



ENGLISH CONTEXT SUMMARY NOTES
**“Exploring issues of identity
and belonging”**

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Understanding the context

Where do we get our belonging?

- Family [parents/ grandparents / siblings / extended family]
- Peer group / friendship circles / social networks
- Clubs [personal interest, community service / motorcycle / choir / service]
- Sport [playing / coaching / umpiring / spectating / administrating]
- Political associations / community action groups
- Education [school / university etc]
- Media [notions of identity from news, current affairs, fictional media texts]
- Commercial organization [employer/employee / customer]
- Professional organization
- Profession [lawyer, truck driver, teacher]
- Skills and abilities
- Ethnicity
- Society [dominant values / cultural practices]
- Nationality
- Gender
- Spiritual faith
- Generation [Baby-boomer / Generation X / Generation Y]
- Location [street / neighbourhood / village / town / city]
- Civilization [western / eastern]

Consider the lack of belonging:

Alienation:

Disconnection, disconnectedness, break, discontinuity, disintegration, dissolution, dissociation, withdrawal, moving apart, growing apart, split, detachment, isolation, seclusion, avoidance, lack of unity, separateness, separatism, no connection, no common ground, unrelatedness, distance apart, breach, rift, split, disjoining, severance, breaking up, splitting up, segregation, displacement, disjointing, dislocation, breakdown, rupture, fracture, partition, cutting off, dissection.

Outsider:

Alien, foreigner, loner, nonperson, nonconformist, misfit.

Gathering ideas

You will need to put a file together over time that addresses the issues in this context. Remember that this is relevant to the end of year exam as well as your SACs.

- start a file.
- keep notes from class discussions and brainstorm sessions.
- take notes from wider reading, viewing and listening, wherever that may be:
- other texts, newspapers, magazines, websites, images, films, documentaries, television programs, radio programs etc.
- note particular words and phrases used by others that may be useful to your understanding of the topic and that you may use in your writing.
- also keep key quotes from texts that you may be able to use.

Make comprehensive notes to begin with. You never know what may be useful in time as you consider and develop your understanding of the issues. It is important to consider the many different issues that are related to the context, and not only those that are presented to you in the associated text.

Identity table

A good idea is to start with yourself. Complete the following.

Name:

Ethnicity/Nationality:

Spirituality:

Born and raised:

Mother's and father's occupations:

Schooling/education:

Moulding background events:

Happy memories:

Sad memories:

Proudest moment:

Most shameful moment:

Fears:

Expressed emotions:

Closest people:

Issues:

Who has loved:

Who has disliked:

Positive personality attributes:

Negative personality attributes:

Who do you influence:

Who influences you:

Expectations:

Occupation [student/part-time job]:

Talents/abilities:

Accomplishments:

Professional:

Sporting:

Artistic:

Academic:

Other:

Greatest achievement:

Biggest failure:

Hobbies/sport:

Opinions and ideas about current issues:

Physical identity – hair style / clothes / etc:

Background

Consider the following:

- What is belonging?
Society, family, peer group, ethnic background, religious affiliation, personal interests, etc.
- Aspects of belonging –
Fellowship, membership, community, association, making one of, being one of, team spirit, esprit de corps, comradeship, companionship, camaraderie, fraternization, hobnobbing, familiarity, intimacy, mateship, togetherness, friendship, social circle, home, family, acquaintances, compatibility, conformity, sociableness, gregariousness, friendliness, affability, acceptability, cordiality.
- What is an individual?
- How does this influence who the individual is?
- How does an individual become who they are?
- How do we understand self and our place in world?
- What is a person's identity?
personality, uniqueness, individuality, make-up, character, physical appearance, distinctive features, mannerisms, traits, features, attributes, differences, skills, selfhood, psyche, spirit, idiosyncrasies, achievements, defining features, qualities, eccentricities, peculiarities, quirks.
- What is society?
- What is the place of the individual in society?
- Where is the individual/society interface?
- What expectations can society make on the individual?

- Consider the inherent tension in the meanings of 'individual' and 'belonging'. To be an individual implies a measure of difference, yet belonging implies a measure of shared attitudes and values. How does the individual and society negotiate these issues?
- Conversely, consider how belonging actively bestows identity on the individual by giving him/her a set of recognizable attitudes and values that he/she can adopt as his/her own.
- Consider the dynamics of identity. To what extent is an individual's identity given to him/her through the influences of others: family, ethnicity, culture, education, work, spiritual faith etc? And to what extent is identity a personal achievement that the individual sets out to put into place for him/herself? Is it a voyage of self-discovery – a kind of revelation over time during which we progressively discover ourselves?

Themes and issues related to the context

Introduction

This is a broad context and may be approached from a variety of viewpoints. 'Identity' may be used to describe personal identity, being the idiosyncratic aspects of a person that makes them unique. A person's identity comprises the many different aspects of their life and activities, such as language, dress, behaviour, friends, employment and social groups. A person's social identity are the memberships that a person makes of groups in society that help to define the individual. Many people gain a sense of positive self-esteem from their identity groups and that helps to develop feelings of community and belonging.

So, this issue involves two parts: where we gain our individual identity and where we gain our sense of social belonging. There seems to be a certain tension between the two, that individual identity and social belonging are opposites, and that they are naturally in conflict with each other, and this may be true to some extent. But it may be equally true that they inter-relate and also offer support to each other, as we gain identity from the various groups in society that we belong to, and that we choose the various groups we wish to belong to as an expression of our identity.

It could even be said that there are really three aspects to this issue, being the nature of individual identity, the nature of social belonging, and the necessary reconciliation that must exist between the two so that neither one nor the other is either completely dominant or completely submissive.

Belonging

Our first experiences in the world are concerned with belonging. We are born into a family, where there may usually be parents, siblings, grandparents, and all of the extended family of uncles, aunts and cousins. Our experiences of life are concerned with those around us, and we come to understand that we have a very close association with them. This is our first sense of belonging, and we accept the attitudes and values of this group of people.

As we grow up our experiences of belonging widen. We move outside of the immediate family group to gain a sense of belonging in other ways. We go to school, where we learn that belonging has wider implications. We now not only belong to a family, we also belong to a group of people in a class and also in a school. And again, we take up and accept the attitudes and values that are espoused by the school and its students and teachers.

As we go through school and continue to grow up, we come into contact with wider groups of people. We form friendships and we take up memberships of various groups. We develop a network of friends, and this network will often be based on finding belonging amongst people who share with us at least some similar attitudes and values towards life. We also take up memberships of groups. And it is often our personal interests that decide what those groups will be. However, there may also be important family input into these decisions as family members, especially parents, also exercise important influence over where we belong – especially in childhood. Often our parents wish to actively influence the friendships that we make and the groups that we belong to. These groups are many and varied. They may be involved in education, sport, community services, music, religion, ethnicity, hobbies, employment, culture, politics, environment, personal interests and so on. And we may belong to several of these groups

simultaneously. And we will also belong to a social group of friends, some of whom may be involved in the activities that we choose to do. Even our gender (and the social expectations around that) may have influence over the social groups that we choose to belong to. It is here that we begin to learn how to reconcile the conflicting demands that membership of these various groups may place on us. There may be conflicting demands on our time, on our priorities, and on our attitudes and values. And we must learn to negotiate our way through these demands to our own best advantage, while not violating the fundamental reasons for belonging to these groups.

As we enter adulthood our sense of belonging becomes most complex. We will maintain a peer group of friends. We may also maintain membership of many groups in society. And we will also belong to a profession and may also belong to professional groups as well. Further, while we may have carried our family membership with us throughout our life, we may also decide to partner and begin a family of our own, which will also impact on our identity. We also gain a complete understanding that we belong to a social class, a generation, a local community, and a nation, all of which have their own attitudes, values and expectations that they will make on us. And to that extent, we may also come to understand that we belong to the global body of humanity.

From the beginning, life offers us belonging of an enormous variety of groups, and we will, for the most part, make conscious decisions about which groups we wish to belong to and which not. And our belonging to these groups will have a great influence on the attitudes and values that we, as individuals, take up. Our belonging may never be complete, it being a process that will continue right throughout our lives as our circumstances change – belonging being more of a journey than a destination.

Identity

At first glance, individuality may seem to be the opposite of belonging, the one being concerned with what we have in common with others, and the other, with what makes us different. Our individual identity is what makes each of us the unique person whom we are, or feel to be, and gives each of us our self-knowledge and self-understanding of ourselves as separate individuals from all others. While identity involves a sense of difference, or even uniqueness from others, it also involves a sense of belonging, or affiliation. And there also needs to be a sense of stability, or continuity, for identity is difficult to determine if it is constantly changing, although incremental change over time may be acceptable.

We begin to develop our personal identity from infancy onwards. We develop this out of the experiences that we have as we travel through life from infancy, through childhood and adolescence to adulthood. And even in adulthood we still continue to develop our identity. Personal identity is dynamic; it is always evolving throughout our lives.

In the earliest part of our lives we do not make decisions for ourselves. These are made for us by those who raise us. As we grow older we begin to observe life and to start to draw our own conclusions about it. This is when we begin to make decisions about the attitudes and values that we may wish to hold, and the sorts of attitudes, beliefs and activities that we may wish to make or be involved in. These decisions, at first when very young, may be greatly, and even almost totally, influenced by those who raise us.

As we go through the adolescent years we take a much bigger role for ourselves in the activities that we do and the attitudes and values that we wish to take up, although these may still be importantly influenced by close family. This is when we begin to feel a sense of individual personality that does, in many ways,

make us different from others. This culminates in the middle to later teenage years when we may begin to make the very important decisions of which way we would like our lives to go, especially in respect of overall attitudes and values towards life, work and general lifestyle. During these years we may experience an increasingly greater sense of personal responsibility for ourselves as we become more self-reliant and make more of our own decisions about our own lives.

It is in this process that some very important decisions may be made. Probably the most fundamental of these is the extent to which we will continue to be guided by the formative influences in our lives that we gained from those who raised us. We may decide to continue with the attitudes and values that were first given to us, we may decide to continue with some but not others or we may even decide to reject most of them in favour of others that we prefer instead. The decisions are ours to make as independent individuals. Even in adulthood our personal identities may continue to develop and change over time.

Alienation

This may occur in two ways, when we decide that we have no real affinity with parts of society, or even with most of society. This is when we lose our sense of belonging, at least with those parts of society for whom we do not feel affinity. It may be that the basis for this is that we do not wish to take up the attitudes and values of those parts of society for whom we feel no affinity. There may be two basic motives for this, being that we have decided, for personal reasons we have, that we do not wish to interact with certain sections of society, and this may often be seen by others as rebelliousness. Or it may be that we belong to a minority group whose attitudes and values are significantly at variance with the dominant values of wider society and we wish to protect ourselves from them. Nonetheless, we still find a sense of belonging in the smaller group.

TEXT 1: THE MEMBER OF THE WEDDING

A Novella:

McCullers, Carson, *The Member of the Wedding*, Penguin Books, 2001 (First published 1949)

Overview:

Twelve-year-old Frankie Addams feels trapped in an endless summer. At odds with her growing body and the shifting world around her, she yearns for a sense of belonging. When her brother Jarvis announces his plans to marry, Frankie fantasises about the forthcoming wedding, and sees herself as the third member of the new family. Set against the backdrop of the Second World War, and in a town where racial and gender expectations dominate people's interactions, *The Member of the Wedding* invites the reader to question the societal, cultural and familial expectations that both define and constrain us.¹

Themes

Themes are ideas which are explored throughout a text. *The Member of the Wedding* offers a number of themes which are useful in relation to the Context of Exploring Issues of Identity and Belonging. *The Member of the Wedding* focuses closely on the events of one summer in a twelve-year-old girl's life. The narrative is set in the hot August summer of 1944, in a small southern town in the United States of America. It is a coming-of-age novella, where in the space of the three days in which the majority of the novella is set, the protagonist Frankie Addams firstly becomes F. Jasmine Addams, in an attempt to connect herself to her elder brother Jarvis and his fiancée Janice, then finally Frances Addams as she turns thirteen.

Alienation: disconnected to the world

Frankie is a naïve twelve year old. Her mother died giving birth to her. Consequently, she has been raised by her father. She has also been raised by Berenice, a black woman employed by her father as the housekeeper and nurse. Frankie's father is a jeweller. He owns a small store in town, where from a side window, passers-by can watch him work. Frankie reveals that she used to enjoy watching him work. She also imagines herself working quietly at her father's desk. She imagines this not because she has an interest in becoming a jeweller, but rather because she is attracted to the effect that seeing her working would have on those that pass by. This is one of Frankie's imagined fantasies which indicate that she still displays the egocentric perspective of a child. It is also a metaphor for Frankie's perspective of the adult world. She looks in on it, as through a window, but illustrates that she does not understand the reality of

¹ VCAA Bulletin No. 78 February 2010. Version 2: Updated 9 June 2010. Supplement 4 VCE English/ESL Text list 2011. VCE Literature Text list 2011. (<http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/correspondence/bulletins/2010/February/2010FEBSUP4.pdf>) as accessed 24-7-2010.

what is involved to be an adult and also what kind of behaviour will gain her entry into this world. She does not see the toil of her father as necessary for their livelihood, rather can only romanticise about herself in his place, enamoured by the effect that she believes such a sight would have - seeing someone so young (yet so skilled and dedicated) - on those who see her at work. Whilst this fantasy is not a harmful one, it does indicate that she is prone to disconnecting herself from reality so that she can reconstruct her world so that in her mind, she has a central, important role.

Another example which illustrates how she perceives events so that she is central to them is the fantastic life she imagines for herself, her brother Jarvis and his fiancée Janice. The climax of the novella; her brother's wedding, is a complete anti-climax and disaster for F. Jasmine (Frankie) as her dream of being a part of her brother's married life is shattered. She had imagined a relationship between herself and the bride and groom which never existed. In spite of the warnings directly given to her by Berenice, and the way that she was greeted and treated by her brother and the other adults at the wedding (as a child), the identity of F. Jasmine and the dream of being a 'we' was stubbornly held unto until she is dragged kicking and screaming from the car, and left lying in the dirt as her brother and his new bride drive away. This fantasy can be seen as a type of denial of her reality. It allowed for her to imagine herself as older – mature – an adult with equal value in an adult world. But, the reality of the situation was that her age (and the social conventions of marriage) did exclude her from this imagined future. She was not physically excluded or alienated from the wedding completely (although Janice was too preoccupied with her preparations for F. Jasmine to speak with her before the wedding); she was there just as all the other guests were there, to celebrate a marriage. But, this was not why Frankie had come to the wedding. She saw the wedding as a chance to leave her old life, and her old identity, behind. She had packed a suitcase full of her best clothes, even though to attend the wedding only required a day trip. In her imagination, she believed that she was a member of the wedding, not a guest. So, in effect, it was her own delusions which lead to her alienation at the wedding. She knew who she was (F. Jasmine) and what her future held but the reality of the situation resulted in no one listening to her, and her dreams of a new life (and new identity) being dashed.

These behaviours do indicate Frankie yearns for a sense of belonging. She does feel alienated and disconnected from the world around her. In this summer, she is in a transitional phase in her maturation, moving from being a child to a teenager – a young adult. She is also physically maturing at what she believes to be an alarming rate. She feels that she is unnaturally tall for a twelve year old, standing at a lean, gangly, five foot five inches. Ironically, her only comparison or reference to confirm the unnaturalness of her height seems to be Berenice, who is diminutive at a touch over five feet tall. Frankie's best friend (and 'only friend') Evelyn Owen has moved to Florida. Frankie is no doubt feeling a sense of loss over this, although she does not attribute her feeling of being 'scared' to her friend leaving. To compound her loneliness, she has also dissociated herself from the other children of the town, whom she used to build swimming pools with, as she feels she is now too mature for such antics. She does want the company of someone, so asks her young cousin John Henry to sleep over, but he is six. Through fate relocating her friend, and also through her own choices, she does find herself feeling lonely at a time when her body is undergoing physical and emotional changes which are also out of her control. Perhaps because of these changes and feelings which she does not understand, (due to her naivety regarding the facts of life) Frankie has become more solemn and 'mean'. Her behaviour has led to her not being wanted in 'the club' of older girls (ranging in age from thirteen to fifteen) – girls with whom she used to play with in earlier summers. In fact, Frankie feels that she does not belong in any particular club or group anymore. She also feels that everyone else *is* in some kind of group or club. She feels disconnected from those around her own age, yet is also scared about this disconnection and sense of

alienation which has sprung from her physical maturation. What were once familiar, every-day actions, places and people, are now imbued with shadowed meanings and partially glimpsed hidden truths. These changes have all played a part in confusing Frankie. She is no longer sure of whom she is and as a consequence, has begun asking herself questions about her future in the world; questions which further confuse her as she does not know how to determine any satisfactory answers.

Growing Up

Frankie is experiencing the normal, typical changes brought on by puberty. What she does not have is a mother to guide her through these changes, but she does have Berenice. Berenice has been married four times. She is also currently being courted by T.T, a respectable restaurateur. On many occasions Berenice has entertained Frankie and John Henry with stories about her past relationships. During the second part of the novella, F. Jasmine is thrilled to be included in an adult conversation, when Berenice again relates the story of her past. Berenice does this as a type of moral sermon or warning for Frankie, whom she believes is jealous of her brother and his impending wedding. Unfortunately, F. Jasmine does not hear the message of Berenice's long winded tale, rather is distracted by the joy of speaking, one adult to another, about love. The strength of her feelings, and the way she interprets this conversation as being another confirmation that she is a different person to the one she was yesterday, only serve to confirm for the reader that F. Jasmine is still ignorant and naïve regarding the realities of life. It is obvious to the reader that even by the novella's conclusion, Frances (first Frankie, then F. Jasmine, now Frances) has not grown up, rather, is in the midst of the emotional and physical changes which are a part of the growing up process.

