

Hurley is arguably among the pioneers of the ciné-*m*avérité movement of the 1960s (with a hand-held portable camera style chronicling an unfolding crisis) and docu-fiction (a style based upon merging fictitious interpretations and recreations with historically accurate representations of events).

◆ Soundtrack

Mick Harvey's soundtrack employs a leitmotif of a synthesiser in a rippling E flat chord throughout the documentary. The sound is reminiscent of the opening of 'Das Rheingold' from Wagner's Ring Cycle operas. The brass motif in the key of E flat is also a reference to the music of Beethoven, for whom this key was 'heroic', and which is the principal key of the 'Eroica' Symphony and 'Emperor' Piano Concerto. Its purpose is to symbolise the epic and heroic nature of Hurley's ambitious polar feats. The 'tone colour' of the synthesiser often bears a distinctive quality similar to a glass harmonica to evoke the sound of ice.

◆ Elliptical structure

The auction scene is employed by Nasht to frame his documentary within an elliptical (or circular) narrative construction: the text begins and ends with a focus on the auction. The purpose of this is to symbolically position the documentary as an 'evaluation' of Hurley's personal and artistic legacy and a text which encourages its audience to contemplate the 'moral value' of an artist who constructed photographic and cinematic works primarily to acquire wealth and fame.

◆ Motifs

Nasht and Arestides employ limited visual motifs throughout their text (or deliberate and recurring visual images and patterns for effect). The principal motif in the editing is that of the split-screen device. The purpose of the split-screen in the Nasht text is manifold: to visually demonstrate the technical achievement of Hurley's artistic transformations (or 'frauds'); to visually convey the 'split opinions' of Hurley among his contemporary critics; to underscore the irony that the artificiality of composite photography (then new to Hurley and his contemporaries) is now considered commonplace in the documentary form; to display the passage of time since Hurley's illustrious trips to the Antarctic; and to deftly symbolise the documentary's own dialectical and polemical approach to their subject.

◆ Semiotics (film language)

Semiotics is the practice of deliberately constructing words, images and 'signs' in cinema to create a metaphoric effect or convey the directorial interpretation of a character or event. Semiotics is otherwise known, more plainly, as 'film language'. Nasht employs semiotic techniques throughout his text principally to infer that Hurley's personal and artistic integrity was highly

questionable at certain stages of his career.

The predominant semiotic devices in the text revolve around the use of cinematography and selective editing to reference popular, vernacular expressions about the truth. For example, shadows over the Antarctic ice infer that Hurley's reputation 'lies in the shadows' while a close-up shot of the Mawson ship ploughing through the water's crust infers that Hurley's claims of historical veracity do not 'cut ice' with a modern audience. In another example, the alignment of script and editing as the narrator questions Hurley's enduring legacy deftly conveys his reputation as figuratively stranded, sinking and lost in a polar continent of argument.

Nasht also overlaps the script and non-diegetic sound to mirror the audience's own visceral reaction to Hurley's photographic deceit. One example is Adelle and Toni's expressions of awe immediately following the narrator's comment that 'Hurley was to make his most-breathtaking illusion' on Elephant Island. Other semiotic devices include the use of close-up shots on objects commonly associated with legal judgements (the gavel in the opening chapter) and transition effects which suggest Hurley's unwanted discoveries (the emulsified image of the *Endurance* 'melting' away to metaphorically convey Hurley's regret and loss at his photographic plates sinking into the Antarctic sea).

◆ Intertextual references

Nasht lightly draws upon intertextual references in his documentary for the purpose of irony and as a further function of his directorial semiotics or film language. In Chapter Seven—Cinesound Studios the editing selection of Nasht and Arestides to include Hurley footage of children marching towards the camera over the title 'Thus A Nation Is Built' visually infers that Hurley's pre-WWII Australian films were propagandist in nature. In Chapter Three—WWI Europe the time-lapsed editing of clouds passing overhead during the Hurley fight with Charles Bean references his infamous 'composite photography' and forms a subtle allusion to the themes of impermanence and illusion in *The Tempest*. Responders recall Prospero's description of 'The cloud-capped towers ... shall dissolve / And like this insubstantial pageant faded / Leave not a rack behind'. The allusion to Shakespeare's final play also rests well with the intertextual knowledge of responders that Prospero is similarly known as a conjurer in *The Tempest*: a man also given to discovering his magical powers while living on deserted and remote isles at the ends of the earth.

GO BACK TO WHERE YOU CAME FROM

BY IVAN O'MAHONEY

Focus on the concept of discovery

◆ Introduction

Go Back to Where You Came From documents a modern sea and land odyssey undertaken by six ordinary Australians. Their twenty-five day reverse refugee journey takes them from the comfort of their known lives to the points of origin of some of their newest neighbours: 'boat people' and refugees. The Logie Award-winning Australian television series, produced by Cordell Jigsaw Productions and directed by Ivan O'Mahony, was broadcast in 2011 (Season 1).

Go Back to Where You Came From reveals the unique ability of the documentary genre to not just capture experience but to *be* experience. Melding realism with fantasy, fact with adventure and horror with mysticism, it uncovers the myriad of conflicting human issues in both the refugee world and Australia's evolving multiculturalism in a filmic bildungsroman (a coming of age tale) centred on one of the hottest political and human questions dividing many in this nation.

Places and the concept of discovery

Christmas Island—the first image confronting viewers is that of rough seas off Rocky Point, Christmas Island, in which a people smuggler boat is disintegrating. It is 15 December 2010. By the end of search and rescue operations, forty-two survivors and twenty-eight deceased had been accounted for. The tragedy promoted heated debate on both sides of politics and in the public arena. 'Boat people' had become big news as Australia discovered that it was no longer isolated from a global humanitarian crisis.

