

Introduction: Ana Kokkinos

I first watched a film directed by Ana Kokkinos during my doctoral research. I was investigating recently released films with women directors and lesbian protagonists as part of a larger survey of 'lesbian romantic comedies' and it was during that research that I first saw *Only the Brave* (1994).¹ Though by no means a romantic comedy – Kokkinos has joked that she will make a comedy 'when [she] grow[s] up' (qtd in Buckmaster 2009: n.p.) – it was a striking and unusual film that stayed with me, not least as a young queer woman growing up in suburban Australia. Indeed, as I contend in Chapter 1, *Only the Brave* was the first queer coming-of-age film in Australia, and one of the first in the world to feature a queer girl.² But unlike other queer coming-of-age films that tended to privilege 'positive and compassionate attitudes' (Padva 2004: 357), Kokkinos instead explores the alienation, estrangement, and visceral distresses of those outside the mainstream. Her oeuvre has been described as 'about as confrontational as Australian films get' (McFarlane 2010: 86) and 'among the most hard-hitting bodies of work in Australian cinema' (Buckmaster 2014: n.p.). More than that, though, Kokkinos's oeuvre is a body of work at once both distinctive and culturally significant, and warranting considerably more attention than it has yet received. And it is to that broad project that this book aims to first contribute.

The director

Ana Kokkinos (1958–) is an Australian screenwriter, producer, and director best known for her work directing fictional films, including the short *Antamasi* (1991), short feature³ *Only the Brave* (1994), and features *Head On* (1998), *The Book of Revelation* (2006), and *Blessed* (2009). Alongside her work in fictional film, Kokkinos has directed multiple episodes of popular Australian television dramas and docudramas, from *Eugenie Sandler P.I.* (2000) to *Seven Types of Ambiguity* (2017–),⁴ as well as co-directed the documentary *The Original Mermaid* (2002) with Michael Cordell. With a body of work spanning almost three decades, Kokkinos is one of Australia's most distinctive filmmakers, not least with her sustained focus on the city of Melbourne (the setting of all of her fictional films) and her visceral depictions of 'outsiders' (two points to which I return). She is also one of the country's most celebrated filmmakers. Her films have premiered at the Director's Fortnight at the Cannes, Venice, Toronto, and San Sebastian film festivals; won more than thirty awards nationally and internationally; and been praised by scholars and critics alike (Kokkinos n.d.). She has been described as, among other things, 'a major talent' (McFarlane 2010: 87), a 'celebrated' filmmaker (Buckmaster 2009: n.p.), an 'acclaimed director' (Ross 2012: 51), and a 'filmmaker in powerful command of the medium' (Hopgood 2009: 35) with 'a body of work that makes a significant contribution to global cinema' (French 2013: n.p.).

Yet Kokkinos very nearly wasn't a filmmaker at all.

One of three daughters, Kokkinos was born in Yarraville, Victoria on 3 August 1958, three years after her Greek parents migrated to Australia (Kalina 2009). As a working-class Greek-Australian girl growing up in the western suburbs of Melbourne – 'the only Greek family in an Irish working-class street' (Kalina 2009: n.p.) – the idea of becoming a filmmaker felt 'remote, it just didn't feel like a career prospect' (Kokkinos qtd in Barber 1998: 5). Certainly it was not the career she initially pursued. Kokkinos graduated from Monash University in 1982 and worked in

industrial law for close to a decade. It was in that capacity that she worked alongside future Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard at Slater & Gordon (Kent 2010: 73), with both young lawyers sharing a keen interest in social justice (Kalina 2009), a preoccupation that resonates in Kokkinos's films. But where Gillard was joining the firm in 1987, Kokkinos was soon to leave. Perhaps ironically, it was the offer of a partnership at her law firm that motivated her departure (Kalina 2009). Kokkinos has said of the time:

I got to a point in my law career where I realised that I should make the break, either I committed myself to the law or said I really want to become a film-maker, I really want to become a director. I'll give it a go and see what happens. And that's virtually what I did. I threw everything in and applied to film school. (Kokkinos in Malone 1999: n.p.)