Frances Addams also imagines herself to have three different variants of her name during the course of the novella. John Henry, her father, and her brother call her Frankie. This variant of her name is representative of the child. It is not feminine. Frankie is a name that suits her during the time in her life when she used to enjoy playing with the other children in her neighbourhood. It was the name that she used when she was still young enough to sleep in the same bed with her father. Now that he has decided she is old enough to sleep in her own room, she feels that she needs another name, but takes time to find one which she feels better suits her. She questions Berenice about the significance and the permanence of a name. Berenice tries to explain to Frankie that names are important because events and other people's perception of someone accumulate around their name, and so, this is how they become known, and in turn, come to know themselves, but Frankie cannot accept this. She wants to have the power or control to determine her own name. This would at once allow her to disassociate herself from events in her past with which she no longer wants to identify, and to start over with a clean slate. Frankie is also intelligent enough to know that a name change in itself would not allow for such a complete transformation. This leads to her epiphany. She comes to the realisation that she will have to travel, as well as change her name, if she is to truly re-invent herself. Away from the small town where she has grown up, people will see her as whomever she chooses to be. In her imagined future she offers up many possible destinations and romantic locations where she can make her mark, from Cincinnati to Hollywood. She even tries to share her new-found understanding of how a person can become whoever they want to be, with Honey. His reaction is to laugh. He recognised her advice for what it is – a childish, imagined fancy. Honey is also intelligent. He knows (as do most adults) that the name which you call yourself – or the place where you live – does not change who you are. Frankie, then F. Jasmine, then Frances, still has this lesson to learn.

Innocence and Experience

The complicating factor in Frankie's maturation is her naivety regarding the changes brought about by puberty. She is also nearly completely ignorant with regards to what sexual intercourse is, and also the adult relationships which lead to this kind of physical interaction. Her naivety leads to physical danger. She only narrowly escapes having sex with the red headed soldier when she realises that being in a hotel room with a man is 'wrong'. This soldier is about to commit a crime by having intercourse with a minor, but he could have genuinely believed that Frankie was of legal age. She was in the bar where he was drinking. She did strike up a conversation with him. She agreed to a date. She did return later that same night. She did agree to follow him up the stairs to his room. Thankfully, she comes to a vague understanding that she had put herself in a compromising position, and is lucky enough to knock the soldier out as he tries to press himself upon her. She also has the good sense to leave via the window and fire escape, rather than to walk again through the public bar, although she did this because she was worried she may have killed the soldier, rather than to protect her reputation. This event illustrates Frankie's naivety regarding sexual intercourse in adult relationships. It also highlights her innocence with regards to the act of sex itself.

She has had one sinful experience the previous summer with Barney MacKean. Frankie describes what they did as being a 'queer sin', but does not elaborate about what it was which they actually did. Given her naivety with regards to the approaches of the red headed soldier, the reader can assume that the 'queer sin' was nothing more than a kiss, but this is enough for Frankie, a full year later, to still feel ashamed and frightened over what she had done. Again, this points to her innocence regarding what actually constitutes a sin, as well as demonstrating her lack of emotional maturity. She is too young to rationalise and understand the emotional response which her actions elicit, so, rather than discuss her feelings with someone with the aim of understanding and growing from her experiences, she declares she hates Barney MacKean and has nothing more to do with him.

Phoniness

During the novel Frankie also reflects or looks back on other times in her life when she has pretended to be a different person or to have a different identity. She recounts the time when she wore a Mexican hat around the town. The hat in itself was a novelty, and many of the younger children did follow her around just because she had the audacity to wear such a hat, but this had not been enough for Frankie. She also explains that she had taken to using a Mexican accent, and also to speaking 'gibberish', thinking that she had convinced those with whom she spoke that she knew another language, and also that she was from some other, exotic location. Such behaviour foreshadows Frankie's preoccupation with establishing an identity for herself which she feels is truly reflective of her individuality. Ironically, such behaviour, rather than transforming her into someone else, or giving her a new identity, only serves to confirm her individual uniqueness to those who know her. In fact, such behaviour makes her more 'Frankie'; this kind of behaviour comes to define who she is to her friends and family. Part of such irony also comes from Frankie not realising that her eccentricities are actually who she really is as a personality. In her mind – in her reality – she does perceive herself in a different way to those who know her. Because

people cannot see inside her head, she literally believes that no one else will be able to ever understand her. This adds to her sense of loneliness, and also generates her need to pretend to be someone else. It is a type of phoniness, in that she is deceiving herself as to whom she really is, when she is actually thinking her behaviour is fooling others into believing she is someone else. As convoluted as this appears, it is in fact the complication which everyone faces as they mature: perception of oneself can never be literally compared with how others perceive you. This leads to a continual questioning and testing of personal identity in a bid to determine who you actually are – such behaviour is labelled differently depending on the specific context, but these labels range from childish role-play, through to adolescent risk-taking, and on to explorations with activities which are deemed a part of counter-culture (illegal or prohibited activities).

Structure

This is how the novella is put together. It is related to chronology. *The Member of the Wedding* is written in three parts. The first part focuses on the orientation of the narrative, with the events of the Friday afternoon, evening and night being described, along with the events of the Saturday afternoon. The reader is introduced to the protagonist as Frankie. Descriptive imagery is also used to flesh out the background of the main character, as well as to connect her identity and personality to the descriptions of the setting; namely the extreme, oppressive heat, which bleaches and bakes the small town where she lives.

The second part of the novella focuses on the events of the Saturday afternoon. During this time Frankie changes her name in order to play out a new persona, that of F. Jasmine. She walks the streets connecting to everyone whose eyes catch hers, as her new perception of herself gives a knowing worldliness to her look and to her understanding of the world around her. She feels she knows her place because she has a clear picture of her future – it is to be spent with her older brother Jarvis and his future wife Janice, travelling the world as a ‘we’, whereas the reality is her brother has no inkling of her wishes or thinking, so she ends this part of the novella very much the embarrassed and humiliated ‘I’.

In the third part of the novella, the denouement, the conclusion is reached quickly, with the narrative tone becoming more objective. Three months are described in this part of the novella. This change of style to succinct brevity is reflective of the changes in the personality of the protagonist, who is now Frances. She has turned thirteen, and has been lucky enough to find a new friend, who is two years, her senior. She concerns herself with art and poetry and turns her back on childhood pastimes and attitudes – illustrated through her avoidance of the Freak Show when attending the annual fair. Her six year old cousin, who over the earlier events of the novella had been her near constant companion before she met Mary Littlejohn, also dies suddenly from meningitis. She and her father also plan to move to a new house, so Berenice, the housekeeper, announces she will quit and get married. This part (and the novella) ends with Frances’ all-consuming euphoria as Mary Littlejohn arrives to excitingly share her last night in the old house.

Chronology

This is how the action of the novella is arranged in respect to time. The novella is basically *linear*, as it begins at a certain point in time and ends at a certain later point in time. The events in this novella begin on a Friday afternoon, just following the departure of Frankie's older brother Jarvis and his fiancée Janice and continue through to the Sunday night, after Frankie, her father, John Henry and Berenice arrive home from the wedding. There is extensive use of recounts in the past tense to provide background to events which add to the reader's understanding of the protagonist's current perspective. These recounts or reflections are Frankie's. The limited omniscience of the narrative voice is maintained by Frankie being the only character whose thoughts are described to the reader. To supplement this limited omniscience, direct speech is also used to recount some of Berenice's past history, especially in the long, convoluted moral coda in part two (which F. Jasmine does not completely understand) where Berenice speaks about her past husbands. The middle part of the novel is also split into two sections. The first of these sections is set in the evening, but most of the second section takes the action back to follow F. Jasmine as she roams the streets from late morning to mid-afternoon. This does break the linear chronology of the novella. This structural organisation is effective, as when the reader learns of Frankie's unusual day; her philosophical conversation with Berenice can be re-evaluated. The third part of the novel describes three months of time. The present tense narrative voice moves swiftly through the events of the wedding, meeting Mary, the death of John Henry, the decision to move house, to the finale as Frances hears the door bell, announcing the arrival of her new friend Mary Littlejohn.

Continuity

Novellas do not tell everything that happens during a period of time. This is certainly true in this novella, as the author does relate only those things which she feels are important. However, there must be a certain *continuity* in the novel – that there is consistency of the characteristics of persons, objects, places and events as perceived by the reader, basically meaning that the events of the novella run logically and smoothly despite the breaks of time. Time, and the effect that the passing of time can have on a character, is the vital undertone which the novelist constructs her novella around. Time passes slowly during this novella when Frankie is expectant of a wedding and a new life for herself. Continuity is tightly maintained so that the reader experiences the duration of expectation along with Frankie. Yet, once the wedding is over, time literally flies. The narrative quickly progresses to significant events and then describes them by way of recount, using the past tense to draw to a close the stories of the other characters.

Period of time covered by the novel:

Part I

Friday afternoon, Saturday morning, Saturday late afternoon, Saturday night.

Part II

Saturday late morning through to Saturday late afternoon.

Part III

Sunday night, August through to November 1944.

Style

Orientation [Point Of View, Voice]

This is about who is telling the story. The novella's voice is that of an anonymous, removed narrator with limited omniscience. The perspective of the novella is limited to that of Frankie Addams, the protagonist. It is her experiences and understanding which provide the plot and the descriptive focus of the novella. McCullers' lexicon is richer than the vocabulary used by a twelve-year-old, but it does still give the audience the sense that they are gaining insight into the mind of an immersing, pubescence girl, as well as insight into the world of small town southern America in 1944 – the world Frankie inhabits.

Characteristics

Limited Omniscience

In a first person narration the author refers to himself as 'I' and is one of the characters. The reader cannot know or witness anything that the narrator does not tell, and therefore shares all of the narrator's limitations in this respect. However, first person narration has the advantage of a precise focus on the experiences, opinions, and perceptions of the voice of the narrative, and on how he/she sees the world and the views of other people, and to this extent it draws the reader convincingly into the story. *The Member of the Wedding* is not a first person narrative, but McCullers does control the narrative voice tightly, so that only Frankie's thoughts are explored as part of the narrative. Other characters actions are observed and described closely, and through direct speech their conversations with Frankie are presented faithfully to help develop the complications of the narrative, but this is done from Frankie's perspective – it is her understanding or misunderstanding of a situation which drives the narrative.

Impartiality

Narrators are not impartial. They will attempt to influence the reader in many ways, both favourably and unfavourably. They may make assertions that are positive and/or negative, and may assert ideas or controvert them. They may make assumptions about the characters, events and ideas of the narrative, and also about the reader. They tell only what they want to tell or address, in the way and to the extent that they want to address it, and they ignore what they do not want to tell or address. Because this novella utilises the perspective of Frankie Addams, the reader is drawn into her story, even though she is a protagonist who is naive, ignorant, self-absorbed and, as a consequence, insensitive to the needs and motivations of the other characters. The power of the writing is evident because despite Frankie having these negative character traits, she is depicted in such a way that the reader can still sympathise with her loneliness, and with her search for identity and a sense of belonging.

Tone

Every aspect of a novelist's language contributes to the style: choice of words, figures of speech, kinds of sentences, tone etc. Like style, tone is influenced by the novelist's purpose and the way that her use of language supports this. Tone is also a key to the novelist's attitude towards both the characters, events and ideas of the novella, and also to the reader. Tone may describe the novella in its entirety [*mood*], and it may also describe various passages within it. The mood of this novella as a whole is one of brooding frustration. Frankie and Berenice are thinking their way through their respective problems – Frankie to understand better who she really is, and Berenice is dealing with the challenges presented by Frankie's behaviour, as well as trying to decide if she needs another husband. The way the heat of the summer is described by McCullers adds to the oppressive mood of the novella. The heat is physically palpable and directly affects Frankie's mood.

Characters

A character is any person who appears in a text. There are major characters and minor characters. Major characters carry most of the action and are usually more rounded than minor characters: the reader learns a great deal more about their world view [attitudes and values], motivations and behaviour. Minor characters carry less of the action, but are still important in their own way, either as a contrast, foil or to affirm aspects of the main characters, or to help generate developments in the plot.

Aspects of characterisation

- The characters appearance, world view, motivations and behaviour.
- The attitudes, motivations and behaviour that other characters display towards the main characters.
- What the author, through the narrative voice, and also through the constructed dialogue, states and implies about the characters.

Characters, like people, can be very complex; they have strengths and weaknesses, they face challenges, they achieve and fail, they undergo a range of emotional feelings, they think, speak and do. And also, like people, they can think and behave in ways that are unpredictable or never fully understood by others.

Protagonists and Antagonists

This novella has a main character that is on a journey of self-discovery. Frankie is not set against other characters – there is no antagonist in the text, even though she does find herself in conflict at some point in the novella with nearly all of the other characters. But, even though it is often Frankie who is forcing the conflict, she also does not become the antagonist at any point in the novella. In essence, she is grappling with her inner self, trying to understand who she really is. There is a duality to her nature which simultaneously confuses her (trying to understand what kind of an adult she will be), and protects her (keeps her a child through maintaining her innocence). She wants to behave as an adult yet is still subject to the extreme emotional roller coaster which marks what it is to be a child. She perceives her physical appearance in a similar way. She is at once embarrassed about her growth spurt, with her skinny height and bony body, yet knows that she has to go through these changes if she is ever to become a woman.

It would be an overstatement to declare that Frankie is at war with herself, for this would imply that she is fully aware of the changes and conflicts within her. She is not. What she is doing is questioning the things which she sees and hears going on around her. She tries to envisage what particular people and relationships signify in relation to her own place in the world, and she does try and discover where it is that she is heading. The novella's complication is generated from Frankie's musings, philosophies, and beliefs. These spring from what she observes and from the way she interprets events which impact her, such as her brother's wedding. At times she makes insightful, profound statements, but these often are said in order to gain a reaction from those with whom she is speaking, rather than being an expression of

her core beliefs and values.

Few adolescents are able to decipher and articulate who they are, as a person, at twelve. Frankie has some inspired moments in the text – but such epiphanies do not embed themselves into her understanding of the world. She is still being protected from the ugly, cruel realities which form part of the adult world by her family, Berenice, and by her own naivety. As a consequence, she is trying to piece together who she is and where she belongs with limited information. She has been sheltered from the devastation of World War Two. Despite the radio being an almost constant companion during the summer, Frankie perceives it as noise, not a source of information. Even the letters from her brother are circumspect about his active duty: Frankie believes that he was stationed in Alaska for two years – she also thinks Luxemburg sounds romantic – whilst in reality her brother is fighting his way to Berlin. On the one hand, as the protagonist, she is sensitive to the mood or atmosphere which emanates from her particular setting, but on the other, she is immature and inexperienced. This leads to her comprehending the significance of specific moments and details of her life, whilst, concurrently, misconstruing (or denying) their significance so that she can deceive herself that she has some control over proceedings.

Author's attitude

Characters do not exist in a moral vacuum. Consider the author's attitudes towards them – this will be revealed in the words that she uses to describe them, their actions, their attitudes and values and the dialogue that they speak. It may be covert as well as overt, using words and phrases for their connotations as well as their denotations. The reader should also consider their personal attitudes to the characters of the novel – you may agree or disagree with aspects of the novelist's attitudes.

Readers must also not mistake characters as being autobiographical. Yes, McCullers is a young woman when writing *The Member of the Wedding*, and she was very much a unique individual, but the character of Frankie Addams is not constructed to be a representation of herself as a youth. Obviously, her personal experiences shaped each of her characters to some extent, but it must be remembered that each character in a fiction is a literary device, not an autobiographical one. Just like an artist's brushes and paints are not representative of the artist as a person, neither are characters in fiction representative of the author. Readers should be able to interpret reflections of who McCullers may be as a person in the novella's characters, but to read any more autobiographical details in her characters is at best a speculative guess (and is outside this Area of Study).

Character as symbol or representation

Characters may represent a given quality or abstraction. Rather than simply being people, they stand for something larger. John Henry represents the honest moral purity of the young. He also represents another stage in life which Frankie does not have access. He is there to show her (and the reader), that she cannot regress into childhood. She is in a state of limbo in the novella, searching for her identity, but McCullers constructs John Henry so that whenever Frankie looks to John Henry for answers, no satisfactory wisdom or understanding is found. This forces Frankie to look ahead, to her future, for answers. The mistake which Frankie makes is that she looks too far ahead, to the institution of marriage, and mistakenly believes that this is the stage of life where answers are found. McCullers is almost brutal when showing

Frankie her mistake – which is why the resolution of the novella is confronting but appropriate. The novella ends with Frankie finding a friend who is a match in maturity. It is like McCullers is saying that two years is an appropriate leap forward, or back, when looking for a place (through friendship) where you belong. Maybe McCullers did have to kill John Henry so that Frankie would stop looking in the wrong places for a person who is a suited and similar playmate? Maybe Frankie needed this reminder of her own mortality so that she could make more of the present, rather than waste too much time imagining herself living in the future? Whatever your interpretation, John Henry is symbolic of the honest moral purity of the young. His character is also a reminder that fate can be unfair, cruel, and will never be understood.

Major Characters

Frankie Addams

Status: A twelve-year-old. She is the youngest child and only daughter of the widower Royal Addams.

