THE WRONG CROWD

An online documentary

and

Analytical contextualisation

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

June 2003
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ABSTRACT

The Wrong Crowd

the theory and the practice of creating a personal history-documentary online.

This doctoral study comprises two parts. 75 per cent of the total weight of the submission consists of the creative component, the writing, directing and producing of a moving-image documentary in an online environment (supplementary material includes the script). Cutting edge technology (QTVR ‘movies’ and Live Stage Professional software) was used to create an immersive cinematic experience on the net.

*The Wrong Crowd* can be viewed either online at www.abc.net.au/wrongcrowd or offline via a CD Rom (the latter includes the radio play ‘Death of a Prostitute’ which was excised from the version published via ABC Online because of legal concerns on the part of the ABC lawyers).

The second part of the doctorate is the analytical contextualisation, comprising 25 per cent of the submission. This part examines the critical literature on the nature of the documentary form, documentary as history, cultural memory and the autobiography as history. Documentary exists as a truth-claim. History also embraces the search for evidence. The history documentary has a television form from which the online version is derived. The nature of the internet as a delivery platform for the moving image is
discussed with reference to the truth claim as founded in the visible evidence - the news coverage – the ‘this really happened’. The evidence however is open to interpretation for the historical record and is retold to suit the present power relations (the funding bodies, the commissioning editors, etc). In a CD Rom and more so online, this tendency towards individual interpretation is amplified to the point where the viewer can participate in the construction of the argument via a navigable database. Visually, the change from the temporal montage of the linear television documentary to spatial montage of the windows interface has led us to reconnect with computer-based moving images as a form of animated painting. Conventional screen theories of engagement and reception are invoked to aid in the discussion of modified cinematic conventions of editing and framing within the online form.

The case-study of one of the inaugural Australian Film Commission funded online documentaries, *The Wrong Crowd: Inside the Family Outside the Law*, is a personal history narrative that intersects with Queensland police history from the 1950s to the late 1970s at the moments of inquiries into issues of police brutality and corruption.
Statement of Originality

This work has not been submitted for a degree or diploma in any university. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the work contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the work itself.

Signature _____________________________

Date _________________________________
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge the Australian Film Commission as singular in its support for the uncovering of the other side of the Bjelke-Petersen story. In the first instance, the support was through Jane Oehr for research and development funding for the compilation documentary supervised by Ian Stocks as part of my Masters by Research Degree in 1996. The initial title Don't You Worry About That was revised to Manufacturing Dissent in 1997. In 2000, Peter Kaufmann at the Australian Film Commission recognised the potential for this research to become one of the inaugural AFC/ABC online documentaries.

I would also like to acknowledge the support of Professor Stuart Cunningham, Dr Gary MacLennan and Richard Jones and I thank them for their solidarity.

None of the work would have been possible without the love of my partner, John Ridgway, and our three beautiful children Serena, Simonne and Robert James, who have sustained me through the difficult journey I chose to undertake amongst the liminal and chthonic realms of story-telling the past.

Finally, I acknowledge all the staff at Toadshow and their empathy in helping to translate the journey into a form navigable in cyberspace.
THE WRONG CROWD

Man has an insatiable longing for justice. In his soul he rebels against a social order which denies it to him, and whatever the world he lives in, he accuses either that social order or the entire material universe of injustice. Man is filled with a strange, stubborn urge to remember, to think things out and to change things; and in addition he carries within himself the wish to have what he cannot have – if only in the form of a fairy tale. That is perhaps the basis for the heroic sagas of all ages, all religions, all peoples and all classes.

From Ivan Olbracht’s Der Rauber Nikola Schuhaf
Quoted in Eric Hobsbawm, Bandits (2000:145)
CHAPTER ONE
HISTORY, DOCUMENTARY, MEMORY

Introduction

The core of this doctoral project is the production of a history-documentary in an online environment, using as a case-study one of the four Australian Film Commission funded inaugural programs published by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation via ABC Online in 2002. The creative component of the Ph.D. is not only this completed work, which is available, online at www.abc.net.au/documentaryonline or in the attached CD-ROM but also the attached script, Appendix One. The Wrong Crowd (the online documentary, CD Rom and script) represent 75% of the total doctoral work. This analytical contextualisation is 25%.

At the commencement of my doctoral candidacy in 2000, I was seeking to produce a broadcast version of the compilation documentary Manufacturing Dissent (1997) which I had completed for my Masters Research Degree. That documentary set out to contest the present dominant account of the administration of the era, which is that Queensland grew as a prosperous and peaceful place under the strong rule of Bjelke-Petersen. This mainstream interpretation is found in the accounts in Hugh Lunn’s Joh (1984), Rae Wear’s The Lord’s Premier (2002), Des Sturgess’ Tangled Web (2001) and most recently in the updated Premiers of Queensland (Wear 2003). My compilation documentary sought to excavate a buried history of the alternative documentaries of the Bjelke-Petersen era, and examined how the then Premier transformed Queensland into a State
founded on fear and social divisiveness by pitting certain sections of the citizenry against others in his relentless pursuit of electoral success.

On the eve of the Queensland State election in 1996, I was somewhat taken aback by a discussion with a group of 18 year old first time voters who were arguing that ‘there was no real difference between the major parties’. Yet, in 1989, only seven years earlier, I could remember an earlier generation, the then youth of Brisbane celebrating what seemed to be our equivalent of the fall of the Berlin Wall! The National Party had finally been defeated after 32 years and there was literally dancing in the street (most memorably in the centre of the city, in the fountain in King George Square). There was a spontaneous and genuine expression of liberation from the pattern of police harassment at the behest of the government that had existed for so long, and yet, in just seven years, the intensity of the historic experience of 1989 had been lost. History was being buried right before my eyes. As a documentarian, I was troubled at how rapidly popular memory was being eroded. Not long after being awarded the Masters degree in 1997, I presented the documentary at the Australian History Teachers’ Conference and the audience response affirmed that this burying of recent Queensland history was also a concern with teachers.

So I began further research on representations in moving images of the Bjelke-Petersen era to uncover what was becoming of the history of Queensland’s extra-parliamentary opposition. Through the Documentary Mentor Scheme run in 1999/2000, and auspiced by QDox (the Queensland documentary-makers industry group) under the umbrella of the Pacific Film and Television Commission, I negotiated with Look Films from Sydney to
package the research into a broadcast proposal to ABC-TV. Will Davies (Look Films) who had successfully completed *Tales from A Suitcase* for SBS invited me to direct the two North Queensland episodes for the second series - the oral histories of post-war refugees.

As part of the proposal package for the ABC submission, I conducted what was probably the last coherent interview with the Bjelke-Petersen in December, 1999, before the onset of his Parkinson’s disease. This interview was a profound experience for me – to meet face to face with a man who had been a source of fear for a significant part of my adult life. There were no great revelations in his answers – they seemed to be the stock responses that he had given to issues throughout his political career. There was a shift in my perception however as I drove home from Kingaroy that afternoon – the icon now had a human face.

The script I submitted as part of my production proposal for the doctorate was this broadcast version. The script then moved through a number of incarnations in the course of the doctoral program as outlined in acknowledgements. It is important to recognize the Australian Film Commission’s support for the uncovering of the other side of the Bjelke-Petersen story. In the first instance, the support was through Jane Oehr who funded the research dubs for the compilation documentary (which was supervised by Ian Stocks in 1996 as part of my Masters), and then entitled *Don't You Worry About That*. The script treatment then moved into a more detailed historiography, still aiming for the platform of broadcast television. The inspiration for this version came from a documentary based
around the international workers’ union, The Wobblies. The treatment based on this style and approach was the one submitted to the Australian Broadcasting Corporation under the title Beyond The Joke (2000).

This development history has explanatory value for an analysis of the approach and style of the present work. The changes in the title are significant because they reflect the change in my awareness of how Queensland-based subject matter is viewed interstate and overseas. The one Queensland documentary mentioned in Winston’s Claiming the Real is Cane Toads (Winston 1995:255) and I realised with Don’t You Worry About That (1997) I was following this tradition of presenting the quirkiness of Queensland. For the next scripts, I wanted to move away from the joke that Queensland was portrayed as during the Joh years. (‘The Joke’ also referred to the network of police/political corruption detailed and diagrammed in Phil Dickie’s book, The Road to Fitzgerald (1988). So I decided on the title Beyond the Joke (2000) to indicate that we would be looking underneath the superficiality of Queensland as a cultural backwater populated by not very bright hedonists. In that script, I also looked beyond the documented evidence of corruption to the more pervasive modes of exchange that affected social relations at the time.

The ABC Commissioning Editor rejected that script for a pre-sale on broadcast television with the comment that ‘they weren’t interested in history-films’. (Recounted in letter from Will Davies, October, 2000). I would argue that the response of the commissioning editor at that time reflected the status of modern history generally within the community.
With the emerging postmodern influence in documentary-funding bodies, history programs became of interest only if the proposed program was to be told through a personal narrative as in the SBSI’s *Grandfathers and Revolution*, (Hegedus 1998). The SBS Commissioning Editor to whom I also showed the ABC package suggested that the personal focus of my experiences as the daughter and niece of policemen had potential appeal for a broadcaster. I was most reluctant however to produce a broadcast documentary of a personal nature because in this instance the lens would be focussed on my family who were deeply divided on their interpretation of the past and in their willingness to discover the truth of that past.

In 2000, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation began a collaboration with the government film agencies in the form of an online accord. The approach adopted was similar to the pattern of the production accords that already applied between the Film Finance Corporation and the public broadcasters for the production and broadcast of documentary programs for television. In the new online initiative however, the accord was between the Australian Broadcasting Corporation and the Australian Film Commission whereby these two partners combined to provide funding to documentary producers and web-based teams with a guaranteed delivery mechanism for the resulting product on the ABC’s own online portal.

In late 2000, the AFC’s ‘Documentary Online’ initiative commenced with a call for documentary projects that would ‘explore the online environment in innovative, challenging and original ways’ (www.afc.gov.au/services/funding//guides). The initiative
received an ‘overwhelming’ response to the call for submissions – 116 submissions were received in all, from that eleven projects nationwide were shortlisted for a Stage 2 funded development phase in early 2001. Being short-listed for the Scheme, we received $2,000 in seed-money to develop a diagrammatic site-map and interface design. From the short-list, the Australian Film Commission then provided $100,000 in cash support for each of the four final projects selected and scheduled for production July 2001 – July 2002. The Wrong Crowd was shot in July – December 2001 and post-produced in January – June, 2002. The ABC then provided the delivery mechanism (after the checking of legal requirements) via its website, publishing the finished works for an initial 12 months from August 2002, with the option to renew for another three years (www.abc.net.au/documentaryonline).

Theoretical issues that emerged from writing, directing and producing the online documentary surround the present form of the documentary and the potentialities of its transition into a datacasting context. In discussing the changes to the documentary form, I seek to explore the intersections that occur between documentary evidence, history, memory and truth as they merge in a ‘creative treatment of actuality’ in a semi-autobiographical mode which is to be delivered via a new media platform, the key feature of which is navigable narration. *The Wrong Crowd: Inside the Family, Outside the Law*, is dedicated to those who Eric Hobsbawm describes in *Bandits* (2000) as developing ‘in the 1960s and 1970s [as] a curious postscript to the history of traditional social banditry’ (Hobsbawm 2000:189), and these were the ‘delinquents’ whose energy and courage contributed so much to Brisbane’s social and creative culture in the decades of my growing-up.

The following study is divided into three major chapters – the first chapter deals with issues of history and cultural memory and the form of the history-documentary. The second chapter is devoted to building an understanding of digital revolution in the moving image and its impact on the documentary form, in which I articulate the production process for the online environment, invoking cinema screen theory to describe the model of potential audience reception for this new kind of screen-work. The third chapter is a more detailed discussion of the online documentary case-study that is at the core of the PhD – *The Wrong Crowd*. This final chapter also reviews the work of cyber-theorists, cyber-psychologists and cyber-philosophers to further understand the new delivery platform of the Internet for digital cinema and ‘animated paintings’.
History and Popular Memory

1. (a) Background

‘hope is alive as long as there is a witness – or as long as the witnesses themselves do not die without witnesses’


Coming from a background of broadcast documentarian/historian, I have always been interested in uncovering buried histories, having produced documentaries for the Special Broadcasting Service on the South Sea Islanders’ arrival in Queensland, *Kidnapped* (1988) and on the contribution of Aborigines to the defence of northern Australia in WW2 for the National Seven Network, *No Bugles No Drums* (1990). Both these stories had been absented from the matriculation curriculum for Modern History and earlier school-studies in Australian history.

On this occasion however I was seeking to uncover the buried stories of the Bjelke-Petersen era and particularly the role of the Queensland Police Force in the government’s electoral success. In doing so I was encouraged by commissioning editors to uncover the microhistory of my own family, specifically stories of my father and his two brothers, all Queensland policemen (one Uncle being the subject of public scrutiny for his actions during a student demonstration in 1976). There is also the tragic story of my mother’s first husband who was beaten by a Queensland policeman in a Mt Isa watchhouse. (Mick Jorgensen subsequently died from the injuries inflicted upon him that night and his death
was the subject of the first long-running coronial inquiry into police conduct in Queensland).

*The Wrong Crowd* as a title for the project came about because that is what one of my relatives told me when I wanted to know what Dad was like. As Uncle Bill explained it, “He wasn’t a bad man, darling, he just got in with the wrong crowd”, a very strange comment I thought to describe a policeman and his colleagues. The comment also resonated for me because it was the way my dissident behaviour at University was dismissed by my family. My actions and beliefs weren’t taken seriously because they were just the product of my having started mixing with ‘the wrong crowd’ – social justice activists, civil liberties campaigners, actors, artists, musicians, and writers.

The refusal to affirm the legitimacy of the actions of the extra-parliamentary opposition to the Bjelke-Petersen government and the failure to acknowledge the endorsement by the majority of Queenslanders of overt and covert politically sponsored police violence against that opposition has left the State with a stunted collective moral character. Within the present retelling of the history of the era, there is a negation of the moral truth of what that delegitimation meant to a generation. What is at stake in confronting the truth about the past is the refusal on the part of the hegemonic institutions to come to terms with what a legitimate expression of democratic freedom means. Denying the past means never having to confront the truth about complicity. This argument on the implications of ‘buried histories’ is expanded in the following section.
In the research for this project, I was struck by the breadth and the depth of the collective memory of the era with respect to police and community relations at that time. My field research has included archiving the interviews from Nick Torrens’ tapes of the Radicals’ Reunion (1992), the 4ZZZ-FM Twenty Five Year Reunion (2001) and also the Labour History Conference papers (2002) from Brisbane activists of the sixties and seventies. I have also done more lengthy interviews with Trevor Stuart Smith and Bryan Nason (both actors and directors), Brian Laver, Mitch Thompson, Dan O’Neill, Errol O’Neill and Sam Watson (civil rights activists) and Nigel Powell (ex-Vice Squad) on their memories and observations of the era. I have approached the research of these suppressed popular memories through the methodology of the ethnographer recording interviews/testimonies at moments of significant commemoration, as well as the recounting of significant events at the site of the event. The website of The Wrong Crowd has also provided testimony from visitors to the site, as has publicity in the Courier Mail such as the feature Sins of Our Fathers (2001) which resulted in a number of interviews with people personally affected by events of the era.

This doctoral research project then is the natural culmination of a career concerned with uncovering buried histories, working within an oral tradition. Theorising of this praxis in an online environment is contained in following chapters.

1. (b) Buried Histories

What are the issues at stake when a history is buried? What is at issue are ideas about
power and voice and the legitimised expression of those ideas so that moral truths are acknowledged and upheld. The importance for the psychological growth of a community to acknowledge the truth about its past is discussed later in greater detail with reference to the work of Alexandre and Margarete Mitscherlich in Germany in the sixties and seventies.

