**David Stratton’s Stories of Australian Cinema: Worksheet 3**

**Muriel’s Wedding, 1994**

1. Identify 3 reasons that mark Muriel’s Wedding as an important film.
2. Identify 2 specific ways it engaged Australian audiences.
3. Explain the overall success of the film.
4. Stratton says “that fine line between parody and despair is a hallmark of Australian comedy”. Define ‘parody’ and ‘satire’. What other films, television, web series or Youtube series do you know that reveal that distinctive form of Australian comedy?

**They’re A Weird Mob, 1966**

1. Hugo Weaving says that the film is a wonderful document of a particular time. What can contemporary audiences learn from old films such as They’re A Weird Mob?
2. The film was a British-Australia co-production. What is a ‘co-production’?
3. When the film was made in 1966, why were co-productions necessary? What had happened to the once burgeoning Australian film industry and why had it happened?
4. Why was They’re A Weird Mob considered to be “ahead of its time”? Give 2 reasons.
5. Consider the scene shown and Russell Crowe’s comments. Explain the social criticism of the film. Despite the film’s age, how is its message still relevant? What can audiences learn from it today?
6. When it opened in December 1966, They’re A Weird Mob “broke cinema attendance records for 14 weeks”. Explain this success.
7. List other Australian films that tell stories of the migrant experience in our nation.

**The Overlanders, 1946**

1. List the other Australian films referenced here that “tell stories of white outsiders conquering the land”.
2. Based on the 2 images edited together from films The Overlanders and Australia, sketch or describe the “mythic” image of the Australian stockman.
3. How was The Overlanders instrumental in Stratton’s own life?
4. Who made the film and how famous was Chips Rafferty?

**Wake in Fright, 1971**

1. “It took an outsider to show Australians some ugly home truths.” Explain why it took a non-Australian director to show the “menacing” side of Australian culture.
2. Identify the ‘ugly home truths’ that are depicted in the sequences from the film.
3. Jack Thompson says the film “brought a reality to the screen that was crucial for all Australians and all wouldbe filmmakers in this country, to meet themselves for the first time.” Explain why the reviews of the film were negative.
4. Why is this controversial film seen as so important, especially given its television re-make?
5. Identify the film-making techniques (such as editing and camerawork) seen in the screened sequence that make the last 10 minutes of the film disturbing for some.

**Evil Angels, 1988**

1. What is the film about?
2. Explain what prompted director Fred Schepisi to make the film?
3. Watch carefully the excerpts shown; explain how he exposed “the bigotry and intolerance of many Australians” through his use of production techniques.
4. Stratton thinks Evil Angels “was absolutely crucial in changing attitudes” in Australia. What evidence does he give to support his view given the lack of box-office success the film received?
5. Sam Neill played Michael Chamberlain in the film; he knew he was doing a film that wouldn’t be popular with a lot of Australians. So why did he do it? Explain this serious side to being an actor in a film about a true story.
6. Watch other films that depict a failure of justice in Australia. Some titles include Black and White (2002) and Balibo (2009).
7. They may not be “happy” stories but why is it important that these films are made?

**Walkabout, 1971**

1. It took another foreign director to depict the Australian landscape as beautiful and mystical. What technical equipment allowed him to capture the landscape in new ways?
2. Importantly, Walkabout launched David Gulpilil’s acting career. List the films featured here that he’s acted in.
3. Explain the impact Walkabout and Gulpilil had on a young Warwick Thornton.
4. There are several reasons that make the film an important one. What are some of these?
5. Despite its international critical acclaim, why wasn’t the film popular in Australia?

**Bran Nue Dae, 2009**

1. Director, Rachel Perkins says, “The thing about Bran Nue Dae is that on the surface it is this sort of absurd comedy road movie but there are many layers to read into the film” Based on the sequences shown, what features can you see that you think made it a success with audiences?
2. What does it reflect about culture and current social attitudes towards race relations, and specifically Reconciliation in Australia?
3. “The vitality and pride that runs through Bran Nue Dae, also runs through other indigenous-made films, appearing in the twenty-first century. It’s been called the new Black Wave of filmmaking.” How is the film a product of its time?

**The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert, 1994**

1. “The same levellers of humour and music were the core of one of the most powerful Australian films about outsiders”. The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert was both a “feel good movie” and a “phobia smasher”. Explain what is meant by this description.
2. The screenplay was inspired by a threatening experience of the writer/director Stephan Elliot. So what does the making of the film mean for both him and audiences?
3. Given the time when the ‘Grim Reaper’ AIDS advertisements were everywhere, explain why the film was needed in Australia in the 1990s.
4. Films like ‘Priscilla’ turn ‘preconceptions into real people’. Explain how.
5. Name any other film you’ve seen recently that has changed a perception or belief you have. What changed? And why?
6. “The incongruity of drag queens in the desert showed us that identity is endless”. How can this statement be applied to this ‘Australian story.’ Explain the power of the final image shown here from the film.