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Film Finance Corporation

STUDY GUIDE

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SCREEN EDUCATION



www.metromagazine.com.au
www.theeducationshop.com.au

‘Death, be not proud, though some have called thee Mighty and dreadful, for, though art not so’.
[John Donne, *Divine Poems*]



NICK (William McInnes) reads from the card, which Meryl (Justine Clarke) has illustrated.

It is a card with an illustration of a shell on the sand, gentle waves caressing the shell. It is the same card the overwrought train driver hand delivers to Julia by way of condolence and redemption. Nick reads to Meryl, ‘We have no light promised us to show our road 100 kilometres away, but we have a light to show us the next footstep and if we take that we will have a light to show us the one that is to follow’.

This simple affecting sequence reveals one of the discursive elements of *Look Both Ways* and resonates through the lives of all the central characters as a reminder that perception and understanding in life are best realized by not getting too far ahead of oneself or by being submerged by too big a picture.

The film invites the viewer to think about the fears and anxieties that at times act as blockers or blinkers during periods of stress. Each of the central characters affirms the need to process and control these fears and anxieties in ways that do not negate the quintessential spirit that resides in humans.

Look Both Ways is a film of breadth and substance in its ideas on fear, anxiety, emptiness, inertia, despair

and mortality. The film is an authentic personal and group portrait about how humans cope with personal tragedy, depression and loss.

The film’s use of visual and aural language to support its ideas is also revealed in the seminal moments in the film. There is a strong coherence to the narrative as it fuses form and content and reinforces central ideas.

Look Both Ways presents a mosaic of responses to loss, adversity and fear caused by feelings of lack of personal control. These feelings of helplessness are registered with a keen eye.

It is self-evident that loss, tragedy and death will test resolve and resilience, but the film asserts that while suffering is omnipresent, and ‘inevitable’ as Nick’s mother argues, a kind of dangerous, disabling paralysis can set in once the suffering colonizes the psyche. Fear and grief are healthy

responses to adversity, yet when they are excessive or long-term they become a fog that envelops the human spirit.

Look Both Ways explores the different ways that humans grapple with life’s random twists and turns; how they try to make sense of what may seem unintelligible, unfair, overwhelming or chaotic. Difficult though it is, *Look Both Ways* suggests that while change, unpredictability and uncertainty are difficult to navigate they are best placed in perspective and accepted.



could, to allow people to receive the film as part of their own experience, to bring their own lives to it and enjoy it that way.

(<http://www.lookbothways.com.au>)

ACTIVITY

- After viewing the film write a personal response to both sets of ideas as they are outlined in the Introduction and the Director's statement

Look Both Ways is book-ended by a news report of a train crash at Arnow Hill that has claimed many lives. It is a tragic news story that frames the smaller, more parochial, though no less significant story of the impact of another separate train accident with a single fatality that touches the lives of multiple characters.

The ensemble of parallel stories that echo and complement each other are also of equal importance in the film. There is pathos in all the characters as they get to know themselves through the vagaries of their respective lives, lives that are touched

Director's Statement

In the web log that is part of the web site for *Look Both Ways*, Sarah Watt, the director articulates her ideas on the experience and feelings that underpin the film.

I remember sitting on a train, thinking about what my fellow travellers weren't revealing to me ... whether they were on the brink of something wonderful or something terrible, whether anyone is ever in neutral mode ... whether knowledge held by one person could potentially help another.

I also imagined our train hurtling over the pathetically insubstantial railing on the bridge, and into the chemical storage facility below – killing us all in a poisonous inferno. I thought about whether anyone else was feeling the same way.

*I set out to make a romantic comedy, but the stuff of most people's lives includes what we think of as tragedy, so *Look Both Ways* ended up a bit of both I guess. I like searching for the universal aspects of people's experience, in both the big and little things. I tried to keep everything as 'real' as I*

by the death of a young man hit by a train while out walking his dog, the referent of the film.

