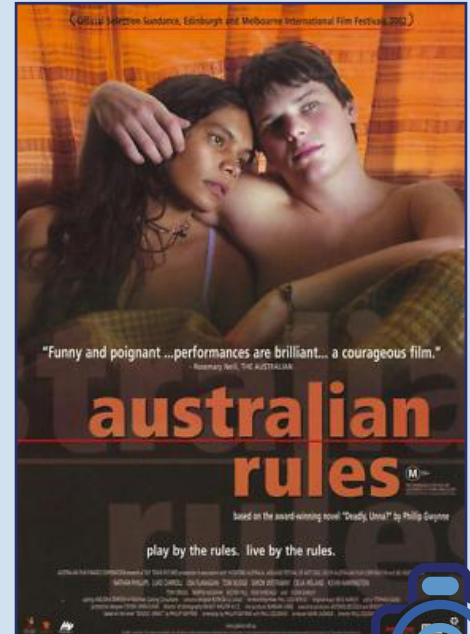


THE FILM POSTER - GROUP A

Look at the film poster of „Australian Rules“. What do you expect this movie to be about? Write a short abstract of the movie based on your expectations – use the information that the boy's name is Gary and the girl's name is Clarence.

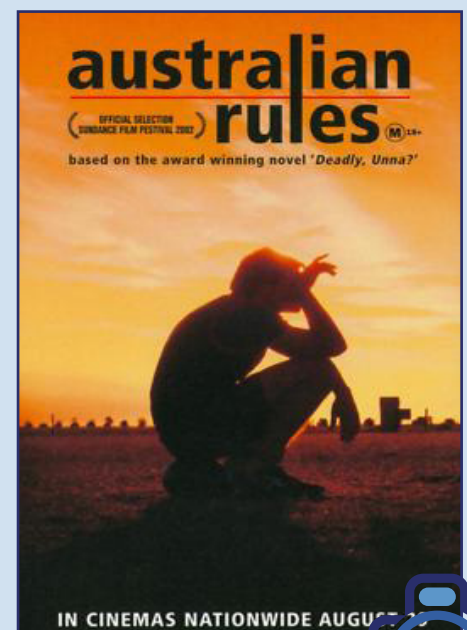
Reflect on the reasons for your expectations: What on the poster aroused those expectations?



THE FILM POSTER - GROUP B

Look at the film poster of „Australian Rules“. What do you expect this movie to be about? Write a short abstract of the movie based on your expectations – use the information that the boy's name is Gary and the girl's name is Clarence.

Reflect on the reasons for your expectations: What on the poster aroused those expectations?



CASTING

The film Australian Rules is based on the two Novels Deadly Unna? (1998) and Nukkin Ya! (2000) by Phillip Gwynne. In the books, there are detailed descriptions of most of the characters. Imagine you are the casting director for Australian Rules and in charge of the casting process. Read the following extracts of the book Deadly Unna?.



Dumby Red

pp. 21-23: “It was a Nunga, one I didn’t know. He was smiling. I couldn’t help noticing his teeth. They were perfect. He wasn’t tall, but not short either. Slim, athletic-looking. He had long hair, shoulder length. And he was wearing a Levi’s, a denim shirt and basketball boots with red stars on the side and red laces. [...] When h’d done up his boots he took out a white comb. ‘There a mirror round here?’ he said. ‘Over there,’ I said, pointing. He walked over and started combing his hair. Pickles arrived. ‘Whose stuff is this?’ he said annoyed. I nodded towards Dumby. He was still combing his hair.”

p. 25: “This Dumby Red was trendy, he was talented, he was up himself, he wore Jezza’s number 25, and he had that smile.”

p. 26: “Dumby was totally up himself, there’s no denying that. He couldn’t walk past a mirro or a shop-window without stopping. I’d even caught him looking at his reflection in a puddle, giving that white comb of his a good workout.”

Darcy

p. 45: “Old Dracy was a little bloke, jockey size, with a big nose, like a beak. He always wore the same clothes, no matter what the weather – long khaki trousers, a long-sleeved khaki shirt buttoned at the wrists, and sandshoes. We thought he was mad, dressed like that in the middle of summer when we spent all day with just our bathers on. [...]”

Try to find photos or magazine pictures which show a person that would be an appropriate actor for a) Dumby Red and b) Darcy.