Who is burying Queensland’s history? and why? Stuart Hall’s work in Policing the Crisis (1978), though not directly related to civil disobedience, points to some important ways in which placing demonstrators and dissenters outside the law affected the way the discourse was treated by the media. The liberal democratic concept of media process, that of two sides of the debate, working through the issues to achieve a consensus, failed to operate, because as an opposition, ‘criminals’ are not legitimate. Bjelke-Petersen’s response to the growth of the New Left in Queensland was to recycle the anti-Communist rhetoric of the Cold War heyday of the fifties. ‘Radical’ in Bjelke-Petersen’s Queensland was an extremely derogatory term.

What is involved in the uncovering of buried histories? As John Tosh argues in The Pursuit of History (1991), the fight for the historical record is fierce – “a political battleground”. Stuart Hall argues that the mass media (the primary source of ‘documents’ for the documentarian of history) reproduces the definitions of the powerful, not as a conspiracy but because the media is structured to over-access the definitions of those in power. The language of the past is perpetuated in discussions of the past where Queenslanders who had a dissenting view are characterised as ‘radicals’ and ‘socialists’
and the Premier as one who fulfilled our Queensland ‘Penchant for strong men’, the headline for Greg Chamberlin’s review of the recently updated *Premiers of Queensland* by Rae Wear (Chamberlin 2003:11).

History however is not just what is included in the historical records of journalists or cultural commentators. History is our memories. I have conducted a broad review of literature in the fields of cultural theory, social history, social psychology and trauma theory that includes Halbwachs (1992), Benjamin (1968), the Mitscherlichs (1969), Caruth (1996) and Freud (1939/1961) With all of these writers, I have drawn from their observations on how citizens remember public events and how a state documents its citizens’ memories in order to write a state’s history. With the exception of Halbwachs, who was formulating his theories in the 1920s, all of the sources formulated their discussions around the events of the Third Reich. I must state emphatically at the outset of my study that though the history of Queensland is not in any degree comparable in enormity and intensity to Germany’s Nazi past, the literature and discussions that pertain to that time and place resonate in the approach I have taken to the vexed example of Queensland police history.

Ross Gibson’s *Seven Versions of an Australian Badland* (2002) draws on the work of the Mitscherlichs, social psychologists who worked with individuals coming to terms with their experiences of the trauma of Germany’s Nazi past, as outlined in *Society Without A Father* (1969) and *The Inability to Mourn* (1975). The Mitscherlichs argued that denying ourselves a truthful understanding of our collective history as a society has the same
deleterious effect as an individual who refuses to reflect on and learn from their own personal history. Gibson references their work in describing the socio-cultural history of a particular section of the old Queensland highway known as The Horror Stretch from Sarina to Mackay in the North of the State. In recounting this history, he alludes to the ‘ghosts’ and the ‘hauntings’ that the area is known for and argues that the Mitscherlich’s model of social melancholy can be usefully applied to understanding the troubled past of this part of North Queensland. To recount history effectively, the historian must recall the entirety, including the horrors, without any denials and erasures. “To deny the entirety of a story is usually to refuse difficulty, to wish away difference or contradiction. From such refusal melancholy looms” (Gibson 2002:180).

The process of uncovering my own family’s buried history has been therapeutic for me and lifted much of the melancholy I felt about it. Speaking out about experiences with friends and colleagues from 1960s and 1970s has also provided a much-needed transition in bringing buried hurts to the surface, and allowed us as a group to strengthen bonds forged by those shared experiences. The website is now providing an opportunity for a larger group of Queenslanders and expatriates to explore their history and bring it forward into their present, as evidenced by the range of anecdotes I have stored via electronic mail since The Wrong Crowd’s publication in July, 2002. Some of these have been quite moving and often prefaced with a comment to the effect that the sender has not spoken or written for decades of the painful event they are about to share. The following is a couple of paragraphs taken from a quite lengthy recounting of a number of events of a student who arrived here in 1972 from Tasmania. It is typical of the kinds of
responses the website has aroused.

My personal contact with the Queensland Police was no less traumatic. On many occasions when my friends and I were at parties, visiting friends and even sitting at home having our dinner we were raided by the police who gave all manner of excuses to unlawfully enter the house without a search warrant, the most common one, of course, being to search for drugs. On one occasion at a friend's party they raided, without justification, they assaulted me, throwing me against the wall. On another occasion at a friend's house they illegally entered they verbally assaulted me, yelling disgusting obscenities and threatening to bash me beyond recognition and throw me in jail. And I got mild treatment compared to my friends, who were savagely punched by these bullies from hell …I have further stories to tell of the brutality of the Queensland Police that I was either told about or witnessed personally, but the emotional scars are bit raw at the moment after having brought back the memories in the telling. So I need to let the pain of these memories settle a bit. Then I may tell the other stories.

In Michel Foucault’s famous interview on ‘Film and Popular Memory’ with the Cahiers du Cinema collective, he argued that the “battle over popular memory” is fought out daily in the mass media and that it is the voice of the dominant ideology that dominates the debate. The focus at the first Australian History and Film Conference in 1985 was on Foucault’s argument and on how the documentary form in both the cinema and on television has become the twentieth century’s history teacher. How this battle for the popular memory is conducted in Queensland is exemplified in the case of the ABC
journalist in her twenties researching for a program on Sir Joh and Lady Flo for a 2002 *Australian Story*. She has researched by watching the footage of programs from the mainstream of that era and repeated in her report the dominant view of the dominant ideology in the 1970s in Queensland – ‘like him or hate him, he was good for Queensland’. If she had researched in alternative to the mainstream accounts, she would have found that in the 1970s the ex-Premier closed down Fred Hollows’ trachoma program for Aborigines. This was one of the great things he did for Queensland. When the AIDS epidemic was threatening, he had condom vending machines at university campuses removed by police officers. This was another one of the great things he did for Queensland. In 1985 he sacked over a thousand SEQEB (Energex) workers, many of whose lives were ruined. This was one of the great things that Bjelke-Petersen did for Queensland, and none of these were mentioned in *Australian Story* 2002.

So what remains of the ethos of the Bjelke-Petersen era as a vein to be tapped in the present Queensland psyche? Are there certain memories being documented? Whose are being buried? What of the disinherited of whom Rainer Maria Rilke said ‘to whom no longer what’s been and not yet what’s coming belongs’? (Agamben 1993:43). During the Bjelke-Petersen era, civil rights were consistently denied to the ‘disinherited’. The gays, the blacks, hippies, and young people who mixed with civil rights activists were all seen by the government to be not worth protecting.
The decade before my story starts is the story of police batonning a man in 1948. This event is re-enacted in the documentary *The Legend of Fred Patterson* (1992) by Pat Laughren and Owen Johnston, and is at the core of the play by Errol O’Neill, *Popular Front*. At a demonstration supporting the Shearer’s Strike, Fred Patterson MLA (Australia’s first and only Communist Party Member of Parliament) is batonned by a Queensland policeman (he suffered brain damage from which he never recovered).

In the courtroom investigating the policeman’s actions, one of the characters breaks into a Brechtian address to the audience with these words.

“Well you’ve heard the evidence, ladies and gentlemen of the jury. Now you must consider your verdict. You must decide whether Fred Patterson was savagely and brutally attacked by Detective Mahony ... or whether it was some other … acting under orders he was powerless to change... orders from Premier Ned Hanlon, or some other ... or acting under orders from an electorate, a society that had already decided who was and wasn’t worth protecting”.

This is one of the themes I seek to explore - who was and who wasn’t deemed to be worth protecting in Bjelke-Petersen’s Queensland? When I was a young student, I learnt that the homes of Aboriginal people and hippies were not deemed worth protecting and could be burnt down by the Queensland police with no public outcry. When the government ordered a military-style police raid on a hippie commune in Far North Queensland that included the burning of the hippies’ homes, what became known as the Cedar Bay story was initially ignored by the mainstream media until a journalist from alternative radio station 4ZZZ (Steve Gray) broadcast a report that was picked up by
Andrew Olle from the ABC’s Four Corners who then sent an investigative team to visit there.

Ross Fitzgerald was the consultant historian for *The Legend of Fred Paterson* (1996) and for the other documentary by Johnston and Laughren on Queensland history, *Red Ted and the Great Depression* (1994). Fitzgerald’s view of the Bjelke-Petersen era in *History of Queensland From 1915 to the 1980s* (1984) is that Bjelke-Petersen was one of a long line of authoritarian Premiers whose electoral success relied on the admiration of the Queensland populace for toughness in its leaders. Hugh Lunn is also seen as a key social commentator of the era and Lunn’s phrase ‘love him or hate him, Joh was good for Queensland’ is as I have said, the dominant view echoed by young journalists preparing retrospective programs today. The quote however that was picked up from my proposal by one of the SBS Commissioning Editors as having most resonance for a national audience was that “In twenty years time people will look back and think this is all a fairytale, how a man with twenty percent of the vote could unseat a Federal government” (Preface of Hugh Lunn’s *Joh*, 1984).

The argument underlying the online documentary *The Wrong Crowd* (2002) is that the Bjelke-Petersen era was not part of a continuity, that it was unprecedented in the pervasiveness of its control of the police, the media and electoral politics. The historical record provided by Evan Whitton and by Peter Coaldrake aligns more closely with this view. In *The Hillbilly Dictator* (1989) Whitton described it thus, “In Queensland, ‘socialist’ was a code word for Communist; Labor people were referred to as ‘socialists’.
It may seem difficult to portray [Prime Minister Gough] Whitlam, 56, a middle class barrister who had an interest in sewer ing the outer suburbs of Sydney, as an agent of the Comintern, but Bjelke-Petersen managed it” (Whitton 1989:23). In Peter Coaldrake’s chapter ‘Critics Emasulated’, Working the System (1989) he re-iterates this point that “by the eighties …to attack the Premier …was to risk being labelled …anti-Queensland” (1989:151). If voting Labor could earn you the tag of ‘socialist’, or of being ‘anti-Queensland’ then becoming involved in social protest left you open to the consequences of the ex-Premier’s dictum, that ‘if you fly with the crows, squawk like a crow and look like a crow, you can’t yell out if you get shot at’ (Price, Hancock and Scholz 1988:20).

In the course of my research I have uncovered the visual archives of Bruce Dixon’s footage in the University of Queensland library (Bruce was employed at the Student Union in the 1970s and filmed many hours of the Right to March demonstrations of 1977 and 1978). I also located the original tape of the documentary produced by Ian Curr and the New Left Press, If You Don’t Fight, You Lose (1978) and sent it to the Film Archives in Canberra to be transferred to a viewable format. The visible evidence that exists for the violence that existed between the Queensland Police Force and the State’s youth is minimal (the violence was often perpetrated out of the view of a camera, systemic and hidden by definition) and it was heavily contextualised. When it was broadcast on television, it was presented within an argument that such police brutality was necessary to keep the forces of unruly modernity at bay. There is one piece of news footage however, filmed on 29 July, 1976 that acts in my project as a videographic trope for the era. The footage is of a short, mature-age, female protestor just as she is hit on the head with a
baton produced by a senior police officer. The moment occurs towards the end of a demonstration against a reduction in student allowances, the first demonstration the woman had ever attended. The students had been walking for some time from the campus at St Lucia and were about to enter the city proper. That blow would have remained a secret – he did, no, he didn’t – but that it was caught by a cameraman who’d arrived to cover the demonstration.

In Paula Rabinowitz’ chapter on video verite, ‘Rodney King in the City of Angels of History’, she cites Walter Benjamin speaking on the occasion of the ninetieth anniversary of the invention of photography. “The camera is getting smaller and smaller, ever readier to capture fleeting and secret moments whose images paralyse the associative mechanisms of the beholder” (Rabinowitz 1994:206). Benjamin as I understand it was referring to the footage of the Jewish ghetto – footage truly horrific and paralysing. The Queensland footage I include was not horrific in the sense that the Rodney King or the ghetto footage was horrific, but in July of 1976 the ‘baton incident’ was played and replayed on Queensland television over a number of days and weeks.
Police Commissioner Whitrod called for an Inquiry into the officer’s actions on the grounds that such violence was unacceptable but the Premier countered that there would be no Inquiry because whatever happened, the government supported the police actions. Rabinowitz’ argument that when we see the footage of Rodney King being beaten, we see a body in pain that ‘signifies truth and reality with an immediacy that needs no contextualization’ (1994:208) - our sense of injustice is visceral. The American footage
acts as a videographic trope, ‘a synecdoche for the many other unrecorded beatings of African Americans and Latinos by the LAPD’ (1994:212). The context in the U.S. setting was racism.

Though not violent to the same degree, the Coronation Drive footage or ‘the baton incident’ became, for me, a synecdoche for the many other unrecorded beatings of young people in Brisbane in the 60s and 70s by the Queensland Police Force. For me it is the synecdoche of a whole regime, at once political/militaristic/overbearingly conservative, the product of long decades of power in a gerrymandered state with very low levels of education. The histories of Queensland by Frank Brennan (1983), Roger Scott (1984) Ross Fitzgerald (1984) and Evan Whitton (1989) all agree on this assessment of the era.

The power of the framed image to document events is unquestionable. As Paula Rabinowitz argues however it is the ‘reconstruction and reproduction of the image that hold the possibility for interpreting history’ (1994:210). In my desire to reconstruct and reproduce this particular image lies the rationale for my interpretation of history. It operates within the online documentary as an item of visible evidence embedded in the personal narrative under ‘Director’s Notes - Uncle Mark’.

The historian E.H. Carr in *What is History?* (1964) discusses how his view of history is refracted through having grown up in the full flood of Victorian optimism, that ‘something remains with [him] of the hopefulness that then was easy’ (1964:106). Growing up in the full flood of Queensland paranoia and cultural divisiveness, something
remains with me, and with many of my friends and colleagues, of the fear that was then so prevalent. We spent our childhoods in the shadow of The Bomb, our adolescence in apprehension of The Draft and our early adulthood in fear of The Baton. It would seem from the title of Krauth and Sheahan’s compilation of Queensland creative writing of that era, *From Paradise to Paranoia* (1995), there are many more who share this view.

O.K. Werckmeister, in his article ‘Walter Benjamin’s Angel of History’, ruminates on Paul Klee’s watercolour *Angelus Novus* (1920). The angel became the focus for Benjamin’s *Theses on the Philosophy of History* and has become an icon for many on the Left of the catastrophic view of history and for the powerlessness of its witnesses. Walter Benjamin’s angel of history wants to redeem the past, but ultimately she will fail. She is the persona however that I try to wrap around myself in this documentary. There will be no judgement day and it is very unlikely the wicked will be cast down. But the victims can be remembered, we can still bear witness. For Benjamin, that is what the dead expect of us. They want to be remembered, they want not to be absented from the collective memory. Though Queensland police brutality was a mere shadow of the Third Reich violence, it is the same instinct to bear witness to the injustices that compels me.

In *Archive Fever* (1995) Jacques Derrida reflects on the contemporary obsession with storing data and of the need for remembering, for bearing witness to the past wrongs, to foregrounding the absences from the dominant ideology’s world view. Derrida quotes at length from Freud’s contemplation on *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory* and contemplates Freud’s question, “Is it possible that the antonym of ‘forgetting’ is not
‘remembering’, but justice?” (1995:77) highlighting what is essentially the injustice of emerging historians like David Irving who want to deny the reality of the Holocaust.

‘We are our memories’. This comment is by ‘Uncle Bob’ Anderson, Aboriginal elder and veteran trade unionist, at the Labour and History conference in 2002. He was sharing his witnessing of the tears of Aboriginal women from Arakun as they told him the story of their homes burned down by the Weipa police, and how this witnessing had become a part of his memory. Not long after the houses were destroyed, Comalco moved in to Weipa to commence their mining operations. The oral testimony of these women is also recorded in David Bradbury’s State of Shock (1989) a documentary that deals with the background story of Alwyn Peters, jailed for the murder of his young wife. The Peters family had been one of many forcibly removed from their homes and ‘resettled’ by the mining company, and made severely dysfunctional by the enforced dislocation. ‘Uncle Bob’ argued that once retold, this story became a part of his memory and he, as witness to those tears, retold it to us as a part of our shared history. Memories are history and whatever the historical record absents, the collective memories sustain.