Nick, the photojournalist who has just been diagnosed with cancer, photographs the aftermath of the tragedy. Meryl, the illustrator, is fatalistic, if not nihilistic, not coping with being single and just going through the motions. Meryl imagines disaster at every turn, manifested in animations in which she is eaten by sharks, swallowed by collapsing floors or tunnels. Her ghoulish anxieties are hardly allayed when, returning to the Adelaide summer

Awards >

Best Film Script: Queensland Literary Awards - 2004

Discovery Award: Toronto Film Festival, 2005

FIPRESCI Award: Brisbane film Festival, 2005

4 AFI Awards, 2005: Best Film, Best Director, Best Screenplay, Best Supporting Actor (Tony Hayes)

5 Film Critics Circle awards, 2005: Best Film, Director, Actor (William McInnes), Screenplay, Editing

3 IF Awards, 2005: Best Director, Screenplay, Editing

Most Popular Film: Adelaide Film Festival, 2005. Brisbane Film Festival, 2005. Australian Film Festival, London 2006

Best Screenplay: Mar del Plata Film Festival, 2006

Best Actress (Justine Clarke): Mar del Plata Film Festival, 2006

Critics Award: Rotterdam Film Festival 2006

Critics Award: NatFilm Festival (Denmark) 2006

Nominated

European Film Academy: Non-European Film Award category



after her father's funeral, she is a witness to the fatal accident on a train-line.

Andy, who works with Nick on the same newspaper, twists the fatal accident to a story on male suicide and a speculative essay about depression, showing scant regard for the victim's widow. The irascible Andy is also lost, separated and afraid of commitment to his pregnant girlfriend, Anna, who struggles with Andy's lack of response to her pregnancy and his cavalier, yet world-weary attitude to work and relationships.

Julia, the widow, mourns the loss of her partner killed by a passing train and the train driver spirals into

depressive silence, shattered by his perceived role in the death.

Phil, the editor of the newspaper grows closer to his partner and children as these tragedies reverberate and bleed into his own life.

Look Both Ways is a film that refuses to prioritize characters even though Meryl and Nick have the most screen time.

We see, through different means, into the troubled hearts and souls of several other characters touched by the accident, either directly or indirectly, over the course of a blistering three days in inner Adelaide

CURRICULUM LINKS> In Victoria, *Look Both Ways* has been included on the list of texts for study by VCE English students in Units 3 and 4 for 2007. The film will have a universal appeal for senior students of English throughout Australia, given that the film is strongly character-driven and crystallizes and shapes multiple themes on fear and

mortality in an accessible and gentle way. The film's distinctive style is inextricably linked to character and theme and demands analysis. > The study of screen-based texts has been enshrined in the national English curriculum for over a decade and there is a strong interest in English not only in the key themes and ideas that are explored but

how those ideas are articulated in filmic terms. Much of this study guide will invite teachers and students to think about the ways in which form and content support each other in the making of meanings. > While this guide has a focus on English there are other disciplines that will find *Look Both Ways* accessible. > *Look Both Ways* is a film of

interest for senior students of Media Studies, especially in the context of exploring production values and design in film. > At an interdisciplinary level the film could be used in the sciences and social sciences, health and human development, religious studies, and as part of any discipline that deals with Australian culture and society.

BEFORE WATCHING THE FILM

The Key Concepts in *Look Both Ways*

THE film deals with some of life's eternal concerns. Make notes on each of the following concepts and then compare and contrast your notes with those of your peers. Most of these concepts are subjective, as you will discover when comparing your individual responses with those of other students.

- Responsibility
- Grief
- Compassion
- Loss
- Self-knowledge
- Hope
- Redemption
- Fate
- Choice
- Despair
- Survival
- Love
- Spirit
- Desire
- Anxiety
- Fear
- Chance
- Commitment

Sarah Watt's earlier work

While a filmmaker's body of work is part of a continuum, each project should be seen in its own right. Inevitably, there will be traces left that find their way into later films. So it might be instructive in providing a context for *Look Both Ways* to view Sarah Watt's earlier animations. They deal with similar ideas of a sense of optimism triggered initially by loss and private grief.