Role: Protagonist. Her role is to grapple with, and explore, the complexities of early adolescence.

Circumstances: She lives with her father. Her mother died at her birth. She has a housekeeper, Berenice, to cook her meals and to maintain the household. She is suffering through the heat of the summer school holidays in 1944.

World View: That she is unique, complex and talented (just the world does not know this yet).

This creates her quest to understand more about the adult world. She is also trying to understand more about herself – who she is and what her future will hold.

Motivations: to be part of her brother's wedding and to go off with them into the world which leads to her making a complete fool of herself and showing her immaturity at the wedding.

Behaviour: a mix of extraverted, escapist, ignorant and even dangerous behaviours.

Development: She remains caught in the emotional extremes of adolescence at the novella's conclusion.

John Henry West

Status: A six year cousin of Frankie's.

Role: Frankie's companion. He is also like a 'security blanket' for Frankie, without realising why his presence is important to her.

Circumstances: He lives down the road from Frankie and visits often. It is Berenice's role to look after the two children, with the reader presuming that John Henry's family does not employ a housekeeper.

World View: He is quiet. He is as unknowable as any six year old. Frankie tries to interpret his behaviour as being mature when it is obvious to the reader that John Henry is a typical, un-complex little boy. Which create his innocence.

Motivations: He enjoys being with Frankie. He also enjoys Berenice's company and motherly affection. He is prepared to forego his wishes to play with the other children to please Frankie. Which leads to his setting around the kitchen table at the Addams' listening to conversations which are beyond his level of understanding, and also to him tagging along after Frankie as she wanders the town.

Behaviour: He is quiet and reserved but not physically encumbered in any way except that he wears glasses.

Development: He dies unexpectedly at the conclusion of the novel. His death from meningitis is traumatic and painful. The way Frankie deals (or almost ignores) his demise gives the reader important insight into her level of maturity.

Berenice

Status: Adult sounding board and confidant for Frankie.

Role: Housekeeper and a maternal replacement for Frankie.

Circumstances: She is a black servant who lives in a poorer neighbourhood. She has only one eye. She has chosen to wear a fake eye which is disconcertingly, and unashamedly blue. She has been married four times, with only the first marriage happening out of love. She is being courted by T.T but is reluctant to marry him because her last three marriages were unsuccessful.

World View: She is a pragmatic and capable domestic helper. She is also cares for and loves Frankie and John Henry. She is prepared to speak plainly to Frankie. She is aware that she has made decisions in her life which have not been good ones. She cares for her mother and helps to raise her brother Honey.

Her personality is well matched/complemented by her role as housekeeper.

Motivations: She does want the best for Frankie and John Henry. She also wants the best for her family. She also wants the best for herself but only commits to another relationship when her responsibilities to the Addams' family change. Which lead to her resigning from her job and agreeing to marry T.T.

Behaviour: Caring but also firm. She does not take on the role of physical disciplinarian with Frankie but tries to instead treat her as an equal.

Development: She assists the nurse to care for John Henry when he is dying. This confirms the amount she cares about him - and Frankie.

Minor Characters

Royal Addams

Status: Frankie's father. A widower.

Role: Breadwinner, jeweller, paternal head of the household.

Circumstances: He shows his love for Frankie by working to provide for her.

World View: A steadfast but distant father figure during the events of the novel. His earlier decision to make Frankie sleep in her own bed is reflective of a parent who is trying to behave with a sense of social correctness and propriety.

Behaviour: He is stern with Frankie when she acts poorly but otherwise lets Frankie live her own life, placing few restrictions on her movements or activities.

Development: His character does not change during the course of the text. As the patriarch of the family his decisions do impact on Frankie but she does not express any resentment toward him except for her returning 'fear' or feeling of loneliness being attributed to his decision to make her sleep in her own bed.

Mary Littlejohn

Status: Fifteen year-old girl

Role: New best friend for Frances (Frankie)

Circumstances: From a middle class family. Her long blonde hair is worn in immaculate plats, symbolising her preoccupation with her appearance and also the effect her image has on Frankie.

Moral perspective: That of a teenage girl – the narrator does not introduce Mary to the present tense narrative. She does not visit the Freak Show at the fair as her parents feel it is in poor taste.

Motivations: To be seen to be engaged with the worldly pursuits of poetry and art. Which lead to her being thought of as a 'snob' by Berenice; Berenice is not impressed by Mary Littlejohn.

Important Quotations

PART I

“There was in the neighborhood a clubhouse, and Frankie was not a member.” (pg. 17)

“Then she breathed deeply, settled herself with her chin on his sharp damp shoulder, and closed her eyes: for now, with somebody sleeping in the dark with her, she was not so much afraid.” (pg. 21)

“This was the summer when Frankie was sick and tired of being Frankie. She hated herself, and had become a loafer and a big no-good who hung around the summer kitchen: dirty and greedy and mean and sad.” (pg. 29)

“The war and the world were too fast and big and strange. To think about the world for very long made her afraid... She was afraid because in the war they would not include her, and because the world seemed somehow separate from herself.” (pg. 31)

“They were them, and leaving her, and she was her, and sitting left all by herself there at the kitchen table. But a part of her was with them, and she could feel this part of her own self going away, and farther away; farther and farther, so that a drawn-out sickness came in her, going away and farther away, so that in the kitchen Frankie was an old hull left there at the table.” (pg. 38)

“They were them and in Winter Hill, together, while she was her and in the same old town all by herself... *They are the we of me.*” (pg. 52)

For when the old question came to her – the who she was and the what she would be in the world, and why she was standing there that minute – when the old question came to her, she did not feel hurt and unanswered. At last she knew just who she was and understood where she was going. She loved her brother and the bride and she was a member of the wedding. The three of them would go into the world and they would always be together. And finally, after the scared spring and the crazy summer, she was no more afraid. (pg. 57)

PART II, 1.

“It was the day when, from the beginning, the world seemed no longer separate from herself and when all at once she felt included.” (pg. 59)

“They were all sizes and ages, members of nothing, and in the summers before, the old Frankie had been like leader or president of the swimming-pool diggers in that part of town – but now that she was twelve years old, she knew in advance that, though they would work and dig in various yards, not doubting to the very last the cool clear swimming pool of water, it would all end in a big wide ditch of shallow mud.” (pg. 64)

“That day alone seemed equally important as both the long past and the bright future – as a hinge is important to a swinging door.” (pg. 73-74)

“It was the actual present, in fact, that seemed to F. Jasmine a little bit unreal.” (pg. 86)

“The argument that afternoon was, from the beginning to the end, about the wedding. Berenice refused to follow F. Jasmine’s frame of mind. From the first it was as though she tried to catch F. Jasmine by the collar, like the Law catches a no-good in the wrong, and jerk her back where she had started – back to the sad and crazy summer that now seemed to F. Jasmine like a time remembered from long ago.” (pg. 93-94)

PART II, 2.

“No coloured people, but all human men and ladies and children as one loving family on the earth...No war and no hunger in the world. And, finally, Ludie Freeman would be alive.” (pg. 115)

“It was the first time ever they had talked about love, with F. Jasmine included in the conversation as a person who understood and had worth-while opinions.” (pg. 118)

“‘But what had accumulated around my old name?’ F. Jasmine asked. Then, when Berenice did not reply at once, F. Jasmine answered her own question. ‘Nothing! See? My name just didn’t mean anything.’” (pg. 134)

“‘But no matter what we do we still caught. Me is me and you is you and he is he. We each one of us somehow caught all by ourself.’” (pg. 141)

“‘Here we are – right now. This very minute. Now. But while we’re talking right now, this minute is passing. And it will never come again. Never in all the world. When it is gone it is gone. No power on earth could bring it back again. It is gone. Have you ever thought about that?’” (pg. 143-144)

PART III

“The wedding was like a dream, for all that came about occurred in a world beyond her power; from the moment when, sedate and proper, she shook hands with the grown people until the time, the wrecked wedding over, when she watched the car with the two of them driving away from her, and, flinging herself down in the sizzling dust, she cried out for the last time: ‘Take me! Take me!’ – from the beginning to the end the wedding was unmanaged as a nightmare.” (pg. 169)

“It was as though the things that she had done, the sins committed, had all been done by someone else – a stranger a long time ago.” (pg. 182)

“Frances was never once to speak about the wedding. Weathers had turned and it was in another season. There were the changes and Frances was now thirteen.” (pg. 184)

“It was not the same kitchen of the summer that now seemed so long ago.” (pg. 185)

“The kitchen, done over and almost modern, had nothing that would bring to mind John Henry West. But nevertheless there were times when Frances felt his presence there, solemn and hovering and ghost-grey. And at that time there would come a hush – a hush quivered by voiceless words.” (pg. 185)

“John Henry had meningitis and after ten days he was dead.” (pg. 188)

“‘I am simply mad about -’ But the sentence was left unfinished for the hush was shattered when, with an instant shock of happiness, she heard the ringing of the bell.’ (pg. 190)

TEXT 2: GROWING UP ASIAN IN AUSTRALIA

Themes

Belonging to your family

Many protagonists from various narratives must deal with the pressures and expectations that are placed on them by their family. In a number of stories children reject their parentage, and as a result their heritage. We often witness children or adolescents wanting to fulfil their own dreams and aspirations, and at the same time long to win their parents approval by following the path their parent's desire. These short stories question, *how much is one willing to discard their hopes and dreams to fulfil that of their parents?* In many of these stories the parents have very high hopes for their children, often wanting them to become doctors or lawyers, and the reader is able to see the battle between who to please.

Belonging to your family means making them happy and proud of you, but these short stories question, *to what extent?*

Many of the protagonists want to break free from their families' constraints and define themselves, yet still yearn to execute their parent's fantasies. Often in many of these narratives, as the child matures they realise the importance of belonging to a family and meeting their expectations, yet in other narratives the child learns the importance of making themselves happy and breaking free.

We see Amy Choi frustrated by her grandfather who cannot speak English but as she matures she values him. This story embodies the universal idea of *taking the chance before it's too late*. Amy's grandfather dies, and it is after his loss that she realises that she missed out on being close to him.

We also see Diana Nguyen discuss five ways to disappoint your Vietnamese mother. Diana wanted to study acting, but her parents wanted her to study law. As a consequence of Diana following her dreams, she came home one day only to find out that she had been kicked out of home. Here following one's own dream resulted in a break and loss of family.

Ivy Tseng's relationship with her father diminishes, due to a language barrier. As a child she was made to have Mandarin lessons on a Saturday. However because she was uninterested in the language as a child, her skills were very limited as an adult. This meant that as an adult she was unable to converse with her father. Later in life she realises the importance of belonging to your family and in order to reconnect with them, takes up Mandarin. Ivy is another example of a character that learns how one does not need to rid themselves of their family in order to fit into the Australia culture - one can assimilate to both.

The idea of belonging to your family contributes greatly in shaping your identity. In many stories, characters have learnt that they can belong to their family and belong to the 'outside' world, with both helping to mould their identity. We also see that often when many reject their culture or heritage, they become disconnected from their family and no longer feel that they *belong*. These are universal themes and experiences and do not simply apply to Asians in Australia.

Belonging to the outside world

Many, if not most of the protagonists want to feel that they belong to the outside world. Here, we refer to *outside world* as that outside the family home, bound by their Asian culture, language and traditions. We see many characters renouncing their identity that has been shaped by their family, and adopting the English language, Australian names and other Australian habits and customs. Often the families of the protagonist object to assimilation, and it is here that they must choose which life they want to belong too. However, many narratives show that one can belong to both worlds.

Sunil Badami tries to change his name to *Neili* as he sees it as more anglicised and will help him feel *less black* and therefore more accepted. He refers to the Australian lifestyle and as ‘the real world’ and after changing his name he begins to feel that he fits in. However, his mother becomes infuriated and tries to teach him the importance of keeping his heritage, and achieves this by making up a false meaning to his name. As an adult he learns he can belong to both worlds.

We see Francis Lee being sent to Australia, *the land of opportunities*, he is encouraged by his family to belong to the ‘outside world’. Unlike many other protagonists, he feels that he belongs in Hong Kong and is forced to assimilate.

Through food, we see Annette Shun Wah and her family drop their Chinese customs and begin to celebrate Christmas like other Australians. Stories like this one, show the reader how more recent generations of migrants can quite easily lose their cultural norms and adopt those of the ‘outside world’.

In Oliver Phommavanh’s story, we see that Albert wants to be more ‘Aussie’ and dreads the idea of bringing Thai food to school. In another story, Tanveer Ahmed also wants to be more like the other ‘Aussie’ boys. Here the rissoles are very symbolic. His mother adds part of her own culture to them, and they therefore represent the joining of two cultures and of two worlds alike. Tanveer and his family adopt Australian ways, but also manage to retain some of their own culture; this helps them maintain a sense of belonging to both worlds.

In many stories, the ‘outside world’ consists of many who are judgemental, racist, prejudice and intolerant towards Asians living in Australia. This can be a great hindrance for those trying to not only assimilate, but want to feel a true sense of belonging. Some go against their families’ wishes and come to belong to the Australian way more than that of their own culture, while others believe belonging to their heritage is more important to that of the Australian culture. It is stories such as Oliver’s that highlight that one can belong to both the outside world, and that of your family.

Yet belonging to the outside world can depend on the extent to which people allow you to; your family allowing you to belong to the outside world, and the ‘outside world’ allowing you to become a part of *their* world.

Alienation and being the outsider

In many of the short stories the protagonists become victims of racial discrimination, prejudice and intolerance. The Asian migrants to Australia are often seen as the 'outsiders' and are made to feel that they don't belong. We see many examples of alienation and hostility towards them, and it is because of these attitudes, that many of the characters find themselves isolated. Being made to feel the outcast often results in segregation rather than assimilation. However, this treatment does not stop many of the characters determination to 'fit in' and feel accepted. One may think that after such treatment, a sense of revolt and detestation would emerge, although many of these stories show unyielding and determined people can be when it comes to being accepted.

The basis of the stories is to share what they have endured in an alien country. Characters show enormous strength and persistence to turn their life around, while trying to ignore ethnic oppression and hypocrisy. We see various stories whereby characters endure the pressure to conform, and often the hardships turn into triumphs.

We see Sunil Badami taunted at school, he is called a black bastard, and as a consequence he attempts to wash the *blackness* from his skin and change his name. In Jacqui Larkin's and James Chong's story as well as many others, we hear the damaging and oppressive attitudes of teachers towards the protagonists. Often the lack of English skills and therefore language barriers becomes a common motivation for intolerance. We see this predominantly in the section *Strine* whereby the difficulties of navigating a new language presents many opportunities to be seen as an outcast. Ray Wing-Lun is a victim of bullying and is harassed by a boy named Tony. We also hear of how Aditi Gouvernal was taunted by a boy named Barry West. She recounts the times when he would state he would have to wash his shirt because she touched it because she 'wiped her butt with her hands'.

Uyen Loewold's poem *Be Good, Little Migrants* shares the attitude that migrants should 'behave' and tolerate what is thrown at them as Australia has allowed them into the country. It presents the attitude that they should tolerate any form of prejudice as they don't belong and focuses on the 'necessity' for them to conform. We also see Tony Ayres spat at, called a 'Fucking Poofter' and attacked by some skinheads outside a Chinese restaurant, James Chong. The poem by Ken Chau shows how an Asian migrant himself can develop a bigotry and discriminatory attitude towards new migrants in Australia. This is ironic as he would have been seen as the *outsider* when he arrived, and may have been a victim of such attitudes. Throughout most of these stories we witness cross-cultural conflict and see the resilience towards this. Through these narratives we see that there is more to a person than their inherited-cultural identity. This alienation has great effect on a person's sense of belonging and contributes towards shaping their identity.

Multiple identities

Many of the characters in the short stories identify with multiple identities. Often they have formed an identity within the family context, and another in the *outside* world which may consist of work, school or general socialising. Many characters such as Amy Choi and Sunil Badami identify with their family heritage and culture, yet can feel they also belong to the culture and traditions of Australia. It is here that they often feel torn between the two worlds as both place great expectations on them.

Although many of the narratives express the idea that you can belong to only one identity, most of the tales reflect the idea that you can belong to multiple.

Tanveer Ahmed, through his friendship with Daryl finds he can have multiple identities, integrating his Indian culture with his new Australian one. Mia Francis tells the tale of Ricky, an adopted boy who was raised as an Australian yet goes in search of his *other* identity in Manila. This story confirms that one can take on an Australian identity even when having an Asian heritage. When comparing himself to Asian tourists he states he feels very Australian.

The chapter, 'The Hots' presents many stories that deal with finding your identity while being homosexual. Here many characters possess multiple identities, yet struggle to retain their identity based on cultural heritage, their homosexual identity and their newly found Australian identity. Here they often feel displaced within the community and within their own families, however it is insinuated that the Australian way of life seems more accepting of their sexual preference. Lian Low's story *First Kiss* is a good example of the acceptance of multiple identities as her family accept her homosexuality, resulting in a true feeling of belonging.

Alice Pung states that these stories "present the challenges of coming to terms with multiple identities." Many protagonists succeed in uniting both identities, while others do not and have had to choose one, while leaving the other behind. Characters that felt they were unable to have multiple identities have often lost something. Whether this is a connection with their family, their native tongues, friends, education or a general sense of belonging to one group or another.

The narratives verify that often if given a choice, all of the characters would have wished to have multiple identities, showing that it is the external forces of either society or family (and the pressures they impose), that disenable the protagonist to have both.