Where are the absences in the history of Queensland? What is being forgotten? Denied? Over the two decades of Bjelke-Petersen’s administration, the Queensland police were consistently mobilised against any challenges to the Premier’s authority. The mobilisations covered anti-racism activists, anti-freeway protestors, university students, environmentalists, feminists, hippies, and in 1985, the former Premier used the police in a brutal attempt to crush the union movement. With the constant increase in police power,
there also grew a corrupt police leadership, accountable to no-one.

For me, personally, the absences cover the range of tales of heroism, bravery, camaraderie and loyalty from what Hobsbawm might call Queensland’s ‘social bandits’ – the ‘radicals’ described to me as a young girl as ‘the wrong crowd’.

1. (c) Trauma, Narrative and History

Why is it important to produce a history that describes events of the Bjelke-Petersen era from the point of view of those who were silenced at the time? The answer to this is intertwined with why it has been important for me to uncover the buried history of my own family. To remember experiences of trauma, to face them honestly, ‘in their entirety’ and to reflect on them are the necessary steps in a transition towards maturity. There are many of my generation who were marginalised by the Bjelke-Petersen government and because that marginalisation occurred during a formative period of their lives, they have not yet felt a sense of reconciliation with the mainstream. The sense of being on the outside, and in the wrong crowd, has remained with them.

Our journeys towards understanding our parents are life long. I was most reluctant to share my journey publicly. It was however the vehicle in which the funding bodies were interested - the personal story narrated as the spine for the public history. The documentation of the traumatic experiences of my generation required an exposition of my particular point of view and I had to be prepared to intertwine the two, the private and
the public narratives of life during the Bjelke-Petersen regime.

Annette Kuhn in *Family Secrets* (1995) describes how this kind of memory-work is like straddling the two camps of cultural criticism and cultural production, when we begin the task of looking at the ways memory shapes the stories we tell ourselves. ‘Private and public are less readily separable than conventional wisdom would have us believe’ (Kuhn 1995:4). She argues that our recourse to the past is in fact a way of reaching for myth, ‘for the story that is deep enough to express the profound feelings we have in the present’ (Kuhn 1995:1).

This myth-making based on expressing profound feelings, often of grief and trauma, is also taken up in the work of Cathy Caruth in *Unclaimed Experience, Trauma, Narrative and History* (1996). She elucidates how another form of memory-work - therapeutic re-enactments of personal trauma - might translate into a transitional experience, on a broader level, for a larger group within a society. Caruth engages Freud’s theory of trauma in *The Origin of Religion: Moses and Monotheism* (1985) and *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1961) in which Freud describes the pattern of repeated physical suffering persistent in the lives of certain individuals. The ‘traumatic neurosis’, as Freud described it, is the unwitting repetition of an event that cannot be left behind because it has not yet been assimilated psychologically. In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Freud relates the mythic tale of Tasso’s *Gerusalemme Liberata* (1961:24) in which the hero Tancred unwittingly kills his love Clorinda in a battle. After the funeral, Tancred is riding through the forest, is mysteriously spooked, and begins to slash aimlessly at a tree with...
his sword. Blood streams from the cut and Tancred hears Clorinda’s voice asking why
has he wounded her a second time?

It is this metaphoric tale of The Wound and The Voice that strikes Caruth – a voice that is
released through the re-opening of a wound. The voice bears witness to the past that
Tancred does not wish to acknowledge, to a truth that Tancred does not want to know.
For Caruth, as a professor of literature, there is a major intersection between literature
and psychoanalysis in this specific moment of not knowing and knowing.

The origin of the very word trauma in the Greek is ‘wound’. In psychoanalysis, it is a
wound of the mind and not directly locatable in the original event of an individual’s past
but in the way that it is unassimilated – not known – that it returns to haunt the survivor
later on in their life. Freud gives an example of a train accident in which a person walks
away physically unharmed but suffers symptoms of shock weeks later as another way of
illustrating the ‘traumatic neurosis’ experienced after a violent event. What returns to
haunt the survivor is not just the reality of the violent event but the reality of the way that
its violence has not yet been fully assimilated, known, witnessed. For many decades of
my adult life, when I was under stress, a pain/ache/intense sensitivity would circle around
my wrist. I never knew why. The dreams, the vivid memories of the night of my mother
leaving my father and taking her with me dissipated over the years but the pain that
circled my wrist continued. It was not until the night that the film crew and I set up the
re-enactment of that traumatic event (‘Running Away – 1964’) that the detail of how my
mother held my wrist returned to me. As I (playing my mother) linked hands with my
youngest daughter (playing me), I realised I couldn’t hold her tightly enough by the hand to actually drag her along as my mother had dragged a reluctant me along all those decades ago, so I grabbed her around the wrist to maintain a better grip on an uncooperative child.

The re-enactment allowed the physical element of the trauma of the event to be made known to me. It brought the physical memory to my conscious adult awareness; it brought it there for me to bear witness. I had physically survived the leaving of my father but the crisis at the core of me had stayed. That was my history – the profound link between the loss of my father (and my father’s loss of me) and my ongoing life. This was my crying wound, and the night that we filmed that scene, that we re-enacted that trauma of the event, I listened to a voice that I could not fully know, but that I could nonetheless bear witness to.

Caruth takes on the metaphors contained in Freud’s writing on trauma – metaphors that relate to the repetitive enactments in our memories and how they are an attempt to tell ourselves of a reality or truth that is not yet assimilated in us, that is demanding us to bear witness to the event. Freud’s history of the Jews in *Moses and Monotheism* (1985) and his approach to that collective trauma is the starting point for her work theorising ‘unclaimed experiences’ in the narratives of trauma in collective history, as addressed in literature and in film. During the Bjelke-Petersen era of the 1970s and 1980s, the experiences of many young people were experiences of trauma, of being physically bashed, of being sexually abused by figures of authority (particularly police), of being
devalued in the workplace, of by being shunned by family, of by being marginalised in the media and by the mainstream of the creative arts. Up until now, other than in the novels of Nyst (Cop This, 1999), Armanno (Firehead, 1996) and McGahan (Last Drinks, 2000) and the plays of O’Neill (Popular Front, 1988 and Hope of the World, 1995) and Jill Shearer (The Family, 1995), these have all been ‘unclaimed experiences’ for the majority of the generation who experienced them.

To a more detailed degree, in The Inability to Mourn (1975), Alexandre and Margarete Mitscherlich combine their expertise in classical psychoanalytic theory with their scholarship of social and historical processes to outline certain principles of collective behaviour in Germany’s dealing with its Nazi past. Their book draws out the threads between the need for the individual and the society to address past trauma. They argue that, ‘Nations seek to shrugged off their guilt, and far from repenting, they will steal away from the scene of the crime without compunction. They can do so because no super-ego stands guard over them as it does over the individual. Their sole guide is an uncertain general consensus’ (Mitscherlich 1975:xvii).

We Queenslanders suffer from this ‘uncertain general consensus’ and do not yet understand either ourselves or our own actions during a shameful period in our history, and this is partly because of a lack of will on the part of the present to address the issue of remembering the past in its ‘entirety’ (Gibson 2002:180) The Mitscherlich’s research and case-studies reference those sectors of the German citizenry who were complicit in the outcomes of the Nazi state. Drawing on the ideas explored by the Mitscherlichs on the
implications of guilt for a nation or State, Ross Gibson muses on the denial of regional Queensland’s colonial past and the refusal of the present hegemonic social institutions to listen to the ‘whispering in our hearts’ (Reynolds 1997). I would argue that the negation of the moral truth of the Bjelke-Petersen era in present mainstream media commentaries is an attempt to steal away from the scene of the crime and stunts the development of our collective moral character.

After giving seminar and conference papers screening the alternative compilation-documentary footage from the era, I am often approached by audience members afterward who say thank you for bringing these issues out into a public forum, and in an affirming way for those who had been designated as part of the wrong crowd. These people need to be acknowledged, to hear that they were right to demonstrate against apartheid, against attacks on civil liberties, against the Acts that controlled every aspect of Aboriginal lives, against the punitive abortion laws, but never on any level, official or otherwise, has Queensland culture indicated to those who became the extra-parliamentary opposition and were criminalised for it, that their stance was vindicated.

**Documentary**

1. (d) **History and the document(ary) as evidence**

‘While history will rarely be able to say: this is the truth and no other answer is possible; it will always be able to say: this once existed or took place, and there is therefore a truth to be discovered if only we can find it’ (Elton 1969:74).
In the nineteenth century, historians fetishised the facts. The Positivists argued for a history that could be taken with the seriousness of a science. ‘Facts are what we need’ Mr Gradgrind told the readers of Dickens’ *Hard Times*, and in order to prove a fact the historian needs documents and so began the link between historical truth and documentary evidence. Like the dominant ‘hard’ sciences of the past century, history-writing too has demanded ‘hard’ evidence. It devalued that which had not been previously recorded. Unsubstantiated experience was dismissed as ‘hearsay’. As Scott McQuire points out in *Visions of Modernity* (1999:166), the inadmissibility of the oral testimony of indigenous Australians (and their lack of written records) with relation to land tenure allowed the fiction of the history of *terra nullius* to continue. This was not overturned until 1992 by the Mabo case in which the Meriam language was finally granted legal status and their oral evidence admitted as argument.

In *What is History?* (1964) E. H. Carr argues that this earlier notion of a value-free gathering of facts was not supported by any underlying philosophy and it was not until Voltaire began his *Lettres Philosophiques* that historians began to reconsider. Influenced by Voltaire, Croce began to put forward a philosophy of history that recognised the role of the historian in deciding which facts were or were not worth saving, which documents would be selected and recorded and which left to disappear without trace. Croce argued that all history is contemporary history, that the past is always seen through the eyes of the present and so is open to interpretation and so re-interpretation.

If we accept then that the historian interprets, is there an objective truth of history to be
told? To come closer to an understanding of this question requires us to realise that history writing is a reflection of the times in which the history is written. The historian interprets the past from the point of view of the present that she inhabits. Carr makes the observation here that ‘there is no more significant pointer to the character of a society than the kind of history that it writes or fails to write’ (1961:37). Carr discusses the problem of facts and values in the word ‘truth’ arguing as he does that the word straddles elements of both, and not only in the English language is this so. The word for truth in Latin 
\textit{veritas} and in the German \textit{wahrheit} and the Russian \textit{pravda} – all possess this dual character. ‘Somewhere between these two poles – the north pole for valueless facts and the south pole of value judgements still struggling to form themselves into facts – lies the realm of historical truth’ (1961:126).

If the objectivity of the historian can be the subject of so much debate, how much more so that of the documentarian producing history programs for television? Content choices in documentary-making are governed by the need to tell a story but a story that has strong images. Colin McArthur’s monograph \textit{Television and History} (1978) was a culmination of a strong focus on history and popular memory in Britain in the late 1970s which discusses the ways in which the dominant practices of history-writing and the dominant practices of television production have tended to reinforce each other. In the chapter, ‘The Institution of Television and the Idea of Tele-History’, McArthur quotes Stuart Hall’s analysis of what constitutes ‘good’ television. Amongst other things, “‘Good’ television is visually dramatic, the pictures are full of incident. ‘Bad’ television is static, talking heads, long camera takes, pictures which do not ‘move’ …” (Hall, 1976:248).
Therein lie some clues for how television production practice has reinforced the dominant practices of history writing. Pictures full of incident are given a privileged position with the authority of ‘the real’ in that if there aren’t good pictures to back up the narration then that part of the story may well be overlooked.

With respect to the creation of powerful images, Lutz Koepnick’s 1996 article in *Critical Inquiry* alludes to the impact of Carl Schmitt’s political thought (particularly *Die Diktatur*, Munich, 1928) on Walter Benjamin’s discussion of *Das Trauerspiel/The Spectacle*. Koepnick argues that contained within Benjamin’s work on baroque drama there lies a commentary on the politics of the period (1920s), that is politics as spectacle. Schmitt anchors political legitimacy in the formal criterion of decisiveness during periods of exception. “Challenged through states of emergency, resolute leaders simultaneously assume the role of ‘judge, dictator, sovereign and pope’” (Koepnick 1996:285). Bjelke-Petersen’s media adviser during the anti apartheid demonstrations of 1971 was Allen Callaghan and he recognised early in the Premier’s career the electoral advantages in Queensland of promoting the image of the resolute leader in a state of emergency. Photo-journalists in Queensland caught the images of the conflict generated and the spectacle of hundreds of police arresting hundreds of demonstrators, and these were positioned against the decisive images of Bjelke-Petersen asserting the need for law and order.

During the ‘right to march’ years, the view from in front of police lines was very different to the view behind police lines. Analyses of these differing viewpoints from either side of the police lines are covered in detail in Stuart Hall’s *Policing the Crisis*
(1978) a discussion of Thatcher’s Britain and Ian Ward’s study of the Australian scene in *Politics and the Media* (1995). These texts and the writings of the Glasgow Media Group describe the effect of news constituted as ‘us versus them’, where the mode of address is such that it excludes the strikers or the protestors, placing them in a category separate from the broadcast news audience.

As part of a 1976 national campaign against uranium mining there were a number of demonstrations organised across Australia. In Queensland, Premier Bjelke-Petersen declared that “nobody, including the Communist Party or anyone else, is going to turn the streets of Brisbane into a forum. Protest groups need not bother applying for permits to stage marches because they won’t be granted” (Fitzgerald 1984:572). In the Courier Mail, the journalists wrote, quoting the Premier, ‘The day of the political street march is over. Anyone who holds a street march spontaneously or otherwise will know they’re acting illegally … Don’t bother applying for a permit. You won’t get one. That’s government policy now’ (Courier Mail, 5 September, 1977).

The first ‘Right to March’ protest was held the day before the State election in 1977. There were 2000 people, six hundred police – and 172 arrests. Most of all there were pictures, pictures of demonstrators being arrested and the ‘spectacle’ of law-breakers being dealt with. The strong leader was re-elected. The ‘spectacles’ created by the Premier, worked as ‘agenda-priming’ (Ward 1995) for a repressive police-state, and support for Bjelke-Petersen as the father figure, the protective patriarch, keeping Queensland society safe from the forces of modernity. The truth of that claim is debated
in Brennan’s *Too Much Law and Too Little Order* (1983) where it is shown that the demonstrations in the years preceding the Premier’s decree had actually been relatively trouble-free (Brennan 1983:152) and ‘the task of ensuring an acceptable level of public tranquillity in the State has not been heavy’ (Brennan 1983:121). For the documentary I was producing, I did not want to simply repeat the ‘spectacle’ of the demonstrations. I felt it was more important to explore the personal politics behind that spectatorship and to activate the critical impulses that can emerge from the witnessing of conflict in specific montage.

Colin MacArthur pointed to another conventional practice of the television history documentary-maker that I sought to avoid - the centrality of the individual, particularly the ‘great man’. Historian Thomas Carlyle suggested that history should be the biography of great men and it seems that view is still prevalent amongst many of television’s commissioning editors, certainly the Seven Network who I first approached in 1997. They rejected my proposal because they said they themselves would produce in-house the documentary that they would screen ‘when the great man died’. In this Hegelian philosophy of history, the great historical individual is invoked again. For the documentary I sought to produce, I wanted to follow the tradition of the History from Below movement which argues that social and cultural memories are important signifiers of history and seeks to include the memories of the hitherto unrecorded.
1. (e) So whose memories make documented history?

The camera didn’t stay in the hands of the mainstream journalists. It was taken up as well by those on the other side of the police lines, or by amateurs like Zapruder, who in the 1960s embraced the new technology of the video camera with unexpected consequences for the writers of history. We began to experience in our lounge-rooms widely screened footage of historical events which had the impact of creating history for us, the viewers. History became a ‘media event’ and the media event then became a part of our personal narrative, “Where were you when?” When Kennedy was shot? When they landed on the moon? (Elsaesser 1998:211) The implication being where were you when the television news brought it to you? Showed it to you? Replayed it again and again for you? And thus it became a part of your memory and a part of the social framework of memory.

