Introduction to Newsfront

Few films of the Australian revival of the 1970s are held in such affectionate regard as Phillip Noyce’s Newsfront (1978). It evokes the Australian decade following the end of World War Two with precision and rigour: certainly, one may feel nostalgic about what now seems the passing of more innocent times, but the film doesn’t encourage sentimentality. It is sometimes very moving in its representation of the lives of its newsreel cameramen and their partners and families; it is aware that, in terms of media reporting, the film catches a key moment in the nation’s history; and, in the matter of its own technical expertise – especially in the marrying of news footage and staged action, in moving between colour and black-and-white – it was something of a tour de force. And in Bill Hunter’s incarnation of cameraman Len Maguire, the film boasts one of the finest performances ever in an Australian film. Rose Lucas’ study of the film explores the key issues relating to time and place and the way men and women functioned in these, as well as situating the film in the contexts of its production and reception.

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