Indeed, in 1990 Kokkinos completed a course run by Women in Film and Television (WIFT), which, as its name suggests, aimed to bring more women into filmmaking in Australia (Barber 1998: 5). And, with Kokkinos, it succeeded. In 1991 Kokkinos was accepted into a one-year postgraduate filmmaking course at Swinburne Film and Television School (which became the Victorian College of Arts or VCA), in part through the two short films she made during her WIFT course (Katsigiannis 1998), and graduated the following year at thirty-four years of age. Kokkinos has described entering filmmaking later in life as 'a very active conscious decision to say, "I now feel stronger and in a better position to launch into something like this"' (qtd in Barber 1998: 5).

Now almost three decades since the release of her first film, this is the first monograph to focus on the director. In doing so, I focus specifically on Kokkinos's fictional oeuvre comprised of *Antamosi*, *Only the Brave*, *Head On*, *The Book of Revelation*, and *Blessed*. Kokkinos's films, though not previously the focus of a book, have nevertheless been widely reviewed, particularly in the Australian and queer press, and are, to a lesser extent, the focus of journal articles and book chapters. While scholars have

long drawn attention to the marked paucity of scholarship on the director (Hardwick 2009; Collins and Davis 2004; Berry 1999), reasons for which I point to later, the work that does exist on Kokkinos nevertheless offers valuable insights and an important starting point. Thus far, the majority of existing scholarship focused on Kokkinos has centred on *Head On* and often been interested in aspects of the depiction of either queerness (Hunn 2000; Jennings and Lominé 2004; Vernay 2006; McIntyre 2010), ethnicity (Conomos 2014; Plunkett 2006; Aquilia 2001; Bennett 2007; Freiberg and Damousi 2003), or both (Tziallas 2010; Papanikolaou 2009; O'Regan 2001). Considerably less scholarship has investigated Kokkinos's other films, though of the work that does, much of it is interested in Kokkinos's use of genres, and particularly the intersections between genre, gender, and/or sexuality (for example, McWilliam and Bickle 2017; Henry 2014; Heller-Nicholas 2011a, 2011b; Hopgood 2009; Hardwick 2009).

Though diverse foci are inevitably taken within this body of scholarship, these broader trends nevertheless point towards the noteworthiness of Kokkinos's privileging of difference in a national cinema that has historically 'been overly concerned with the fabrication of a metonymic Australian masculinity' and 'ethnic and racial exclusiveness' (Craven 2001: 6), which have been enunciated through the 'white, heterosexual man of Anglo-Irish origin as the Australian type par excellence' (Seco 2008: 145). In contrast, all but one of Kokkinos's films centre around working-class, first- or second-generation Greek immigrants who are often also young and/or queer. Notably, these are characteristics the director largely shares: Kokkinos has discussed being a lesbian, second-generation Greek immigrant, who grew up in a working-class family in the western suburbs of Melbourne (Thomas 1999; Kalina 2009). While Kokkinos has stated that her films are not 'autobiographical', she has nevertheless described them (and particularly *Only the Brave*) as being 'born out of [her] own experiences' and part of a desire to bring something resembling her own lived experiences to the screen (in White and Lambropoulos 2017).

And indeed Kokkinos's fictional films, too, are all shot and set in the port city of Melbourne, the capital city of Victoria and the city in which Kokkinos still resides, and often specifically in the western suburbs in which she grew up. While her decision to consistently film in Melbourne presumably speaks partly to issues of convenience and finance, it is also the Australian city most associated with immigrants and Greek immigrants in particular. Melbourne has been a 'sister city' of the Greek city of Thessaloniki since 1984, for instance, in recognition of Melbourne's role as 'home to the largest Greek-speaking population outside of Europe' ('Greece' 2018). Well-known for its 'Greek precinct', Melbourne is also the site of a new 'Global Greek Diaspora Library' being built in collaboration with the National Library of Greece (Ioannou 2017). But unlike Sydney, which is frequently associated on film with iconic images of the internationally recognisable Sydney Harbour Bridge or Sydney Opera House, there are 'few dominant or defining images of Melbourne' in much Australian cinema outside of 'fleeting images of the skyline and muddy Yarra River' (Danks 2012: 6). Instead, Melbourne-set cinema is frequently 'representationally heterogeneous' and 'spatially indistinct' (Danks 2012: 6), a kind of 'non-place' (Danks 2017: n.p.). The diverse, indistinct Australian city functions emblematically of Australian society more broadly, but also introduces themes of 'place and placelessness, home and homelessness' (to adapt Craven 2001: 8), and insiders and outsiders.