Some may reject the idea of conforming- others embrace it and therefore feel they can belong to two worlds.

Structure

Chronology

Chronology shows how the action of the narrative is arranged in respect of time. *Linear* is when the narrative is continuous. This novel as a whole cannot be said to be necessarily *linear* as each story is not connected to the next. However, individually, each story is linear as it starts at a certain point in time and ends at a certain point in time. In some of these short stories, the action takes place over a period of years, while others cover a period of weeks or simply days.

Continuity

Narratives do not tell everything that has happened in a certain period of time, and the author will only include information or detail that he/she deems to be important or relative. Nevertheless, there must be *continuity within* the narrative (or in this case many short narratives). This means the reader perceives consistency in the characters, events, experiences and places. This allows the events in the narrative to flow logically and smoothly despite breaks of time. The individual stories in *Growing up Asian in Australia* all have continuity, and when looking at them collectively as an anthology, they still possess continuity as they have been grouped together according to thematic relevance and experience.

Anthology

An anthology is a collection of selected literary passages. In *Growing up Asian in Australia*, the short stories and poems written by various authors have been categorised into twelve sections, loosely based on themes. The following gives an outline of the themes adopted in each section.

Strine

This section focuses on how language helps to establish our identity and shows how it can be a hindrance to being accepted. Many of these stories show the extent to which language allows someone to communicate, negotiate and articulate their point of view.

Pioneers

This section looks at the member of the family who left their homeland first. It focuses on their journey to Australia, exposing their dreams, aspirations and expectations. These stories often also explain why they left their homeland.

Battlers

This section looks at the difficulties people faced while trying to settle into Australia. Looking for work, starting a new school and supporting your family are all struggles that are focused on in these stories. Ultimately they are about trying to survive in a new world.

Mates

This section is about making friends, and often presents it as a challenge whereby the characters often become isolated or are a victim of intolerance and discrimination. Some stories however, do show close bonds made with either Australian people, or people of the same culture.

The folks

This section focuses on parent's expectations of their children, and how such high demands and pressure can affect a child and their relationship with their family. Some stories show their parent's high expectations in a positive light, resulting in success, while other present it in a negative light, whereby relationships have been ruined.

The clan

This section focuses on conflict of religion, sexuality, ancient traditions and divorce. These stories show the effects that conflict of belief can have, and how hard it can be to have broken or extended families.

Legends

This section looks at how people have tried to find their identity through adopting a role model. These stories also present characters that have tried to live their life through more than one culture, and these stories show the hardships this can present.

The hots

This section focuses on sexuality. It shows the confusion many go through when trying to establish their sexual preference, and the battles they must face to be accepted by their own family.

Un-Australian

This section looks at characters who feel they don't fit in anywhere. These characters feel isolated, not only from their individual cultures, but from the Australian way of life. It examines the concept and importance of what it means to belong and be accepted. Often these characters feel they cannot assimilate to the 'Australian way' while still adhering to the expectations of their own culture.

Tall poppies

This section looks at people who have excelled in their profession. These are presented in interview style whereby Alice Pung asks them about their triumphs and challenges in their lives.

Leaving home

Along with having to move to Australia, this section looks at other hurdles characters have faced. Here the characters reflect on difficulties they have faced in their family or home life, and other choices they have made in life that have often presented complications.

Homecoming

In this section characters return to their homeland to help establish their true identity. They search for where they truly belong to help determine where they are going in life.

Style

Non-fiction text

The contributions within the anthology, *Growing up Asian in Australia*, are non-fiction. This means that they are not inventions of the imagination, but are events that have actually happened. Together they provide a narrative that gives, not just the facts about events that have happened to people, but also insight into the impact of those events on the individuals involved. The writers do not choose the incidents within their stories because the events have in fact taken place. Rather, the writers have chosen to express how they depict or represent events, situations or characters and give some insight into what this has meant to them. In other words, each author writes with a purpose, seeking to evoke an empathetic/sympathetic response from the reader.

Orientation (Point of View, Voice)

This is about who is telling the story. Being an anthology of short texts, they are each presented the individual author's point of view. Apart from the poetry, the stories are told in first person, with the writers referring to themselves as 'I'. The audience is therefore only privy to the information the narrator shares. The viewpoints presented are, therefore, very personal and could be said to be even biased in their nature.

While each contribution is an individual's representation of living in Australia and therefore a presentation of the insight of each contributor's insight, experiences and opinions; there is also an overarching idea that organises this collection. The editor, herself has an intention for the collected works and that is represented in the nature of the collection as a whole. Together the tone of each contribution, and theme of each, aggregate to deliver to the reader an understanding of the issues/challenges for those who grow up in a second culture – specifically for Asians in Australia. The invitation to the reader is to enter into this and understand.

Impartiality

Writers aim to influence their readers in a variety of ways. Some may aim to influence favourably, while others unfavourably. They achieve this through making assertions or assumptions about the subjects or people they address (in this instance, Asians moving to Australia). It is important to note that they choose what information is given and in how much detail. Writers can omit what they do not wish to address. They can also put their own interpretation on circumstances and people to the point of questioning the motives of others.

The contributions in *Growing up Asian in Australia* are true *reflections* of the writer's life. The story can be told in such a way that the readers' emotions are brought to the forefront - for example the reader can empathise with characters or feel a sense of disgust towards characters. But the question can also be asked, "I wonder how the other participants would have remembered/written this story?" This is not to negate the original contributor's reflection and its importance to them; rather, to remember that it is what it is; a point of view.

Humour

There are many humorous stories and scenes within *Growing up Asian in Australia*. Many protagonists use humour to play upon the racist and intolerant attitudes that others have towards them. Often a central character will recount their experiences using wittiness, focusing on the funny side to their story. Serious and quite humourless issues are confronted, yet through presenting them in a frivolous manner, the reader is able to see how far the character has come, being able to tell their story in a light hearted manner. Humour is also a way of mocking the callous and bigoted characters.

Alice Pung states that she included a lot of Australian humour in this anthology to enable the reader to somehow connect and relate to the stories being told. This witty style ensures wide appeal amongst the readers.

Characters

A character is a person who exists in a text or narrative. There are two types of characters- major characters and minor characters. Major characters are involved in the central and most often climatic point of the action. The reader learns about these characters in more depth. They learn about their attitudes and approach to life, their motivations and typical behaviour.

Minor characters however, are not focused on exclusively. They are often there as a foundation to help in establishing the story of the main character. Nevertheless, they are important as they help shape and expand the narrative.

Protagonists and Antagonists

Narratives often have characters who oppose each other and experience conflict or tension in some way. These characters are often seen as foes or enemies, and can often be seen as the *good guy* and the *bad guy*. The one driving or creating the conflict is seen as the *antagonist*. The character who is the victim of this conflict is seen as the *protagonist*. The anthologies in *Growing up Asian in Australia*, usually present the Asian migrant as the *protagonist* and the racist prejudice Australians as the *antagonist*.

The outsider, being the Asian, is often seen to be mistreated by those that have established themselves in Australia. Common *antagonists* in these short stories are often children at school who taunt or bully, teachers who mock or society in general who judges or condemns.

Author's attitude

The author uses specific words and descriptions to present their attitude or stance on the action taking place or towards other characters. This may be written covertly (secretly) or overtly (openly). Through the words and phrases chosen, many connotations are brought forth, and these strongly influence the point of view of the reader.

The authors of the short stories within *Growing up Asian in Australia* have written their narrative in such a way that the reader clearly views who is 'right' and who is 'wrong'. As already noted earlier, it is important to note that the migrated Asian characters are often portrayed positively.

Characters as symbol or representation

Characters may often represent something larger. Their individual nature or qualities may symbolise something much more. In the same way, objects may represent an aspect or attribute of a character. Consider the use of food in many of the stories. Often food is representative of culture; language and speech is also very symbolic in many of the stories as they symbolise disconnectedness to the rest of society; and, a parent may also represent the "force" of cultural expectation.

Major characters

The following character profiles have been taken from various short stories. Characters that have encountered strong feelings or have had realisations about their sense of identity or belonging have been chosen.

Amy Choi – The Relative Advantages of Learning My Language

Status: Primary character- first person narrator and protagonist

Circumstances: She had the duty of looking after her ill grandfather.

World View: Predisposed to letting her “Chinese go” and did not value her culture. She was not kind to her grandfather.

Motivations: Her motivation to let her culture go was to fit in. Her grandfather dies and this leads to a change in her.

Behaviour: After her grandfathers death she takes pride in her culture and learns Chinese so she can communicate and relate to her family.

Development in relation to identity and belonging: At first she saw herself as an Australian and questioned the necessity of following Chinese traditions. As she grows older she learns to appreciate her heritage. Her grandfather’s death is the driving force behind her new realisation and change in attitude. She learns the importance of her Chinese culture and how this can enable her to communicate with her elders. As she rejects her Chinese heritage and reclaims it later, we see a universal theme of missed opportunities. She discovers that she is both Chinese and Australian and can belong to two cultures, learning and using both languages.

The Early Settlers - Ken Chau

Status: Protagonist is the great-grandfather, while the narrative is told by a great granddaughter/grandson. However, a variant reading could be that the host society is the “protagonist” and the great-grandfather is the antagonist, fearful of those that ‘threaten’ his well being or livelihood.

Circumstances: Great-grandfather arrived to make his fortune as a market gardener.

World View: This new arrival saw those already there as potential threats; they are not like him. Maybe they were – early Australia was not a hospitable place for the Chinese migrants of that time. Maybe he did experience terror delivered by them – as other Chinese on the goldfields had. This poem should be read in conjunction with *The Terrorists*.

Motivations: Often being on the receiving end of antagonism new migrants react angrily in their disappointment at the way they are perceived and treated.

Behaviour: Reactive, feels vulnerable but not intimidated, seeks to succeed.

Development in relation to identity and belonging: A political poem about how a great-grandfather views his place in Australia. It is interesting to note the title *The Early Settlers*, as it immediately creates an image of Anglo-Australians and their settlement in Australia. The Great-Grandfather does not see himself as one of them; he has come after them and feels ostracised and isolated by them as group. His comments and attitudes imply derive from his fear of them. This is reinforced in the companion poem, *The Terrorists*, in a successive generation. The Chinese community had long been on the margins of the general Australian community – even with the abolishing of the White-Australia policy. It's not until more recent times that a greater sense of inclusion has been felt; hence the final sentiment in *The Terrorists*.

Wei-Lei and Me- Aditi Gouvernal

Status: Primary character- first person narrator (Aditi) and protagonist

Circumstances: Aditi is bullied and taunted at school, predominantly by Barry West, for being Indian. That is until she meets a friend, Wei-Lei, and together they defend themselves.

World View: Aditi does not feel a sense of belonging in Australia. When first moving to Australia at six, she thought Australia would be a place to create a new identity. She would pretend she was ill so she didn't have to go to school.

Motivations: Aditi found motivation to not only persevere with school, but to defend herself from bullies when she met her friend Wei-Lei. It is through that friendship that she found will power and a stronger sense of identity.

Behaviour: Before the arrival of her friend, Aditi would refuse to go to school. After Wei-Lei arrived, Aditi gets a rock and brings it down on Barry's head. The two girls happily re-enact television shows and see each other as their shadow, going everywhere together for safety. After being spat on by Barry, Aditi bashes Barry with a bat.

Development in relation to identity and belonging: Initially Aditi feels like an outsider at school and is made to feel alienated by her peers. After meeting Wei-Lei she establishes her identity, becoming more assertive. She can identify and relate to Wei-Lei. In the end, after Barry leaves to live in Jakarta, Aditi feels more Australian and at home.

Perfect Chinese Children- Vanessa Woods

Status: Primary character- first person narrator and protagonist

Circumstances: Vanessa is half Asian, half 'gweilo'. She struggles to live up to her cousin's impressive academic results. Her family is poor and her mother remarried. Her mother indicates that her children don't look Chinese and 'are going the way of Australian children.' After the divorce, and now living with their Aunty, their lives become more Chinese. Vanessa steals from children at school and is soon caught.

World View: Vanessa longs for her mother's love and approval. In the end she realises her mother has sacrificed a lot. After the divorce, Vanessa is more aware of the discrimination around her. She is taunted at school and dislikes having to go.

Motivations: Vanessa is driven to theft at school because of the poverty her family faces. The story insinuates she tries harder at school in order to win her mother's approval.

Behaviour: Vanessa steals at school to win her mother's affection and respect. She finds it hard to connect and relate to her Chinese culture.

Development in relation to identity and belonging: Vanessa is trapped between two worlds as she looks Anglo but obviously has a Chinese heritage. Her family are victims of poverty and it seems all of those around her are quite rich. Unlike herself, she is surrounded by cousins and family who have great aspirations and academic success. In the end she realises her mother does love her and has given up a lot for her children. She becomes more comfortable in her own shoes and seems happier with her own identity, instead of trying to live up to others.

How to be Japanese- Leanne Hall

Status: Primary character- first person narrator and protagonist

Circumstances: The narrator (Leanne Hall) is half-Chinese and half-Australian. She and her friend Emma are at a photo shoot for Japanese beer. Unlike her friend Emma, the narrator looks very Chinese and has no breasts. All of those around her are Japanese and 'Japanese image-girl' is the look they are going for. When she sees the advert it doesn't look like her and she wonders what her Chinese grandfather would have thought. She wonders what her life would be like if she looked less Chinese. She is then at a night club and some Asian men ask if she is Japanese. She visits China and here she feels 'at home'.

World View: The narrator has adolescent issues to deal with as well as cultural ones. She seems concerned with her appearance and the way in which she is perceived.

Motivations: The narrator is motivated to go to China in order to explore her heritage and find a sense of belonging and identity. She does some reading on the Japanese occupation of China as she is scared her grandfather would disapprove of her modelling as a Japanese girl.

Behaviour: The narrator seems to behave quite confidently yet as the narrative progresses we can see that she is searching for her true identity.

Development in relation to identity and belonging: The narrator feels she does not fit exclusively into either the Chinese or Australian culture. Although she sees herself as Australian, when looking around at her other friends, she looks more Chinese and this prevents her from feeling a true sense of belonging. She realises her grandfather saw himself as Australian, wearing the flag and this helps her accept her partial Australian identity. After visiting China, she realises the importance of her heritage and begins to understand she can look Chinese while feeling Australian.

From the Tall Poppies section- Hoa Pham

Status: Primary character is the narrator. She responds in interview to a series of questions.

Circumstances: Hoa Pham, now a psychologist and author, was forbidden to write stories as a child and was raped by an uncle. After this she stopped speaking Vietnamese. She kept this a secret for over nine years. As a child she was bullied and was a victim of racial taunts. She had issues dating both Asian men and Australian men.

World View: Hoa Pham now sees herself to be Australian and feels very much at home in Australia. She seems content to have lost some of her Vietnamese heritage, and this was encouraged by her family. As a child she felt she did not fit in anywhere, this was further exacerbated by her trouble with men. She loves to write and believes it to be a form of escapism.

Motivations: Hoa was motivated to stop speaking Vietnamese because of her grandmother moving to America and because of being raped by her uncle. The generation before her insisted they were not Vietnamese and this motivated her to see herself as Australian. Because she was discouraged from writing, this motivated her to do exactly that.

Behaviour: Hoa studied hard and although she faced many tough times as a child, she is now happy and content with her identity and love life. She states it was often her anger that used to drive her to succeed.

Development in relation to identity and belonging: As a child Hoa had so much anger as she felt she did not fit in anywhere. As an adult she considers herself to be Vietnamese-Australian. She reflects, "You need to find the place within yourself that is home, an island of peace. After many years I have found this peace accepting who I am and what I can be."

Minor characters

Often the minor characters in these short stories help to establish the story and events that revolve around the main character. Some examples of how these minor characters help extend and enhance the narrative are as follows:

The Relative Advantages of Learning My Language – Amy Choi

In this story her grandfather is a minor character yet is still quite vital to the storyline. It is he who passes away and it is his death that encourages Amy to learn Chinese again.

Chinese Lessons- Ivy Tseng

Although Ivy's father is a minor character, he drives the whole narrative as it is he who initially insists that Ivy and her siblings have Chinese lessons every Saturday morning.

The Beat of a Different Drum- Simon Tang

In this short story Stewart, Simon's newly found friend is a minor character, however he is very important. It is Stewart who helps and encourages Simon to learn English and helps him feel that he belongs.

Wei-Lei and Me – Aditi Gouvernal

In this short story Barry West, although a minor character helps show the effects racism and bullying can have on someone who is trying to assimilate and fit in. It is Barry West who taunts and persecutes Aditi.