Now compare the casting of Darcy (Martin Vaughan) and Dumby (Luke Carrol) in the film with a) the descriptions of the book extracts and 2) the pictures you found. Why do you think the producers of Australian Rules made a decision for those actors? What could the reason to modify the figure of Dumby (for example: get rid of his long hair)?

VIEWING NOTES

The movie is divided into eight sections. While watching the movie, take notes concerning the settings, characters, events, themes and sound/music in each of those sections. Below each table, there is some more space for notes, questions or anything else that strikes you.



Section 1: Introduction: 00:00:00-00:07:00

Settings	CHARACTERS	EVENTS	THEMES	SOUND/MUSIC

Section 2: Insights into Gary's life: 00:07:00-00:15:47

Settings	CHARACTERS	EVENTS	THEMES	SOUND/MUSIC

Section 3: Gary's friends and family: 00:15:47-00:24:29

Settings	CHARACTERS	EVENTS	THEMES	SOUND/MUSIC

Section 4: Conflicts: 00:24:29 -00:35:45

Settings	CHARACTERS	EVENTS	THEMES	SOUND/MUSIC

Section 5: The Game: 00:35:45- 00:46:45

Settings	CHARACTERS	EVENTS	THEMES	SOUND/MUSIC

Section 6: Celebrating the victory and Clarence:

Settings	CHARACTERS	EVENTS	THEMES	SOUND/MUSIC

Section 7: The conflicts get worse: 01:01:11-01:16:47

Settings	CHARACTERS	EVENTS	THEMES	SOUND/MUSIC

Section 8: Gary's decision: 01:16:47 – End

Settings	CHARACTERS	EVENTS	THEMES	SOUND/MUSIC

VOCABULARY TERMS

sartorial
to stir someone up
expendable
umpire
unpredictable

of or relating to a tailor, tailoring or tailored clothes
to get someone excited or angry
not strictly necessary, dispensable
referee, person appointed to rule on sports
not to be foreseen or foretold

Idiomatic / (Australian) Slang

to drop one's bundle
chick
to pull up a pew
gents
to chicken out
boong
Deadly unna?
Nukkin Ya!
Nunga
Goonya
to buggarize around
gin

to lose confidence, to lose hope
attractive girl
to take a seat, to sit down
maggots
to back off
an Australian aborigine (very pejorative)
Good, isn't it? It's cool, isn't it?
See you later!
an Aboriginal person
a "white" person
to waste time, to behave aimlessly
a term used by "white" Australians for Aboriginal women,
often implying that they were used for sexual services

Australian Football

the guts
ruckman / ruck
the flag
best on ground

mark

the corridor
player who contests the ball-up or throw-in
common expression for the premiership
player who is judged to be the best player taking part in any game
a clean catch of the ball before it has touched the ground or been touched by any other player, and after it has travelled a minimum of 15 metres
annual awards programme that acknowledges regional communities who foster sustainable behaviour and a litter-free environment
a small village in the Southern Tablelands of New South Wales, Australia
reserves set up in the 19th century, usually by clergy, to house, protect and Christianise local Aboriginal people
a piece of land that is bordered by water on three sides but connected to the mainland

Australia

South Australian tidy town competition

Gundaroo

the mission (mish)

Peninsula



THE SHOOTING SCENE - SOUND ONLY

Listen to the scene from You may want to listen several times while working on the following questions/tasks. The language support list below may help you. You can also use a dictionary if necessary.



- a. Describe what you hear as detailed as possible. Concentrate on sounds, dialogue and music. Take notes.
- b. What are the effects of the sound? Which associations and feeling does it evoke in you? What kind of atmosphere is created through the sounds?

INVESTIGATE IN GROUPS

Work together in pairs (one student from group A, one student from group B) and share your results with one another.



Also discuss the relationship between sound and image. Does the sound reinforce or counterpoint the visual images. Is there a certain meaning added by the composition of sound and image? Watch the scene again with both sound and image to verify your ideas.

Discuss the following statement:

“When sound and image are put together, the combination creates a certain dynamic that will have an effect on the overall meaning of what is on screen.” (Stanley Alten)

Be prepared to present your results in class.

THE SHOOTING SCENE - PICTURE ONLY

Watch the scene from with the sound turned off. You may want to watch it several times while working on the following questions/tasks. The language support list below may help you. You can also use a dictionary if necessary.