Lisa French – who represents an important precedent for the present study as the first to discuss Kokkinos's fictional oeuvre (2012, 2013) – notes:

The cinema of Melbourne film-maker Ana Kokkinos [...] offer[s] an *insider's* view of place. Yet these insiders are also outsiders who are frequently 'Othered', painfully aware of their difference due to their sexuality (as gays or lesbians); their ethnicity (as Greek immigrants within a troubled multicultural Australia); their socio-economic status (as working class, and often disenfranchised youths); and their place as sons and daughters battling familial tensions (particularly as second generation migrants). (French 2012: 66)

The idea of the outsider in the work of Kokkinos is thus a focus I draw from French. I elaborate on it briefly below before expanding on it throughout this book.

The outsider

For celebrated film critic David Stratton (2017), ‘stories of outsiders are an enduring theme of Australian cinema’ (and, indeed, of many cinemas and cinematic genres around the world). For Stratton (2017), stories of outsiders in Australian cinema revolve around ‘strangers from other places coming to, surviving, and adapting to an unknown land’ as well as the ‘inner mental struggle we [all] face to fit in and belong’. These enunciations of the outsider inevitably take numerous forms across the different genres and styles of Australian cinema, though ‘a significant proportion of Australian features since 1970’ articulate this relationship to the land vis-à-vis ‘the bush’, and often through a white male seeking to ‘tame’ or survive the land (Raynor 2000: 118; Craven 2001). In contrast, Kokkinos’s cinema is intimate and psychological in focus, transposing the ‘survival’ and ‘adaptation’ of her outsiders to exclusively urban and suburban spaces that often symbolise the interiority of those outsiders (French 2012, 2013): abandoned shacks, urban back alleys, run-down houses in outer suburbs – sites isolated from mainstream society.

Outside *The Book of Revelation*, these outsiders are, as French (2012) noted earlier, typically multiply marginalised as working-class, first- or second-generation Greek immigrants dealing with familial conflict, who are often also young and/or queer. In foregrounding multiple axes of difference and the relational overlapping of them – such that the experience of women, for example, is also ‘shaped by other dimensions of their identities, such as race and class’ (Crenshaw 1991: 1242) – Kokkinos takes an intersectional approach to her depiction of the outsider in much of her oeuvre (Brah and Phoenix 2004; Phoenix and Pattynama 2006). Much of Ari’s conflict with his father in *Head On*, for instance, revolves specifically around

the tension between his gender and ethnicity, as a young Greek man expected to marry a woman and start a family, and his sexuality as a non-monogamous queer. In often underscoring the intersectionality of her outsiders, Kokkinos emphasises the outsider as the sum of complex, socio-culturally situated, and 'shifting configurations of inequality along various dimensions' (Atewologun et al. 2016: 224). Where Kokkinos does employ a hegemonic protagonist – as with the white, hetero-masculine Daniel in the seemingly atypical *The Book of Revelation* – he undergoes a traumatising abduction that forcibly repositions him as an outsider to his own life, concluding the film literally removed from mainstream society by being arrested and in police custody.