Important Quotations

- “I am not trying to ‘discover my roots’. I am simply trying to ensure that next time an elderly relative wants me to listen to them, I am not only willing, I am able.” (Pg 9)
- “One thing that got under my skin was my own name. *Sunil*.” (Pg 9)
- “Naturally, growing up, I didn’t want to be a nigger, a coon, a darkie. I didn’t feel ‘black’ anything. I just wanted to fit in.” (Pg 10)
- “Scrubbing my right arm with the floor brush till tiny spots of blood started weeping.” (Pg 10)
- “Wishing we were somewhere else, wishing we were someone else.” (Pg 11)
- “If I couldn’t *be* less black, surely I could get a name that made me *feel* less black.” (Pg 12)
- “In the real world, in the brilliant universe of my imagination, I was Neil.” (Pg 12)
- “It’s just that – I- um, I hate it. Sunil. It’s too hard to say. It’s too, it’s too Indian!” (Pg 13)
- “Who are you? What are you? You should be proud!” (Pg 13)
- “Even if I still found it hard to tie my Indian appearance to my Australian feeling.. I didn’t worry so much about my name anymore.” (Pg 14)
- “I think it’s hard for a non-migrant to understand just how difficult it is to learn a new language while adapting to a life in a new country.” (Pg 15)
- “They were a way of ensuring he would still be able to connect to his past.” (Pg 17)
- “These lessons were also a way to ensure that his three Australian-born and bred daughters recognised that their Chineseness was not restricted to their black hair, small round noses and consumption of rice.” (Pg 18)
- “Theirs was a deeper, heavier inheritance of over 4000 years of history, language and values.” (Pg 18)
- “...Wishing I was white or Aussie.” (Pg 18)
- “I couldn’t understand why I had to learn Chinese when everyone else around us seemed to speak, think, dream *do* English.” (Pg 18)
- “I regret not paying closer attention to those Chinese lessons.” (Pg 20)
- “I know there’s more to a person than their cultural background, how they look on the outside- more to me than being Taiwanese-Chinese-Australian. Do I even need those hyphenated, cut-and-paste identities? There are other parts of me.” (Pg 21)
- “I want to kill the fucking bastards for making me feel that being born in Australia and being an Australian are not the same.” (Pg 26)
- “Crossing the classroom threshold was like stumbling through a portal into a foreign country. I was robbed of speech, hearing and literacy.” (Pg 44)

- "I was the new animal at the zoo." (Pg 47)
- "I was stripped of my dignity and personality as well. I didn't have the words to object, to defend myself, to argue, to cajole or control. My ethnicity made me conspicuous, but my reticence made me invisible." (Pg 48)
- "Were my feelings less real if I couldn't articulate them? If I couldn't express myself, then who was myself?" (Pg 48)
- "Right there was the divide between the old world and the new." (Pg 53)
- "I thought about our neighbours, the girls who caught the school bus, and wondered if they'd heard the commotion." (Pg 56)
- "Being the only Asian family in the entire district, it was pointless carrying on a ritual no one else understood." (Pg 61)
- "My mother's Chinese-Australian Christmas feast- roast turkey or chicken swollen with stuffing made from stale bread and fresh mint, served with rice and soy-sauce gravy." (Pg 62)
- "However they were also our friends, simply because in this small, prejudice town, all we had was each other." (Pg 66)
- "You're Indian and I've got your Indian shit on me." (Pg 75)
- "Australia, on the other hand, large, spacious and full of gaps, would be a place where we could start a new identity." (Pg 75)
- "The kids mauled Wei-Li the way a cat would maul a toy." (Pg 77)
- "Everything Wei-Li saw could be used as evidence for my difference." (Pg 78)
- "We had become what we thought we could never be: Australian." (Pg 81)
- "I'd watch them intently: like an outsider, like a tourist." (Pg 152)
- "My skin was the wrong colour, my eyes were the wrong colour, and my legs just weren't long enough." (Pg 177)
- "His assimilation into Australian life was so complete that neither my mother nor any of her four siblings can speak a word of Cantonese." (Pg 229)
- "If I was Chinese I would feel it inside – and I don't." (Pg 230)
- "He also made us drop the *Tio Tio*, being a 'product of the old world. We're all Aussies now, so call me Uncle." (Pg 209)
- "Although English was the language I spoke in, dreamt in and created my reality in, I felt a foreigner whenever I opened my mouth." (Pg 217)
- "Suddenly I had the confidence to cope with troublesome teachers, bullies, racists." (Pg 221)
- "I wonder in what ways life would be different if I looked less Chinese." (Pg 231)

- “Perhaps it is possible to be attuned to both, but it was my fate to cross a threshold from one culture and class into another.” (Pg 238)
- “My Vietnamese background was now valuable in Australia in a way I had not seen before.” (Pg 261)
- “When I was six I remember drawing myself with blonde hair and blue eyes, because that was how I wanted myself to be.” (Pg 261)
- “The one Greek boy in the school would call me Chink then smile at me as if it was a joke.” (Pg 262)
- “I had so much anger in me, not fitting in anywhere.” (Pg 262)
- “I think there would be a smile in my self-portrait- not the passive Asian smile that says everything is good and wonderful, but a grin that says I’m ready to take on the world and anything that is projected onto me.” (Pg 262)

TEXT 3: SOMETIMES GLADNESS

Themes

Identity of birth

Enter Without So Much as Knocking and *Life-cycle*.

Identity may be given to us at birth – social, cultural and spiritual values may be inculcated from birth by the immediate environment – family especially. People may accept this process without question and accept being told who they are and where they belong. This challenges the idea of self-discovery – that we live reflective lives where we are active participants in the construction of our own identities.

Intimate relationships

Suburban Lovers, *With You Not by Me*, *Cloth* and *City Lovers*.

Those who are closest to us influence our identity – immediate family and loved ones, close friends. Identity and belonging can be heavily influenced by our relationships.

Not belonging

The Flashing of Badges, *The Boy*, *Drifters*, *Cravensville*, *Migrants* and *Exiles*.

Consider life for those who do not belong and whether belonging is a basic need for people. There are problems for those who live apart from mainstream society, especially if they are told that they do not belong. Conversely, it must be asked how much conformity can be demanded from the individual in order to have a sense of belonging.

Choice of belonging

The Family Man, *Up the Wall* and *Reverie of a Swimmer*.

People may feel that they do not fit the requirements for belonging – they may feel oppressed. Some may feel so strongly about this that they remove themselves from wider society, either fully or partially.

Individual identity in an enormous world

Othernesses Other than Our Own, *The Hunter at Sunset* and *Planning a Service*.

People are only a small part of an enormous world. People belong to local communities and to the wider world. The individual is not at the centre of things, but is a part of things.

Structure and Style

Verse [poetry] is the expression of language in a precisely controlled format. There is a rhythm to the words in each line; the lines may rhyme with each other at the end; the words are especially chosen for their conciseness in order to express much meaning from few words.

Impartiality

Poets are not impartial. They will attempt to influence the reader in many ways, both favourably and unfavourably. They may make assertions that are positive and/or negative, and may assert ideas or controvert them. They may make assumptions about the subjects that they address in their writing, and also about the reader. They tell only what they want to tell or address, in the way and to the extent that they want to address it, and they ignore what they do not want to tell or address. At its simplest, these poems are Dawe's thoughts and reflections on the subjects that he writes about.

Characters

Aspects of characterization

In respect of poetry, it is the author's own character and personality that often express themselves. However, the poet may also enter into the personality of a character much like a novelist does, offering description and comment about their world view, motivations and behaviour.

Characters, like people, can be very complex; they have strengths and weaknesses, they face challenges, they achieve and fail, they undergo a range of emotional feelings, they think, speak and act. And also, like people, they can think and behave in ways that are unpredictable or never fully understood by others.

Author's attitude

Consider the author's attitudes towards his subjects – this will be revealed in the words that he uses to describe them, their actions, their attitudes and values and the dialogue that they speak. It may be covert as well as overt, using words and phrases for their connotations as well as their denotations. The reader should also consider his own attitudes to the subjects – he may agree or disagree with aspects of the poet's attitudes.

Important Quotations

Life- Cycle

In the pure flood of sound, they are scarfed with light, a voice
like the voice of God booms from the stands
Ooohh you bludger and the covenant is sealed.

City Lovers

Half in half out of time love guarantees
Safe conduct for them as they venture out
Among the whistling knife-edged certainties,
Their vulnerability in times apart
Becomes unfiling talisman to these
Jaywalkers in the mainstream of the heart

The Flashing of Badges

The first thing the dead-beat does
Is flash his badge...
 If you're in uniform,
I'm an old digger myself he says. If coming from mass,
He's Catholic of course and loyal as hell,
While if you're wearing corduroys, carrying books,
He'll grimace towards learning's obscure god,

The Boy

Was he smiling?
He seemed cheerful enough
As though the handcuffs and torn blue shirt-sleeve
were badges of office,
climbing out of the patrol car
between two brown drab figures, dwarfed by them although
he was average height.

Drifters

One day soon he'll tell her it's time to start packing,
and the kids will yell 'truly?' and get wildly excited for no reason,
and the brown kelpie pup will start dashing about, tripping everyone up,
And she'll go out to the vegetable patch and pick all the green tomatoes from the vine,
and notice how the oldest girl is close to tears because she was happy here,
and how the youngest girl is beaming because she wasn't.

Cravensville

'Run-of-the-mill you well might call this town
– A place where many go, but few remain,
Where you'd be mad to want to settle down,
 Off the main road, too far from bus or train
neither backlocks enough to suit the likes
 Of most of us nor moderately supplied
with urban comforts, good for mystery hikes,
 But not the place to take the happy bride.

Migrants

But still the skies stayed friendly, even if
They found themselves being shouted at like deaf
– mutes whom one naturally hates the more for this.

Exiles

More than ourselves we made these people strangers.
Israel is awash with Babylonians,
and where in Israel may the twelve tribes speak?

The Family Man

'Kids make a home', he said, the family man,
speaking from long experience. That was on Thursday
evening. On Saturday he lay dead
in his own wood-shed, having blown away
all qualifications with a trigger's touch.

The Family Man

Oh you who bow your heads now at mention of me,
Here this: it wasn't kelp current or shark
That finally hauled me down under,
But the voluminous waste of your minds,
the effluence pumped from the shore, against which
only a god could contend

The Hunter at Sunset

He lines his sights up on the vulnerable spot
Behind the left shoulder or at the skull's base.
And his vision is finally triggered
As the setting sun flames on the jungle-pool, the shocking sound
Jerks up each startled head for a second

Planning a Service

a special arrangement of the alleluia will be rendered
by a squadron of maggies released from regular duties
dive-bombing the kids at Holy Name
the Gospel will be John, of course, either 14 or 15,

TEXT 4: BOMBSHELLS

Themes

These are the issues, messages and insights into life that the novelist wishes to address, and which give the novel its sense of unity. However, there can also be issues and messages in a novel that readers may devise for themselves. And there may be major and minor themes –those which are very important to the play, and those ones which are less important.

Themes may be presented directly or indirectly.

When dealing with themes, look for the issues which the writer seems to confirm in his writing – these are things that he will deal with positively. And look for issues which he seems to challenge [disagree with in some way], as he will probably not deal with these positively.

A list of possible themes would be almost endless, and a single play will address only a few. Themes often involve the nature of some kind of conflict, which may be intra-personal, inter-personal, intra-national, inter-national, passive and/or active, and its traumatic effects and moral implications and outcomes.

Belonging

The women accept society's demands of marriage and family and the sacrifices which all this involves. Meryl is anxious about being a lax mother. Her husband Barry is supportive, but she wonders about her own perceived inability to cope, and defines her life in reference to what it means to him rather than to herself. The media influences Meryl's anxious desire to be the perfect woman. She considers doing yoga because Gwyneth Paltrow does it, and her fixation with the celebrity mothers in the media influence her unrealistic expectations of family.

Theresa tells of her wedding day where her marriage to Ted gives meaning and purpose to her life. She compares herself to Princess Grace, Princess Diana, Audrey Hepburn, Posh Spice, Jennifer Aniston, Jennifer Lopez. Again, the role of the media comes into play. Theresa feels rescued by her marriage rather than fulfilled by it. She makes slow realization of the problems that occur through using marriage for social acceptance. Her final act is to scream – of frustration not happiness.

Relationships and identity

Winsome's husband has died. Tiggy's husband left her for a younger woman. Each is left without the validation of a relationship with a man. Each must reconsider her identity. Tiggy recognises that the North Heatherton Chapter of the C.A.S.L (the cacti society), has given her a sense of belonging – of being valued. Nonetheless, without Harry she feels lonely, so still needing the validation of a man in her life. In Tiggy is a woman who feels both betrayed and rejected.

It is Winsome who states that women struggle with meaning and purpose without a husband. Unmarried women struggle to belong in a society where women are defined by men. Winsome seeks companionship with other women, but only because she has no choice, as she is too old for a new relationship with a man.

Mary's overt rendition of the *Shaft* theme is counterpointed with her request to God during the talent quest, and also her fixation with Angela. Zoe's drunken dialogue between improvised show tunes demonstrate that she is an ageing woman suffering a family breakdown, substance abuse and bad publicity. And she has not answered the question 'who *is* Zoe Struthers?' despite the self-help guidance she gives the audience. Tiggy Entwistle's faltering slide show and comments bring her emotional needs to attention.

The bride, the mother and the widow offer interesting juxtapositions in their monologues, for, not being on stage, they believe that they must take up set gender roles to be accepted by society.

Meryl feels she must be the 'supermum', both devoted and glamorous, and for public approval rather than personal satisfaction. Yet she feels that she has failed.

Life expectations

Meryl is too fearful and guilty to be happy. Tiggy sees that the role of devoted wife does not bring happiness. Theresa's scream is borne of desperation. Personal fulfilment is unattainable.

Winsome's happiest moment was during a sunny day, with the decision to poach some pears for dinner. This accentuates happiness as momentary and is equalled only by the blind student Patrick who gives her a book of erotica, so making Winsome feel alive, as she finds herself outside society's expectations of her position.

Structure

This is how the play is put together, and is related to chronology. This play is structured in a series of monologues, where one actor portrays different characters.

Chronology

This is how the action of the play is arranged in respect of time. This play is not a continuous narrative, so chronology is not relevant in the normal sense.

Continuity

Plays do not tell everything that happens during a period of time. The author will relate only those things that she feels are important. However, there must be a certain *continuity* in the play – that there is consistency of the characteristics of persons, objects, places and events as perceived by the reader, basically meaning that the events of the play run logically and smoothly despite the breaks of time. *Bombshells* is different in this regard, as the continuity is not so much provided by time as it is by thematic relevance to women's issues.

Style

Orientation [Point Of View, Voice]

This is about who is telling the story. Being a dramatic monologue, the play presents a number of women from different walks of life who present their views on the status of women.

Characteristics

The play is a series of dramatic monologues, and so differs from the 'normal' play structure of linear narrative.

Playwrights are not impartial. They will attempt to influence the audience in many ways, both favourably and unfavourably. They may make assertions that are positive and/or negative, and may assert ideas or controvert them. They may make assumptions about the characters, events and ideas of the play, and also about the audience. They tell only what they want to tell, in the way and to the extent that they want to tell it. They ignore what they do not want to convey. The play addresses the status of women from the point of view of several individual characters.

Characters

A character is any person who appears in a text. There are major characters and minor characters. Major characters carry most of the action and are usually more rounded than minor characters: the reader learns a great deal more about their world view [attitudes and values], motivations and behaviour. Minor characters carry less of the action, but are still important in their own way.

As this is a play, and is therefore intended for performance, there is an important degree of interpretation of characters that is out of the author's influence. The author of a novel has greater control over his characters than does a playwright, for he describes their thoughts, words and actions himself. However, the performance of a play is subject to the interpretations of the characters by both the director and the actors because they are actively directing and acting the play, and so they can bring their own particular influences to the words and actions of the characters.

Aspects of characterization

The author's own appearance, world view, motivations and behaviour.

The attitudes, motivations and behaviour that other characters display towards him.

What the author states and implies about them.

Characters, like people, can be very complex; they have strengths and weaknesses, they face challenges, they achieve and fail, they undergo a range of emotional feelings, they think, speak and do. And also, like people, they can think and behave in ways that are unpredictable or never fully understood by others.

Protagonists and Antagonists

A play may have main characters who are set against each other in some kind of conflict. The one forcing the conflict is the *antagonist*, the other is the *protagonist*. The antagonist may often be on the side of evil, the protagonist on the side of good. The various female characters may be regarded as protagonists as they struggle to make sense of a sometimes hostile world.

Author's attitude

Characters do not exist in a moral vacuum. Consider the author's attitude towards them – this will be revealed in the words that she uses to describe them, their actions, their attitudes and values and the dialogue that they speak. It may be covert as well as overt, using words and phrases for their connotations as well as their denotations. Readers should also consider their own attitudes to the characters of the play – they may agree or disagree with aspects of the playwright's attitudes.

Character trait thesaurus*Accepting:*

Complacent, docile, lenient, submissive.

Admirable:

Commendable, exemplary, meritorious, praiseworthy.

Aggressive:

Assertive, belligerent, forthright, militant.

Amiable:

Affable, considerate, likeable.

Angry:

Enraged, incensed, infuriated, vexed.

Apprehensive:

Hesitant, nervous, tentative.

Ardent:

Fervent, fiery, passionate.

Argumentative:

Cantankerous, critical, intractable, quarrelsome.

Assertive:

Dominating, empowered, forthright, insistent.

Authentic:

Genuine, honest, legitimate, reliable.

Barbaric:

Brutish, uncivilized, primitive, savage, basic.

Biased:

Discriminatory, narrow-minded, partial, prejudiced, subjective.

Bloodthirsty:

Murderous, vicious, unprincipled, warlike.

Bold:

Audacious, brazen, impertinent, insolent.

Charming:

Agreeable, appealing, courteous, manipulative.

Circumspect:

Careful, cautious, guarded, prudent, watchful.

Contemptible:

Corrupt, despicable, scorned, worthless.

Courageous:

Brave, gallant, heroic, intrepid, valiant.

Cowardly:

Faint-hearted, fearful, irresolute, spiritless, timid.

Deceptive:

Artful, cunning, dishonest, equivocal, fraudulent, glib.

Difficult:

Defiant, irascible, provocative, rebellious.