The old fort—the journey starts with a location that is neutral to the backgrounds of the six participants, delocalising them and establishing them as representatives of a country rather than of the places in which they live their ordinary lives. Visually, the old fort foreshadows much of the squalor that these volunteers will encounter as they travel to some of the most dangerous and desperate corners of the world, deprived of their wallets, phones and passports: comforts that are part of the freedoms and safeguards of being Australian.

◆ Onshore

The Musudi family's home—the beginning of Raye, Raquel and Roderick's journey is the Albury-Wodonga

home of the Musudi family from Africa. Central to Musudi family life is the dinner table and the sharing of a meal. To celebrate the arrival of their guests, the Musudi family—Bahati and Maisara and their five sons—cook a traditional African meal, eaten in the traditional way without knives or forks. Raye 'has a go', Raquel demonstrates continued discomfort with the food and the company and Roderick demonstrates his nervousness with a quip about a glass of wine (as Muslims, the Musudis do not drink alcohol). The Musudis are some of a minority of lucky ones who have come to Australia on offshore humanitarian visas. As Raye observes later, they are the 'real refugees', not 'boat people'.

Flat 65 in Liverpool—the beginning of Gleny, Adam and Darren's journey is an awkward introduction to the western Sydney home of three 'boat people', all from Iraq but from different places of origin and practising different religions. The narrator points out that Liverpool at the time houses over 2000 Iraqi refugees, including those who came by boat. This is a small proportion of the three million Iraqis displaced since the US-led invasion in 2003, a war in which Australia participated.

Darren arrives full of questions and a firm position on the unacceptability of government generosity to illegal arrivals. He questions why these men (and others like them) leave the safety of Indonesia to undertake a risky, illegal journey to Australia. His position is hard line:

We need to take a tougher line ... People who come without any documentation should be immediately repatriated ... if they are destroying documents, what are they trying to hide?

Darren's challenging questions about their lack of documentation is met by an explanation by one of the men of the inability to resist the smugglers' confiscation of all documents: 'He will kill you of course [if you do not comply]'. Darren's statement of his persistent line of thinking—that the refugees should not make the journey in the first place—is met with a matter of fact summary by Sud Hussein of the reality in Iraq: 'They kill anyone, everywhere, anywhere, anytime ... The situation very bad now ... The bomb doesn't know Muslim, Christian ...'. The disclosure does not leave Adam or Darren totally satisfied that the true motives for 'boat people' journeys have been fully explained.

Discovering difference—the pool is a place where the three unemployed Iraqi men spend much of their time. It is where the human face of the boat journey is revealed in Wasme's fear of water. He has been diagnosed with post traumatic stress. Unable to swim and stuck on a boat for seven days, in rough seas, he still has nightmares.

The journey to the pool also gives rise to a dialogue about the different cultural attitudes between Iraqis and Australians to women's wearing of the bikini: the Iraqi prohibition on their women wearing so little highlights the Iraqi's insistence that it is Australians who must adjust to the Iraqi culture in this and other respects. Only Gleny is sympathetic with this view.

Discovering the meaning of detention—every Friday, Wasme makes a trip to the Villawood Detention Centre, bearing gifts of food and chocolate. Camera shots of wire fencing and impersonal signs set the scene of a prison as the narrator defines the atmosphere with statistics: in the nine months preceding their visit, three detainees have suicided and eighteen attempted self-harm.

◆ Offshore

Discovering a new world of pain—David warns the six Australians that in Malaysia they would experience first-hand the reality of the refugees living there and would come to understand what it is like to be 'a refugee in transit', subject to arrest and indefinite detention. This ill prepares them, however, for what they find. Raquel, in particular, is stunned by the fact that 'all the women are wearing tea towels' and the fact that the place is 'not really clean'. Her cultural naivety is indicated once again when she rejects Gleny's suggestion that as she is in a Muslim country she may want to wear something that is less revealing than her shorts.

Discovering the refugee reality—the Australians are introduced to a community of fifty Chin living in one small flat. They are typical of over 90 percent of the refugees that flood into Malaysia from Myanmar, with the remainder being from Afghanistan, Iraq and Somalia. Two families (seven people) occupy one room. Washing hangs from the ceiling and the children and adults sleep on mats on the floor. There is one toilet, which evokes an untutored and unintentionally humorous remark from Raquel: 'There's a very unhygienic odour in the bathroom ... Quite disgusting. I don't want to use that toilet' though she does so later, armed with her bottle of Dettol disinfectant.

Kennedy, a Chin who fled Myanmar five years prior, takes over the role of guide and introduces the Australians to the rules that maintain some order in the cramped conditions: all the men sit on one side, all the women on the other. He explains that many of the children have been born in the flat and want to go outside and play but cannot. Outside their personal safety is at risk as even pregnant women are subject to arrest. Gleny observes that the flat and compound is 'like a detention

centre' the Chin have created 'for their own safety' and that there is 'no way anybody could be happy'. After the first night sleeping in cramped conditions on the floor, Darren provides another element of unintended humour: 'Sleeping on the floor ... my neck is rooted ... Now the bloody Muslims are at their prayers'. More perceptively he notes that 'These guys are getting ready [for the day] as if [the poor living conditions are] nothing'.

Discovering exploitation—the three Australian men spend the day working with the Chin on a farm. The narrator reminds viewers that it is illegal for refugees to work in Malaysia. Roderick reminds viewers of the easy life of Australian 'desk jockeys' compared with farm work: 'Worst injury in my life [until now] is a paper cut. Seven minutes in, I had my first blister', while Adam muses 'One miss and one of these toes are gone! [Its] pretty hard yakka!'

One 'volunteer' worker tells Adam that he and others are afraid to work elsewhere (including on construction sites) for fear of being arrested. Here they work nine hours for free, receiving only their own food and shelter. Adam observes, 'At home, we have a payslip to go to get the luxuries in life. These people have nothing'.

