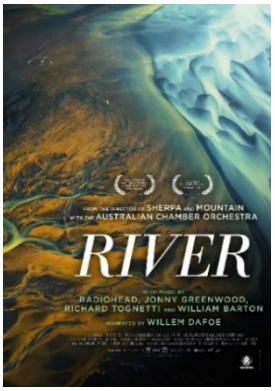

Teacher's notes and suggestions for student preparation and follow-up, for Peedom's 2021 "cinematic and musical odyssey"

RIVER

Peedom says her film aims to "provide the audience with an encounter in nature".

Annie's invitation to this film, said that "It is about Rivers of the world and has some really beautiful images of rivers and human connection to rivers. It also shows what we've done to rivers with overpopulation, pollution etc. It's a powerful film that I hope the students get something out of."

The following notes aim to help you and your students get more out of viewing the movie. It contains some background information, and ideas for student preparation and follow up. Aspects of English, Geography, Science, History, the Arts, Visual Communication, Critical Thinking and Sustainability could be covered by viewing and discussion of this film.

What does the film cover?

ABC arts editor, Dee Jefferson, says that River "blends cinema essay with documentary, to tell the story of … how [Rivers] shaped first the planet and then human civilisation — before humans learned how, in turn, to shape them."

It is global in scale, showing River features in almost 40 places. However, these are not named during the commentary, nor identified by any subtitles.

The photography is amazing, comprehensively covering many features of river systems and their uses, and of the water cycle. Several visual techniques are used, especially views from above, using drones, aerial photography and satellites.

The arts in the film

This film is strongly based in two forms of the arts: music and film.

For a background in this creativity, see the video River – Official Clip + Filmmakers' Intro at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9LPMb_BhwNo

And, for greater detail, River - Behind the Scenes at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SyfZpKKvVMg

The ABC's Arts editor Dee Jefferson discusses this film and its creation in the article "River: Australian documentary narrated by Willem Dafoe highlights the importance and precarity of rivers worldwide' at https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-03-24/river-documentary-willem-dafoe-jennifer-peedom/100932194

Suggestions for preparing students for recognising the film's images

As the commentary does not identify neither what, nor where, the images are, teachers may wish to prepare students for such imagery and an awareness of what they portray, by spending some time beforehand familiarising themselves with a range of river feature images using aerial, and satellite formats.

The movie trailer at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=efHe-VYtHzY is only about 2 minutes long. It gives a quick overview of some of the types of images that are in the film. It can be paused, so that images can be identified and discussed.

If students would benefit from more familiarisation with the range of river feature images, computers could be used for an 'image' search for "aerial views of" and/or "satellite views of" the following features:

- *Glaciers*
- *River tributaries*
- *Dendritic rivers*
- *Braided streams*
- *River deltas*
- *Canyons*
- *Meanders*
- *Waterfalls*
- *Dry river basins*
- *River Algal blooms*
- *Ocean currents*

To prepare students for the downstream journey of flowing water, teachers may want to use diagrams that can be found under searching for images of "rivers from source to mouth.

The film's key points

Peedom says "So many of us are sitting behind desks in front of computers and we don't connect with nature nearly as much as we should in the ways that we used to … we have lost sight of the role that Nature plays in our lives and our survival. … We are shooting ourselves in the foot by stopping the natural sediments from flowing down river, by dams etc, and we're doing extraordinary damage to the river systems that are actually keeping us alive."

Hence, this movie seeks not only to entertain with its stunning imagery- but to provoke thought about human relationships with, and care of, Rivers.

It begins with Rivers as a creative force, first for Nature and then for human civilisations. It moves onto human use of rivers, then to some types of damage that has been, is being done, to them and therefor over time risking human survival. It takes a long-term view of rivers in space and time. Just as rivers (of water or ice) flow downstream over land, so do they also 'flow downstream' in time. In both cases, what happens upstream will have impacts downstream – and in time that means on those who come after us.

Jefferson says "The film makes a clear statement: the fate of humans and rivers are fundamentally intertwined."

It poses the question "Have we forgotten to revere Rivers?"

Some film follow up suggestions

Seeing some sections again

If you wanted to revisit the text of the commentary in the movie, the trailer (at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=efHe-VYtHzY) does include some key parts of it.

Were you and your students amazed by the drone journey down the glacier, its melt stream and waterfall with the lake below? If you wanted to revisit that journey, it can be found from about the 5:12 to 6:45 minute mark online in "River - Behind the Scenes" at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SyfZpKKvVMg . (The other two clips on Youtube also could be used to review some of the other images is desired.)

Making it local

While the movie is global in scale, follow up could be locally focused. Some suggestions for discussion are:

- *What is your local water place? What would it look like in an aerial image?*
- *Is it healthy? Does it have problems? Are these problems mentioned on the movie? (note there are no salinity images) Are the problems being dealt with?*
- *What would you like your local water place to be like for the future? And what could be done to work towards that now?*
- *In what river system is your local water place located? (All are in the Wimmera drainage basin- a digital map can be found this area can be found at https://www.riverdetectives.net.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Wimmera-River-Catchment-map-1.jpg) The Wimmera is part of the Murray-Darling (an example of a map is https://murrayrivertrails.com.au/plan/river-conditions/)*
- *How is this water place connected over space to other water places in the Wimmera and the Murray-Darling? What connections are there for this water place over time? (Note that in a wetter climate, a long time ago, the Wimmera used to reach the Murray-Darling.)*
- *How do you look after your water place now? What have people done to look after it in the past? What can you do to look after this water place for those who come after you in the short and/or long term?*
- *How would you/they know that any changes were for the better, same or worse? This is where monitoring programs like 'River Detectives' (it's on the web) comes in – citizen science- that records and has that information available for now – to identify and work on any problems that are seen- and to hand on for the future- to see how things have hopefully improved.*
- *Salinity is not shown in the movie, but it another river health problem. It is a problem for the Wimmera. Salinity increases downstream where the river flows. It appears to have increased over time. But the story of why the river is salty begins with an understanding of the geomorphic (landform) history of the Wimmera and of the Murray Darling Basin. The landform history of Australia is found in the first 3 ½ minutes of the CSIRO video 'Soil Salinity in Australia' (at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P4pX5W_WwU4). It describes why our Murray-Darling catchment (and Wimmera as a part of it) has land and river salinity problems.*