Discontented:

Angst-ridden, alienated, disillusioned.

Disloyal:

Defiant, faithless, seditious, traitorous.

Dogmatic:

Arrogant, emphatic, uncompromising, intolerantly authoritative.

Domineering:

Opinionated, officious, truculent.

Downtrodden:

Oppressed, persecuted, subservient, submissive.

Generous:

Benevolent, altruistic, kind-hearted, magnanimous.

Good:

Dutiful, honorable, magnanimous, moral, obedient, virtuous, pious

Gullible:

Credulous, deceived, duped, manipulated.

Flattering:

Ingratiating, insincere, obsequious, smooth-tongued, unctuous.

Happy:

Content, cheerful, ecstatic, exhilarated, jubilant.

Heartless:

Brutal, callous, cold-blooded, pitiless.

Hypocritical:

Two-faced, treacherous, perfidious, sanctimonious.

Idealistic:

Optimistic, utopian, romantic, visionary.

Ignorant:

Unaware, uneducated, unintelligent, unenlightened.

Immoral:

Corrupt, depraved, malevolent, malicious, iniquitous.

Impatient:

Abrupt, brusque, curt, restive, rash.

Impetuous:

Impulsive, spontaneous, rash, reckless.

Intelligent:

Articulate, astute, perceptive, ingenious.

Interesting:

Captivating, compelling, fascinating, intriguing.

Just:

Dispassionate, ethical, fair-minded, impartial, unprejudiced.

Loyal:

Devoted, faithful, obedient, steadfast, trustworthy.

Malleable:

Adaptable, pliable, flexible.

Malevolent:

Draconian, malicious, venomous, vindictive.

Manipulative:

Artful, calculating, conniving, scheming, shrewd.

Materialistic:

Acquisitive, selfish, commercial, opportunistic, secular, worldly.

Mean:

Churlish, parsimonious, stinting, uncharitable.

Merciless:

Cruel, inhumane, ruthless, unforgiving.

Militant:

Defiant, hostile, warlike.

Moody:

Temperamental, volatile, petulant, changeable.

Moral:

Decent, ethical, honourable, principled, scrupulous.

Particular:

Fussy, fastidious, meticulous, punctilious.

Political:

Expedient, cunning, designing,

*Machiavellian.**Pragmatic:*

Practical, commonsensical, expedient, hard-headed, realistic.

Racist:

Bigot, chauvinistic, dogmatic, supremacist, zealot.

Biased, bigoted, discriminatory, prejudiced, intolerant, xenophobic.

Religious:

Devout, pious, faithful, spiritual.

Resilient:

Ebullient, irrepressible, optimistic, robust.

Sanctimonious:

Self-righteous, unctuous.

Self-interested:

Self-centred, self-focused, hedonistic, narcissistic, self-indulgent.

Sinful:

Corrupt, immoral, profligate, sacrilegious, ungodly.

Unbiased:

Broad-minded, egalitarian, judicial,

Impartial, objective, tolerant.

Unhappy:

Despondent, disconsolate, dispirited, forlorn, melancholy, morose.

Unjust:

Discriminatory, illegal, iniquitous, partial, prejudiced.

Wicked:

Depraved, diabolical, fiendish, heinous, odious.

Wise:

Sagacious, circumspect, astute.

Major Characters

Meryl

Status: Protagonist.

Role: Wife and mother.

Circumstances: Married to Barry.

World view: Defines herself by her marriage. High expectations of family. Which creates ...

Motivations: To be the perfect wife and mother. Fixation wife celebrities. Which lead to ...

Behaviour: Expects too much of herself.

Mary

Status: Protagonist.

Role: Teenage school girl.

Circumstances: Student at Catholic school.

World view: Show business hopeful. High expectations of herself. Which creates ...

Motivations: To be better on stage than Angela McTerry. Which lead to ...

Behaviour: Anxious and unsure, she has high expectations of herself.

Theresa

Status: Protagonist.

Role: Wife.

Circumstances: Married to Ted.

World view: Marriage gives purpose and meaning to her life. Which creates ...

Motivations: fixation with media personalities. Which lead to ...

Behaviour: compares self to media personalities.

Winsome

Status: Protagonist.

Role: Widow.

Circumstances: Widowed.

World view: Struggles to find meaning without a husband. Which creates ...

Motivations: Loneliness. Which leads to ...

Behaviour: Finds companionship among women as too old to remarry. Finds relationship with Patrick exciting.

Zoe

Status: Protagonist.

Role: Jazz singer.

Circumstances: Once down and out, now making a comeback.

World view: Regretful of relationships with husband and daughter. Which creates ...

Motivations: To be persistent. Which lead to ...

Behaviour: Makes a comeback in music.

Tiggy

Status: Protagonist.

Role: Separated from Harry.

Circumstances: Husband left her for younger woman.

World view: Struggles to find meaning without a husband. Which creates ...

Motivations: Loneliness. Which lead to ...

Behaviour: Finds sense of belonging at cacti club.

Important Quotations

Meryl Louise Davenport

Ok. That's it. Need a coffee! [p7]

Barry's so nice to me, have to make things easier on him. [p6]

I know nothing, if anyone knew how little I knew there'd be an uprising. [p9]

Can't live without Barry. [p10]

Tiggy Entwhistle

Membership of this society has provided me with a sense of belonging... [p12]

He didn't believe me, he didn't think we could recapture... [p14]

Harry! Harry! Harry! Come back! [p16]

Mary O'Donnell

I *am* the talent show. The talent show would be nothing without me. [p19]

Oh fabulous. Angela McTerry is doing my party piece and I am left with precisely ... nothing. [p20]

Ok. Ok. Stay calm. You'll think of something. [p20]

I'll improvise. That's what real performers do. [p20]

I have prayed to you every day of my life and now, NOW is the moment I am calling in a favour from you. [p22]

Theresa McTerry

I've got Ted. Ted. What a guy. What a lucky girl. [p25]

I'm going to *belong* to someone. I'm not going to be floating on that endless ocean of singlehood. [p25]

Ted has thrown me a lifebuoy and I'm taking it. [p25]

This is the happiest day of my life. Truly the happiest. P27]

I want to excel at supporting and obeying. [p27]

I want to be possessed. [p27]

It's all about the dress. [p29]

I am so happy I could scream. [p33]

Winsome Webster

In our society being alone can make one feel rather silly. [p34]

I'm a widow. I enjoy being useful. And I can't parallel park. [p37]

And once, when he asked me if I enjoyed my life, I found myself saying there was a kind of relief in resigning myself to it. [p38]

I'm rather a sensible tweed skirt and blouse kind of a dresser. [p39]

I thought of saying 'Patrick!', but I could hear the potential sound of false dismay in my voice. [p41]

I felt little parts of me reacting, as if penny-bangers were going off all over my body. [p41]

And there is nothing more enchanting than chance – when it goes your way. [p42]

Zoe Struthers

But what doesn't kill you makes you stronger.

I didn't really know who I was any more.

There was life in the old girl yet!

I'm a dame with charisma to spare!

I want a husband and several ex -

My best friend's a platinum AMEX!

I think you all know that my husband, Daryl, left me in '99 for my stylist Tiffany.

I had to learn not to hide from the question, 'who *is* Zoe Struthers?'

I hope Deirdre will find it in her heart to ... learn to accept me for who I am instead of who I was.

Have you heard of substance abuse over here?

TEXT 5: THE CATCHER IN THE RYE

Themes

Alienation

Holden is apart from the world around him and victimized by it. He feels trapped on 'the other side' of life, and he attempts to make his way in a world where he feels he doesn't belong. His alienation is how he protects himself. He uses his isolation as proof that he is better than everyone else around him and so above interacting with them. However, interactions with others confuse him and his sense of superiority is a type of self-protection.

Holden's alienation causes most of his pain. He never tries to discover the source of his troubles. He desperately needs human love, but the protective wall around him prevents him from receiving it. Alienation is the source of both his strength and his problems – his loneliness pushes him to date Sally Hayes and his need for isolation forces him to insult her and send her away. He longs for the connection he had with Jane Gallagher but he is afraid to make any effort to contact her.

Growing Up

Holden struggles with the transition from childhood to adulthood. He resists maturity. He wants everything to be permanently fixed, like the statues of Eskimos and Indians in the museum. He is guilty of the faults he criticizes in others, and he doesn't understand everything around him. He refuses to admit this fear, expressing it occasionally, such as when he talks about sex and says 'sex is something I just don't understand. I swear to God I don't'.

Holden fantasises that adulthood is superficial ('phoniness'), and childhood is a place of innocence, curiosity, and honesty. His image of these two worlds is the catcher in the rye – he imagines childhood as an idyllic field of rye where children play. Adulthood is equal to death—to fall over the edge of a cliff. His views of childhood and adulthood let him cut himself off from the world with a protective wall of cynicism. His meetings with Mr. Antolini and Phoebe show the shallowness of his conceptions.

Innocence and Experience

Holden regards childhood as a time of innocence. To him children are virtuous as they have integrity of character. This is why he wants to be 'the catcher in the rye.' He wants to prevent children from losing their innocence. Perhaps he has been affected by the death of his younger brother, seeing him as the innocent victim of a terminal illness. Conversely he also regards adults as 'phoney.' Adulthood is a corrupted state that loses the innocence of childhood and turns people into 'phonies.' Ironically, Holden's attempts at resisting phoneyism, being the false appearances put on by adults, only rebound on him in his cynical criticism and rejection of people.

Phoniness

'Phoniness' is Holden's description for superficiality, hypocrisy, pretension, and shallowness. He feels that adults are phony but don't even realize it. Phoniness is emblematic of all that's wrong in the world and gives him reason to withdraw into isolation.

However, Holden can be a perceptive narrator and he is aware of the superficial behaviour of others. He meets characters who are affected, pretentious and superficial, such as Sally Hayes, Carl Luce, Maurice, Sunny and Mr. Spencer. While Holden sees phoniness in others, he never considers his own. He likes to see himself as virtuous in a world of phoniness, but this isn't true. He likes to see the world as simple, with virtue and innocence on one side and superficiality and phoniness on the other, but he is his own contradictory evidence. The world just is not as simple as he'd like to see it, and even he is unable to keep to the standards that he judges others by.



The Circle, Middlesex School, [Concord, Massachusetts](#) [Source: Wikipedia].

This is the kind of private school that Salinger's Pencey Prep [preparatory school] was based on.

Structure

This is how the novel is put together. It is related to chronology. *The Catcher In The Rye* is written in 26 chapters, each offering an insight into his attitudes and values about the people he deals with and comment about life in general.

Chronology

This is how the action of the novel is arranged in respect of time. The novel is basically *linear*, as it begins at a certain point in time and ends at a certain later point in time.

Continuity

Novels do not tell everything that happens during a period of time. The author will relate only those things that he feels are important. However, there must be a certain *continuity* in the novel – that there is consistency of the characteristics of persons, objects, places and events as perceived by the reader, basically meaning that the events of the novel run logically and smoothly despite the breaks of time.

Period of time covered by the novel:

A few days.

Style

Orientation [Point Of View, Voice]

This is about who is telling the story. It is written in the first person, told from Holden Caulfield's point of view.

Characteristics

First person

In a first person narration the author refers to himself as 'I' and is one of the characters. The reader cannot know or witness anything that the narrator does not tell, and therefore shares all of the narrator's limitations in this respect. However, first person narration has the advantage of a precise focus on the experiences, opinions, and perceptions of the author, and on how he sees the world and the views of other people, and to this extent it draws the reader convincingly into the narrative.

Impartiality

Narrators are not impartial. They will attempt to influence the reader in many ways, both favourably and unfavourably. They may make assertions that are positive and/or negative, and may assert ideas or controvert them. They may make assumptions about the characters, events and ideas of the novel, and also about the reader. They tell only what they want to tell or address, in the way and to the extent that they want to address it, and they ignore what they do not want to tell or address.

Tone

Every aspect of a novelist's language contributes to the style: choice of words, figures of speech, kinds of sentences, tone etc.

Like style, tone is influenced by the novelist's purpose and the way that his use of language supports this. Tone is also a key to the novelist's attitude towards both the characters, events and ideas of the novel, and also to the reader. Tone may describe the novel in its entirety [*mood*], and it may also describe various passages within it. The mood of the novel as a whole is one of cynical world-weariness. Holden is extremely critical of most people he meets in life, regarding them as phonies.

Characters

A character is any person who appears in a text. There are major characters and minor characters. Major characters carry most of the action and are usually more rounded than minor characters: the reader learns a great deal more about their world view [attitudes and values], motivations and behaviour. Minor characters carry less of the action, but are still important in their own way.

Aspects of characterization

The author's own appearance, world view, motivations and behaviour.

The attitudes, motivations and behaviour that other characters display towards him.

What the author states and implies about them.

Characters, like people, can be very complex; they have strengths and weaknesses, they face challenges, they achieve and fail, they undergo a range of emotional feelings, they think, speak and do. And also, like people, they can think and behave in ways that are unpredictable or never fully understood by others.

Protagonists and Antagonists

A novel may have main characters who are set against each other in some kind of conflict. The one forcing the conflict is the *antagonist*, the other is the *protagonist*. The antagonist may often be on the side of evil, the protagonist on the side of good. There is an irony to *Catcher In The Rye*, being that while Holden is the main character, being rebellious and super-critical of so much, he seems to be more the antagonist than the protagonist, while those people who try to help him are more the protagonists.

Author's attitude

Characters do not exist in a moral vacuum. Consider the author's attitudes towards them – this will be revealed in the words that he uses to describe them, their actions, their attitudes and values and the dialogue that they speak. It may be covert as well as overt, using words and phrases for their connotations as well as their denotations. The reader should also consider his own attitudes to the characters of the novel – he may agree or disagree with aspects of the novelist's attitudes.

Salinger has created a main character here with whom it may be difficult for many people to empathize, he being at odds with the world in general. However, there may be those readers who enjoy his cynical observations about people and their supposed superficialities.

Character as symbol or representation

Characters may represent a given quality or abstraction. Rather than simply being people, they stand for something larger. Consider Holden as representative of teenage angst and rebellion.

Major Characters

Holden Caulfield

Status: Primary character; protagonist; rounded character.

Role: 1st person narrator.

Circumstances: Student at boarding [Prep] school.

World View: Extremely judgmental. Dislikes 'phonies' – conventional people. Ambivalent about sex – feels it should only be between people who care deeply for each other, but spends much time trying to lose his virginity. Sees childhood as a time of innocence. Which create his ...

Motivations: Identifying 'phonies'. Wants to be the catcher in the rye. Which lead to his ...

Behaviour: Refuses to conform to conventional behaviour. And may also lead to his ...

Development: The extent that a character changes, if at all, during the course of the novel.

Minor Characters

Phoebe Caulfield

Status: Secondary character; protagonist; rounded character.

Role: Commentator on brother Holden.

Circumstances: Holden's sister, still lives at home.

World View: Offers critical comment on Holden's life. Which create her ...

Motivations: Sees growing up as a process. Which lead to her

Behaviour: Is often angry at Holden for his attitudes and behaviour. And may also lead to her

Development: in her own way, more mature than Holden.

Mr. Antolini

Status: Secondary character; protagonist; rounded character.

Role: Commentator on Holden's life.

Circumstances: Former teacher of Holden.

Moral perspective: Offers critical comment on Holden. Understands Holden as different from other people. Which create his ...

Motivations: To see Holden resolve his issues. Which lead to his ...

Behaviour: Offers solace to Holden. And may also lead to his

Development: has reached a stage in life where he sees people as they really seem to be.

Important Quotations

If you really want to hear about it, the first thing you'll probably want to know is where I was born and what my lousy childhood was like, and how my parents were occupied and all before they had me, and all that David Copperfield kind of crap, but I don't feel like going into it, if you want to know the truth.

Chapter 1

Old Selma Thurmer - she was the headmaster's daughter - showed up at the games quite often, but she wasn't exactly the type that drove you mad with desire. She was a pretty nice girl, though. I sat next to her once in the bus from Agerstown and we sort of struck up a conversation. I liked her. She had a big nose and her nails were all bitten down and bleedy-looking and she had on those damn falsies that point all over the place, but you felt sort of sorry for her. What I liked about her, she didn't give you a lot of horse manure about what a great guy her father was. She probably knew what a phony slob he was.

Chapter 1

What I was really hanging around for, I was trying to feel some kind of a good-by. I mean I've left schools and places I didn't even know I was leaving them. I hate that. I don't care if it's a sad good-by or a bad good-by, but when I leave a place I like to know I'm leaving it. If you don't, you feel even worse.

Chapter 1

Pencey was full of crooks. Quite a few guys came from these wealthy families, but it was full of crooks anyway. The more expensive a school is, the more crooks it has - I'm not kidding.

Chapter 1

It was that kind of a crazy afternoon, terrifically cold, and no sun out or anything, and you felt like you were disappearing every time you crossed a road.

Chapter 1

People always think something's all true.

Chapter 2

People never notice anything.

Chapter 2

Life is a game, boy. Life is a game that one plays according to the rules.

Chapter 2

I live in New York, and I was thinking about the lagoon in Central Park, down near Central Park South. I was wondering if it would be frozen over when I got home, and if it was, where did the ducks go? I was wondering where the ducks went when the lagoon got all icy and frozen over. I wondered if some guy came in a truck and took them away to a zoo or something. Or if they just flew away.

Chapter 2

I'm the most terrific liar you ever saw in your life. It's awful. If I'm on my way to the store to buy a magazine, even, and somebody asks me where I'm going, I'm liable to say I'm going to the opera. It's terrible.