Discovering the desire to learn—Raquel, Raye and Gleny visit the school that has been established by the Chin for their children: one hundred children crammed into four small rooms. The camera lingers on the neat lines of shoes and on enthusiastic young students for whom the Australians' visit is a welcome distraction. The women's approach to their set task of teaching English for the day again produces a set of different reactions. Raye is nervous but hopes 'to do some good'. She resorts to imitations of her farm animals and is an immediate success. Gleny's approach is to write a list of animals on the board and to ask the children to select their favourite. In any event, either approach is satisfactory because, as the narrator comments, 'There is no set syllabus. As refugees in Malaysia, these children will never have access to a more formal education'. Gleny's observation on the contrast with many Australian students provided by the Chin students is telling: 'The more you have, the less desire you have to learn'.

Discovering a grotesque reality—Swahili for 'nowhere', Kakuma Refugee Camp is managed by the Kenyan government in conjunction with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). By the time Raye, Raquel and Roderick reach the camp they have had no contact with their own families for sixteen days. The administration officer, who records the Australian's admission and doles out a sleeping mat, a bowl and a mug to each of them, has some simple but confronting general advice: 'When they hit you, you don't have to hit back' and 'once stolen', the sleeping mat 'cannot be replaced'. To unemployed Raquel, he gives some specific advice: 'In Kakuma, at least you have to do something'.

Kakuma produces mixed reactions from Raye, Raquel and Roderick. Raye, when confronted with her bowl of porridge, states 'I don't know if I can do this. I'm struggling with this'. Roderick sums up his first reaction simply with 'I'm lucky' but Raquel cannot bring herself to eat the food nor can she use the toilet. The Kakuma Camp will particularly challenge Raquel.

Discovering the persistence of childhood—some especially fine moments in the Kakuma Camp define the universal connection between the people who live there and the Australian world: a little boy playing with a toy truck made of a plastic water container mounted on some small wheels is one such moment.

Discovering the size of the problem—Kakuma Camp is home to more than 84 000 refugees, mostly Muslim or Christian, from fourteen different African countries. They have all either been forcibly displaced or have fled their war-torn home countries in search of safety. All Kakuma's refugees are traumatised by their experiences before arriving at the camp. The UN World Food Program provides food supplies every fifteen days. The camera records the anxieties that arise in their distribution and the strap used to keep the queue in order. Unsurprisingly, disease and malnourishment are common problems for the camp's residents. While life in Kakuma might be relatively safe, it is also difficult.

In Kakuma the Red Cross runs a tracing program to assist the reuniting of families separated by war. From Red Cross records, the Australians are able to locate Bahati's brother who, like other refugees in the camp, has built his own shelter on a plot of land.

Discovering the dehumanisation of the refugee—Bahati's brother Deo lives with his wife and six children and Maisara's sister in a mud house. Life is not easy. Though relatively safe, the family exists in poverty stricken circumstances. They have neither electricity nor water: the women carry plastic containers to the well to collect water for washing and cooking. There are no toys for the children, no school for the teenagers and no employment. Deo says, 'We are not animals; we need to contribute with work'.

The family lives in desperate hope that they may be granted opportunity to leave the camp for a better life. Each member suffers a deep anguish at being separated from their extended family in Australia and while they are proud and happy for Bahati and Maisara and their children, their tears are also for themselves.

Goma Refugee Camp—the narrator sets the scene for Goma: 'More than five million people have died in a brutal war ... rape is a weapon of war. Every day ... over 1000 women are raped'. The Goma camp is one of the most confronting images of the documentary. The makeshift camps are perched on black volcanic rock and have fostered a local industry for women: the making of soap. It is by doing this that these women

hope to avoid having to leave the camp and risking rape in order to survive.

Discovering the reality of danger—Adam, Gleny and Roderick are flown to a US military base in Kuwait. The narrator reminds viewers that they 'are about to travel to one of the most dangerous places on Earth'. The military base is another world, photographed as if through a silver sheen. Away in the distance is a reminder of its broader global context: a McDonalds golden arch sign that speaks of a more affluent world.

Events and the concept of discovery

The film opens with footage of the foundering of a refugee boat on Christmas Island, a very individual and near home expression of the tragedy suffered by millions around the world. The then Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard and Leader of the Opposition, Tony Abbott, appear in close-up on the screen as unempathetic figureheads, with both saying the boats must be stopped. The narrator challenges viewers with a very direct question regarding 'refugees, asylum seekers, boat people': 'What do you know of those who risk life and limb to come to these shores?'

The recorded experiences of six Australians on an epic journey will address the general ignorance of most to the facts raised by this question. Raye, the first of the six to be introduced to viewers, voices the aggression towards newcomers that the Christmas Island sinking brought out in many Australians—'Serve you bastards right'—while Adam Hartup, Cronulla lifeguard, shares the emotion: 'We are spending millions of dollars on housing these criminals'.

Roderick Schneider, the aspiring politician, is more concerned with his political image and personal brand than being in the position of the refugees. Darren Paran, businessman and family man, also takes a conservative position, if a little more focused on the human plight. Raquel Moore has little sympathy for the plight of the 'boat people'. Only Gleny Ray, the country singer from Newcastle, expresses a generosity of spirit to 'boat people' and refugees, an open heart she is prepared to back up with an offer to share her home with a family who have come to Australia to start a new life.

From the starting point of these initial positions on the narrator's question, the film narrates a set of adventures, each full of remarkable events, which will challenge and, in some cases, bring a shift to these original points of view and, at the same time, transform the position of many viewers.

The Musudi family experiences—Maisara narrates simply and movingly her truly disturbing experience at the camp in Kenya: the UNHCR gave them food but the local people came at night and stole it and a daughter she had before her son, Felix, died because she had no money to pay the doctor or to buy Panadol. The revelations have a profound effect on Raye, who tearfully reveals

that she understands Maisara's grief because she had 'a lot of trouble' bearing children. Even Raquel finds the narrative confronting when thinking through how she might have reacted in similar circumstances: 'I don't know how I would cope ... made me quite upset, I don't know; I'm quite nervous'.