- a. Describe what you see as detailed as possible. Concentrate on acting, mimic and setting. Take notes.
- b. What are the effects of the picture? Which associations and feeling does it evoke in you? What kind of atmosphere is created through the pictures?

INVESTIGATE IN GROUPS

Work together in pairs (one student from group A, one student from group B) and share your results with one another.



Also discuss the relationship between sound and image. Does the sound reinforce or counterpoint the visual images. Is there a certain meaning added by the composition of sound and image? Watch the scene again with both sound and image to verify your ideas.

Discuss the following statement:

“When sound and image are put together, the combination creates a certain dynamic that will have an effect on the overall meaning of what is on screen.” (Stanley Alten)

Be prepared to present your results in class.

COMMENTARY

Phillip Gwynne, the author of the two books upon which the film Australian Rules is based, says about the final fight between Blacky and Bob that this scene “doesn’t ring true to him”.



He says:

“As far as I am concerned, it’s actually the only false tone in the film. I don’t like it. I don’t believe in it, not for a minute. Well, just the idea that it’s that easy. I know we are talking shorthand because of cinematic language, but it’s never that easy, it’s never that easy to get away from someone like that.” (DVD audio commentary)

A BELIEVABLE ENDING?

Watch the scene “Showdown” (01:25:48-01:28:25).

How do you judge this scene? Do you think it is believable and follows from the rest of the story?

Would you thus disagree with Phillip Gwynne?

Or would you agree with him and also think that this scene is not believable? Give reasons.

What does Phillip Gwynne refer to when he says they are talking shorthand because of cinematic language?



REWRITE THE ENDING

At the very end of the film, Blacky tells the audience that “the old man” hung around for a few days before he took off. Phillip Gwynne says that “it’s never that easy to get away from someone like that.”

What could have been an alternative ending of the film?

Imagine there is a contest for a “more believable ending” of Australian Rules. Phillip Gwynne is part of the jury. Rewrite the ending of the film. Your goal is to win the contest!



GARY

Watch the provided composition of scenes (“GARY”).
Focus on what is shown about Gary: his character, his relationships, his environment and his everyday life.
Then: **Write a role biography** of Gary.

The extract does not give a complete picture of Gary, it is just a help - you can also refer to other scenes in the movie.
To write this role biography, first try to answer the following questions with a special focus on the last question:

- a) **General questions:** What is your name? How old are you (or age group)? Where do you live? What is your nationality? What is your social/ cultural background?
- b) **Outward Appearance:** What do your hair and face look like? How do you dress? What is your stature?
- c) **Development:** Where do you come from? Where did you grow up? Who are your parents? How did your environment influence your development? What do you like or dislike about your family/parents? What do your siblings mean to you?
- d) **Everyday Life:** What are typical elements of your everyday life? What do you do in your spare time? Where would you like to live? Are you happy with your everyday life?
- e) **Self-Image and Relationship to Other People:** How would you characterise yourself? What do you like or dislike about yourself? What do you fear? What are your dreams? What is especially important to you? What do others mean to you? What is your relationship to the members of your family like?

Scenes:

00:03:48-00:07:00

00:15:50-00:17:38

00:20:20-00:20:57

00:32:42-00:34:28

00:46:49-00:48:01

00:55:20-00:58:00



ABOUT GARY

Gary is said to be “very different” from all the other people in his town. Do you agree/disagree? In which aspects is he “different”, where does he differ from other characters in the movie?



“Blacky’s [= Gary’s] central challenge in the film is to reaffirm his masculinity by standing up to his father, through the relationship with Clarence. [...] “ – Do you agree with this statement? Why do you agree or disagree with it?

LIZ BLACK

Watch the provided composition of scenes („LIZ BLACK“).
Write a characterization of Liz, including her outer appearance, her life situation and her character traits.

Read the following preview about ‘Domestic Violence: “Why Women Stay”’ and think about the reasons for Liz’ staying with Gary’s father Bob despite the domestic violence and abuse she suffers. Take notes.