Kokkinos's outsider, then, is a motif through which themes of alienation, disaffection, and the powerlessness of the marginalised are explored, typically through a visceral depiction of the experience of trauma. Key examples of these traumatic experiences include when: Katina's heroic, idealised father is revealed to be a murdered traitor in *Antamosi*; Alex's best friend self-immolates in front of her after being molested by her father in *Only the Brave*; Ari sees transgendered friend Johnny/Toula brutalised by police in *Head On*; Daniel is abducted and tortured in *The Book of Revelation*; and Rhonda looks for her children in *Blessed* only to learn that they have accidentally burned to death. That trauma is a uniting experience across Kokkinos's outsiders foregrounds the vulnerability of the marginalised in confronting and, across the chronology of her oeuvre, increasingly visceral ways: close-ups, slow motion, and exaggerated uses of colour and sound, as noted in later chapters, variously emphasise the physicality of trauma in particular, and the outsider's point-of-view more broadly. To some extent, Kokkinos invites audiences to experience outsider embodiments, to empathise with the outsider's point-of-view by looking with, rather than at the outsider. While Stratton (2017) argues that Australian cinema's preoccupation with outsiders is about 'bring[ing] the outsiders in from the edge', for Kokkinos it is about bringing audiences to that 'edge' and insisting that they see and experience it.

Indeed, the figure of the outsider in Kokkinos's oeuvre functions as a witness to the confronting failures of inclusion, and of hegemonic institutions more broadly, in the Australian cultural landscape, offering a counter-testimony to prevailing discourses of Australian nationhood at the time of these films' release. Certainly at the time of Kokkinos's emergence as a filmmaker, the Australian zeitgeist was marked by a national negotiation of the place of the outsider in Australian society. In 1989, for example – three years before Kokkinos released her first film and the year before she undertook her first filmmaking course – the Australian Federal Government released the *National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia*, which called for a shift away from an official view of Australia as a predominantly white colonial nation⁵ and towards multiculturalism as a national policy across cultural, social, and economic sectors (Australian Government 1989). The emphasis in the *National Agenda* was on acknowledging Australia's multicultural diversity largely through a unifying commitment to Australia: immigrants should, former Prime Minister Paul Keating stipulated, 'accept the basic principles of Australian society. These include the Constitution and the rule of law, parliamentary democracy, freedom of speech and religion, English as a national language, equality of the sexes and tolerance' (qtd in Ozdowski 2012). Tom O'Regan (1996: 20, 23) has argued that multiculturalism was effectively offered as a 'new public myth of the people' with the 1989 *National Agenda* providing 'an impetus, albeit in a limited fashion, for cultural diversity to move [...] into the mainstream'. But it was a short-lived mainstreaming that was increasingly associated with public unrest: in 1996 the conservative John Howard, who had been critical of multiculturalism (among other sites of difference), was elected prime minister and remained so until 2007 (Tavan 2006). Among his early decisions in office were the abandoning 'of the multicultural portfolio' and the closure of the Office of Multicultural Affairs (Ozdowski 2012; Koleth 2010).⁶ One of the effects of the *National Agenda* around multiculturalism

and its rejection, of course, is that the ‘ethnic’ immigrant was discursively negotiated as Australian ‘other’.

Nevertheless, at the time the shift in policy represented a key contextual influence to Australian filmmakers, as the film industry was subsidised by the government, and a propitious, albeit brief, moment for broadening and diversifying cultural representations in film. And certainly there were a number of prominent films released in the policy’s wake that were set in multicultural milieus, most notably *Death in Brunswick* (dir. John Ruane, 1990), *Strictly Ballroom* (dir. Baz Luhrmann, 1992), and *The Heartbreak Kid* (dir. Michael Jenkins, 1993). French writes:

When Kokkinos emerged in the 1990s, *Cinema Papers*, amongst others, was heralding a ‘New Breed of Ethnic Filmmakers’. [...] Filmmakers like Kokkinos, Alexis Velis and Monica Pellizzari were encouraged to make films that reflected their ethnic backgrounds. Multicultural stories gained greater funding and mainstream exposure, even with non-ethnic filmmakers (for example, Baz Luhrmann’s *Strictly Ballroom*, 1992). (French 2013: n.p.)

And perhaps even ‘especially’ with non-ethnic filmmakers. Certainly the prominent ‘multicultural’ films released in cinemas in the early 1990s were overwhelmingly directed by non-ethnic and/or male directors, a number of which (as I note further in Chapter 1) told comedic stories about ‘caricatured’ characters from the perspective of ethnically unmarked, male characters (Callahan 2001). Yet despite these national discourses, and the prominent paradigm of an eventually good-natured acceptance of the ‘ethnic other’ depicted in much mainstream Australian cinema of the time, Kokkinos’s films foreground the often violent and traumatic failures of inclusion in practice, typically through a confronting social realism.⁷ Kokkinos, John Conomos (2014: 121) writes, depicts a ‘rupture with [...] conservative notions of Australian identity’.