In *Living with Happiness* (2001), a young mother finds herself gripped by an overwhelming pessimism that threatens to consume her. Only a freak accident on a lonely beach may be the key to her future happiness.



Small Treasures (1995) represents the experience of losing a baby during childbirth and how a mother makes sense of the tragedy.

- What are the similarities and differences between these short animations and the feature debut that used animation to register Meryl's fears, insecurities and anxieties?

Context

Every text that is studied is inseparable from its contexts. The context can be the time and place in which the film is made, viewed and set.

Look Both Ways has been made at a time when fear is prevalent in society. Meryl articulates this when she is looking at newspaper and is overwhelmed

by the pervasive stories on loss and tragedy. She is scared.

While previous generations have been forced to deal with the fears synonymous with war and the poverty of the Great Depression, the fears of the new millennium are perpetually drawn to our attention by media outlets. Fear in this context is in its own right a scary mechanism of control. Fear of terrorism, fear of the 'Other' (e.g. asylum seekers, those of 'different' appearance), fear of failure, and fear of our bodies are just some of the fears that are tangible in 2006.

ACTIVITY

- Describe the fears that bombard you and indicate whether they are real or exaggerated.

AFTER WATCHING THE FILM

Title

HERE are a few preliminary ideas on the multiple meanings of the title of the film. Implicit in the title is the notion of peripheral vision, seeing beyond the surface and the obvious, Other connotations might be the idea of anticipating what's coming, knowing when to cross the metaphorical road and working out the angles and speed of oncoming traffic, reconciling the past, the present and the future. The title appears briefly beside the railway line, as a sign in the film 'Look both ways before crossing'.

ACTIVITY > As a metaphor the title can take you in many directions.

- Make your own list of ideas that you think are either explicitly or implicitly suggested in the film's title. The iconography of the yellow sign with a shark and a train might be a useful starting point.

First Impressions

A useful way to start thinking about the film after the first viewing is to identify the images, dialogue or sounds that made an immediate impact on the viewer. Explaining why these aspects of the film (the microcosm) made an impression and then speculating on how the emotional effects and traces are left with the viewer provides a framework for crystallizing an understanding of the film's macrocosm (the broader perspective).

- What – the image, sound, dialogue
- Why – the reason that the impact was profound
- How – the ways in which these emotional effects are created



Write your responses in each column.

Key scenes

Opening and closing scenes of films are an instructive way of framing understandings. Every opening scene will introduce characters, foreshadow ideas and set up expectations for the viewer. The endings of films reveal any growth in moral courage and/or self-knowledge.

View the following sequences which are time coded for you and respond to the prompts provided for each excerpt. When responding think about the effects created by the choices made by Sarah Watt, the director.

1. OMNIPRESENT DISASTER (0.00 – 3.40)

- the use of a photomontage to create mood
- the news broadcast and its contents
- the close-ups of Meryl and her point of view (who and what Meryl sees)
- the animations

- the heat
- the flight of birds
- the silent shock that Nick experiences
- the breakneck photomontage of his life
- the doctor's response

2. CODA (1.29.14 – end)

- the birds
- the rain and its effects
- the lyrics of the song
- the tears of both Nick and Meryl
- the pan of Joan's photographs
- the joy of the party
- the close-up of Phil's reaction to that joy
- the close-up of Anna's pain
- the scene in which the train driver offers the card and his hand to Julia
- Nick's photomontage of flowers and graves



- Andy's decision to return to Anna
- the re-union and reconciliation of Nick and Meryl
- the final animation
- Joan's reaction to the news of a survivor of the Arnow Hill train crash
- the children playing in the puddles
- the final photomontage of the future

Structure

Look Both Ways appears to meander from one life experience to another. However, in a multi-strand narrative these seemingly discrete stories are all woven together conceptually. The varied human response to fear and loss is the fulcrum of all the stories as they negotiate their sense of isolation and conversely their place in the lives of others.

