow Death of White Australia*. Melbourne: Scribe, 2005. Print.
- Thomson, Alistair. *Moving Stories: An Intimate History of Four Women Across Two Countries*. Sydney: UNSW Press, 2011. Print.
- Turner, Graeme. *Making it National: Nationalism and Australian Popular Culture*. St Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1994. Print.
- V, Irene, and Nina V. Interview with Kate Darian-Smith. 7 November 2010.
- V, Nicholas. Interview with Kate Darian-Smith. 3 May 2010.
- White, Richard. "'The Australian Way of Life'." *Australian Historical Studies*, vol. 18, October 1979: 528–545. Print.