Chapter 3

He started telling us how he was never ashamed, when he was in some kind of trouble or something, to get right down on his knees and pray to God. He told us we should always pray to God - talk to Him and all - whenever we were. He told us we ought to think of Jesus as our buddy and all. He said he talked to Jesus all the time. Even when he was driving in his car. That killed me. I can just see the big phony bastard shifting into first gear and asking Jesus to send him a few more stiff.

Chapter 3

What really knocks me out is a book, when you're all done reading it, you wished the author that wrote it was a terrific friend of yours and you could call him up on the phone whenever you felt like it.

Chapter 3

Ask her if she still keeps all her kings in the back row.

Chapter 4

People never believe you.

Chapter 5

You could also hear old Ackley snoring. Right through the goddam shower curtains you could hear him. he has sinus trouble and he couldn't breathe too hot when he was asleep. That guy had just about everything. Sinus trouble, pimples, lousy teeth, halitosis, crumby fingernails. You had to feel a little sorry for that crazy sonuvabitch.

Chapter 5

When I really worry about something, I don't just fool around. I even have to go to the bathroom when I worry about something. Only, I don't go. I'm too worried to go. I don't want to interrupt my worrying to go.

Chapter 6

All morons hate it when you call them a moron.

Chapter 6

Almost every time somebody gives me a present, it ends up making me sad.

Chapter 7

When I was all set to go, when I had my bags and all, I stood for a while next to the stairs and took a last look down that goddam corridor. I was sort of crying. I don't know why. I put my red hunting hat on, and turned the peak around to the back, the way I liked it, and then I yelled at the top of my goddam voice, "Sleep tight, ya morons!" I'll bet I woke up every bastard on the whole floor. Then I got the hell out. Some stupid guy had thrown peanut shells all over the stairs, and I damn near broke my crazy neck.

Chapter 7

Sensitive. That killed me. That guy Morrow was about as sensitive as a toilet seat.

Chapter 8

"Would you care for a cigarette?" I asked her.

She looked all around. "I don't believe this is a smoker, Rudolf," she said. Rudolf. That killed me.

Chapter 8

In my *mind*, I'm probably the biggest sex maniac you ever saw.

Chapter 9

I think if you don't really like a girl, you shouldn't horse around with her at all, and if you do like her, then you're supposed to like her face, and if you like her face, you ought to be careful about doing crumby stuff to it, like squirting water all over it. It's really too bad that so much crumby stuff is a lot of fun sometimes.

Chapter 9

Sex is something I really don't understand too hot. You never know where the hell you are. I keep making up these sex rules for myself, and then I break them right away. Last year I made a rule that I was going to quit horsing around with girls that, deep down, gave me a pain in the ass. I broke it, though, the same week I made it - the same night, as a matter of fact.

Chapter 9

I'm a goddam minor.

Chapter 10

My brother D.B.'s a writer and all, and my brother Allie, the one that died, that I told you about, was a wizard. I'm the only really dumb one.

Chapter 10

I was half in love with her by the time we sat down. That's the thing about girls. Every time they do something pretty, even if they're not much to look at, or even if they're sort of stupid, you fall half in love with them, and then you never know where the hell you are. Girls. Jesus Christ. They can drive you crazy. They really can.

Chapter 10

There isn't any night club in the world you can sit in for a long time unless you can at least buy some liquor and get drunk. Or unless you're with some girl that really knocks you out.

Chapter 10

Then she really started to cry, and the next thing I knew, I was kissing her all over...

Chapter 11

She was terrific to hold hands with. Most girls, if you hold hands with them, their goddam hand dies on you, or else they think they have to keep moving their hands all the time, as if they were afraid they'd bore you or something. Jane was different. We'd get into a goddam movie or something, and right away we'd start holding hands, and we won't quit till the movie was over. And without changing the position or making a deal out of it. You never even worried, with Jane, whether your hand was sweaty or not. All you knew was, you were happy. You really were.

Chapter 11

Ernie's a big fat colored guy that plays the piano. He's a terrific snob and he won't hardly even talk to you unless you're a big shot or a celebrity or something, but he can really play the piano. He's so good, he's almost corny, in fact. I don't exactly know what I mean by that, but I mean it. I certainly like to hear him play, but sometimes you feel like turning the goddam piano over. I think it's because sometimes when he plays, he sounds like the kind of guy that won't talk to you unless you're a big shot.

Chapter 11

People always clap for the wrong things.

Chapter 12

I'm always saying "Glad to've met you" to somebody I'm not at all glad I met. If you want to stay alive, you have to say that stuff, though.

Chapter 12

It's no fun to be yellow. Maybe I'm not all yellow. I don't know. I think maybe I'm just partly yellow and partly the type that doesn't give much of a damn if they lose their gloves.

Chapter 13

The thing is, most of the time when you're coming pretty close to doing it with a girl, she keeps telling you to stop. The trouble with me is, I stop. Most guys don't. I can't help it. You never really know whether they want you to stop or whether they're just scared as hell, or whether they're just telling you to stop so that if you do go through with it, the blame'll be on you, not them. Anyway, I keep stopping. The trouble is, I get to feeling sorry for them.

Chapter 13

I mean most girls are so dumb and all. After you neck them for a while, you can really watch them losing their brains. You take a girl when she really gets passionate, she just hasn't any brains.

Chapter 13

I wouldn't mind being pretty good at that stuff. Half the time, if you really want to know the truth, when I'm horsing around with a girl, I have a helluva lot of trouble just finding what I'm looking for, for God's sake, if you know what I mean. Take this girl that I just missed having sexual intercourse with, that I told you about. It took me about an hour to just get her goddam brassière off. By the time I did get it off, she was about ready to spit in my eye.

Chapter 13

I'm sort of an atheist. I like Jesus and all, but I don't care too much for most of the other stuff in the Bible. Take the Disciples, for instance. They annoyed the hell out of me, if you want to know the truth. They were all right after Jesus was dead and all, but while He was alive, they were about as much use to Him as a hole in the head. All they did was keep letting Him down. I like almost anybody in the Bible better than the Disciples. If you want to know the truth, the guy I like best in the Bible, next to Jesus, was that lunatic and all, that lived in the tombs and kept cutting himself with stones. I like him ten times as much as the Disciples, that poor bastard.

Chapter 14

I felt like jumping out the window. I probably would've, too, if I'd been sure somebody'd cover me up as soon as I landed. I didn't want a bunch of stupid rubbernecks looking at me when I was all gory.

Chapter 14

He kept saying they were too new and bourgeois. That was his favorite goddam word. He read it somewhere or heard it somewhere, Everything I had was bourgeois as hell. Even my fountain pen was bourgeois. He borrowed it off me all the time, but it was bourgeois anyway.

Chapter 15

The thing is, it's really hard to be roommates with people if your suitcases are much better than theirs - if yours are really good ones and theirs aren't. You think if they're intelligent and all, the other person, and have a good sense of humor, that they don't give a damn whose suitcases are better, but they do. They really do. It's one of the reasons why I roomed with a stupid bastard like Stradlater. At least his suitcases were as good as mine.

Chapter 15

Catholics are always trying to find out if you're Catholic.

Chapter 15

Goddam money. It always ends up making you blue as hell.

Chapter 15

He was singing that song, "If a body catch a body coming through the rye." He had a pretty little voice too. He was just singing for the hell of it, you could tell. The cars zoomed by, the brakes screeched all over the place, his parents paid no attention to him, and he kept on walking next to the kerb and singing "If a body catch a body coming through the rye." It made me feel better. It made me feel not so depressed anymore.

Chapter 16

If a girl looks swell when she meets you, who gives a damn if she's late? Nobody.

Chapter 17

"Promise me you'll let your hair grow. Crew cuts are getting corny. And your hair's so lovely."

Lovely my ass.

Chapter 17

The waiter came up, and I ordered a Coke for her - she didn't drink - and a Scotch and soda for myself, but the sonuvabitch wouldn't bring you one, so I had a Coke too.

Chapter 17

Take most people, they're crazy about cars. They worry if they get a little scratch on them, and they're always talking about how many miles they get to a gallon, and if they get a brand-new car already they start thinking about trading it in for one that's even newer. I don't even like old cars. I mean they don't even interest me. I'd rather have a goddam horse. A horse is at least human, for God's sake.

Chapter 17

"You ought to go to a boy's school sometimes. Try it sometime," I said. "It's full of phonies, and all you do is study so that you can learn enough to be smart enough to be able to buy a goddam Cadillac some day, and you have to keep making believe you give a damn if the football team loses, and all you do is talk about girls and liquor and sex all day, and everybody sticks together in these dirty little goddam cliques. The guys that are on the basketball team stick together, the goddam intellectuals stick together, the guys that play bridge stick together. Even the guys that belong to the goddam Book-of-the-Month Club stick together."

Chapter 17

Girls. You never know what they're going to think.

Chapter 18

All these angels start coming out of the boxes and everywhere, guys carrying crucifixes and stuff all over the place, and the whole bunch of them - thousands of them - singing "Come All Ye Faithful" like mad. Big deal. It's supposed to be religious as hell, I know, and very pretty and all, but I can't see anything religious or pretty, for God's sake, about a bunch of actors carrying crucifixes all over the stage. When they all finished and started going out the boxes again, you could tell they could hardly wait to get a cigarette of something. I saw it with old Sally Hayes the year before, and she kept saying how beautiful it was, the costumes and all. I said old Jesus probably would've puked if He could see it.

Chapter 18

Anyway, I'm sort of glad they've got the atomic bomb invented. If there's ever another war, I'm going to sit right the hell on top of it. I'll volunteer for it, I swear to God I will.

Chapter 18

People never give your message to anybody.

Chapter 20

Boy, when you're dead, they really fix you up. I hope to hell when I do die somebody has sense enough to just dump me in the river or something. Anything except sticking me in a goddam cemetery. People coming and putting a bunch of flowers on your stomach on Sunday, and all that crap. Who wants flowers when you're dead? Nobody.

Chapter 20

When the weather's nice, my parents go out quite frequently and stick a bunch of flowers on old Allie's grave. I went with them a couple of times, but I cut it out. In the first place, I don't enjoy seeing him in that crazy cemetery. Surrounded by dead guys and tombstones and all. It wasn't too bad when the sun was out, but twice - twice - we were there when it started to rain. It was awful. It rained on his lousy tombstone, and it rained on the grass on his stomach. It rained all over the place. All the visitors that were visiting the cemetery started running like hell over to their cars. That's what nearly drove me crazy. All the visitors could get in their cars and turn on their radios and all and then go someplace nice for dinner - everybody except Allie. I couldn't stand it. I know it's only his body and all that's in the cemetery, and his soul's in Heaven and all that crap, but I couldn't stand it anyway. I just wished he wasn't there.

Chapter 21

It's funny. All you have to do is say something nobody understands and they'll do practically anything you want them to.

Chapter 21

'You know that song, "If a body catch a body comin' through the rye"?'...

'It's "If a body meet a body coming through the rye"! old Phoebe said. "It's a poem. By Robert Burns."

Chapter 22

Anyway, I keep picturing all these little kids playing some game in this big field of rye and all. Thousands of little kids, and nobody's around - nobody big, I mean - except me. And I'm standing on the edge of some crazy cliff. What I have to do, I have to catch everybody if they start to go over the cliff - I mean if they're running and they don't look where they're going I have to come out from somewhere and catch them. That's all I do all day. I'd just be the catcher in the rye and all. I know it's crazy, but that's the only thing I'd really like to be.

Chapter 22

I have a feeling that you're riding for some kind of a terrible, terrible fall. But I don't honestly know what kind.... It may be the kind where, at the age of thirty, you sit in some bar hating everybody who comes in looking as if he might have played football in college. Then again, you may pick up just enough education to hate people who say, 'It's a secret between he and I.' Or you may end up in some business office, throwing paper clips at the nearest stenographer. I just don't know.

Chapter 24

This fall I think you're riding for - it's a special kind of fall, a horrible kind. The man falling isn't permitted to feel or hear himself hit bottom. He just keeps falling and falling. The whole arrangement's designed for men who, at some time or other in their lives, were looking for something their own environment couldn't supply them with. Or they thought their own environment couldn't supply them with. So they gave up looking. They gave it up before they ever really even got started.

Chapter 24

Among other things, you'll find that you're not the first person who was ever confused and frightened and even sickened by human behavior. You're by no means alone on that score, you'll be excited and stimulated to know. Many, many men have been just as troubled morally and spiritually as you are right now. Happily, some of them kept records of their troubles. You'll learn from them - if you want to. Just as someday, if you have something to offer, someone will learn something from you. It's a beautiful reciprocal arrangement. And it isn't education. It's history. It's poetry.

Chapter 24

If you had a million years to do it in, you couldn't rub out even half the 'Fuck you' signs in the world. It's impossible.

Chapter 25

I was the only one left in the tomb then. I sort of liked it, in a way. It was so nice and peaceful.

Chapter 25

That's the nice thing about carrouseles, they always play the same songs.

Chapter 25

All the kids kept trying to grab for the gold ring, and so was old Phoebe, and I was sort of afraid she'd fall off the goddam horse, but I didn't say anything or do anything. The thing with kids is, if they want to grab for the gold ring, you have to let them do it, and not say anything. If they fall off, they fall off, but it's bad if you say anything to them.

Chapter 25

I felt so damn happy all of a sudden, the way old Phoebe kept going around and around . . . It was just that she looked so damn nice, the way she kept going around and around, in her blue coat and all.

Chapter 25

Don't ever tell anybody anything. If you do, you start missing everybody.

Chapter 26

TEXT 6: WITNESS

Themes

These are the issues, messages and insights into life that the film wishes to address, and which give the film its sense of unity. However, there can also be issues and messages in a film that readers may devise for themselves. And there may be major and minor themes – those which are very important to the film, and those ones which are less important.

Themes may be presented directly or indirectly.

When dealing with themes, look for the issues which the film seems to confirm – these are things that he will deal with positively. And look for issues which he seems to challenge [disagree with in some way], as he will probably not deal with these positively.

A list of possible themes would be almost endless, and a single film will address only a few. Themes often involve the nature of some kind of conflict, which may be intra-personal, inter-personal, intra-national, inter-national, passive and/or active, and its traumatic effects and moral implications and outcomes.

Belonging

Belonging provides the individual with a sense of being part of a larger group. Sharing the attitudes and values of a group is a powerful motivating force. The Amish work towards common goals. A poignant scene in the film is the barn raising, where the men demonstrate a high level of cooperation with each other to complete the task.

In the opening scenes, of the funeral of Rachel's husband, there is communal grief at the loss of one of their own. The women gather about Rachel while the men talk amongst themselves. The attitudes and values shared between the Amish, give meaning and purpose to their lives.

Consider where we find a sense of belonging through shared attitudes and values and common goals:

family, ethnic group, school, work, football club, spiritual faith groups, choral societies, motorcycle clubs, community service clubs etc. We find meaning and purpose in associating with people who share things in common with us. We see the world through the groups we belong to. We have a sense of self and identity among those whom we can relate to. Eli belongs to those who believe in the literal truth of the Bible. He lives accordingly, bearing witness to Amish values. His belonging to the community lets him live a life that he finds desirable and righteous. In juxtaposition, John Book is also a man of strong moral values, in his case this is demonstrated by his refusal to join the small group of corrupt police officers.

Family values are also portrayed in the film, demonstrating family ties under duress. Book is concerned about his sister's fatherless children and her unstable lifestyle – he believes in the values of stable family life. Elaine offers her car to her brother and gives hospitality to Rachel and Samuel when he needs a place for them. Eli and Rachel are concerned for Samuel. The film's presentation of home is significant, as the basis of a sense of belonging and identity, especially in times of trouble.

The Price of Belonging

Belonging to a group may well mean suppressing one's own desires for those of the group. Rachel has only two options within the Amish community. She may remain a widow or marry Daniel. John Book's presence as an outsider causes her to reconsider her status; for a time she questions her Amish world and considers the possibilities of the outside world. Symbolically, she removes her bonnet, the emblem of her Amish identity. But by the end of the film, the final shots see her replace the bonnet, thereby reaffirming her place as being among the Amish.

John Book has joined the police force, and as a police officer, the values of the force partially define the person that he is. However, while he wishes to fight crime and seek justice, his exposure to the violence of his work affects him. He deals with the suspect outside the nightclub with unnecessary violence, as he also hits the mocking tourist. He has become desensitised to violence because of his work, and he resorts to violence as a means of conflict resolution.

Not Belonging

There are also those who pretend to belong, but do not. Schaeffer, McFee and Fergie are corrupt police officers who pretend to belong to the ranks of the honest. The police force, and the community respect that it confers, serves to conceal the real criminal motives of these men to deal drugs. As a result, their true identities are not immediately apparent to the wider world. At one stage, John Book poses as an Amish, with ironic results when he bashes a mocking tourist. The tourist himself understands nothing of the Amish ways, and has only come to observe them as a curiosity.

The Amish themselves choose not to belong to the wider society around them. They shun the practices and conventions of modern society to live in traditional simplicity that forsakes modern technology for traditional domestic and work practices and a strict and comprehensive adherence to their understanding of the Christian [Anabaptist] faith that even regulates dress, diet and social behaviour. Yet while they choose not to belong to wider society so as to avoid its practices and conventions, they still find belonging in their own small community where they can live according to their own attitudes and values.