Maisara's revelations of her family's experiences in the Congo are equally horrific: the family had just finished serving lunch when they heard the grenades. Soldiers broke down the door and took away her father and brother and then they started beating her mother (the physical gestures of Maisara that accompany this revelation show that the memory is still raw). They took away and raped her younger sisters, aged eight and twelve, leaving one of them with AIDS. Maisara chokes up at this memory and it is hard for her to talk. Raye observes that these 'are not boat people' while Gleny's comments are more telling: 'They're just our brothers and sisters'. Each woman is dramatically impacted by what she discovers through Maisara's honest narrative.

In a conversation with Roderick, Bahati reveals why he would not return to his own country: 'Three hundred and twenty people in my group were killed by the government. I have a bad souvenir'.

The boat journey out of Darwin—'You're shittin' me': this utterance from one of the Australians sums up the shock of them all when they are confronted with the boat that is to carry them on the next leg of their reverse journey. The narrator fills in some background: in 1976 the first boatload of Vietnamese refugees reached Darwin Harbour. Like the six Australians, these and their contemporary 'boat people' 'have little idea of where they are heading'. Leaving their luggage behind and taking with them only a bag of bare necessities, the six have a dramatic awakening offshore from Australia. Army trained Darren rations their food, Raquel becomes seasick and tensions explode in the argument between Raye and Raquel over Raquel's continued complaining: 'She just pushed the wrong button'.

The discomfort of them all exacerbates with a night spent bailing water on the captain's instructions (to keep the boat afloat). Even normally confident Gleny is forced to admit that the experience is 'a little bit nerve-racking'. After three hours of bailing the boat has sunk further into the water. Then, after a very long night, smoke appears. Just when the Australians feel all might be lost, the coast guard sights the stricken vessel. Safely aboard, Raquel announces 'I'm not going through that again ... like a *Titanic* scenario. Shit'.

David's announcement that they were never in danger of sinking is cold comfort. The narrator utilises the example the boat journey has provided: of the 130 000 refugees that have made it to Australia that year, 2000 arrived on unseaworthy boats which the Australians' boat had been mocked up to replicate.

The boat journey uncovers some very strong and different reactions on the part of the participants. Darren's is most strongly felt as he argues that it is irresponsible to put yourself (or your family) in danger. He also argues that David, the show's producers and the media are 'emotionally involving' Australians 'without our consent'. The community should not be 'made to feel empathy' in the way that they are. So strong are Darren's feelings that he takes himself out of the dialogue with David.

David announces that notwithstanding the fact that they may have thought that their next destination was Indonesia, it is not. Indonesia has a mere 3000 refugees and they are going to Malaysia, a country that has 100 000. The narrator reminds viewers that this will be a particularly eye-opening experience for the two of the six who have never before been overseas.

Discovering the plight of the world's refugees—the narrator sums up the next even bolder 'immersion' of the Australians into the refugee experience: behind the glamour and gloss of modern Malaysia there lies a 'shadow land of refugees', over 100 000 of them living in urban slums.

The last night in the Chin complex is particularly difficult for Raye and Adam. Raye and Gleny and Raquel have been befriended by seven-year-old Munchepar. As Raye observes, 'You want to enjoy their company; they're an amazing race of people'. For Adam, saying goodbye to his young friend who has shared his aspirations to be a professional kick-boxer is accompanied with a promise: 'I will send you some t-shirts'. The humanity of the refugees has been discovered by all.

The narrator drives the meaning of the experiences home: the six Australians have now known the 'shadow world' and the time is ripe for them to see the Malaysian refugee question from a very different perspective: that of official enforcement of Malaysia's refugee laws.

Searching the coast—the narrator fills in the details: Gleny and Adam are on a border patrol in the air while the others are on the sea in one of the boats that Australian taxpayers have financed in an effort to combat people smugglers. The pilot tells Gleny and David of the difficulties posed by the mangrove covered coastline. A makeshift camp is located.

On the sea, the pilot points out the vast expanse of ocean which the refugees are facing when they leave Malaysian shores. He also notes the sobering fact that till then, no boat provided by Australia has been involved in a successful prevention of a refugee departure.

The raid—some of the group join one hundred officers (some of whom are armed) on a raid on a construction site where, it is suspected, there are illegal immigrants hiding. This incident leads to actual discovery of the horror of the refugees' daily lives. Roderick hopes (rather naively) that the offenders are 'bad people'.

Raye is philosophical and reasons that 'These people are just trying to find a new life ... somewhere. I don't call that criminal'. Raye's empathy is not shared by Raquel, who continues to be unforgiving.

The narrator points out a sobering fact: among the group being arrested are Chin. With Gleny's identification of some of the mats left behind by those caught in the raid as those used by the Chin, the experience comes 'closer to home'. Adam's response is 'Far out' but Gleny's continues to be one of empathy.

The narrator reveals the outcome of the raid: over one hundred people are rounded up. If found to be guilty, they face caning, jail and deportation. Malaysia is not a signatory to the UN Convention for Refugees.

As the dialogue between them shows, for Gleny, Raye and Raquel the experience seems to have consolidated their positions: Raquel sees the potential outcome for the refugees as due punishment for their criminal conduct; Raye sees the human dilemma behind the squalid poverty, fear and violence, while Gleny continues to be the voice of social conscience and is deeply affected by her experience. Adam assesses the desperation of a people who seem to have no other option and notes that if were in the refugees' position and 'had the money', he would 'get on a boat'. Darren is more circumspect: for him, 'I don't believe that's the way to go'.

The experience of the raid prepares the six Australians for the next stage of their journey. David tells them that they will be travelling to the countries where the refugees go before they come to Malaysia: Adam, Darren and Gleny will journey to Jordan, one of the 'hot spots' for refugees fleeing Iraq, while Raye, Raquel and Roderick will journey to Kenya, to one of the biggest refugee camps run by the UN. From this point on the documentary diverges into two main story threads: the African and Jordan journeys.