For Kokkinos, this challenge to ‘conservative notions of Australian identity’ occurs across her oeuvre, but also occurs

discursively and extra-textually. As implied earlier, Kokkinos, like her protagonists, is also a multiply marginalised outsider as a lesbian, Greek-Australian director who grew up in a working-class family, which might also go some way to understanding the comparative lack of attention she and her films have received in comparison with her peers. Certainly Kokkinos has described being a Greek-Australian filmmaker in the early 1990s as ‘incredibly rare at the time, and in some ways still rare’ to the extent that ‘to come from an ethnic background, a Greek background, was not only unusual, but fairly unique’ (in White and Lambropoulos 2017). But in a national cinema both textually and extra-textually characterised by its emphasis on white, typically heterosexual men (Berry 1999), Kokkinos’s ethnicity is by no means her only point of difference to the film industry norms in which she operates.

French, for example, has argued that simply being a female director in Australia constitutes having an ‘outsider’s view’ (paraphrased in Hancock 2014: 5). Indeed, the proportion of female to male directors in Australia is so dire that a national intervention – the AU\$3 million ‘Gender Matters’ initiative by Screen Australia – is currently under way to increase women’s participation in key roles, including specifically as directors (Molloy 2016). While women now account for approximately half of all students in Australian film schools, male directors account for almost 85 per cent of all feature films, and have done since the 1970s (Davidson 2015). Such structural bias is reflected in the reception of Australian women filmmakers, too. Consider Aaron Krach’s (1999: n.p.) backhanded assertion that ‘Anna [sic] Kokkinos is living proof that female filmmakers don’t necessarily make “women’s films”.’

Chris Berry (1999: 35) has further argued that the reception of Kokkinos’s first feature, *Head On* (1998), frequently ‘pigeonhole[d]’ it as ‘a gay or ethnic film’ and, to some extent, the same can be said of the director herself (French 2012). Certainly discussions frequently draw attention to Kokkinos not simply as a ‘director’, but specifically as a ‘lesbian director’ (for example, Lambie 2012: n.p.; Kennerson 1999: 35; Hunn 2000: 113). It is a label Kokkinos has explicitly rejected:

I mean I'm out [...]. And I've been in a relationship for a while now with a woman [...]. But, at the same time, I don't also identify myself as a 'lesbian' filmmaker. I reject that tag. Listen, I am a filmmaker. I have the capacity to represent all kinds of characters on screen and tell a variety of stories with all kinds of characters in a compelling and interesting way for the broadest possible audience. (Kokkinos qtd in Thomas 1999: n.p.)

As with similar debates that have occurred internationally around other lesbian filmmakers, the 'lesbian' descriptor has frequently been feared to delimit a film's potential audience to only those who identify as lesbian or lesbian-friendly, effectively 'ghettoizing' a director's work (Wilton 1995: 13). As Julia Knight (1995: 46) has argued (in relation to the work of Monica Treut), the 'lesbian' descriptor is frustratingly feared to 'deny the broader appeal and, more importantly, the wider relevance of her work'. But while 'lesbian' is often employed as something of a proud acceptance in certain contexts, as with Kokkinos's reception in the queer press, it may also hint at why her films (most of which feature prominent queer characters) have received comparatively little attention. Berry has raised the same spectre:

Some have suggested to me that it is precisely this very marked ethnic and gay combination that has led to critical neglect of [*Head On*]. They have pointed out that since nearly all of Australia's prominent film critics are Anglo and straight, and most of them are male, they could not be expected to grasp a film like *Head On*. (Berry 1999: 35)

Or, perhaps, a director like Kokkinos and her larger body of work.