The film is structured around a series of conversations, musical interludes set to a series of vignettes that embrace all the characters as they cope with private dilemmas and fears.

These conversations take place between all the major characters. Some are awkward, some are tender, some bitter, and some hurtful and some lead to flickers of understanding. For example, Anna and Andy speak about agendas in the context of his journalistic license when covering the fatal accident. He argues that male suicide often hides behind these 'accidents'. Anna snaps at him, 'Things just happen', a reminder that over analyzing the human condition is not always best.

And Joan, Nick's mother asserts that death is not the sum of a person's life in a conversation with Nick.

There are also the conversations that are manifested in whispers or merely eye contact.



ACTIVITY > Choose a conversation and explain why you think it matters.

The seemingly discrete stories are woven together in the narrative coda or epilogue at the end of the film in which characters have finally come to terms with their fears. There is a sense of newly acquired self-knowledge in the characters.

ACTIVITY > List some of the self knowledge some of the characters have learnt.

Montage

Montage is defined in the glossary of terms. *Look Both Ways* employs montage regularly.

- Nick's life flashing before him
- Nick's reveries on the physiological changes and chemical attacks on his body
- Nick's abject nightmares that

invade him

like the cancer that breeds and multiplies inside his body.

- Nick's reflections on the links between his lifestyle and cancer
- Nick's reflections on death, floral tributes and tombstones
- Nick's abstracted thoughts on the train on his way back from his mother's home

There is also the montage that is used with some of the songs which clearly focuses on what characters are thinking, feeling and seeing.

- Choose one of these sequences in the film and write a response in which you comment on the effectiveness of the montage.

Animations and Meryl's subconscious

There are two almost subliminal animations that reveal the complexities of *Look Both Ways* and serve to remind the viewer that film is multi-dimensional and rich in its ideas and aesthetics.

As Meryl, who flirts with the concept of co-incidence and the role of destiny in life walks away from her first meeting with Nick, she slips into her animation alter ego. She utters the line, 'Maybe it was meant to be', when trying to piece together the reasons for her experiences and encounters.

This ironic, almost parodic line, is delivered to two mournful, young Indigenous males whose poverty resonates in the light of Meryl's awkward and seemingly superficial explanation of her meeting Nick. Her statement, which she realizes is trite (she mutters 'Jesus'), is then critiqued as a careless, empty self-indulgence in relation to the boys own plight. Their poverty is certainly not meant to be. A sense of moral relativism is affirmed in this sequence and Meryl's empty words are debunked.

Meryl's reductive explanations for her own 'failures' are never far away in *Look Both Ways*.

The same Indigenous boys come back to mock Meryl at the end of the film when she is splashed by a car that drives through puddles.

ACTIVITY > How does the second inclusion of the boys differ from the first time we see them?

Other animations

A couple of years ago there was a television series called *Ally McBeal*. Ally McBeal experienced subliminal flights of fancy that focused on impending doom or acute embarrassment. These were a fantastic visual realization of her insecurities.

Similarly, Meryl experiences the worst of all possible worlds in her subconscious



animations that are the realizations of her own fears. Sharks, crashing trains, gunmen, floors that open up, disabled triplets and AIDS are a few of the nightmares and ghosts that haunt her.

- Choose one of the animations and write a short response in which you discuss the relevance and effectiveness of the animation.
- Why do you think the animations are hand drawn?

Memory

There are several flashbacks to Nick's father in the film. He died of cancer. Nick's psyche is fixated with these moments, given his own diagnosis.