In *Visions of Modernity* (1998), Scott McQuire reflects on the significance for the historiographer when the footage of historical events is widely screened. He discusses in detail the Zapruder footage of the Kennedy assassination. For the commentator writing of this event, describing the act of the shooting and the writing of its significance are demarcated - the description and then the analysis. On viewing and positioning the film in a larger historical documentation however, the description and the analysis merge. There is a ‘fusion of the particular and the general’. In the selection and the positioning of the audio/visual/images/text for *The Wrong Crowd*, my concerns were with both the ethics of using certain documents as well as the aesthetics of them and the interplay of both.
In my selection of historic events, I was drawn to the story of Shirley Brifman, a young prostitute who died in police custody in mid 1971 in mysterious circumstances as she waited to give evidence against a senior member of the Queensland police force. There was no inquest, and no autopsy, and the assessment of the officers who visited her home in Clayfield on the morning of her death was that she had died from a self-inflicted overdose. Writer Steve Stockwell had written a short story published in the *Cane Toad Times* (1985) that echoed an ‘urban myth’ that had been circulating for years that Brifman had been visited that night by her policeman/lover. In Stockwell’s story, he lulls her into consuming the sleeping pills and Bundaberg Rum found at the scene by suggesting a joint suicide-pact, one that he reneged on as soon as she was unconscious. The account in David Hickie’s *The Prince and the Premier* (1985) is much less romantic and suggests that she was visited by a senior Queensland policeman in the company of the notorious Fred Krahe from Sydney who ‘shoved pills down her throat’ with a plastic tube. This latter view is also recounted in a Courier Mail interview with ex Police Commissioner Ray Whitrod headed ‘Suicides Were Murder’ (Courier Mail, September 2, 1988). The Stockwell short story appealed to me on ethical and aesthetic grounds and so I wrote an adaptation of it as a radio-play and created a QTVR scene to accompany it. The radio play and the scene were however deleted from the website at the request of the ABC lawyers who were concerned at the litigious history of the policeman being referred to, and so that chapter of Queensland’s police history is absented from the online narrative though the ‘urban myth’ continues to exist in our memories and the stories we tell each other.
Writing in the 1920s, Maurice Halbwachs (*On Collective Memory*, 1926/1992) was the first theorist to address how it is that an individual memory intersects with the collective memory. He argued that human memory could only function within a collective context. As an undergraduate, Halbwachs had studied with Marc Bloch and Lucien Febvre, the founders of what has since become known as the ‘Annales’ school of social history first formulated at Strasbourg in 1929. The Annalistes used primary source documents like the diaries of workers to create their histories of an era, and were the precursors of the French Popular Memory movement favoured by Foucault in the 1970s and the British History from Below school articulated by Eric Hobsbawm.

Eric Hobsbawm is an historian who eschews the ‘grand narrative’ and the ‘history of the great men’ arguing for the place of ‘remembered history’ as distinct from the official histories written in books. In his most recent text, *On History* (1997) Hobsbawm reflects on the importance of ‘what ordinary people remember of big events as distinct from what their betters think they should remember, or what historians can establish as having happened; and insofar as they turn memory into myth, how such myths are formed’ (1997:273). How can we reconstruct either the original feelings or the formation of the myth? Can we separate them? These are not insignificant questions. The reign of Bjelke-Petersen has been over since 1987 but we can expect a welter of celebration to recur at his imminent funeral. Given the present Premier’s constant appeals to populist sentiment, there is the very real prospect of a State funeral or such-like when the ‘myth of the great man’ will be retold. Why do myths attach themselves to some individuals and not others? The central element in the explanation of this mythogenesis is the perception of a ‘fit’ in
some respect or respects between a particular individual and a current stereotype of a hero or villain.

Allen Callaghan, with his expertise in the media (an ex ABC journalist) helped to mould the image of the Premier to fit the stereotype of the man upholding the old order, the fifties patriarch, protecting the electorate from the evils of modernity. The issue at stake for me was one of citizen’s rights and what those rights should be in a democratic society, and I remember the cheers for Dan O’Neill (recorded by Bruce Dixon, tapes lodged in University of Queensland’s Fryer Library) as he shouted that “There are no democratic rights in the streets of Brisbane” (Dixon 1977).

Ben Bradley, ex-editor of the Washington Post, once commented that journalism is the first draft of history and for the documentarist of history, the photo-journalist indeed provided the ‘eye witness’ images to be edited. As documentarists, when we revisit a public event, we have a range of documents, of ‘eye witness’ accounts to draw upon in order to fulfil our function of ‘the creative treatment of actuality’. As historiographers, we are in the process of editing and re-editing the available visual and textual evidence and within that we are reclaiming, constructing, and reconstructing a history. Public events occur and are photographed and recorded in newspapers and those records enter the public domain. It is in the nature of the photographic image that it is of a particular place and a particular time, and this has interesting consequences for the formulation of history. Those events however involve people whose existence is broader than that event. That public event is one moment in a lifetime of personal history.
Halbwach’s chapter on ‘The Collective Memory of the Family’ has particular resonance for *The Wrong Crowd* as a document of history as this has been the issue around which most of the conflict has arisen in the research. As I sought to uncover the truth about a number of significant family issues – the death of my mother’s first husband whilst in police custody, my mother running away with me from my policeman father and the bashing of a demonstrator by my policeman Uncle, other members of the family remonstrated that I had no right to uncover these buried traumas.

Halbwachs argued that memories within families express the general attitude of the group; they not only reproduce its history, but also define its nature and its qualities and weaknesses. When one says”, In our family … “One is to speak of a physical or a moral quality which is supposed to be inherent in the group, and which passes from the group to its members. However, when that phrase, “In our family…” is used in my family, there are no words that spring easily to mind to account for the death of Mick Jorgensen or the deserting of Sam Beattie or the bashing of Rosemarie Severin. The figurative skeletons of these events have been put firmly in the closet. If I were to speak, it would be to say “In our family, some husbands are beaten and die, some fathers are left desolate to drown in alcohol, and some uncles have vicious tempers and are brutal”. None of these things was acceptable to say, so there was silence, and the history of our family’s everyday life was untold. Memories are our history. They are what make us who we are. My memories of childhood and adolescence and early adulthood have been repressed, and this repression is akin to the ‘disinheriting’ that Giorgio Agamben refers to in *Infancy and History* (1993).
A ‘memory moment’ that I created for the uncovering of the personal history of the Jorgensen death was in the account of evenings in my cot. It was not one evening in particular. I was far too young to recollect a detailed account of one night, but an assembly in one scene of recollections over many evenings – recollections engraved in my memory of the light under the door and above the door as I stood and listened to my parents’ shouting at each other. It was only after I discovered the newspaper clippings that my mother had kept hidden in a shoebox that contained the details of the death of Mick Jorgensen (my mother’s first husband) that I could recreate the argument I imagine they had over and over again. Nevertheless, the scene as we shot it gives the viewer of a true idea of my family life at that time.

Sharing similar territory with the Annalistes and with Halbwachs are the practitioners of Alltagsgeschichte (or the history of everyday life). This movement took shape in the mid seventies, partly as a call for Germans to come to terms with their Nazi past. Alf Ludkte in his comprehensive Alltagsgeschichte/History of Everyday Life, (1995) explores social history in these experiential or subjective dimensions. This approach is what is applied to The Wrong Crowd and allows for a transcendence of the conventional distinctions between ‘public’ and ‘private’ history. For Ludtke, historical change and continuity are understood as the outcome of action by concrete groups and individuals, and he insists on the need for a systematic decentralisation of analysis and interpretation, through the careful construction of what he calls ‘historical miniatures’. In exploring these forms of ‘microhistory’, we can find a different way of approaching the big questions. It is useful to think of each of the seventeen scenes of the online documentary as ‘historical
miniatures’.

To a substantial degree, ‘alltagsgeschichte’ was advanced in Germany by writers and filmmakers. Alf Ludkte recalls the work of Eberhard Fechner in his 1979 television film *Das Leben der Klara Heydebreck*, which depicts the daily life and rituals of a war widow in Berlin, and Peter Stripp’s 1983 telemovie *Rote Erde (Red Earth)*. A year later, Edgar Reitz presented his marathon sixteen-hour movie *Heimat (Homeland)* a principled attempt at a visual chronicle of village life from the 1920s to the 1960s. In the spring of 1985, there was the broadcast of *Shoah*, Claude Lanzmann’s nine and a half hour film of documentary interviews interspersed with camera journeys over the tracks and terrain of the death camps as they appeared in the present of 1980s. Claude Lanzmann, after screening *Shoah* at the 36th Melbourne Film Festival in 1987 spoke of the process of breathing life into the past, resuscitating it, breathing life into ghosts, seeking evidence from ‘the other side’.

This principled call is one that is not yet found in the present-day work of Queensland documentarians. Unlike the early body of work from expatriates that included *Moonlight State* (1987) *Police State* (1989) and *Joh’s Jury* (docu-drama) (1991), there has been an absence of screenwriters, directors and producers dealing with that content in recent years. What could evolve as part of an important cultural transition in the maturation of a community has been absent here. The trauma of our recent past as a divided society is not being revisited in its entirety.
When I first sought to produce an alternative account of the Bjelke Petersen era, inspired by *The Wobblies* documentary, it was through the collective memory of those who were marginalised that I wanted to proceed. I went first to the Nick Torrens’ tapes of the Radical Reunion in 1991 at Parliament House in Brisbane and was struck by the cohesion of the collective memories invoked. A poignant moment on viewing these unedited rushes was on listening to a tall gentle looking middle aged man describing himself as ‘cannon fodder’. With this phrase, I was reminded of the intensity of the physical brutality at the heart of the police state at that time. It crystallised for me why I was frightened to take part in demonstrations, staying on the sidelines for fear of hearing the crunch of a baton on my own head, and why I have so much respect for those like this man and women like Jane Gruchy who threw themselves into the frontline. “The people united will never be defeated,” Jane shouted as the police threw her in the back of the Black Maria (paddy wagon/police van) (*Manufacturing Dissent*, 1997).

In Dutton and Harris’ book on censorship, Judith Wright gives us a description of one of the early street marches in Brisbane and the sense of deep social divisiveness that was being manufactured by the arbitrary declaration by the government of an end to the democratic right of assembly.

‘The local press and tv coverage of university events was singularly one–sided for the most part, the police were thoroughly roused, and the stage was set for a nasty blow-up. At one time, during a student debate on whether to march again in protest against the anti-demonstration regulations, the road outside the University was lined for hundreds of
yards with what looked like every cop, dee and Black Maria in Brisbane, bristling like bull-ants and waiting for the student’s’ emergence onto hostile territory. (I drove through the street and met the eyes, and I remember them.) It was very clear, then, that all sense of proportion had vanished into pieces’ (Dutton & Harris 1970:112).

It is a critical issue for Queensland cultural studies and for the present generation of artists, writers and filmmakers to understand the context in which the generation before them operated, to get a sense of the ‘alltagsgeschichte’ of my generation and the collective memory we shared of an overbearingly conservative, almost militaristic regime, and how that may have shaped the present generation of Queensland bohemians/artists/young activists. Stuart Glover and Robyn Sheahan-Bright have sought to address this issue of what has shaped the present generation of writers in their compilation *Hot Iron Corrugated Sky* (2002). Gerard Lee’s contribution, a song of praise for HARPO (How About Resisting Powerful Organisations), struck a chord of recognition in its reminiscence of the culture at the time for its youthful energy, and its determination not to be bullied, but Lee and the compilation generally misses the reality of the violent brutality that for example McGahan captures in *Last Drinks* (2000) or that we find in the poignant last few pages of Birmingham’s *Leviathan* (2000) - the ‘interview’ with the Queensland policeman dying from cancer who when asked how he felt at dealing with the constant corruption said it made him ‘sick to the stomach, stick to the stomach that I ever had to be involved with it’ (2000:500).

Within Glover and Sheahan-Bright’s collection of excerpts from Queensland’s creative
writers they cross over into cultural analysis, discussing the ways that literary processes – metaphor, figuration, narrative – affect the ways cultural phenomena are registered. Over the past twenty years of submitting documentary applications to Sydney and Melbourne-based funding bodies and commissioning editors, I have always had the sense of sending a cultural interpretation of a place and people seen to be ‘exotic’ by Southerners and felt myself engaged in a form of cultural ethnography, in ‘the constant reconstitution of (myself) and others through specific exclusions, conventions and discursive practices’ (Clifford & Marcus 1986:24).

This notion of the documentarian as ethnographer is explored in Bill Nichols’ *Blurred Boundaries* (1994) when he discusses the performative documentary *Unfinished Diary/Journal Inacheve* by Marilu Mallet (Canada, 1983). In a chapter he calls ‘The ethnographer’s tale’, he argues that instead of the classic ethnographic paradigm of speaking about them (refugees in Canada) to us, Mallet speaks about herself for herself, and for others like her in a form of testimonial (Nichols 1996:86). Mallet’s placement of herself within the film as a person whose authority derives from experience displaces the ‘history lesson’ or ethnographic message – she is not *one–who–knows*, she is *one–who–is*.

She films scenes not from a marriage but from her marriage, and the scenes are significant in their particularity not in their ‘typicality’. Likewise, I am speaking about not all families but families like mine impacted on by police violence. I am speaking not about all artists at the time, but artists like me who shared a view of the need for resistance against the repressive nature of the era. In 1977 in Melbourne I studied a
course in oral history with Wendy Lowenstein who wrote *Weevils in the Flour* (1978) a compilation of oral histories of the Depression and she once commented that formal history and oral history are as different as an aria and a tune. She pointed out that this is because oral histories are collected from people whose voices have been made small by the dominance of the formal historian’s voice.

In *The Pursuit of History* (1991) John Tosh uses the term ‘oppositional’ history to discusses the ‘subversive possibilities of untrammelled historical enquiry’ and how it can have the ‘immediate effect of raising the consciousness of the group in question’ (1991:201). All of my made-for-broadcast documentary work has been in the form of history-documentaries - *No Bugles No Drums* (1989) for the National Seven Network, *Kidnapped* (1988) and *Tales from a Suitcase* (1999) for SBS TV and they have been based on Tosh’s ‘untrammelled historical enquiry’ with the hope of raising the consciousness of the group they were documenting.

For a choice of the documents to use in the production of these programs, I went initially to the John Oxley Library for photographs and to the National Film and Sound Archive for footage. The other ‘documents’ of the documentary are of course the eye-witness accounts, the ‘talking heads’ so prevalent in broadcast television. Who would I interview? Whose account was to be given the status of inclusion and which would be excluded from this public record? This is where the role of the documentarian and the historian intersect. To make *No Bugles No Drums* (1989) was to make history. Interviewing Gerry Blitner was a choice I made that no historian had made. Gerry was an
Aboriginal man in Darwin who had been heavily involved in building airstrips during WW2. His accounts of the gruelling physical work had never been told before. His accounts of the lack of recompense that had been given to him at the time had also never been broadcast. Robert Tickner was Minister for Aboriginal Affairs in 1990. He saw No Bugles No Drums and set his Department the task of investigating the claims of Gerry, others interviewed by us, and eventually they were given what was owed to them. The National Seven Network screened that program every Anzac Day for the next seven years (the length of their contract of purchase).

It was during the production of No Bugles No Drums that I first grappled with the issue of providing information that had no accompanying visible evidence already in existence. We looked to the tools of trade of the documentarian – the recreation, the simulation. We were working in an expensive medium for such things – talent, locations, getting the crew to these locations, props, all cost money and lots of it. As always, this is the greatest challenge of the creative producer of history documentaries and where the imaginative interpretation facility of the historian as described by Carr comes into its own. I found myself drawing on the experience I had when I first started as a media producer – producing radio plays – the media par excellence for creating expensive recreations/simulations. The sound effects to create a thunderstorm on radio are child’s play compared to producing the same scene visually – hiring a fire truck for the rain, a generator and a gaffer’s truck for the 2K blondie to flash on and off, not to mention the insurance for staging such an event. So I already had an appreciation for the efficacy of a carefully constructed and imaginatively created soundtrack.
Interestingly as I laboured over the memory-work for the online documentary *The Wrong Crowd*, it became clear that the soundtrack of my memories was almost as powerful as the visual images that accompanied them, especially for the very early memories. In the nonverbal state (before we learn to speak), our auditory apparatus is finely tuned for nuance and inflection. Very small children have acute hearing ability. In the intensive care of newborns, mothers are encouraged to speak/sing/recite nursery rhymes through the gaps in the humidicrib so that the newborn is soothed and comforted, and sound can be a powerful memory trigger for early remembrances. Audio is also the optimum medium for online datacasting.