The book

In this book, I take up the points raised throughout this Introduction to offer a reading of and across Kokkinos's fictional films through the broad focus of tracing the deployment of the

outsider as a textual motif. I extend this reading, in the concluding chapter, to consider the extra-textual construction of Kokkinos's fictional oeuvre in interviews, and particularly the framing of it as, as the book's subtitle indicates, an 'oeuvre of outsiders'. In doing this, I pursue a number of organising questions, including:

- How are the protagonists in Kokkinos's fictional films depicted as 'outsiders' and what features characterise the outsider within and across these films?
- What characterises Kokkinos's filmmaking style, in terms of both technical and thematic preoccupations, including (but not limited to) her depictions of the outsider?
- And to what extent can Kokkinos's 'oeuvre of outsiders' support a reading of her as an auteur?

In investigating these framing questions, the book is divided into five chapters organised chronologically around the release dates of her films.

Chapter 1. *Antamosi* and *Only the Brave*: the early films

Chapter 1 examines Kokkinos's early work by looking at her student short *Antamosi* and her short feature *Only the Brave*. In this chapter, I am broadly interested in establishing the features and preoccupations of Kokkinos's developing style, including the stylised social realism and focus on Greek-Australian migrant families in working-class Melbourne for which she is best known. In Chapter 1 I also track the emergence and characteristics of the proto-outsider, emerging first in the final scene of *Antamosi* before its explicit realisation from the first scene of *Only the Brave*. I look particularly at the construction of protagonist Alex as an outsider in terms of class, gender, ethnicity, and sexuality in *Only the Brave*, as well as noting her role as a witness to social injustice and trauma.

Chapter 2. *Head On*: centring the other

Chapters 2–4 each focus on one of Kokkinos's feature films, with Chapter 2 focused on her first feature film, *Head On*. *Head On* was a critical and commercial success; it was widely celebrated as a 'landmark' film in relation to its explicit and unapologetic depiction of queerness in particular, and continues to be exhibited in film festivals around the world almost two decades after its release. This chapter builds on discussions that posit *Head On* (and, for some scholars, *Only the Brave* before it) as the first example(s) of 'New Queer Cinema' in Australia. In doing this, I focus on Kokkinos's increasingly bold focus or 'centring' of an outsider or 'Othered' protagonist, and note the recurrence of the outsider as a witness to social injustice and trauma. I argue that the latter reveals the outsider in Kokkinos's oeuvre as a pretext for a denaturalising appraisal of Australian social and cinematic norms (which, as I argue in Chapter 3, is reinforced in *The Book of Revelation* when its hegemonic protagonist is 'othered'). However, I argue that unlike other social-realist films which tend to favour a didactic tone, Kokkinos's films' emphasis on the traumatised body instead invites an affective, and specifically queer, mode of engagement from audiences, which is emphasised by her refusal to recuperate protagonist Ari into any fixed identity or narrative conclusion.

Chapter 3 (with Sharon Bickle). *The Book of Revelation*: othering the centre

Chapter 3 is focused on Kokkinos's most controversial film, *The Book of Revelation*. In this chapter I, with Sharon Bickle, am interested in the depiction of the film's protagonist Daniel, who, as a successful, white, hetero-masculine man is the only hegemonic protagonist of Kokkinos's oeuvre. It is therefore interesting that he is also the only protagonist that does not witness traumatic social injustice but is instead the victim of it. We argue that Daniel's

abduction and torture disorients him so profoundly that he is forcibly recast as an outsider to his own life – he changes his name and leaves his previous job, house, partner, and profession on his release from capture. Moreover, where *Head On* focused on or ‘centred’ a marginalised character or ‘Other’, we argue that *The Book of Revelation* can be read as the reverse: as ‘othering’ the standard hero of much Australian cinema, namely the white, heterosexual, Anglo-Irish man (Seco 2008). We examine how this occurs through a rewriting of the rape-revenge genre and conclude by exploring a reading of the film as a violent rejection of masculinist Australian film mythologies.