The African journey—the African journey follows Raye, Raquel and Roderick as they retrace the refugee journey of Bahati and Maisara from Albury-Wodonga back to Kakuma Camp in Kenya and for Raye and Roderick, on to the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The journey to Kakuma—the journey to Kakuma is not uneventful. En-route, Roderick, Raye and Raquel view first-hand an impoverished landscape and experience the tension of having to make the journey unescorted. The delay in the appearance of the security escort and the harsh African landscape unsettle Raquel especially: 'This is fucked up ... I'm not some fuckin' refugee asylum seeker ...'. The UN transfer to the main camp does little to change Raquel's view and the narrator fills in the details: the Kakuma Camp is home to refugees who have fled 'war, death, torture and rape' and, at the time of the film, number 84 000 people.

The Goma celebration—the Australian's donation of money to repair the Goma women refugees' soap machine

brings another unexpected moment of celebration in the journey. The song that the women sing is 'There'll be no more rape'. While the joy of the women is unbridled, the response from Roderick is more serious. He ponders whether by giving the donation the Australians have not fostered 'false hope', 'in a set of circumstances where it is difficult to work out who is fighting who. He echoes many viewers' sentiments when he wonders if charity is not in fact merely 'plugging holes'.

The Middle Eastern journey—the Middle Eastern storyline follows participants Adam, Darren and Gleny who began their journey back to Iraq by a visit to Villawood Detention Centre.

Discovering the personal behind the headlines and assumptions—at the home of Wasme's mother, Adam, Darren and Gleny are met by Wasme's nephew, Rashid, who has returned to Jordan from the United States (where he has been resettled) to look after her. Darren asks Rashid to ask the elderly lady how she felt about the fact that Wasme took a boat to Australia and left his wife and children in Iraq and her in Aman. Her translated reply is simply 'Iraq is not good ... He had to [leave]... Australians are nice people'.

Skyping Rasheed's family in the US brings more tears and refines the human perspective of Wasme's mother's situation. Her response to the 'sweet little girl' on the screen speaks for all grandmother's love of their grandchildren and a shared meal opens further communication between the visitors and their hosts.

As night falls and the moon rises in the sky over Jordan the narrator reminds viewers that three million Iraqis have been displaced since the war began. Darren is still largely unmoved: 'I'm emotionally affected ... I might not show it ... [but the experience has had] a profound effect ... spiritually'.

Gleny, by contrast, is quick to admit 'I don't think my life will be the same' and Adam is similarly affected. At this point the volunteers are twenty days into their journey.

The opportunity to discover even more—Gleny, Adam and Darren are given the opportunity to 'go all the way back' to Iraq and to face the truth of life as an African refugee. They accept, trusting, as Darren puts it, in the United States military to keep them alive.

Back in Kakuma, Raquel, Raye and Roderick are given the opportunity to go to the Congo, the starting point for Masaira and her sister. Their protection will be provided by UN Security Forces. Raye and Roderick seize the opportunity but Raquel declines. They each sum up their experiences so far and for Raquel, 'They're African people, not black people any more'.

The new understanding she has gained of the humanity of the African refugees is visually emphasised by the cuddling one of Bahati's children: 'I'd take this one home'. Roderick observes that 'It's not fair. They stay here. And we go' and his words are given greater emotional

resonance as they are accompanied by a close-up of Maisara's sister's tears.

Raye is very deeply aware of her own transformation through the Kakuma Camp and Deo family experience. Her comments remind viewers of the key focus (the debate on 'boat people') of the social experiment they are watching:

They are just really, really lovely people. I was a very close-minded person ... very tunnel visioned. Today, especially today, I would do anything to improve the life of my children. If that mean getting on a boat, I would probably do it ... Their whole life has been a risk ... If it means freedom, it's worth it.

Discovering the reality of war—Gleny, Adam and Darren meet the reality of the war that has led to so many Iraqis abandoning their country. As they hurry down the highway 'at a fair rate of speed' they have the comfort provided by the US soldier-minder that this mode of travel 'is safe for Baghdad'.

The narrator adds to the tension with the advice that 'an hour earlier a bomb exploded nearby, killing two civilians', contributing to the total of more than 100 000 civilian lives lost since the war began. Adam comments on the 'nerve-wracking' moments of delay.

In the face of the harsh reality that is Baghdad, Darren is unrelenting in the importance he gives to the power of UN protocols to address the human fall-out of the Iraqi situation. He does not see why he or other Australians should have to 'shoulder the guilt of the world's poverty problem'. Adam is more open-minded and states that the 'next wave of Iraqis I won't see as illegals'. Gleny confesses that her view of the world has changed because of this experience.

The wrap-up—after four weeks outside Australia and with no contact with their families, Dr David Corlett brings the participants together for a wrap-up of where their emotionally and physically tough journey has brought them. Raye is shocked to be reminded of her first comments that she could 'take a gun and shoot' the refugees. Now she admits that 'Getting to know people personally is a whole new concept'. Darren admits that he has developed a greater compassion for refugees but less empathy than ever for 'boat people', who he sees as attempting to thwart a fair system put in place to deal with the refugee question.

Gleny has been reminded of the hideousness human beings are capable of and expresses empathy for those who get on a boat to escape the circumstances of war, hunger and torture in which they find themselves. Raquel wishes that the world could 'fix up' the refugee homelands but is adamant now that as she has 'seen it', she is no longer going to say 'No' to refugees. Adam comments on the emotionality of the experience.

Together, as Dr Corlett sums up, the volunteers' reactions through the journey represent the complexity of the refugee debate. His final request to them, and to viewers, is that when in the future they engage in the refugee debate that 'You might have in the front of your minds the humanity of the people concerned'. With their journey now over, the participants are handed back the symbols of their Australian freedom: their passports and mobile phones.