Memory work as Annette Kuhn argues it in *Family Secrets* (1995) is a practice for unearthing stories of lives lived out on the borderlands, lives for which the central interpretive devices of the culture don’t work. She highlights the democratic quality of memory work and alludes to it as an instrument of ‘conscientization’ – ‘the awakening of critical consciousness … across the individual and the collective, the personal and the political’ (1995:8). Memories and their cultural and historical embeddedness have provided the content for the online documentary. In the second chapter of this study I will discuss how the nature of the documentary form as the ‘creative treatment of actuality’ is changed within the parameters of the delivery platform of the digital online environment. Chapter three contains a more detailed analysis of the case-study *The Wrong Crowd* (2002) and an exploration of the nature of the net as a screen-based site for memorializing and for enacting history.
CHAPTER TWO

DOCUMENTARY IN THE AGE OF NEW MEDIA

Digitised Reality and Non-Linear History in a Navigable Narration

Documentary exists as a truth-claim. History also embraces the search for evidence. The history documentary has a television form from which the online version is derived. The truth claim is founded in the evidence of the coverage – this really happened. The evidence however is open to interpretation for the historical record and is retold to suit the present power relations (the funding bodies, the commissioning editors, etc.) In a CD Rom and more so online, this tendency towards individual interpretation is amplified to the point where the viewer can participate in the construction of the argument. Visually, the change from the temporal montage of the linear television documentary to spatial montage of the windows of the non-linear navigable database has led us to reconnect with computer-based moving images as a form of animated painting. The concept ‘animated painting’ is discussed in greater detail in the conclusion on convergence and multi-platforming with its mix of genres – radio, print and graphic, moving image in a visual arts tradition.
2. (a) Simulation as evidence

Traditionally history-documentary made for television has been a considered response on the part of the filmmaker to modernised mass society, one of whose defining components is ‘the media’. These documentarians take the earlier ‘documents’ of the media – radio, newspaper, television - and place them in a narrative context to allow the audience to reflect on the sequence of an event or events. These ‘documents’ then contribute to the documentary’s evidentiary status. The documentary contains visible evidence to stake its claim as ‘actuality’.

The most striking challenge to the evidentiary status of documentary has been postulated in the arguments of Baudrillard, who led a wing of postmodern theory suggesting that the dissolution of the representation of the real into simulation constituted a disqualification from competing for truth-claims. Baudrillard used the example of the 1973 Craig Gilbert documentary *An American Family*, a precursor to the Australian *Sylvania Waters* (1992). These documentaries were created using then innovative lightweight cameras over an extended period in a cinema verite-style detailed observation of the everyday life of a family. The question theorists began to ask was how much of the behaviour within the family was modified by the presence of the camera crew. Would the interactions on which the lens focussed have been different had the camera not been there? Baudrillard argued that was being observed were simulated behaviours for public viewing rather than the real/private interactions that would have occurred without mediation/intervention.
The term documentary as applied to film began to have currency in the 1920s and Flaherty’s *Nanook of the North* is properly given the status of the first. This very first included what was not until many years later revealed as a scene of re-enactment when the results of a hunt are shown to the camera. John Grierson’s definition of the documentary, the one most often used in determining the nature of a work, is that it is ‘the creative treatment of actuality’. Do re-enactments contaminate the core of ‘actuality’? With the emergence of reality television programs, that definition is being re-examined as the actuality filmed becomes increasingly the actuality set-up by the filmmaker.

Within the argument about representation and simulation, what is the place of the re-enactment in the documentary form? Brian Winston’s opening keynote, ‘Serious Intent’, at the Australian International Documentary Conference (2003) has addressed the evolving nature of the re-enactment, beginning with the 1943 classic Humphrey Jennings documentary *Fires Were Started*. In this film, the audience recognises the footage as actual examples/representations of the London Blitz. The fires however were started by Jennings for the purposes of filming and not evidential at all. Does this intervention vitiate the authenticity of the images? Winston’s argument was that what differentiated these ‘simulations’ was the fact that the images were created as a result of research and of Jennings’ ‘prior witnessing’ and that this ‘prior witnessing’ was the key criterion for the definition of ‘actuality’, an argument that one could also apply to Flaherty’s *Nanook* re-enactments.
Errol Morris is an American documentarian who films the realities of modern life, and in *Thin Blue Line*, he presents subgroups of African Americans and Los Angeles police officers. Rather than attempting ‘authentic re-enactment’, Morris terms the scenes he films as ‘iconic representations’. The audience knows that the shadowy figures captured by the camera are meant to represent police but there is no pretence that that is actually who they are. For *The Wrong Crowd*, working within the constraints of a production schedule linked to a broadcaster’s programming requirements and within a budget linked to a government funding agency, I had neither the time nor the budgetary resources to recreate an authentic bedroom of the 1950s, place a small child in clothes and cot appropriate to that era in Brisbane and film with the appropriate crew. For this scene (entitled ‘The Cot’) and many others like it, I decided to distil the essence of the memory-moment into its more visceral elements and capture those in a frozen ‘mise en scene’ or ‘animated painting’.

Because my focus was to represent the truth of that memory moment in its emotional content, I sought the alternative to re-enactment by creating ‘iconic representations’ within the Quicktime Virtual Reality scenes. The scenes of ‘Church and Child’ and ‘Schooldays’ (accessed through the ‘Scenes Menu’ page, by title or by years - 1963 and 1964) provide the viewer with the experience of sounds and point-of-view images of the intimidation and bullying so prevalent in the Catholic Church in Queensland in the 1960s. Once the viewer has experienced the emotion of the moment, there is an option to click on detailed historical documents of the day or newspaper reports to provide evidence for the experience.
No documentarian can claim to provide unmediated access to an event. Knowledge of the event takes place in the first instance, perhaps as a ‘prior witnessing’ and then from behind a camera and later within the sequencing of the images to create the narrative. Michael Renov theorised that no matter how much ‘the fragmentary and often ephemeral experience of representation in contemporary culture is emphasized’ (Renov 1995:89), the fundamental structure of the ‘ordering of the real’ remains, that there is a protocol in the language of cinema that allows the audience to make sense of the structure into an ‘ordering of the real’, thereby preserving the Griersonian notion of a creative treatment of actuality.

2. (b) Narrative and non-linearity

How does Renov’s ‘ordering of the real’ operate in web-based documentary work where the structure is no longer linear and there are now ‘horizontal layers’ and screens existing within screens simultaneously? The nature of the screen and our relationship to it is changed by the computer interface. How does this affect the documentary form? What is to be the impact of this new delivery platform of the online environment on the documentary form? The emerging product is so recent that theorists are only beginning to develop a vocabulary/language to discuss documentary online.

The non-linear nature of the net-based documentary is challenging our earlier definition of creating a story or an argument from pre-existing documents. When a story is told in the theatre, the oldest of the art forms, the audience sit, watches and listens, when a
cinema narrative is engaged with, the audience sit, watch and listen, when a novelist’s narrative is followed, the reader turns the page sequentially, when a radio narration is listened to, the audience remains within earshot so as not to miss a moment of the sequence as it unfolds. In the online environment, the audience have the ability to interact and to intervene to effect the course of the narrative.

This is one of the essential challenges we were to confront within the production of the online documentary, *The Wrong Crowd*. What are the nature and the potential outcomes on the computer screen for engaging with a narrative in some of the traditional senses but with the added dimension of the control of the mouse? Is our engagement with the mouse online not much different to our relationship to the remote control in the present environment or will it mean much more? In many of the forums to which I have been invited to present *The Wrong Crowd*, eg at the Creative Web conference (Hobart October 2002) and at the AIDC series of sessions entitled *Reframe* (Byron Bay February, 2003), the debate centred on this unknown of the future architecture of the televisual broadband viewing experience. Generation wise, the adults who will be the major demographic for the use of broadband entertainment in the future will be the children who are reading the open-ended books today that allow them to progress to page 7 or page 11 of the text depending on their answer on page 3. Open textual navigation of narrative will not be a new experience for the broadband television generation.
In ‘Vision After Television - Technological Convergence, Hypermedia, and the New Media Arts Field’, Michael Nash argues that that most crucial fact of life in the post-television generation is ‘the eventual collapse of the networks into a single bitstream of information that will enter the home as user-determined programming and services’ (Renov & Suderberg 1996:390). Within this future post-television context, Nash addressed the state of a narrative in a non-narrative environment and argued that the ‘death of narrative is a hugely misunderstood notion in the new media discourse’, claiming that jumping form one place in a text, film, or song to any other place in any other text, film or song doesn't actually constitute a ‘non-narrative experience’. He asserted that the tyranny of the single narrative line though a data space authored by one person has already been overthrown in literature (eg Umberto Eco’s 1987 Travels in Hyperreality). It is being supplanted Nash argues, by the new narratives written “by the course that consciousness takes through information fields. …The impulse to 'narratize' experience is endemic to the structure of consciousness and takes root from our mortality” (Renov & Suderberg 1996:392).

Nash bases his argument on the theorizing of Julian Jaynes, author of The Origin of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind (1997). Jayne’s research led him to believe that the act of retrospection ‘has a large element of created imagery – what we call narratizing – of what the experience should be like, rather than what it actually was like’ (Jaynes 1990:29). For example, ‘the thief narratizes his act as due to poverty, the poet his as due to beauty, and the scientist his as due to truth’. There is an argument that
‘purpose and cause (are) inextricably woven into the spatialization of behaviour in consciousness’ (Jaynes 1990:64).

“I think it’s the same, narrative, non-narrative. I’ve done both, I know it’s exactly the same. When you do both, you know you’re dealing with the same kinds of problems anyway” says French feminist filmmaker, Chantal Akerman, in an interview with Christina Creveling ‘Women Working’, (1977:138). In Bordering on Fiction (1995) Michael Tarantino discusses Akerman’s Histoires d’Amerique (1988) in which she constructs a series of tales dealing with Jewish diaspora during the 30s and 40s. ‘Although the film employs actors and scripted text, the characters simply face the camera and recount their experiences. It is narrative stripped to the bone and it reveals the essence of Akerman’s cinema: an emphasis on storytelling, pure and simple, which is able to connect many disparate threads. For Akerman, some narratives are fabricated and others are found. But they are all united by the teller’ (Tarantino 1995:50). Later in the Creveling interview, Akerman asserts that ‘you must always write first when you want to make a film. Language precedes the visual plan’ (1997:140).

Gerard Genette’s theory of narrative, which he termed ‘narratology’, is outlined in Story and Discourse (1978) and first gave us a vocabulary to talk about narrative. This new branch of modern literary theory provided for a neat distinction between what constituted narration and what did not - what is description. Narration moves the plot forward, and description doesn’t. Within the computer gaming industry, there is emerging a new element within the hitherto descriptive scenes - a narrative element is now required,
called ‘cut scenes’. These are cinematic events to move the story of the game along, and television writers are being employed to inject dramatic tension into the game by writing these ‘cut scenes’. In writing the scenes for *The Wrong Crowd*, I was aware that I had to combine both narrative and descriptive into the one frozen moment – each scene needed to move the ‘bildung’ narrative along as it evoked the description of a particular time and place. The narrative feedback is that it is strong enough to move into other genres – such as the embodiment of a theatre performance or being broadcast alone as a radio play.

Mieke Bal’s text, *Narratology* (1985) which builds on the work of Genette, argues that each narrative requires actors, a narrator, text, story, and ‘fabula’, a series of connected events experienced by the actors. In writing the visual plan/interface design for *The Wrong Crowd*, the narration and the description were required to be melded into a navigable form. The narrative had to be constructed by linking elements of the database in a particular order. The trajectory designed within the ‘Scenes Menu’ page is intended to lead the user from childhood through adolescence to adulthood. The intention to produce one of the first ever online documentaries by merging database and narrative into a new form led me to seek to maintain the logic of replacement, a characteristic of cinema, in temporal montage fashion, whilst exploring the spatial montage characteristic of the computer screen as it constantly intruded and needed to be embraced.

Lev Manovich’s *The Language of New Media* (2001) constructs terms and concepts to help us talk about a new form of narrative and argues that the next generation of cinema – broadband cinema – will need to add the notion of spatial montage and multiple windows
to its language as a matter of course. He cites as examples the famous scene in *Bladerunner* where Harrison Ford clicks through the images on the screen in front of him as he searches for the truth about the origins of the cyborg, and the innovation of frames within frames employed in the cinema of Peter Greenaway’s *Draughtsman’s Contract* as potential prototypes for the new artform.

The implications for this in constructing *The Wrong Crowd* site was to explore the innovation of being able to add horizontal layers to the narrative, and for the frames containing these layers to remain on the screen simultaneously. For example, included in links are the original newspaper stories, for interested users who wish to go to the source material and read the complete stories for themselves. There are added extra family photographs and graphics that can be ‘clicked’ on as hotspots within the QTVR scenes to take the user more deeply into the personalised nature of the history related. The ‘world events’ button on each page emphasises the idiosyncratic/individualistic nature of the text. They are world events that interested the kind of person I was and give a clue to what, in the more local context of a police family and a police state, were the global issues and images that concerned me. For instance in 1970, the ‘world’ event that I remember as having had a significant personal impact was the screening of *Easy Rider* with its evocation of the divisions emerging in American society. The shooting of four University students at a demonstration in Ohio, USA, is listed as the other ‘global event’ that grabbed my juvenile attention that year.
2. (c) Digital realism

What has been the impact of the digital revolution on our notion of documentary evidence and of ‘actuality’? What is ‘digital realism’ and how does it differ from our earlier notions of ‘the real’ in cinematic images? In *Cinema Futures* (1998), Thomas Elsaesser declared that the documentary was already an example of an audio-visual practice that raised the issue of its epistemology “irrespective of the changes digitisation might bring to the already highly problematic status of the image as truth, evidence or document” (1998:22).

Bill Nichols’ contribution to Renov’s *Theorising Documentary* (1995) was in the light of then new technological developments termed ‘to scitex’ which means to retouch an image digitally. Nichols was concerned at the implications of digitisation for the truth claims of the documentary. The term ‘scitex’ has fallen from use but the practice is inherent in almost every digital image we see. Nichols thought that the implications of this technology would be decades working themselves through the culture but argued that ‘scitex’ was a ‘nuclear explosion’ in the world of documentary theory. He suggested that there were two ways of dealing with it. ‘Either’, he said, ‘accept that the postmodernists have misused language to confuse the term of ‘objectivity’ conflating it with ‘truth’ – or roll with the ‘epistemological blow’ (Renov 1995:56) and revert to the Griersonian privileging of the documentary as an art over a science. He argued that defining the documentary would now require turning back to considerations of how materials could be subjected to ‘creative treatment’ and yet not totally fictionalised.
This consideration is topical even more so in 2003 with the rise of reality TV programs in the documentary slots. As these programs contain footage gathered as a result of experiments set-up by the television producer, do they still deserve to be given truth-status? Brian Winston in his keynote speech. ‘Serious Intent’ at Australian International Documentary Conference 2003 expressed his concern at increasing fluidity of the definition of documentary and made his argument that ‘prior witnessing’ and ‘serious intent’ were necessary constraints on the Griersonian definition of ‘actuality’.