Chapter 4. *Blessed*: an ensemble of outsiders

Chapter 4 focuses on *Blessed*, the release of which marked a return to a critically successful reception for Kokkinos after the comparatively unpopular *The Book of Revelation*. In this chapter I am interested in examining Kokkinos’s expanded use of the motifs, style, and preoccupations evident in her previous films. I also note a key shift: specifically, where *Only the Brave*, *Head On*, and *The Book of Revelation* all focus on a single outsider protagonist, most of whom are the sites of intersectional marginalities – ethnicity, class, sexuality, youth – *Blessed* disperses these diversities across an ensemble of outsiders. In doing so, Kokkinos makes explicit her ongoing emphasis on pluralistic depictions of Australian identity and on looking from the margins.

Conclusion: an oeuvre of outsiders – an Australian auteur?

In my concluding chapter, I look briefly at the features across, rather than within, Kokkinos’s films. All of her fictional films, for example, are set in contemporary Melbourne, focus on characters who are outsiders, and do so with a strong emphasis

on affect and the body within a stylised realism. In this chapter, I query whether these characteristics, among others, are sufficient to support a reading of Kokkinos as an auteur. To this evidence, I also consider extra-textual information and, in particular, Kokkinos's own framing of her films and oeuvre in reviews and interviews in which she regularly draws attention to her celebration of the outsider. In arguing for a reading of Kokkinos as an auteur, I conclude by considering the significance of the claim in the context of Australian cinema more broadly, and particularly Kokkinos's own role as an 'outsider' figure in the industry.

Notes

- 1 I use 'queer' to denote 'a range of nonstraight expressions' including 'lesbian, and bisexual expressions' but also 'all other potential (and potentially unclassifiable) nonstraight positions' (Doty 1993: xvi).
- 2 Queer coming-of-age films are overwhelmingly dominated by male-focused narratives with few focused on the stories of girls and, even at the time of writing, even fewer directed by 'queer women' (Lodge 2018: n.p.).
- 3 I follow Lisa French (2003: 107) in distinguishing 'short' and 'short feature' as follows: 'Short films are generally defined as films under 60 minutes final running time. As they are not constrained by the need to fill an appropriate time slot, unlike television programs or indeed features which must be within a certain length for exhibition, shorts can be three minutes, or 29, or 42. However, there is a length of short film designated "short feature" that is more well-defined, around the television hour'.
- 4 Specifically, Kokkinos has directed episodes in the following television programmes: *Eugenie Sandler P.I.* (2000), *Young Lions* (2002), *The Secret Life of Us* (2003–5), *Australia on Trial: Massacre at Myall Creek* (2012), *The Time of Our Lives* (2013), *Seven Types of Ambiguity* (2017), and *Pulse* (2017).
- 5 Beginning with (but not limited to) the Immigration Restriction Act 1901 until its abolition in 1973, Australia had in place a series of policies that explicitly sought to limit migration to Australia by non-British peoples by 'favouring applicants from certain countries' (Australian Government n.d.). These became known as the 'White Australia Policy'.
- 6 In many ways, this shift away from multiculturalism is one that has persisted in Australia: 'The last fifteen years have seen a rise in anxiety surrounding

official discourses of multiculturalism, evident both in public debates surrounding the issue, as well as a decrease in the use of the language of multiculturalism itself. Since the late 1990s, Australia has witnessed the diminishing currency of multiculturalism as a national policy priority, largely because of the ascendancy of a conservative politics of Anglo nationalism on the political right (Papastergiadis, 2012). In the popular imagination, the “war on terror” and the politicisation of asylum seekers and refugees have emphasised the divisive nature of cultural difference’ (Khan et al. 2013: 27).

- 7 Though Kokkinos employs different genres and styles within her oeuvre – from social-realist dramas (*Antamasi*), melodramas (*Blessed*), and coming-of-age films (*Only the Brave, Head On*) to a rape-revenge film (*The Book of Revelation*) – she typically favours a stylised social-realist approach. I use ‘social realism’ to denote a filmmaking style rather than a genre, as it is sometimes used. As a style, social realism crosses genre boundaries – evidenced by its use as a descriptor of much Australian cinema (O’Regan 1996: 97) or of a particular approach to genre, as in ‘social-realist coming-of-age films’ (Gottschall 2010: 178) – rather than constitutive of a specific genre itself.