People and the concept of discovery

By the nature of its genre a documentary seeks to record the personal history of its characters. As Dr David Corlett says, each of the six Australians who participated in his experiment undertook 'a gutsy journey, tough both physically and emotionally'. The other participants were the refugees, asylum seekers and 'boat people' from within and outside Australia. For those overseas each day is gutsy, and even tougher emotionally and physically.

Raquel Moore—Raquel is a twenty-one year old who lives with her partner, Levi, and eleven dogs in Sydney's south-west. She has lived in Sydney since she was sixteen and notes at the time of filming, that 'now, there are Sudanese everywhere. They've taken over'. She feels uncomfortable as a 'white' person in her own suburb and unashamedly says of the 'boat people' that she would turn them back, that 'they wouldn't be staying here'. She confesses in Episode 1 that 'I guess I am a little bit racist ... I don't like Africans. You go to Blacktown ... and now it really is Blacktown'. She is confronted by 'black people'. She eats the Masudi family's African food tentatively, admitting afterwards that she did so only to be polite: 'I didn't really like their food. I don't like black people anyway'.

It is Raquel who will be most challenged by the experiences of the reverse journey. In the Kakuma Camp, Raquel states 'I am an Australian ... It's not easy for me. I don't see any way I can get through this'. It is unsurprising to viewers that Raquel is the only participant who opts out of the last leg of the African experience. It is Raquel, however, whose vision is most impacted by what she experiences. In the compound of Deo Masudi she shares a meal more comfortably than she did with Deo's brother's family and hugs one of the children. These simple gestures demonstrate the change in her assessment of African people. From a view essentially egocentric, she discovers a compassion for others, summing up what she learnt from the experience, simply: 'It would be good if we could fix their country up ... I'm not going to say "no" to [refugees]. I've seen it'.

Raye Colbey—Raye's position is the most extreme at the start of the experiment. She is not embarrassed to admit on national television that when her own private haven in South Australia was interrupted by the establishment of the Inverbrackie Immigration Detention Centre she could have taken a gun and 'shot them' herself.

The animosity she feels towards refugees is summed up by her graphic statement about the Christmas Island boat tragedy: 'I cheered when the boat crashed on Christmas Island ... killing more than fifty asylum seekers ... serves you bastards right'.

The reverse journey brings Raye to a very different position on refugees than that which she held as a starting position. She admits that 'getting to know people personally is a whole new concept' and Raye is the participant whose tears flow most frequently in the journey.

Gleny Rae—music teacher Gleny leads the voice of humanitarianism in the documentary. As a participant in the reverse journey, however, even Gleny notes that she has developed 'a different perception of the world'. She concludes that 'boat people' are merely 'chasing elusive dreams' and seeking 'freedom'. She states that she herself would 'get on a boat'.

Darren Hassan—Darren is a family man who takes a tough, critical position on the refugee question. A businessman who has army experience, it is clear from the beginning that he is unsympathetic to those who risk their lives to journey to Australia. His experience in this social experiment fails to change his mind.

While in the reverse journey Darren discovers a greater sense of compassion for refugees he loses much of the empathy he had for 'boat people', who he comes to define as 'system dodgers' rather than 'queue jumpers'. His position is clear: there is a UN agreed program for resettlement of refugees that should be adhered to.

Adam Hartup—Adam is a young Cronulla lifeguard who admits he has lived his whole life 'in the Shire' and by the sea in privileged circumstances. His perspective on refugees has been forged in part by his presence at the 2005 Cronulla riots. He comments on the 'lack of glory' with which Australians covered themselves at this event, but just the same is quick to call refugees 'criminals'. Adam is affected deeply by his experiences on the reverse journey. He notes its emotionality but observes 'life's all built on emotion'. His experiences change the view of Iraqis he has held since the Cronulla race riots: 'The next wave of Iraqis, I won't see as illegal'.

Roderick Schneider—Roderick is the twenty-one year old aspiring politician and Young Liberal in whose dress—his seemingly endless supply of pro Tony Abbott t-shirts—the viewer discovers a visual reminder of the polarised attitudes in Australia. His biggest concern is that he will be perceived as a political 'leftie' and this political consciousness colours his responses to his experiences. For Roderick, the refugee question is an issue to be solved by political policy rather than by ill-informed public opinion. His closest relationship seems to be that which he forms with fellow politician and refugee, Bahati.

Wasme—Wasme is the most vocal of the Iraqis living in Liverpool. He answers in part Darren's criticism of

fathers who undertake the perilous journey by boat, abandoning their families to the risks of their homeland or the refugee camps. Wasme suffers from post traumatic stress because of his boat journey. He explains (showing photos of his family) that he left them behind because he would 'feel guilty' if they drowned. His wife had told him to 'Go, try to find another place'.

Bahati and Maisara—after many years of persecution, degradation and fear, both Bahati and Maisara fled their war-torn countries in search of safety and peace, discovering each other but not the life that they had hoped. Bahati came from Burundi and Maisara from the Democratic Republic of Congo and they settled in a refugee camp in Kenya, where they met. The camp was a dangerous place of poverty and disease, with medical assistance available only to those with money. Maisara's daughter's death is testimony to the human tragedy that is the reality of life in such camps.

Bahati and Maisara become two of the one percent of the world's refugees who had been re-settled by the UN on Humanitarian Visas. For Bahati and Maisara, this enabled them to legally migrate with their family to Australia. While their joy at their life in Australia is real they fear for the rest of their family who wait it out in Kakuma Camp.

Deo—Deo Masudi is the older brother of Bahati. He and his family and Maisara's sister live from day to day in the Kakuma Refugee Camp. He epitomises the desperation of the refugee, a person with no vote, no voice and little hope: 'I close my eyes at night and pray to God for tomorrow. Please give me tomorrow ... We can't ask for any more than that'.

Dr David Corlett—the professor's role adds intrigue and suspense to the journey. He is the one who tests the participants' reactions at the end of each stage and who reveals the next step of their experience.