- Trace the triggers for Nick's memories and explain what the memories reveal about Nick and his father and mother.
- How are these sequences edited to look different from other sequences in the film?

Adjacent worlds

The film entails a lot of observation of seemingly disconnected threads of existence. Nick, who is absorbed in the knowledge that he has cancer, is suddenly alerted to an extraneous world to which he has been blind in

the past. For example, he sees death in butcher's windows. Similarly, his attention is drawn to a wedding adjacent to the cricket field.

This fleeting glimpse of another possible world is a contrast to the solipsistic world of Nick who is almost the man who wasn't there and it affirms that the world does not drown in the nihilism that can be triggered in response to a cancer diagnosis.

Put simply, it is the ideas that someone's worst day can be someone else's happiest day.

Similarly, Anna, Andy's jilted girlfriend feels abandoned and alone, given that she is pregnant and feels overwhelmed by her work in the casualty ward. Yet as she walks through a park of children at play she is enlivened by the fresh, cooling spray of sprinklers. The water energizes her, shakes her out of her self-absorbed world.

In both cases, the adjacent world is an antidote to feelings of helplessness and hopelessness.

- Identify at least two similar moments in the film in which this parallel world is evoked and write a short response on the effect of this world on the character.

Cityscape

The immediate setting of most of the film is within the claustrophobic tangle of inner city Adelaide. Ugly industrial estates, a confluence of railway tracks, graffiti and clutter exist next to parks and playing fields. The physical setting is a tangible force in *Look Both Ways*.

- Why do you think the filmmaker, Sarah Watt, has chosen this location?

Heat and rain

The relentless heat is an oppressive blanket that saps energy and creates a somnolent mood in the film.

- In what other ways does heat play a role in *Look Both Ways*?
- What is the effect of rain in the final scene?

Film language

Film language is the architecture by which films tell stories and trigger responses in viewers. All the elements of filmmaking play a part in this, but of particular importance are editing and the choice of shots, such as the use of close-ups to alert viewers to important moments of action or emotional response.

What follows is a glossary of film terms. They provide the syntax and structure for filmmaking. Read what follows and then complete the activity at the end of the glossary

Camera angle: the position from which the camera looks at what is to be filmed.

Close-up: a camera shot that shows a close-up view of the subject, filling most of the screen.

Frame: the rectangle formed by the outside edges of a movie screen. To frame a shot is to arrange its composition. A frame is also each separate image in a film.

Composition: the way elements in a shot are arranged in relation to each other and to the viewer: the way they are framed. The director and cinematographer determine this.

Cut: the abrupt transition from one shot to another.

Editing: the selection and physical assembling of the pieces of film, which will comprise a finished movie. Editing also refers to the process of fine-tuning a script.

High-angle shot: a camera shot which looks down at the subject from a high angle.

Long shot: a camera shot that makes the subject look small and far away. In reality, any shot which shows a person's whole body rather than a close-up of it.

Low-angle shot: a camera shot which looks up at the subject from a low angle.

Medium shot: a camera shot midway between a close-up and a long shot.

Montage: a series of brief images put together to tell a segment of a story.

Pan: the slow pivoting of a camera from one side to another (derived from the word 'panorama').

Screenplay: a film script in completed and sometimes published form.

Sequence: a series of scenes that describe a continuing action.

Shoot: the action of filming something.

Shot: any set-up of the camera so that something can be filmed. Also used as a verb, with the same meaning as 'filmed'.

Zoom shot: a shot where the camera appears to move closer to or further away from the subject.

Style

There are a number of close-up shots of both Julia who has lost her partner and Anna, Andy's girlfriend framed by windows. The viewer looks in on them from a distance.

In the case of Julia and the train driver, the use of the camera creates other emotional effects. The viewer only ever sees them outside, or within walls, the intention being that they are like neighbours seen from a distance. We know they've both had a traumatic experience but the film isn't about them. It is about Meryl and Nick and

the others. It is about the fear rather than the event, so we never get close to the train driver or Julia. This is supported by shooting them from outside the rooms.