Scenes:

00:20:20-00:22:16

00:25:50-00:26:27

00:33:00-00:34:00

00:40:53-00:41:37

01:08:37-01:09:30

01:18:56-01:20:58



Preview of ‘Domestic Violence: „Why Women Stay“’

It can be truly confusing to people on the outside looking in, wondering why a woman would stay with a man who beats her. Those who don’t understand say things like, „I’d leave him in a heartbeat if he ever hit me -- it would only take one time!“ And yet, despite repeated assaults, -- which can include trips to the emergency room, irreparable physical damage, alienation from family and friends, deteriorating self-esteem, children who live in fear, repeated calls for police protection, and threats of death, -- many women remain with the men who abuse them.

There can be many reasons, with more than one contributing to the problem. The categories are not discrete, with many overlapping characteristics among the arbitrary divisions.

- The Safety Seeker: It may be familiar, and oddly enough, a comfortable lifestyle.
- The Blind: Not realising it is „abuse.“
- The Worthless: „No one else would ever love me.“
- The Defective: „I deserved it; I’ll do better.“
- The Manager: „I can keep it from happening again.“
- The Gullible: „He’s really sorry, and it won’t happen again.“
- The Pretender: „I know I make him sound terrible, but he’s really a good person.“
- The Defender: „He didn’t mean to hurt me.“
- The Caretaker: „No one else understands him the way I do.“
- The Fantasiser: „But I love him.“
- The Martyr: „He isn’t hurting the children; if he ever did, I’d leave.“
- The Helpless: „I can’t support the children on my own.“
- The Hopeless: „He’ll kill me if I try to leave him.“

Imagine Liz would write a diary. Write at least two entries – one after the scene when Gary’s comes home a night to get some things for the funeral and his mother encourages him to take the chocolate but cries desperately when he left and one after any other (important) scene in the movie (for example after Bob shot Dumby, or at the end of the movie,...).

FATHERS

Watch the provided composition of scenes (“FATHERS”). All of those scenes are about fathers (Gary’s father, Dumby’s father, Pickle’s father) or people who (at least to some extent) play the role of a father (Darcy). For all of those “fathers”, **write down** all information you get (as well implicitly as explicitly).

Discuss Darcy’s role in terms of “**being a father**” (for Gary).

Also, **inform yourself** about „Psychological or emotional maltreatment“. In which forms and to what extent is Gary’s father maltreating Gary (and Gary’s siblings)?

Scenes:

00:17:38-00:20:02

00:25:50-00:28:10

00:30:38-00:32:34

00:43:30-00:44:09

01:15:11-01:16:40

01:17:24-01:17:49

01:25:30-01:27:37



Read the following letter a woman wrote to a magazine. What is her problem?

Q: My father has been absent or emotionally abusive of me throughout my life. Any attempt on my part to connect with him has failed miserably. Even at this late stage, I have been unable to have an adult to adult relationship with him. He is a habitual liar, verbally abusive and appears to delight in disappointing people and creating totally unnecessary chaos all around him. I do not know what is wrong with him. I only know that his lies and rejection of me and my family have caused me years of pain. As much as I love him and wish things were better with us, at age 50 I realize this may never be. I have made sure our son is not affected by his grandfather’s indifference and unkindness. Is it okay to stop trying and to detach from him? He is wealthy and does not need anything. I want to do the right thing, but in being good to him I hurt myself, because my father treats me as if I were not even his daughter. He only acknowledges his son, totally overlooking me, my sister and our families.

What is the right thing to do?

Decide:

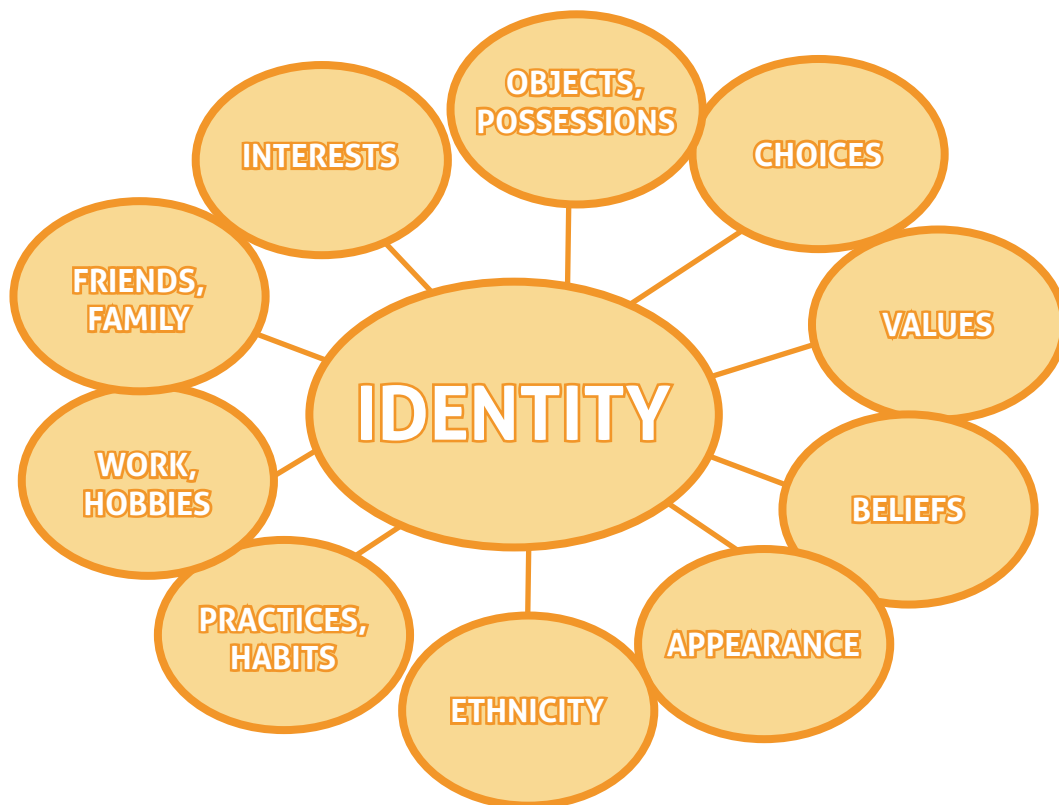
- a) Write an answer to this woman. Try to refer to what you learned about “Psychological and emotional maltreatment” and give advice to her on the basis of this information.
- b) Put yourself in Gary’s position and write a letter similar to the one of the woman about his father and their relationship.

IDENTITY

In Australian Rules, very different concepts of identity are presented. In the following, we want to take a closer look at the concept of identity in general and at concepts of identity shown in the movie...



Look at the following mind map about identity . Do you agree on the elements of “identity” that are shown here? What is “identity”? (You may also use the Internet to answer this question).



Now chose one of the main characters in Australian Rules (Gary, Bob Black, Dumby, Pickles, Darcy or Liz Black) and make a mind map for their individual identity, similar to the one in task 1.



Discuss the following quotation: “The film [Australian Rules] is not about winning or losing, but the personal integrity of the play or the journey in the ongoing process of discovering identity.”

SPORTS AND MASCULINITY

Australian football as a sport is closely associated with masculinity contributing to the male identities of both players and spectators. For adolescent players, it can be seen as a masculinising sport where they are taught manly characteristics (such as physical strengths, toughness, emotional neutrality, assertiveness, control, individuality, competitiveness, or rationality) at a crucial point of time in their identity development. Australian football is a high contact sport played without any protection gear. It demands physical as well as mental strength and might even encourage natural aggression. It is a team sport that contributes to qualities such as group loyalty and the denial of pain in favour of the team as can be seen in the illustration available at <http://weknowmemes.com/2012/05/soccer-players-pretend-theyre-hurt/>.



Not only has Australian Rules football been closely associated with masculinity, it is also believed to lend itself for the “idolisation” and the “cultural glorification” of masculinity in societies that attach great value to sports, and games, particularly to those activities that provide opportunities for displaying the masculine characteristics mentioned above (Agnew 2011: 38).

ABOUT AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL

Describe the illustration at <http://weknowmemes.com/2012/05/soccer-players-pretend-theyre-hurt/>

What does it tell us about the traits of character of (professional) Australian football players?

In how far would you describe Australian football as a particularly masculine sport?



MALE CHARACTERISTICS

Collect those characteristics from the text above that are considered to be typically male. Do you agree to this list? Which other characteristics could you think of?



WHAT IS MASCULINITY?

Try to come up with a definition of 'masculinity'.
Compare your ideas to what you find on the Internet.



SPORTS AND MASCULINITY

Comment on the following statement: Australian football lends itself for the “idolisation” and the “cultural glorification” of masculinity.



COMPARE THE VIEWS

In the film Australian Rules, Blacky and his father embody totally different concepts of masculinity. Compare how either of them would define masculinity and how these definitions relate to the concept of masculinity describe in the previous tasks.