The participants outside Australia—the documentary introduces viewers to 'refugees' and 'asylum seekers'. A refugee has been forced to leave their country because he or she has been persecuted. The term 'asylum seeker' refers to people who 'have fled their own country and who apply for refugee protection, whether or not they are officially determined to be refugees'.

Deo and his family—the warmth of the welcome extended to Raquel, Raye and Roderick by Deo and his family is rich and genuine. It speaks of the strength of spirit that is required by the refugees to survive on a daily basis. It is also warmly human as demonstrated in the children's excited observation that it is 'white people' and Deo's 'Welcome. Welcome. Welcome ... Welcome'.

Deo, his wife and six children share their compound with Maisara's sister, whose pride in her room moves both Raquel and Raye in a moment of shared womanhood. This moment of lightness is in stark contrast to Deo's declaration of how he was tortured in

his homeland and had two teeth knocked out with pliers. He also reveals that his first wife and daughter were taken by soldiers and believed killed. These are the reasons why he has left his country.

The intensity and spectrum of emotions evoked by the visit is most evident in the Deo family's viewing of Bahati and Maisara's recorded message from Australia. The recording reveals Bahati's family's joy in their new country and Maisara's pride in her 'Australian babies'.

Deo's joy for his brother's family is tinged with sadness as he elaborates the aspirations of his children (to be doctors, teachers or engineers) and the impossibility of their being able to fulfil their dreams when they grow up given their present circumstances. The yellow subtitle that accompanies the scene says much with few words: 'Everything just needs perseverance'.

The patients and doctors of Aman—Gleny, Darren and Adam see first-hand the injuries sustained from frequent bombing of civilians in Jordan. Tended by volunteers from Doctors without Borders, the patients are impressive in their quiet courage. Notwithstanding their injuries, however, the patients respond with the joy of being alive to the doctor's instruction on this social day: 'This afternoon, forget about what's happened to your body'. With dancing and music—and Gleny's participation in an expression of common human connection—the patients dance and attempt a smile, in what Adam describes movingly as expressions of real courage.

Relationships and the concept of discovery

The inevitability of conflict—the fragility of harmonious relationships in any community when its members are tested by harsh living conditions can be discovered in the contrasting scenarios in the documentary. The first is the argument that arises between Raquel and Raye as a result of Raquel's seasickness and what Raye sees as an exaggerated concern for her own welfare. Such tension is magnified when over fifty or sixty people are crammed into the unseaworthy boats that come to Australia. The second scenario is Darren's tense debate with Dr Corlett in Malaysia about the role of the media in 'manipulating' (as Darren would have it) the emotions of the Australian people in relation to the refugee question. The third scenario is even more pointed: a visual record of individuals queue-jumping for food in the Kakuma Camp, a visual reminder of Maisara's report on the theft of food from the refugees at gunpoint. The documentary also raises questions about the kinds of pressures newcomers face in Australian society. Separated from their new world by employment opportunities, cultural and language barriers, and the painful legacy of their past experiences, their assimilation into mainstream Australian society is neither easy nor straightforward.

The importance of family—in the events recorded and the personal experiences of the participants, including those from refugee communities, viewers discover the importance to all humanity of the bonds of family. Among the participants Darren, in particular, misses his family.

Such family bonds are even more poignantly displayed by the refugees. For them, experiences of tragedy, persecution and horror are no more deeply felt than familial separation. It is clear that Maisara misses her sisters in Kenya and they miss her. Bahati's welcome of visitors who know his brother is heartwarming and so too is the close-up of his tears. The tears of an Iraqi grandmother who sees the 'dear little girl' who is her granddaughter capture the pain of separation of family members. The refugee journey to a new homeland is bound with such emotional complexity.

Ideas and the concept of discovery

Terror, war, persecution and displacement—given the extent of the global refugee problem, and the continuous media coverage of it, it is easy for viewers to become desensitised to the people involved. The documentary is replete with images that movingly challenge such desensitisation, demonstrating the courage and strength of the human spirit that each refugee must show if they are to survive to the next day.

The human faces behind the political debate—the purpose of the experiment is to communicate the importance of the human stories that lie behind the political debate. It is Deo Masudi who sums up the human reality of the refugee behind the politics: 'I need to touch your heart ... if we do not touch your heart, you do not see us. We are not animals. It is a problem for the world'.

Self-imprisonment and isolation—the documentary shows that in a foreign world it is the natural habit of humans to band together and isolate themselves from others in their environment. Such is the Deo family experience in the Kakuma Camp while the Iraqis in Liverpool are similarly isolated from their community. The most challenging self isolation, however, is that experienced by the Chin and their Christian minority community in Malaysia. Their lives are in such transit that they are ripe for the temptations offered by people smugglers.

The world looks but does not see—Malaysia has its shadow world of refugees existing in the middle of its busy modern cities and often, by their illegal labour, contributing to the building of these cities. Aman in Jordan is home, as the narrator tells viewers, to two million refugees, many hidden in shacks, shanties and attics. Raye sums this up when she says, after coming to understand Deo's family's situation, 'A lot of people ... look but don't see'.

The challenge for Australian society is to ensure that those refugees who are lucky enough to make it to this country do not also become a shadow separate class as

they struggle with stress from their pre-Australian experiences and from language and cultural barriers.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights—Article 14 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that 'Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution'. As the documentary demonstrates, however, the actual governmental red tape and processes that accompany putting this principle into practice can make it difficult for genuine asylum seekers to obtain official refugee status and the visa needed for resettlement in a new country. In Kakuma Camp, the Masudi family has no choice but to wait out each day of poverty and familial separation. Similarly, Wasme's mother can but wait for an opportunity to join her family in Australia or the USA.