There are many examples of montage in the film, from the flash image eruption of still images that encapsulate Nick's life after he has found out he has cancer to the slower montage of sequences that accompany the soundtrack at emotional high points in the film.

ACTIVITY > *Look Both Ways* is idiosyncratic and fresh in the way it plays with film language. From the glossary above choose two of the terms and describe how they are used and with what effects in *Look Both Ways*.

Mood and tone

Look Both Ways is an interesting film in the sense that it deals with very serious life matters, yet never sentimentalizes the heart of the film. There is a sense of optimism and hope that is revealed at quite transparent levels in the film, but there are quieter moments such as the discernible smile on Joan's face when the news of a 5-year-old who is rescued from the Arnou Hill train disaster is televised.

- How does Sarah Watt control the viewer's response to the litany of very real suffering that the film registers? For example, the scenes in which characters look at the moon are revealing.
- What do you think of the ending?

Exploring and recognizing relationships

It is widely acknowledged that the characters in *Look Both Ways* are very real. Regardless of age, you will have some knowledge of the joys and tensions of marital, familial and romantic relationships. When watching the film there is always a character on the screen who reminds you of someone you know or have met or feelings you have had.

Individually, choose a scene between the following characters which you found revealing in the film. Write brief notes about the selected relationship and why it gave you a sense of recognition.

- Nick and Meryl
- Andy and Anna
- Andy and Cathy
- Phil and Miriam
- Julia and Rob
- Joan and Jim
- The train driver and his son
- Nick and Andy
- Phil and Nick

If you feel sufficiently comfortable or confident to do so, discuss your notes with others, as a class or in a small group.

Honesty

Meryl speaks in very animated terms about the 'politeness hostage gene' that seems to intervene when there is a need for honesty.

- What do you think she means by this?

In *Look Both Ways*, there are a number of strategies used to mask or unmask confronting situations. Characters either withhold the truth, they sometimes lie, they avoid or skirt around the truth in different situations and for different reasons. Dishonesty is not always direct. Nor is it always malicious. It can be by commission or omission. It can be a failure to state what you know or suspect, or a tacit agreement to keep quiet.

But dishonesty, like excessive grief, can be a cancer that eats away at the soul.

On a sheet of A4 paper, list all the main characters along the sides. Give each a column for 'honesty' and 'dishonesty'. Identify moments in the film in which characters fall into these two categories and make brief notes on the reasons for and consequences of each, as well as your response as a viewer about whether the film as a whole seemed to endorse or criticize that person's action.

Genre

Sarah Watt describes the film as a seriocomic narrative (a kind of 'tragic-comedy'). Certainly a steady stream of situational, verbal and visual humour in the film alleviates the seriousness of a narrative on fear and death.

There is also a strong hint of melodrama in the film in that it registers the nuances of emotion and looks at moral choices made by characters.

Melodrama comes from the Greek word 'melos' which means music, capturing the emotional rise and fall, the register of human experience. In general terms, other features of melodrama are:

- it is often located in the household
- heightened 'problems' such as sexual dysfunction, marital breakdown, alcoholism
- twists and turns of fate, suspense, disaster and tragedy, last minute rescues and happy endings
- search for the ideal and self-knowledge
- the process of redemption
- the dichotomy of desire versus repression
- the ambiguous function of marriage as either liberating or repressive

Look Both Ways has some of these ingredients, especially in terms of characters making moral choices, seeking the 'ideal' and redemption.

ACTIVITY > List the characters down one side of a page

- in columns next to each one, make notes about the choices they made, the circumstances and reasons behind each choice and the consequences of each choice, both in terms of the plot and relationships.

Background issues

Look Both Ways raises many issues that are currently the source of investigative, informative and opinion writing in newspapers and radio programs.