Nichols’ take on the factual status of documentary was that it could only be maintained if there was a ‘measure of cultural agreement as to the mimetic power of the camera (being) sustained’ (1995:57). Not only has it been sustained but the continued success of fake documentaries suggests the audience’s relationship to broadcast images embodies such a willingness to believe in their truth-status that we seem to have given over our own internal understanding of reality and loaded up the referential weight of the images given to us in order to believe the unbelievable. In Crossing the Digital Threshold (1997), Scott McQuire takes up the issue of the impact of digital technology on the way that we perceive images, arguing that the emergence of an image-saturated culture in which the difference between ‘direct’ and ‘indirect’ perception – what we see ourselves and what we see via the mediation of a screen – has become increasingly unstable’ (1997:57) and that underlying the excitement and controversy aroused by the digital threshold is the potential for digital technology to ‘reconfigure our habitual relationship to camera images’ (1997:53).
Our relationship to the film image has been conditioned by the belief that what we saw was once - in some manner – real. Cinematic credibility had been defined by classic Hollywood cinema and conventions established in the 1910s and 1920s – conventions such as montage, shot matching, continuity, to name a few. How does the digital threshold impact on this situation? McQuire queries the fascination of contemporary cinema audiences as they are faced with what are said to be ‘perceptually realistic’ (1997:58) images of dinosaurs or intergalactic space ships or exploding bodies when these are images that themselves have no physical point of reference in the real world. He also discusses our willingness to believe in the ‘truth’ of the documentaries about dinosaurs. The growing sophistication of digital image manipulation is promising to transform not only the aesthetics of the documentary image, but also its epistemology, its truth-status.

In the BBC’s Walking with Dinosaurs (1997) we have none of Winston’s ‘prior witnessing’ and the full impact of Nichols ‘nuclear explosion’, yet it has been widely accepted by audiences making it one of the BBC’s and ABC’s most popular documentary series. How does the ‘desire underpinning the documentary impulse’ (the classic phrase coined in Andre Bazin’s The Ontology of the Photographic Image’ (1967:14) fit now with ‘photographic’ images against which no authentication is possible? As we move into the emerging digital platform of delivering programs over the Internet, Thomas Elsaesser suggests that documentary is to be the first casualty (1998:21). We are entering an era where ‘actuality’, the core of the definition of the documentary genre, is inhabiting an increasingly fluid space. In the digital world, distinctions between the real and the fake
are blurred. The digital domain extends in an unprecedented way the ability of the filmmaker to control the film image, providing for a level of intervention that includes the minutiae of the pixel. The role of the digital artist is more akin to that of the painter. Once an image is digitised, it becomes another form of graphic. Regardless of its origin, it becomes pixels, easily altered, substituted for one another – an atomic re-arrangement of the dimension of Nichols’ ‘nuclear explosion’; and yet there is a new fascination on the part of audiences who are still seeking ‘perceptually realistic’ images, for example of dinosaurs and space ships, things which themselves have no physical point of reference, but which the audience applauds for their (digital) realism.

The dominant model for identifying the evidence of the past pre-digitisation has been the gathering of material residue, which could then achieve the status of an historical document once its authenticity had been verified by historians. The first scene of my online documentary is called ‘FJ Holden’. It is a mise en scene of a car on a beach at Greenmount, a place that my family and I regularly visited in the late 1950s. With the digital photographer, I returned to the very same spot of my childhood memory and photographed an FJ Holden car which was a version of the exact model that my mother and father owned. These were the pointers to convey ‘a sense of the obdurate real’ to the viewer but the ‘obdurate real’ required that each image was digitally cleaned to erase the high-rise buildings that could be seen on the horizon. The ‘obdurate real’ is a phrase from Lesley Stern in her Australian International Documentary Conference 2003 paper. It refers to the detail out of place, the detail demanding attention. Stern cites an audience member distressed that the documentary footage included in the program she was
viewing was fake because, having grown up in the area the footage was meant to depict, she knew that there were no cows like that in that countryside. That first QTVR of *The wrong crowd* needed to set the scene of Queensland in the 1950s, and it was to the ‘obdurate real’ that I gave my attention, as the digital artist pixillated out of existence the crowd that now inhabits the once less populated Greenmount of my memory-moment.

**The New Age of New Media**

2. (d) Screen Theory Online

As we approach our computer monitors as potential new places of reception for cinematic images, how is the mode of reception to be defined? There are different kinds of screening conditions familiar to us in the old media of cinema and television, but what are the present socio-cultural experiences of the computer screen? We look at, and relate to images differently on a computer. This transition toward ‘entertainment on the net’ has happened at the juncture of the television and the computer. Television studies abound with discussions of how the nature of our reception of television is different to that of cinema, the most classic theorising for this being around the shift from the cinematic ‘gaze’ to the televisual ‘glance’ as posited by John Ellis in *Visible Fictions* (1982). This study is helpful in formulating the parameters of the screening conditions of the computer online and the cognitive schemata of the viewer in that context.
When Ellis was writing *Visible Fictions* in the early 1980s, there had been a substantial amount of recent work on the spectator's position in relation to cinema, informed particularly by psychoanalysis. He begins the section on the spectator by summarising the image of spectators that this cinema studies tradition had developed. Spectators come to the cinema with expectations informed by the film's 'narrative image', which was created by promotional posters, trailers and other publicity. In the cinema they become co-voyeurs, sitting in a darkened public place, their gaze intently focussed on the screen. The spectator's position encourages a libidinal identification with characters in a narrative, and this is reinforced through shot and countershot, an essential mechanism by which audiences identify with filmic worlds. The film is a single, separate fiction that offers puzzles that the spectators must resolve by the end of the film. A spectator's pleasure comes from gradually resolving the anxiety that these puzzles have created. The relationships of spectators to the screen centre on the how cinema manipulates the gaze — of characters, camera and spectators (Ellis 1982:77–91).

Television viewers, by contrast, relate to a much smaller screen that is always present in a domestic space, so the images are experienced as relatively mundane. Television offers viewers a surrogate day-to-day image of the world that casually makes viewers complicit in this structured way of looking. This view separates the 'normal' reality of the citizen and the family at home from a variety of abnormal worlds on television screens. The image quality of TV images is relatively poor, and segments are short, so viewers’ attention often drifts, and has to be drawn back regularly, usually through sound - canned laughter, jingles and stings. Television’s characteristic regime of vision is the glance,
rather than the gaze. While the introduction of home theatre systems since 1982 have changed some television viewers' relationship to the screen towards a more cinematic mode, a proliferation of small and portable televisions has at the same time reinforced this regime of the glance.

It is useful to take the model of broadcast TV formulated by John Ellis to examine the differences between that model and the emergence of the yet to be formulated model of broadband TV or datacasting. In ‘Gaze, Glance and Glaze’ Chris Chesher (2002) theorised a transition in the viewing experience from Ellis’ cinematic gaze and the televisual glance to the computer based glaze. Chesher’s paper focussed on the ‘glaze’ that develops in the user of computer- games. His ideas however are useful in discussing how the internet now provides for music/text/stills and moving images all in one portal, and I suggest that we may be developing a viewing experience wherein we can move from the cinematic ‘gaze’ to the televisual ‘glance’ and back again, engaging in a new cognitive activity that involves the decision to choose between these forms of reception via a mouse, in a ‘navigable narration’.

The accessibility of the new distribution model is also a factor in discussing its reception. Whereas broadcast TV emits a series of signals that are available to anyone who owns or rents a TV set, interactive television will be a part of a range of services accessible to anyone with access to an internet connection. The images involved are different to television. Television screens have traditionally been in the range of a 26-inch monitor and viewers ‘lean back’ in their seats generally 3 to 5 feet away from the screen. The
proximity to the computer screen is another difference and impacts on the ‘lean forward, lean back’ debate about audience reception. At present in 2003, the images generally received via the Internet are restricted to the size of the computer screen or smaller to fit into a frame within the frame of the interface design. It is interesting to speculate on the view of Marc Nothrop, Media Production Co-ordinator for the Broadband e-Lab at the iDevelopments branch of Telstra’s Research Laboratories in Hobart. He predicted that, in five to ten years, the architecture for broadband cinema, could be metre-wide plasma screens connected to a computer control board in the lounge-rooms of a growing number of our more affluent citizens. (Nothrop 2002).

Just as broadcast TV has developed distinctive aesthetic forms to suit its circumstances so too it can be argued will the next generation of broadband television. Interestingly two of the narrowband AFC/ABC online documentaries, *homeless* and *longjourney* reflect the unwritten rule that governs the image for TV which is that ‘the image must show whatever is before the camera with the minimum of fuss and conscious techniques (Ellis 1982:129). *Longjourney* particularly employs close-ups (given their own generic name in TV of ‘talking heads’) to advantage in cropping the images of the children so that we are drawn even further to ‘lean forward’ into the screen to listen intently to their small voices and focus on their small faces. This motif of emphasising the minutiae is repeated with each link to the children’s stories being via miniature suitcases and ‘memory stones’.

Whereas broadcast TV works best when the image is stripped down, lacking in detail, cinema can have a profusion of detail. In my attempt to create a ‘cinematic experience’
we created images rich in detail in which the viewer could immerse themselves. In the model that the webdesign team and I created, we drew on what we conceived as the cinematic potential of the medium, using the fullscreen option. Interactivity within the image offers different opportunities to explore the image’s detail, the variations in the light and shadow, the texture of what might be termed ‘animated paintings’ (McQuire 1997:60). This seems a particularly apt term if we reflect on the recent history of our reception of represented reality in images, we start with the viewing of paintings during the Renaissance. Leon Battista Alberti is credited in his “Della Pittura” (1459) with first describing the nature of the frame through which we then looked. He argued that in our viewing we retained the assumption that the painting extended in our imaginary to a space outside of and beyond the frame. In a brief scopic history of old media, the eye was at first static, immobile, fixed, and begins with the experience of viewing through the perspectival window frame as theorised by Alberti.

David Hockney’s recent research on the work of the Renaissance painters and the ‘camera obscura’ suggests that much of the enthusiasm of the creation of photo-realistic portraits and ‘mise en scene’ paintings of the fifteenth century was the result of painters’ experiments with mirrors and lenses. In *Secret Knowledge* (2001) Hockney traces the use of optics (mirrors and lenses) and the ‘camera obscura’ in the work of early Flemish painters and argues that during this period, the artist’s hand was clearly part of a machine constructing the technology that allowed them to paint the often heavily lit images reflected by the mirrors and lenses placed strategically in a darkened space. The appreciation of this ‘secret knowledge’ was lost with the arrival of photographic
technology and chemically-fixed realism. Photography and its moving counterpart, cinema then for many decades bore the hallmarks of what was ‘real’ and painters moved instead into explorations of surrealism and Cubism.

As cinema inherited the notion of the frame, cinematography added to it the elements of movement in space and changes through time. These spatial and temporal elements are now the major tools for the filmmaker in constructing images. Vertov first theorised these new elements with his introduction of the term the ‘kino-eye’, our eye with the perspective of the camera lens. In the earlier part of the twentieth century, Vertov (The Man with the Movie Camera) showed us the new mobility of the camera operator’s tripod compared with that of the painter’s easel. The viewing experience now included movement through space. This was a significant shift in the perception and the psychological exploration of seeing reality from other perspectives. With increased access to the cinema via the Hollywood genre, there came the emergence of the ‘cinematic experience’ for the masses and we shared the new ability to move along with the camera, fixed to a dolly or a crane. We could leave our physical bodies behind and glide past Ginger and Rogers or sail above Esther Williams but the kino-eye was still fixed to the physically anchored camera on a tripod. It wasn’t until the introduction of the zoom lens that we experienced the alienating disorientation of the eye moving apart from the body. The zoom was psychologically jarring. Our ‘kino-eye’ was doing something that was not in line with what our physical body could do. This cinematic development of ‘the apparatus’ occurred at a time when there was a broader sense of alienation and
disconnectedness sweeping society, particularly for the younger generation of the cinema
going audience – the angst reflected for instance in Antonioni’s *Blow Up*.

What is happening to our mode of reception in this new media age is that we can have
this cinematic experience with the added dimension of being able to control the zoom
ourselves, with the click of our mouse. The body is back in the equation. We still use the
skills of Vertov’s ‘kino eye’ but we have also the potential for interaction. The ‘kino eye’
now has a hand or possibly in the future a voice that can manipulate the image. We can
consciously control our connectedness to the image by disconnecting and re-immersing
ourselves in the detail and texture of the image.

In ‘Towards an Archaeology of the Computer Screen’ Lev Manovich theorises this aspect
of the nature of the delivery of digital data through a computer screen by arguing that this
human computer interface (HCI) will offer radical new positions for art as well as
communication. We still have the same flat rectangular surface, the kind of which we
have had a relationship with for receiving visual information since the days of the
Renaissance. As Manovich points out, the proportions of the pictures haven’t changed in
five centuries. When we reach for the mouse to make a decision regarding our printing
preferences, we find just the same fifteenth century choice – landscape or portrait?
(Elsaesser & Hoffman 1998:27-43) This rectangular framing of represented reality is one
of the features of cinematic perception that persists in the QTVR interface that was used
in *The Wrong Crowd*. Cinema and then television and now the net have inherited this
frame from Western painting. The Renaissance window is assumed to extend beyond the
frame. In the same fashion, a window on a computer screen presents a partial view of a scene. What is evolving in an online environment is the facility for spatial montage outlined in more detail in the following section. The BBC’s broadband documentary *Walking with Dinosaurs* (1997) used split screens within the screen as a main feature of their interface design. The online version of the ABC’s *Long Way to the Top* (2001) similarly covered Normie Rowe’s performance from many angles and all of them are displayed simultaneously on the computer screen with a menu option to click on linked interviews conducted later backstage.

In the cinema, a singular image fills the screen and the screen itself functions to ‘screen out’ what is outside the frame and we are more or less enveloped by the screen. On television, this is so to a lesser degree, but still our attention to what is outside the frame is substantially diminished. There is a definitive change however with programs delivered online via computer screens. Within the computer screen, we have multiple windows and blocks of data – image/text/graphics, and what is outside the screen – that is the mouse and the keyboard – are integral to the screen and to the viewing experience. Our cognitive schema now covers spatial as well as temporal montage.

2. (e) Spatial Montage

Long before digitisation, our belief in what constitutes reality had been suspended by our willingness to embrace certain conventions of the cinema with the emergence of ‘cinematic language’ like montage. In the early part of the twentieth century, Lev
Kuleshov, the Russian filmmaker, was one of the first to explore the possibilities of cinematographic montage. In his 1917 film, *The Project of Engineer Prite* he edited together an image of electric pylons and an image of people looking at it. They were in fact images filmed in completely different times and places but because they had learnt to read the cinematic language regarding montage, the audience accepted the new geography that Kuleshov created. In an interview for *Cinema in Revolution*, Kuleshov described how, as a teaching exercise, he once created a movie of a woman who did not exist by filming the face, head, hair, hands, legs and feet of different women and editing the images together in a montage. The students accepted that it was a continuous depiction of only one woman, as recounted in Jay Leyda’s *Voices of Film Experience*, (1977:249).

This historic point of reference shows how temporal montage demanded a willingness on the part of the audience to suspend their identification with the realism of the individual shot, and to establish a new relation to film as a text composed of multiple shots, and a new way to negotiate the transition between shots. For an understanding of this new dynamic in narrative cinema, theorists have stressed the importance of the psychoanalytical concept of ‘suture’, the process whereby we make connections between disparate items of information. The digital threshold represents another level in this process of psychoanalytic ‘suture’. Crossing the digital threshold engages us in creating a new type of ‘mise en scene’, arranging pixels rather than people and sets. Instead of the fragmentation and re-assemblage of the image over time, which was the crux of classical montage, it introduces a new type of montage: a fluid montage within the frame.
With the respect to the computer’s propensity to contain frames within frames, for the scene ‘Dad Dies’, I didn’t want to simply offer another shot of the same scene (which was the earlier use of split-screen techniques), and so I directed the digital artist to stitch together three different shots in three different locations, where I sought to juxtapose these shots to carry distinct narrative threads within the one temporal space. The first shot was of ‘myself as a young woman’ studying for Matriculation, the second was of the jacaranda in blossom, and the third of my father leaning out of window to catch his dying breath. The idiosyncratic nature of the psychoanalytic notion of ‘suture’ appears to come into play as some viewers reported that they constructed the three scenes as one continuous image to create a narrative of my father dying at the moment that I am sitting at my desk studying, whereas others constructed the narrative more in the vein of a Proustian moment, lost in memory.