Discovering that debate is what is needed—Dr David Corlett notes that what is needed is 'A debate without the vitriol from either side'. As Raquel and Raye in particular demonstrate, understanding the nuance of this debate is a critical step to deeper understanding of the refugee issue. They each admit to a change in position in response to their firsthand refugee experience, with its transforming impact summed up by Raye:

I would do anything to improve the life of my own children and I think if that meant getting on a boat I would probably go ahead and do it ... I honestly never thought I would say this. I never imagined how bad life could really be. It's degrading. The sun comes up and goes down and nothing else happens. They just have to survive and that is all they are doing because it certainly isn't living.

Societies and the concept of discovery

The complexity of Australia's multicultural society—the six Australians discover that they, themselves, demonstrate the divided and often uninformed opinion within Australian society about 'boat people'. In essence, each volunteer occupies a different Australian world.

The society of the camps—the film uncovers the facts of many different societies and in each the viewers and the voyagers discover unique worlds. Bahati and his wife's pride in their home moves both the Australian volunteers and the viewer.

Other societies—the viewer discovers that the fascinating worlds are not all those of refugees. The military base in Kuwait is also an interesting world in itself. Even more dangerous, however, is the world of Baghdad where even a hold up in the road is a matter for anxiety.

Language and the sense of discovery

In *Go Back to Where You Came From* the viewer discovers the impact that is achieved when the characteristic episodic structure and character interest of a television show is mixed with the elements of a documentary drama. Its volunteers are a cross-section

of Australian society and their journey in reverse, while in the tradition of great literary odysseys, is also a refugee travelogue to Malaysia, Africa, Jordan and Iraq.

Go Back to Where You Came From seeks to awaken the thoughts of viewers even as it records its epic journey. Like all media messages, however, it is not without bias, but in it is discovered the colour of the worldview and personal principles of those who produced it, in particular those of Dr David Corlett. Corlett seeks to foster the viewers' own discovery that the refugee 'question' and, in particular, the issue of 'boat people', is more about people than politics.

The dramatisation of reality—to combat the desensitisation of viewers to tales of horror and violence the producers personalise the refugee experience by connecting them to family histories and to individual volunteer responses. Horror is thus given an authentic human face.

Drawing from the fiction genre—as do many documentaries, *Go Back to Where You Came From* has much in common with fiction. It uses movie techniques to engage the audience in some hard content and the flowing of tears on old and young faces is an emotional pattern in the series. Important too is the role of the narrator who fills in important details about the contexts of the places visited by the volunteers and about the factual reality of the refugee experience. The episodic structure and the slow reveal of each step in the journey to create a sense of suspense and anticipation is another important plot element used to maintain excitement.

Star quality—the players in this real life drama take on a star quality as they are brought to the television screen as documentary subjects. This quality is not merely as participants in the action. The paradigms of beauty and ugliness rule in this documentary world as they do in the blockbuster world, even within the characters and interactions of the participants themselves. There are, too, special guest stars (Deo and his family and Wasme's mother) and character roles (the little girl in the green dress, the child with the improvised toy truck). The complexity of the volunteers' personalities and the individual struggles for survival of the refugee 'stars' challenge the viewer to rethink any tendency to generalise the human refugee experience.

Capturing the excitement of events—as in the movies, the excitement of events is magnified in this documentary through a combination of visual and sound elements. The emotional landscape of each episode is enlarged by the soundtrack and the creation of continuous action by careful editing maintains the coherence of the story.

A careful reconstruction of reality—the documentary is a careful reconstruction of reality where the selection and combination of elements to make up the whole are chosen. While grounded in truth, it is a manufactured reality rather than reality itself: the 'sinking' boat experience is a good example of this.

The importance of story—*Go Back to Where You Came From* is structured on the basic principles of narrative: orientation, complication and resolution. Its characters are deliberately chosen to develop the plot element of the reverse journey and the 'reunion' of families that recounts the refugee experience across the globe. The documentary's audience, too, become more than passive viewers, evolving into observers who learn from the story, gaining new knowledge of the refugee reality.

◆ **Visual structures and effects**

The three-part structure has a controlling thesis, echoing what Mr Hockey, the then Shadow Treasurer, said about the drowning of fifty 'boat people' at Christmas Island: the Australian nation had to 'retain our humanity' during the political debate.

Made for television, *Go Back to Where You Came From* exploits the emotionality of faces in close-ups at significant moments in the series: the tears of Wasme's mother, the little girl protecting her play space in the Kakuma Camp, the tears of Maisara and of her sister, and of Deo as he weeps for the loss of opportunity for his children. The series carries some vignettes of anonymous refugees whose plight is poignantly self-evident: a little girl in a green dress, a sick mother clutching a sick child in a women's hospital and disfigured faces in Jordan. There are also many symbolic shots, including the razor wire in silhouette against an African sunset and the little girl in tears clutching Raye in Malaysia.

The power of the narrative voice—the narrative voice of the documentary makes a significant contribution to the powerful communication of its thesis. The genre demands a narrative voice that is all knowing and all informed and *Go Back to Where You Came From* delivers this: a narrator who speaks the 'truth' of a singular human perspective. The narrator is the keeper of the gate to the world of the documentary: the audience's trusted guide who speaks with authority and certainty.

The narrator's voice is a character in itself and his deep tones are coloured by a passion for his subject that at the same time is patriarchal: he is an authoritarian guide more than a confidante, presenting what seems to be an impartial and objective record of the refugee world.

The inevitable bias that comes with a single narrative voice is balanced in the documentary by the use of multiple voices—including Dr Corlett's and those of the volunteers and refugees—to provide a range of perspectives on the issues explored. This approach provides insight into different facets of the refugee world being investigated and stimulates conversation but, at the same time, remains true to the thesis of the program.

Discovering more about refugees—for more on the plight of refugees around the world—and an update on the conditions and facts reported in the documentary—visit the following websites:

- Refugee Council of Australia at www.refugeecouncil.org.au/r/list-smt.php
- The UN Refugee Agency at www.unhcr.org/pages/49c3646c2.html
- Amnesty International at www.amnesty.org.au/LINK

Module A

EXPERIENCE THROUGH LANGUAGE

Elective 1: Distinctive Voices