Australian Sterotypes In Films Essay, Research Paper

Australian films, although we sometimes may not realize it, contain portrayals of the Australian Identity that are seen across the world, but are these stereotypes healthy to the image of Australia?

Film is a medium, which is able to converse across cultures & nations. Often the only knowledge of certain events and cultures is obtained through film. Therefore the way certain cultures or events are portrayed greatly effect the way they are perceived.

The Australian identity is often exaggerated not only in Australian film, but also foreign film. This is especially true of Australian films of the last few decades. Films such as Crocodile Dundee, The Castle, and Muriel s Wedding, have all exaggerated the Australian identity. One other thing you may have noticed about all these films is that they are comedy. The characters in these movies have been intentionally exaggerated for the purposes of comedy, whereas generally films not primarily of the comedy nature do not exaggerate quite as much.

One such example is the acclaimed Australian film, Gallipoli. Gallipoli is intended to be a representation of the Australian Light Horseman in the infamous Battle Of Gallipoli where thousands of Australians lives were sacrificed, some would say pointlessly, by their British command.

Although Gallipoli definitely contains Australian stereotypes, they are not necessarily exaggerated. Larrikinism is a part of Australian culture, and is successfully portrayed in this film through the characters of Archie and Frank. Archie and Frank are classic examples of the Australian stereotype of the red-blooded , fair-go , and anti-authoritarian male. But is it exaggerated?

Stereotypes are just that. Stereotypes are not an accurate portrayal of identity, but rather take they key aspects of this identity and emphasize them. Stereotypes can either be demeaning or complimentary, the latter being the case in the film Gallipoli.

As I mentioned earlier Crocodile Dundee also contains the Australian stereotype but is extremely exaggerated. This exaggeration how ever is not demeaning and is extremely effective as it is the basis of the films comedy.

The Australian identity is a great asset, a national treasure one might say. It should be celebrated and enjoyed, but also respected. It should not be shown in such a way that it demeans Australia, or Australians, but in a way that celebrates the individuality of Australian culture.