The possibilities of the new digital form extend to developments in digital sound technology. As McQuire points out, content creators now have an improved ability to ‘spatialise’ discrete sound elements and to utilise sound as a visceral, even contrapuntal, element of the cinematic experience. In the construction of the QTVR ‘The Watchhouse’, I sought to create a visceral response in the visitor to this scene because of the intensity of the beating of the prisoner by the police officer, and so there is a complex sound-track of the fists and the boots pounding into flesh overlaying the cries and gasps of the victim with the exertions and grunts of the aggressor.
The previously learnt cinematic ways of receiving audio-visual information (and of structuring cinematic time) have become the basic means by which computer users now access and interact with data. Along with that cinematic language, we also have a new language to deal with the new media and this language stems from the essential definition of digital media, that is, media that is programmable, and so we learn to speak of databases, and of the interface as part of the reception of the images. The page becomes the basic unit of data organisation, and in that we have a convergence of text, of still images, of discrete audio, of moving images and animation, and the challenge for the content creator is to use all of these tools in presenting a ‘documentary experience’.

In *The Address of the Eye* (1992), Vivien Sobchack details the three metaphors that have dominated screen studies and film theory – the frame, the window and the mirror. The metaphor of the frame is central to formalist theory, the metaphor of the window underlies realist film theory and is particularly articulated in the work of Bazin, and the metaphor of the mirror is central to psychoanalytic film theory. These distinctions open up a very interesting space for thinking about the evolution of the computer screen viewing experience from the early twentieth century cinema screen viewing experience.

The mirror formulation conflates the frame and the window to a mirror with the notion that the viewing experience is predetermined by the individual’s psychic structures. If one takes the mirror formulation and adds to it the online environment’s element of interactivity, the mirror begins to appear more as the looking glass through which Alice travelled. The mirror of the cinema reflects our psychic make-up back to us as we see our
psychic selves in the characters on screen. The looking-glass of the computer screen allows us to fall in to the image and navigate through it. The psychoanalytically derived metaphor comes into its own as the viewer of *The Wrong Crowd* navigates through the seventeen QTVR scenes, taking a memory-journey of their own.

2. (f) Cinematic apparatus on the net

It was as recent as 1995 that Ars Electronica, the prestigious computer art festival, dropped ‘computer graphics’ as a category in favour of ‘net art’ thus marking a new stage in the evolution of modern culture. In his article, ‘Are you online? Presence and Participation in Network Art’, Andreas Broekmann discusses this emerging ‘net art’ and argues that the term covers any ‘art practices based in the Internet, from www based projects and live-audio experiments, to communication projects that use IRC (Internet Relay Chat), FTP (file transfer protocol, Telnet and other Internet protocols’ (Druckrey 439:1998).

In 1995 our national public broadcaster, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, established its ABC New Media to coordinate ABC Online which has since become one of Australia’s most frequently visited websites. In 2002, ABC Online published the first four purpose-built online documentaries, including *The Wrong Crowd*. The initial advertising and marketing for the site focussed on the form rather than the content. This is not unlike the first moments of cinema history when the posters all advertised in bold calligraphy ‘the ‘cinematographe’. Audiences were invited to attend to view this amazing
example of a new technology, this new invention by Monsieur Lumiere, but it was the
technology that sold the product. The ‘sujet actuels’ were relegated to the bottom of the
poster. Initially the ABC publicised ‘the online documentaries’ as a package and as
examples of a new form – the subject matter and content of each were a subsidiary focus
for the marketing departments. As this new technology potentially marks a new stage in
the evolution of modern culture, the situation is much the same as it was 100 years ago.

In *The Language of New Media* (2001), Lev Manovich compared the introduction of
QuickTime in 1991 to the introduction of the Kinetoscope in 1892. “Both were used to
present short loops, both featured images approximately two by three inches in size, both
called for private viewing rather than collective exhibition. In the early 1890s, the public
patronized … peephole parlours … and a hundred years later, computer users were
equally fascinated by tiny QuickTime movies” (2001:313).

In Stephen Heath and Teresa de Lauretis’ *The Cinematic Apparatus* (1980), contributors
discuss the development of the ‘cinematic apparatus’ through its historical and cultural
forms, both as cinematic technology and in its reception from the early to late twentieth
century. In his chapter Christian Metz observed the apparatus at the moment of what he
calls the ‘exercise of cinema’ and through what he termed ‘le signifiant imaginaire’. This
is the moment where he argued there was a shift in the stress from the earlier focus on the
technological to the metapsychological as the screen’s drawcard. As the immediate focus
on the ‘newness’ of the new delivery platform online is shifting to an exploration of its
psychology and even its spirituality, this description of ‘le signifiant imaginaire’ is most
appropriate in dealing with the changing nature of our relationship with the screen in
cyberspace. This is particularly so for writers like Stephen Johnson who, in *Interface Culture* (1997, praises the metapsychological even spiritual resonance of interface design, where the modern interface resonates with ‘the customs and pageantry of organised faith. Both are imaginative systems predicated on a world ruled by invisible forces, forces made sensuous through the luminous icons and rituals of faith” (1997:242). Johnston and a list that includes Kevin Kelly from the *Wired* magazine, Jaron Lanier, the creator of much Virtual Reality game software, Mark Pesce, creator of VRML (Virtual Reality Modelling Language, cyberphilosophers like Margaret Wertheim and cyberpsychologists like Sherry Turkle are drawn to the Internet as a place for this exploration of the non-physical dimensions of our humanity, in all its potentialities.

In *The Cinematic Apparatus*, Metz’ argument draws on the classic analogy of Plato’s myth of the cave and the shadowplay that dances in front of the audience, who sit with their backs to the real world outside the cave. The psychoanalytic aspect of cinema, Metz argues is evidence of ‘the apparatus’. “… The how of its functioning, the ways in which the machine is regulated, which is distinct from its why, is nowise under the control of science and brings into play options which can only be of a socio-cultural order” (De Lauretis and Heath 1980: 5). Similarly, within a discussion of the change in the mode of exhibition for documentaries, we need to address the emerging nature of the net itself as socio-cultural phenomenon.
As Sherry Turkle has suggested in her comprehensive study *Life on the Screen* (1995) ‘The Internet has become a significant social laboratory for experimenting with the constructions and reconstructions of self that characterize postmodern life’ (1995:180). Turkle explores how netizens around the globe are engaging in these psychosocial explorations online. She details stories of individuals experiences and explorations in MUDs like TrekMUSE and LambdaMOO and argues that we are learning to see ourselves as ‘plugged-in technobodies’ (1995:177) indulging in virtual gender-swapping or role-playing. Turkle, not unlike Manovich, draws on the computer concept of ‘windows’ to explicate her thesis that ‘windows’ have become a metaphor for how the ‘self’ operates in postmodern life. We experience the world by viewing it through different ‘windows’ - a woman wakes up a lover, makes breakfast as a mother and drives to work as a filmmaker. ‘Multiple viewpoints call forth a new moral discourse’ argues Turkle (quoted in Stephen Johnston’s discussion in *Interface Culture* (1997) on the impact of the spatial montage of windows on ‘postmodernistic sociology or our fragmented sense of Self’ (Johnson 1997:85) Online the diversity of the role-playing is greatly extended by access to others in cyberspace.

In *The Pearly Gates of Cyberspace* (1999) Margaret Wertheim investigates the psychosocial dimensions of MUDs (multi user domains), online chat rooms, IRC channels. In all these environments ‘netizens’ can create digital alter egos in a space that offers, even if only temporarily and in very truncated form, a chance to at least get a glimpse at other ways of being. This is an integral point in Margaret Wertheim’s analysis. Though Descartes set the West on a path that has led to the annihilation of soul or spirit
as categories of the real, in cyberspace, she says, our physical bodies enter into the communication in a disembodied manner. “I” go into cyberspace, but my body remains at rest in my chair, and the mind/spirit part of me is transported to another realm and that realm is real in my responses to it. Wertheim argues the various ways in which cyberspace has become a repository for much of our society’s present spiritual journeying. By linking the science of space to the wider cultural milieu, Wertheim tracks the attempts to realise a technological version of Heaven in cyberspace. “The perfect realm awaits us, we are told, not behind the pearly gates but beyond the network gateways, behind electronic doors labelled .com .net and .edu (1999:23).

Isolation persists as one of the major facets of contemporary urban society, and in the midst of this alienation, the computer network provides a wonderful entry into a space where communication comes easily, where there is a potential ‘perfect realm’ for us to inhabit. The meteoric rise of virtual communities is testament to that. People meet and commune on the Net, in chat rooms, in USENET groups and in online forums. The most famous of these was the San Francisco- based WELL community. WELL (Whole Earth ‘Lectronic Link) was a computer conferencing system that enabled people around the world to carry on public conversations, and exchange private electronic mail. Howard Rheingold in Virtual Communities (1994) outlined the development of this virtual village of a few hundred people that he first started communicating with in 1985 and how that grew to almost 10,000 by the time he wrote his book in 1994. ‘People in virtual communities do just about everything people do in real life but we leave our bodies behind” (1994:3).
The success of online counselling services like Kids Helpline in Australia are pointing to the sense of comfort, reassurance, intimacy and trust that can be experienced in cyberspace for people for whom such a state is inaccessible in their physical world. Kids Helpline have reported that teenagers in distress (those who have the choice between the internet and the telephone) will access an online counselling service more readily than a telephone service because they have a greater sense of privacy. The computer is generally in a room away from the rest of the family, they can share thoughts and feelings with an online counsellor with a greater sense of security than they could with the potential eavesdropping that might happen on the family telephone, and they can express themselves in text without the self-consciousness that comes in vocalising (Interview with Richard Jones, Kids Helpline, July, 2002). This anecdotal evidence is repeated in other accounts of counselling experiences such as those in Rheingold’s *Virtual Communities* (1994) where users of the internet in need of emotional support affirm that the communications they can find online they cannot find in the real world, for reasons of physical or emotional disability.

Freud’s attempt with his science of psychoanalysis to reinstate mind or ‘psyche’ back into the realm of scientific discourse is arguably one of the most important intellectual developments of the past century. Much of Freud’s work focussed on the present repetition of the repressed past, arguing that the psyche’s script is not purely internal. It is a constant relation, negotiation and renegotiation between inside and outside. The same psychic system simultaneously engages in the act of remembering and of experiencing
the present thus enabling new data as it re-stores the body of previous experience against
which the incoming information is weighed and judged. Psychoanalysis is not a pursuit
easily followed alone. It seems that people want and need a ‘collective mental arena’, a
space they might share with other minds. As part of a modern trend to externalise mental
life, cyberspace is becoming much more than a data space. Increasingly its use is for
communication, social interaction and entertainment. It has become a new realm for the
mind. The rise of MUDs or multi-user domains and the increase of sites for counselling
are testament to the demand of individuals to indulge in psychosocial exploration online.
In the era of Lenny Lipton, *Independent Filmmaking* (1972), the portapak was seen to be a vehicle for the democratisation of the media. There then evolved character-driven product made on lower budgets whereby the subject matter was self-revelation and even occasionally spiritual discourse. Echoing that revolution, in this time of Final Cut Pro and the worldwide web, thirty years later, there is a great increase yet again in subjective subject matter that privileges the emotions and we are finding increasing examples of net-based confessional discourse as the technology liberates the personal story-teller’s access to self-publishing via blogs.

Over the past few years, there has been a huge increase in the amount of personal narrative being created on the web, many like the well-publicised www.bubbe.com which is a website archiving the folkloric tales of an American Jewish grandmother. Is this archiving of our own memories part of an attempt to save at least our own history within the emergence of what has been termed an ‘amnesic culture’? (McQuire 1998:129) Is it part of that impulse towards myth-making which lies at the heart of our consciousness? Contemporary Western society is dominated by audio-visual media and by the digitisation of information, and with that ‘archive fever’ (Derrida 1996:12) or ‘storage
mania’ (Mediamatic, Summer 1994 issue) there has been much concerned debate about the concomitant emergence of a lack of a sense of history.

How ironic this is when the initial response to the camera was typified by Sir Frederick Pollock’s 1855 eulogising of the camera as history’s saviour. Against this optimism, a century or so later, we have the list that Scott McQuire makes of the catastrophising from many eminent theorists in the field of screen studies in relation to the camera as a servant of history: Barthes and his fear that ‘the culture of the camera (emphasis mine) is antagonistic to the rhythm of History’, Jameson and his assertion that the news media ‘serve as the very agents and mechanisms of our historical amnesia’; Guy Debord who declared the spectacle to be ‘the paralysis of history and memory’; Baudrillard declaring ‘TV, the veritable final solution to the historicity of every event’ and Virilio concerned that history was to become ‘the lost dimension’ (McQuire 1998:129). In all of these we hear echoes of Plato’s fears about the development of the new communication technology of writing, that this invention would produce forgetfulness in the souls of those who learned it because they would not exercise their memories in the oral tradition that then existed.

As critical thinkers of new media express their concerns about an emerging amnesic culture, as our computers increasingly become databases for archiving information, images and even memories, is there a possibility that we ourselves are remembering less? We know that the digital revolution has irrevocably changed our belief in the real and the true when it comes to digital photography, but what is happening with the way that we
are remembering those images? What form is evolving in our archiving of them in both
our individual and social memory? This debate about an emerging amnesic culture as
argued by Daniel Palmer (2001:221) in the ‘The Art of Real Time’ ‘corresponds with an
important development in contemporary art to examine gaps between personal and
cultural memory, and to examine trauma’.

Up until only a few years ago, the computer screen had been primarily the interface
where we navigated in order to access information and then archived it according to our
particular requirements. There has been however an emergence of ‘memory work’ in CD
Roms such as Debra Petrovich’s *Uncle Bill (2000)* and on the net with virtual memorial
sites, personal diaries/blogs and digital short films as in Scott Hessell’s
Persistence of History* (1996), Robert Rosenstone argues that the Internet and the
interactive CD-ROM are places “uniquely capable of dealing with the multiple, complex,
and overlapping elements that comprise historical film” (Sobchack 1996:206). In his
paper ‘The Social and Subjective Look: Hybridization and Poetic Reflexivity in New
Documentary’, Ib Bondebjerg (2003), noted Danish documentary scholar, echoed this
view as he examined this same implosion of the private and the public as part of what he
terms a ‘reflexive modernity’ being played out in the new documentary - online and in
CD Rom - in the Netherlands.

As part of their support for emerging new media, the Australian Film Commission had
previously funded only CD ROMs. Daniel Palmer asserts that the potential for this kind
of memory-work on the net is enormous’ (Palmer 2001:222) and selects three AFC projects as potential precursors of online memory-work. They are Dennis Del Favero’s *Cross Currents* (1999), which examines the dynamics of the sex slave industry in Western Europe, *Uncle Bill* (2000) by Debra Petrovich, dealing with memory and child abuse, and Ross Gibson and Kate Richard’s *Darkness Loiters* (2000), based on a hidden NSW archive of scene-of-the-crime photographs, randomly emerging black and white images combining with haiku text to explore cultural memories of post WW2 Sydney. All three explore the intersections between personal and cultural memory (Palmer 2001:215-223).

When Palmer discusses the use of ‘hotspots’ in Del Favero’s QTVRs, he explains how the user is given these as multiple-entry points to other layers in the narrative and how this provides for a radically different viewing experience. This is very similar to the construction of the ‘movies’ in *The Wrong Crowd*. The QTVR scenes provide for a viewing experience more akin to that of the ‘gaze’ in a cinema setting as I attempt to provide a cinematic experience. The ability to click on various ‘hotspots’ then provides the viewer with an interactive moment within the scene which is more akin to the cognitive experience of a game and can potentially make the computer user a ‘complicit witness’ to the scene (Palmer 2001:221). Palmer argues that these nodes then become entry points to the memories being recreated, and called these sites of ‘unclaimed experience’ – a term used initially by Cathy Caruth (1996) to describe trauma.
It is the layering that it is available in the construction of product for the new technology of the internet that perhaps provides for the most significant aspect of change in the delivery and reception of documentary through a computer screen.