For example:

- How the fear of terrorism is generated and sustained in the community, especially in the aftermath of major contemporary world events such as 9/11, the Bali bombing, the war on Iraq.
- The pre-occupation with violence, death and tragedy on television and in newspapers (Meryl is nauseated by the unrelenting coverage of death and how death is prioritized by the media).
- Belief in a divine power (Nick and Andy discuss the existence of God at the cricket ground).
- The search for meaning in our secular society.
- Cancer as a major cause of death.

ACTIVITY > Individuals or groups of students could investigate one of the above topics and present findings to the class, relating these to aspects of the film.

Images and commentary

ACTIVITY > Using downloaded publicity stills from *Look Both Ways* that can be found at <http://www.lookbothways.com.au>, students could prepare a PowerPoint presentation in which they use particular frames to talk about the important ideas in the film.

'Hot Seat': a role-play based on *Look Both Ways*

Form into groups where each student in each group takes it in turn to be one of the characters from the film. Students must not introduce any personal opinions or things that are not dealt with either visually or verbally in the film. The other students then ask the character about his or her thoughts and feelings at any stage of the narrative (film) and the student who is the character must focus his or her replies as to how the character is presented in *Look Both Ways*.

The rest of the group has to ask questions to draw out the character's

response. Each person in the group must have at least ONE role to play and take it in turns to be interrogated. The interrogation for each character should last about five minutes. The group might like to formulate relevant questions for each character before starting the role-play. Some examples follow. You should do the same for characters not included in the list below.

Nick: Why did you find it too hard to tell your mother that you had cancer?

Meryl : Why did you always seem to think the worst?

Andy : Why did you treat Anna in the way that you did?

Why were you standing in front of the train?

Phil : What have you learned about what is important through Nick's experience?

Train driver : When and why did you decide to visit Julia?

How did the tragedy change the relationship with your son?

Julia : How did you feel when the train driver paid you a visit?

A rehearsed version of this activity could become a formal Oral Presentation for this part of the VCE English course.

Motifs

A motif is a visual image or a set of images which occurs several times in a film. It suggests parallels or links between the characters and thus indirectly helps viewers to understand more about both characters and themes. It is useful to consciously note where and how these motifs occur, whom they relate to and what they might tell us. These visual cues and clues are integral to *Look Both Ways*. For example, birds are a powerful visual cue. The flight of birds punctuates the narrative as a kind of hiatus between different stories. Yet they are also naturally free when contrasted to the lives of characters who live in the industrial and residential tangle below.

- Make brief notes about where the following occur and who is

involved, and how these symbols and motifs might contribute to your appreciation of the film. Remember the notes about film language and include thoughts about framing, lighting, camera shots etc. in assessing your response.

- Birds (there are other examples)
- Cricket
- Mural art
- Painting
- Cigarettes
- Children
- Railway tracks
- Signs

Soundtrack

The soundtrack of a film includes dialogue, music, external background sounds (a soundscape) and silence.

Music is integral to the narrative in *Look Both Ways*. Music registers the rise and fall of thought and feeling and complements the visual narrative. In *Look Both Ways* at some moments of reflection it provides a kind of interlude in the film that allows the viewer to take stock of the emotional tenor of each of the central characters. The additional effect is that the viewer can also process feelings about characters as the images and music wash over.

Here is a list of the music tracks from the film:

- CRASHING (M.Davis/C.Jackson/D.Bradie/D.Tulen) Mushroom Music Publishing. Performed by Gersey
- THIS OLD HOUSE (Suzannah Espie) Control. Performed by GIT
- LIGHTHOUSE (J.Cunningham) The Waifs © 2002. Performed by The Waifs
- ELEVEN (L.Miller) Mushroom Music Publishing. Performed by Lisa Miller
- LET ME BE (X.Rudd) Control Performed by Xavier Rudd
- DARK OF MY MOON (Gene Clark) Gene Clark Music (BMI). Administered by Bug/Festival Music Publishing Performed by Gene Clark