How are memorials to events of trauma to play out in contemporary society? In my project, *The Wrong Crowd*, my remembering and memorialising are enacted on a website. Memories are performed through visual records/enactments/found objects/artefacts/text. Public events are recalled through newspaper accounts and television news footage. Now the documentary is a website that includes text and images that can be downloaded and archived for the visitor, a forum for the audience to provide their own contributions, and a long-term ‘viewing’ experience, possibly over years.

According to research by social psychologist James Pennebaker in *Collective Memory of Political Events* (1997) most of the work in autobiographical memory as well as sociological surveys of historical events indicate that cultural upheavals maximally affect people between certain age- groups. I have narrowed the focus of my personal narrative to the years between 12 and 25, because these are the years, borne out in Pennebaker’s research (as part of his Critical Period Hypothesis) as the years most significant in structuring an individual’s sense of identity and sense of belonging to a community. My transitional summer from 12 to 13 was the summer of 1967. The year I became a teenager was the year that Bjelke-Petersen became Premier of Queensland.
1968 was also the year when Western culture was being shaken by events of immense social change especially in Europe and America. The period post-1968 represents to many the ‘crisis of authority’. Traditional values were being challenged as a new generation and a new set of values emerged. Liberation from the oppression of the conformity of the 1950s was being pursued by the younger generation. Bjelke-Petersen, almost sixty when he came to power in 1968, was an overtly religious church-goer whose values and strict moral code included an acute deference to authority and a determined sexual prudery. The values of the new generation of liberation were in stark contrast to his. ‘Free love’, political protest and artistic freedom were the values that Bjelke-Petersen sought to demonise.

A sense of crisis and social anxiety were fostered and exploited by the then Premier as the fuel for his policy of moral censorship and as justification for his determination to protect society from what he labelled as moral dissolution and decadence. Bjelke-Petersen’s response to the New Left in Queensland was to recycle the anti-Communist rhetoric of the Cold War of the 1950s. Newspaper accounts of the nascent FOCO club, a place for exercising youthful political protest and artistic experimentation, hinted that the place was also frequented by young men and women of loose morals and corrupting behaviour.

In *Australia’s Censorship Crisis* (1970) Queensland poet, Judith Wright argued that Queensland in the 1960s was ‘seized in blind panic’. ‘The banning of the Beardsley’s Lysistrata posters, the prohibition on the sale of the *Hair* recordings and of *An ABZ of
Love are, seen objectively, ridiculous enough to demonstrate that these are seen, not as what they are, but as symbols. They are symbols whose power lies in what they are taken to stand for – a threat to an old and once-powerful order of moral authoritarianism, whose strength is failing’ (Dutton & Harris 1970:108).

Within the QTVR ‘Mulberry Letters’, there are links to images and text that are part of my social memory of that year - 1968. Against the backdrop of the societal battle for the dissolution of the patriarchy was my personal narrative of reconnection with my father through a birthday card he had sent for my thirteenth birthday. The Wrong Crowd narrative concludes in 1976 and provides the ‘user’ of the website with the final closing images of a young woman and her friends trying to operate in a deeply divided society. In Pennebaker’s ‘Generational Resource Hypothesis’ he argues that it is precisely the age-group that I am in now, the over 40s, who are in a position to reflect on the events of their youth and have the impulse to create the memorials, or write the books, or make the films about these significant events.

The Scenes Menu page lists the spine of the narrative - the seventeen QTVRs, chronicling the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s in Queensland from the point of view of a policeman’s daughter. In scripting the QTVR ‘movies’, I sought to create iconic memory-moments, seventeen memory-moments divided into the stages of growing – childhood and adolescence and emerging into early adulthood at the University of Queensland. (Much of the police department’s Special Branch surveillance centred on the University and this information was delivered to the State as a form of social control).
Three key areas of discussion arose in the production – the often competing needs of organising the database and constructing the narrative, the filmmakers’s tool of temporal montage versus the web designer’s comfortableness with spatial montage and the unknown nature of the audience’s reception of a product via online delivery as opposed to broadcast delivery. Content and form emerged as contemporaneous elements in the design of the online documentary. The personal narrative spine of the seventeen iconic memory moments is the classic story of ‘bildung’, of finding yourself. There is a heavy use of emotional signifiers and reality symbols, for example, in the ‘hotspot’ of the picture from my mother’s *Tropical Cookbook* from Golden Circle, there is an image of green jelly surrounding yellow pineapple slices. Amongst recent presentation audiences, that image has been one that consistently triggered what Jane Roscoe in *Faking It* (2001) has termed ‘flickers of authenticity’.

In an attempt to subvert the multiple-windows of conventional interface design, each scene can be played full screen, in and the user can choose either ‘auto’ or ‘manual’. In ‘auto’ mode the scene plays in real time according to my scripting. In ‘manual’ the user can navigate around the scene at will. So for each scene, the viewer is given the option of ‘leaning back’ to view the scene and/or they can click on ‘manual’ and navigate around the scene at their will, zooming here, tilting to a hotspot there, spending the time they require to explore the memory moment further. Interacting with the scene allows the user to understand more fully, more deeply, the layers of the truth of that moment. Being able
to move around a 3D space is a radical break in the recent history of visual representation.

The navigation is via the narrative interface and is embedded with historical documents. The process of the scriptwriting was according to a set of parameters defined by the database. Working with text as one of the essential elements in this new documentary form meant engaging in the world of the graphic designer. It became important to consider word length, layout, and images that can be used to enhance the script-reading. This was especially so in the HTML version, where a still image is taken from the QTVR ‘movie’ and the narration written underneath rather than spoken as in the ‘movies’ version. The introductory FLASH sequence is handwritten to suggest that what follows is excerpts from a diary, a motif also invoked in the image of the torn-off Spirax pages at the top of each of the Director’s Notes. The creation of the QTVRs necessitated a different ‘filming’ technique. I needed to specify a frozen moment of the ‘mise en scene’ that would become the image-interface (the QuickTime ‘movie’) from which the audience would navigate the database.

As Manovich points out, media studies still lacks any framework for addressing the most fundamental quality of new media – its programmability. For this Manovich suggests we need a framework that might be termed ‘software theory’. With categories borrowed from computer theory, he leads us into discussions of ‘interface’ and ‘database’ from an aesthetic consideration. As a content creator, I have had to reach an understanding of the HCI (the human computer interface) in order to provide for a documentary online
experience. I have had to learn the ‘new’ language of the software applications used to
author and access new media product online in order to create a different kind of viewing
experience. The GUI (Graphical User Interface) popularised by Macintosh since 1984
and made for a screen ruled by straight lines and rectangular windows, became my new
screen. The tools I learnt to use to create on this screen were a mouse, a web browser, a
search engine, and a cut and paste function as well as copy, delete and find.

There was a constant tension in the early stages of the site’s design between the
programmer’s preoccupation with navigation and mine as the filmmaker with narration.
Navigation implies a map and the content creator, to a greater or lesser degree, can plot a
pathway through this map. The viewer can then follow this pathway, or deviate, or
continue in a line as the mood takes him/her. Navigation is via a map and the mode of
transport is the mouse. Prospective visitors to the site ask similar questions based on the
temporal expectations of the old media – how long is it? when is it finished? how do I
know when I’ve seen it all? All four program-makers at the Australian International
Documentary Conference Reframe session reported this audience expectation of the
temporal element that surrounds the documentary in its online form. In an attempt to
translate into terms intelligible to the old media audience, the seventeen QTVR ‘movies’
of *The Wrong Crowd* are approximately each one minute in duration. As a content
creator, how long can I expect a viewer/user to stay on the site? Molly Reynolds from
Beyond Online argued at the AIDC Reframe session that six minutes was the average
stay and around twenty minutes was the length of stay on a site that was performing well
in terms of ‘stickiness’. If my site ‘performs well’, it is possible then to follow the whole seventeen scenes in one sitting in a linear fashion.

The essence of new media is that is programmable, and as programming involves altering the linear flow of data through control structures – if/then and repeat/while, and so my narrative must be by definition non-linear. Building a narrative in a non-linear environment meant embracing the essence of what Manovich calls ‘modularity’. Within the site, there is a collection of discrete objects – GIFs, JPEGs, text, wav files and QTVRs, and all are stored independently on a network. Each element can be accessed on its own so it has been imperative to create content that if deleted would not render other parts meaningless. In the computer age, descriptive ‘stand-alone’ information is everywhere. The other side of the ‘modularity’ coin is interactivity. One of the key requirements of the Australian Film Commission’s funding was that the project be interactive but as Manovich argues, to describe computer-based media as ‘interactive’ is almost a tautology as it means stating the most fundamental fact about computers, that they are all about pressing buttons and choosing links.

Interactivity essentially is about random access. Random access allows the sequence and duration of images to be determined at the time of presentation rather than fixed in the production process. Does eliminating fixed sequence and fixed timing of narrative moments eliminate narrative? Stand-alone data so freely available that every event can be linked with the previous event at any moment, and with multiple entry points, does this mean that the continuous sequence and the chronology of the story vanishes?
I would suggest that the temporal narrative structures are ‘endemic to the structure of consciousness’ and we utilise them in all story-telling environments even in a spatial/navigable structure. Images are moved within and around in a new kinaesthetic participation, and the parameters of interactivity for providing for a self-selected narrative, for providing an open-ended storyline, by programming in multiple choices from a menu, all operate within a consciousness that inherently constructs a temporal ‘suture’.

Manovich has called for ‘a theoretical analysis of the aesthetics of information access’ (2001:217) in the online environment – what he describes as ‘info-aesthetics’. In my analysis, ‘info-aesthetics’ addresses the tension that existed in the creation of The Wrong Crowd – the tension between achieving the two goals of information access and psychological engagement. The pinnacle of achievement for the creative treatment of audio-visual content is to engage the viewer in a transformative moment (sadness, laughter etc). How is that experience to be achieved in a domain in which the hand is ever at the ready to disengage in the search for further information? The gaze is potentially on the verge of being broken at any moment by a glance outside the frame to the interface with its potential to move in another direction, to link to another word, series of words, images etc.

In an interactive cinematic experience, the audience constantly shifts between the roles of viewer and user, between perceiving and acting. As Manovich points out, the computer screen itself changes to accommodate this process of moving from one role to another –
one moment it is a transparent window onto a 3D scene, and the next it returns to a solid navigable plane with menus, controls etc, with a click it can become again a window to another reality.

When we as audiences first encountered the moving cinema image, we were required to learn cinematic syntax, for example the most basic, shot and countershot. Are we now learning a new process of suture? And will this periodic shift between illusion and its suspension become an accepted and unconscious part of the interactive cinematic experience? From my experience in creating The Wrong Crowd the new media aesthetic has an affinity with the Brechtian aesthetic of alienation – the conditions of the illusion are constantly ‘revealed’ by the need to return to the interface. This periodic reappearance of the ‘machinery’, the ‘apparatus’, the continuous presence of the communication channel within the viewing experience, provides the resistance for the viewer to stop themselves falling into the illusion for too long.

**Conclusion**

Creating a documentary in a new media format meant constructing the right interface and defining appropriate navigation methods but the real challenge was in attempting to meld the two functions of navigation and narration, to give the user efficient access to information and to psychologically ‘immerse’ the user in an imaginary universe. The database is the vehicle for the first goal and the navigable interface of the QTVR ‘movies’ is an attempt to meet the demands of the second.
Whereas in the past content defined form, the choice of a particular interface is motivated by the content but cannot be seen as separate – content and interface become one entity. The viewing experience is an oscillation between the illusionary segments and the interactive segments and forces the user/viewer to switch between different kinds of cognitive activity.

Clearly CMC (computer mediated communications) are changing the way that we are growing and developing as individuals and within social groupings. The IRC (Internet Relay Chat) generation even have a vocabulary that reflects their post MTV, post mobile phone with SMS text messaging experience. In the private sector, telecommunication companies, television networks, computer companies, cable companies and newspapers in Australia, the USA, Europe and Japan are all jockeying for market share in the nascent ‘interactive home entertainment’ industry. The audience for this new form is still to be defined. It’s not William Gibson’s data cowboy (Neuromancer, 1994) and it’s not Geert Lovink’s data dandy (Datendandy 1994) but the profile of the future datacasting audience is as ill-defined as the form of the content to be datacast.

Once the limitations of communication bandwidth are reduced and the resolution of displays has significantly increased, the next generation of entertainment on the net will appear – broadband cinema. In the meantime, content creators must deal with the real limitations of bandwidth – a single digital image consists of millions of pixels and this requires considerable storage space in a computer and it takes a long time to transmit over a network. Because of this, the technical director makes use of the technique of ‘lossy
compression’, that is, making image files smaller by deleting some information. The technique involves a compromise between image quality and file size. Distributing moving images over a network requires space and time and so ‘lossy compression’ is a constant feature of digital transmission over the Internet and is characterised by a loss of data in the deletion of information to keep file-sizes small and a resultant degradation of image and sound quality from the original.

The narrow bandwidth and this need to keep file sizes small were major considerations behind the decision to use Live Stage Professional software because it allows for files that are information-rich and bandwidth-cautious. Live Stage Professional has been designed by the Totally Hip company in Canada to work within a QuickTime authoring environment. This was seen by the Toadshow web-design team to be the most user-friendly platform as most ABC online users either already have QuickTime software enabling them to access the site or could download the software easily. The ABC’s charter of accessibility was a major impetus to this decision regarding software.

In 2003, we are in a transitional phase where as content creators we are only beginning to understand the implications of the new communication technologies. We are witnessing a transition from the optical or photographic mode of image production to the digital mode (Elsaesser 1998:205). That digital mode allows for images to be altered down to the level of their pixels and reduces the core material of the documentary form – live action – to just one of many different kinds of digital image to be modified. As a media technology, cinema’s role had been to capture and to store visible reality. The difficulty of modifying
images once they were recorded was exactly what gave cinema its value as a document, assuring its authenticity.

In *The Language of New Media*, Lev Manovich argues the implications of digital cinema as a graphic mode (2001:309). 3-D animation, compositing, mapping, paint retouching – ‘computer-enhanced scenes fool the audience into believing the shots were produced with live actors on location’ building on an old cinematic modification of reality. David Hockney argues that the last time that the hand was so evidently ‘in the machine’ was in the convergence of the scientific discovery of mirrors and lenses with the visual art of painting. Is George Lucas’s Industrial Light and Magic the twenty-first century equivalent of Caravaggio’s ‘camera obscura’ studios?

In the summer of 1999, in the magazine *Royal Academy*, Hockney first speculated on the end of the ‘period of chemical photography’ (2001:228) where the camera is returning to the hand via the computer and where he argued the tradition started in the fifteenth century with the use of the camera obscura. With digitisation, the photograph has lost its veracity but as Martin Kemp says in published correspondence with Hockney, ‘we are perceptually addicted to the illusion of reality in whatever medium’ (2001:230).

The convergence of the visual arts with photographs is reflected in the subject of David Hockney’s *Pearblossom Highway* (1985). Although the painting appears to have a central fixed viewpoint, it is a composite of images that Hockney took as he moved about the
landscape. It brings all the details to the surface, much as one can in digitised footage online.

Both Hockney the painter and Manovich the computer theorist, though from very different disciplines, have an optimistic view of this ‘opening up of cultural techniques, conventions and forms …. [which will provide us] an opportunity to see the world anew (Manovich 2001:333) ‘We are in a post-photographic age. Even in movies this is happening, in Jurassic Park and the new Star Wars. What it means I do not know. ….exciting times are ahead (Hockney 2002:228 )

Working on The Wrong Crowd with a digital photographer in a cinematic computer interface, the hand of the artist was very much back in the machine. The ‘mise en scene’, the frozen moment that tells the story in Caravaggio’s Card-Sharps had been painted by compositing separate images captured by a ‘camera obscura’. Creating our Quick Time
‘movies’ online was also a process of compositing live-action shots in Virtual Reality (or VR) scenes that told the story of a memory-moment. For the digital artist who created the ‘animated paintings’ and as the content-creator for this emerging screen art of the digital age, we both needed to learn the ‘language of new media’ in order to communicate with each other.
THE WRONG CROWD

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