LONELY (M.Dyson) Native Tongue Music Publishing. Performed by Mia Dyson

LONELY WON'T LEAVE ME ALONE (Daly/Pulford) Control/Festival Music Publishing on behalf of Bug Music Ltd. Performed by The Arlenes

NEVER EVER WORRY (Alric Farrell) Roots Caribbean Rhythms Publishing Limited. Performed by Lord Pretender

- Choose one of the songs, listen carefully to the lyrics and write a short response on how the sound complements or reinforces the narrative. The web site that allows you to listen to each song in thirty second grabs is http://www.inertia-music.com/catalogue/35949/Various/Look_Both_Ways_Soundtrack/ Choose from the list of songs above. There are extra songs on the CD release.
- Choose three or four other scenes where the soundtrack – whether this is music, silence, natural sounds or a combination – is particularly successful in creating mood and discuss how this effect is achieved. In each case, how does the soundtrack contribute to your understanding of a character or situation?

Please note that a CD soundtrack was released, which includes all the songs in the film, and some additional songs.

Creative writing responses

- Write an entry in Nick's diary while he is recovering from treatment for cancer.
- Julia speaks at her partner's funeral. Write her eulogy.
- The train driver writes a letter to Julia two months after the accident. Write that letter.

Drawing conclusions

Now that you are familiar with the film, the following questions might be better answered.

This study guide has deliberately left analysis of some of the ideas for you to consider. The speculation on suicide and how it relates to Andy's life, his own sense of isolation and initial response to Anna's unplanned pregnancy can be considered in this last section.

- What ideas, themes and issues does the film raise? How are they analyzed or explored?
- How does the narrative structure of the film work to support its ideas? Is the film linear? Do we have to fill in gaps?
- How do the physical setting and the cultural context work in the film to develop its themes and ideas?
- Are characters represented sympathetically? Do they change? Are the characters stereotyped? Are they polarized? Do we feel ambivalent about them?
- How do voice, dialogue, action and image and their interaction define character? Look here at the mood created by the use of colour and light or lack of colour and light at particular moments.
- What values seem to be transmitted in *Look Both Ways*? How is the viewer positioned? Or to put it another way, what are you as viewer invited to accept or reject in the representation of the world of *Look Both Ways* and its closure?
- Who or what is 'missing' from the story?
- What does the film seem to say about children, adults, males, females, and cultures?
- Why do you think certain charac-

ters are represented in particular ways?

Websites

<http://www.lookbothways.com.au/>
This website has trailers, links to bodies such as the Cancer Council, a web log with contributions from major players in the film, review links.

http://www.inertia-music.com/catalogue/35949/Various/Look_Both_Ways_Soundtrack/

This website has grabs of all the tracks that have been incorporated into the film.

<http://www.abc.net.au/austory/content/2005/s1397271.htm>

This transcript of Australian Story eliminates a lot of the second-guessing that accompanies talking about and writing on the film. There are interviews with Sarah Watt and William McInnes that affirm their essential humanity. 'The real McInnes', provides the viewer with a personal account of the dynamics of the relationship at home and at work.

<http://www.acmi.net.au>

This site provides information on the availability of films mentioned in the study guide and descriptions of programs for teachers and students.

Bibliography

Look Both Ways Press Kit, Hibiscus Films.
Cynthia Karena, Look Out for Sarah

Watt, (Metro 146/147). Karena's interview with the director of *Look Both Ways* focuses on the originality of Watt's ideas, the emotional mindscapes and performances in the film, and her experiences as a first time filmmaker.

Film as Text: *Look Both Ways*, Brian McFarlane. (Screen Education, No. 42). An essential guide to interpreting and analyzing one of the most significant Australian films of the past decade.

Look at it Both Ways: Perspectives on Animation, Jen Hughes (Screen Education, No. 40)

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