This also raises the issue of minorities and belonging. While they may in one sense belong to their own group or subculture, they remain quite apart from those around them, especially the dominant culture. This may lead to misunderstandings and rejection between the dominant and minority groups, so raising the issue of how people can belong to a society while rejecting its dominant attitudes and values in favour of their own minority ones.

Out of the Group

Samuel and his mother make their way through the unfamiliar violent backstreets of Philadelphia, well away from the familiar environment of the Amish community. Rachel prays before eating in the hot dog diner, demonstrating how alienated she is from secular society. Book's attack on the young tourist attracts police attention, as his violent actions are out of Amish character. In both cases, Rachel and Book do not conform to the expectations of their new environments, but they have, at the same time, remained true to their own individual selves – a devout Amish and a tough cop. Neither can change easily to take up the attitudes and

values of their new environments.

Outside the Group

Samuel approaches the Hasidic Jewish man at the station, thinking from his dress that he is Amish, only to be surprised that he is not. The murdered drug dealer is really an undercover cop, and the murderer is really a police officer. Police officer McFee stands proudly with his citation in a photo, presenting himself as an honest cop despite his corruption. John Book poses as an Amish farmer. Appearances are presented as deceptive, and we are not able to rely on them to determine who people really are. Appearances do not necessarily tell the truth, and it may be difficult for an outsider to make accurate judgments based on appearance alone.



The interior of an Amish home, showing its plain and traditional appearance. [Source: Wikipedia]



Signs may be found in areas with large Amish populations alerting motorists to their buggies. This sign clearly

indicates rejection by the Amish of modern ways. [Source: Wikipedia]



The horse-drawn buggy is the standard form of Amish transport. [Source: Wikipedia]

Structure

This is how the film is put together, and is related to chronology. The film is structured into 12 scene sequences. Each scene sequence has its own number and name and relates directly to the theme that it describes.

Chronology

This is how the action of the film is arranged in respect of time. This film is basically *linear*, as it begins at a point in time and ends at a later point in time. While it is not entirely clear, the action of this film covers several weeks.

Exposition

Exposition is when the narrator or a character simply tells what happened in the past, called the *back-story*, being the history behind the circumstances at the start of the main story. It is often used to lend depth or reality to the main story. A back-story may include the history of characters, objects, countries, or other elements of the main story, and is usually revealed, partly or in full, chronologically or otherwise, as the main narrative unfolds.

Witness presents certain problems in this regard. It is a film set largely in a minority group whose culture is neither understood nor even known by mainstream society. So the film needed to be written and made in a way that explained enough of Amish culture for the audience to understand. Poignant scenes of exposition include the barnraising, as well as the conversation between grandfather and grandson about guns and pacifism.

Continuity

Films do not tell everything that happens during a period of time. The film with its chronology of a few weeks relates only those aspects of the characters' lives that it feels are important. However, there must be a certain *continuity* in the film; there needs to be consistency in the characteristics of people, objects, places and events as perceived by the viewer, basically meaning that the events of the film run logically and smoothly despite the breaks of time.

Chronology:

Modern [the film was released in 1985].

Period of time:

Several weeks.

Style

Orientation [Point Of View ,Voice]

This is about who is telling the story. It is told largely from Book and Jacob's points of view.

Impartiality

Screenwriters are not impartial. They will attempt to influence the reader in many ways, both favourably and unfavourably. This is further complicated by the attitudes and values of the director in her interpretation of the overall story, and also by the actors in their interpretations of their individual roles. Screenwriters will tell only what they want to tell or address, in the way and to the extent that they want to tell or address it, and they ignore what they do not want to tell or address. They may make assertions that are positive and/or negative, and may assert ideas or controvert them. Directors give their own particular interpretations to scripts, including instructions to actors and camera operators, decisions and alterations to the setting, and decisions on the scenes to be included and omitted from the completed film. Actors also work out their own interpretations of their individual characters, which add a further layer of personal interpretation into the story by those who are creating and presenting it. As a murder mystery there are protagonists and antagonists ['good guys' and 'bad guys'] in *Witness*, with various characters lining up on the sides of right and wrong [or good and evil] as they do in many narratives. This film presents its characters such that the audience can empathize with the protagonists [Book and Jacob] and be repelled by the antagonists, being the corrupt cops.

Dialogue

Witness has taken care to reproduce the Amish speech and accent. In some scenes the Amish speak their own Germanic language, but in important scenes they speak English as an obvious concession to audience understanding.

Wit and humour

While a serious film as a whole, being a murder mystery, there are humorous scenes. Some humour is sexual in nature and plays upon the extremely prudish attitude towards sex that is an Amish characteristic. Some humour is violent, again playing on the pacifist attitudes of the Amish.

Symbols

The rural environment

The Amish are depicted as being in peaceful harmony in their idyllic rural environment, whereas cities are depicted as dysfunctional and their dwellers as alienated.

Characters

A character is any person who appears in a text. There are major characters and minor characters. Major characters carry most of the action and are usually more rounded than minor characters: the viewer learns a great deal more about their world view [attitudes and values], motivations and behaviour. Minor characters carry less of the action, but are still important in their own way.

Aspects of characterization

The character's own appearance, world view, motivations and behaviour.

The attitudes, motivations and behaviour that characters display towards each other.

Characters, like people, can be very complex; they have strengths and weaknesses, they face challenges, they achieve and fail, they undergo the range of emotional feelings, they think, speak and do. And also, like people, they can think and behave in ways that are unpredictable or never fully understood by others.

Protagonists and Antagonists

A film may have main characters who are set against each other in some kind of conflict. The one forcing the conflict is the *antagonist*, the other is the *protagonist*. The antagonist may often be on the side of evil, the protagonist on the side of good. *Witness* offers the usual perspective for a murder mystery, with good guys and bad guys. Its interest comes from the bad guys being corrupt cops, and its setting being in an Amish community. It also offers something of a philosophical attitude towards life as it juxtaposes the idyllic Amish rural community with the alienation of city life.

Character as symbol or representation

Characters may represent a given quality or abstraction. Rather than simply being people, they stand for something larger. Everyone seems to be confronting an uncertain future in a variety of ways: Book is the archetypal straight cop – he fights crime, even when the criminals are his own colleagues. Jacob epitomises both the innocence of childhood and the integrity of a minority group that clings to its anachronistic culture. Schaeffer represents the corruption and alienation of city life.

Character trait thesaurus*Accepting:*

Complacent, docile, lenient, submissive.

Admirable:

Commendable, exemplary, meritorious, praiseworthy.

Aggressive:

Assertive, belligerent, forthright, militant.

Amiable:

Affable, considerate, likeable.

Angry:

Enraged, incensed, infuriated, vexed.

Apprehensive:

Hesitant, nervous, tentative.

Ardent:

Fervent, fiery, passionate.

Argumentative:

Cantankerous, critical, intractable, quarrelsome.

Assertive:

Dominating, empowered, forthright, insistent.

Authentic:

Genuine, honest, legitimate, reliable.

Barbaric:

Brutish, uncivilized, primitive, savage, basic.

Biased:

Discriminatory, narrow-minded, partial, prejudiced, subjective.

Bloodthirsty:

Murderous, vicious, unprincipled, warlike.

Bold:

Audacious, brazen, impertinent, insolent.

Charming:

Agreeable, appealing, courteous,

manipulative.

Circumspect:

Careful, cautious, guarded, prudent, watchful.

Contemptible:

Corrupt, despicable, scorned, worthless.

Courageous:

Brave, gallant, heroic, intrepid, valiant.

Cowardly:

Faint-hearted, fearful, irresolute, spiritless, timid.

Deceptive:

Artful, cunning, dishonest, equivocal, fraudulent, glib.

Difficult:

Defiant, irascible, provocative, rebellious.

Discontented:

Angst-ridden, alienated, disillusioned.

Disloyal:

Defiant, faithless, seditious, traitorous.

Dogmatic:

Arrogant, emphatic, uncompromising, intolerant authoritative.

Domineering:

Opinionated, officious, truculent.

Downtrodden:

Oppressed, persecuted, subservient, submissive.

Generous:

Benevolent, altruistic, kind-hearted, magnanimous.

Good:

Dutiful, honorable, magnanimous, moral, obedient, virtuous.

Gullible:

Credulous, deceived, duped, manipulated.

Flattering:

Ingratiating, insincere, obsequious,
smooth-tongued, unctuous.

Happy:

Content, cheerful, ecstatic, exhilarated,
jubilant.

Heartless:

Brutal, callous, cold-blooded, pitiless.

Hypocritical:

Two-faced, treacherous, perfidious,
sanctimonious.

Idealistic:

Optimistic, utopian, romantic, visionary.

Ignorant:

Unaware, uneducated, unintelligent,
unenlightened.

Immoral:

Corrupt, depraved, malevolent, malicious,
iniquitous.

Impatient:

Abrupt, brusque, curt, restive, rash.

Impetuous:

Impulsive, spontaneous, rash, reckless.

Intelligent:

Articulate, astute, perceptive, ingenious.

Interesting:

Captivating, compelling, fascinating,
intriguing.

Just:

Dispassionate, ethical, fair-minded,
impartial, unprejudiced.

Loyal:

Devoted, faithful, obedient, steadfast,
trustworthy.

Malleable:

Adaptable, pliable, flexible.

Malevolent:

Draconian, malicious, venomous,

vindictive.

Manipulative:

Artful, calculating, conniving, scheming,
shrewd.

Materialistic:

Acquisitive, selfish, commercial,
opportunistic, secular, worldly.

Mean:

Churlish, parsimonious, stinting,
uncharitable.

Merciless:

Cruel, inhumane, ruthless, unforgiving.

Militant:

Defiant, hostile, warlike.

Moody:

Temperamental, volatile, petulant,
changeable.

Moral:

Decent, ethical, honourable, principled,
scrupulous.

Particular:

Fussy, fastidious, meticulous, punctilious.

Political:

Expedient, cunning, designing,
Machiavellian.

Pragmatic:

Practical, commonsensical, expedient,
hard-headed, realistic.

Racist:

Bigot, chauvinistic, dogmatic, supremacist,
zealot.

Biased, bigoted, discriminatory,
prejudiced, intolerant, xenophobic.

Religious:

Devout, pious, faithful, spiritual.

Resilient:

Ebullient, irrepressible, optimistic, robust.

Sanctimonious:

Self-righteous, unctuous.

Self-interested:

Self-centred, self-focused, hedonistic, narcissistic, self-indulgent.

Sinful:

Corrupt, immoral, profligate, sacrilegious, ungodly.

Unbiased:

Broad-minded, egalitarian, judicial, impartial, objective, tolerant.

Unhappy:

Despondent, disconsolate, dispirited, forlorn, melancholy, morose.

Unjust:

Discriminatory, illegal, iniquitous, partial, prejudiced.

Wicked:

Depraved, diabolical, fiendish, heinous, odious.

Wise:

Sagacious, circumspect, astute.

Character emotional states

Rounded characterization has the characters experiencing a range of human emotions.

Book	Fear of assassination. Affection for Rachel. Protective toward Samuel.
Rachel	Protective toward Samuel. Conflicted by affection for Book and her Amish values.
Samuel	Wonder at the wider world. Admiration for Book
Eli Lapp	Desire for Samuel to grow up properly. Worry for Rachel Fear of trouble in his community.
Schaeffer	Desire to remain undiscovered at all costs.

Character relationships

Characters relate to each other in variously different ways.

Book/Lapp	Lapp is prepared to help Book but he is concerned for the negative influences on his community.
Book/Schaeffer	Once a manager/employee relationship, it becomes a hunter/hunted relationship when Schaeffer discovers that Book knows too much.
Book/Rachel	There is an attraction between them, but they also realize the problems of their very different backgrounds.
Book/Jacob	Book is attempting to protect a child who does not realize the danger that he is in.

Major Characters

John Book

Status: Primary character (Protagonist).

Role: Honest cop.

Circumstances: Never married. Devoted to his work. Has a sister who is a single mother.

Personality: Tough cop, but caring rather than cynical.

World view:

Devoted to his work and professionalism. Which creates ...

Motivations: To find the killers. To protect Jacob. Which lead to ...

Behaviour: Does all he can to solve the case. Is prepared to risk his life in the course of duty. And may also lead to ...

Development: realizes that his romantic relationship will not be successful because of the great cultural differences between them.

Samuel Lapp

Status: Primary character.

Role: Witness to a murder.

Circumstances: Only child of a deceased Amish farmer.

Presentation: Dresses in typical Amish clothing.

Personality: Quiet and reserved.

World view: That of a child Amish. Which creates ...

Motivations: To tell the truth. Which leads to ...

Behaviour: A sense of great adventure and wonder when travelling outside his community. And may also lead to ..

Development: Difficult to determine.

Rachel Lapp

Status: Primary character.

Role: Mother of Samuel. Attracted to outside world because of relationship with John Book.

Circumstances: Married with a child.

Presentation: Typically demur Amish woman.

World view: Amish world view, but also wondering about life outside the Amish community. Which creates ...

Motivations: To be a good mother to Samuel. Curious about John Book and outside world. Which leads to ...

Behaviour: Protective of Samuel. Commences friendship with John Book. And may also lead to ...

Development: Decides she is best to remain with Amish.

Paul Schaeffer

Status: Primary character (Antagonist)

Role: Corrupt police chief.

Circumstances: Married with children.

Presentation: Early middle age.

World view: Behaves like an honest cop, but is on the make in the drug trade – cynical about his role as a law enforcer. Which creates ...

Motivations: To make money out of drugs. To remain undiscovered by killing Book. Which leads to ..

Behaviour: Trades drugs illegally. Tries to kill Book. And may also lead to ...

Development: None – never acknowledges his own wrongdoing.

Minor Characters

James McFee

Status: Secondary character (Antagonist).

Role: Corrupt police detective.

Circumstances: Acknowledged in media for community work.

World view: Behaves like an honest cop, and has been recognised for it, but is on the make in the drug trade – cynical about his role as a law enforcer. Which creates ...

Motivations: To make money out of drugs. To remain undiscovered by killing Book. Which lead to ...

Behaviour: Trades drugs illegally. Tries to kill Book. And may also lead to ...

Development: None – never acknowledges his own wrongdoing.

Eli Lapp

Status: Secondary character.

Role: His words and actions explain Amish culture to the audience.

Circumstances: Elderly Amish farmer.

Personality: A teacher of the Amish way to Samuel.

World view: Strict Amish. Which creates ...

Motivations: To do right. To be a father figure to Samuel in the absence of his father. Which lead to ...

Behaviour: Teaches Samuel the Amish way. Helps Book. And may also lead to ...

Development: Never changes beliefs – but does his attitude towards Book.

Daniel Hochleitner

Status: Secondary character.

Role: To be John Book's rival for the attentions of Rachel Lapp.

Circumstances: Amish farmer.

Personality: A little more outgoing than other Amish men, with a sense of humour.

World view: Amish. Which creates ...

Motivations: To court Rachel. Which leads to ...

Behaviour: Spending time with Rachel. Rivalry with Book. And may also lead to ...

Development: Remains constant in attentions to Rachel.

Important Quotations

Rachel Lapp: Are you enjoying your reading?

John Book: Oh yeah. I'm learning a lot about manure. Very interesting.

[*Book is trying to milk a cow*]

Eli Lapp: You never had your hands on a teat before?

John Book: Not one this big.

[*Pause, then Eli Lapp roars with laughter*]

Rachel Lapp: [*Book and Carter are driving around a rough neighbourhood looking for a suspect that fits Samuel's description, with Rachel and Samuel*] Where are you taking us?

John Book: I'm sorry... we're looking for a suspect in the area, we'd like the kid to take a look at him.

Rachel Lapp: You have no right to keep us here.

John Book: Oh, yes I do. Your son's a material witness to a homicide.

Rachel Lapp: You don't understand. We want nothing to do with your laws.

John Book: Doesn't surprise me. A lot of people I meet are like that. [*after Samuel and Rachel speak in German*] What'd he say?

Rachel Lapp: He asked who you are, your name. I told him we didn't need to know anything about you.

John Book: Book... John Book!

Rachel Lapp: [*as she and Samuel are walking through the police station with Book*] When can we leave the city?

John Book: We're trying to get this done as quickly as possible, then you can go. But, Samuel's probably gonna have to come back to testify. I'm sorry.

Rachel Lapp: No, you are not, you are glad.

John Book: Huh?

Rachel Lapp: Because now you have a witness.

John Book: Yeah, now I got a witness.

Rachel Lapp: I just don't like the idea of my son spending all this time with a man who carries a gun and goes around whacking people!

John Book: [*in disbelief*] Whacking?... whacking?

Rachel Lapp: I should tell you this kind of coat doesn't have buttons. See? Hooks and eyes.

John Book: Something wrong with buttons?

Rachel Lapp: Buttons are proud and vain, not plain.

John Book: Got anything against zippers?

Rachel Lapp: Are you making fun of me?

John Book: No.

John Book: How do I look - I mean, do I look Amish?

Rachel Lapp: [*nods*] You look plain.

Tourist Lady: [*Book is in town with Eli. Eli and the other Amish are trying to avoid the tourists with cameras*] Hi! We're just here for the day, would you mind...

John Book: Lady, you take my picture with that thing and I'm gonna rip your brassiere off... and strangle you with it! You got that?

John Book: [to Rachel] If we'd made love last night I'd have to stay. Or you'd have to leave.

Eli Lapp: This gun of the hand is for the taking of human life. We believe it is wrong to take a life. That is only for God. Many times wars have come and people have said to us: you must fight, you must kill, it is the only way to preserve the good. But Samuel, there's never only one way. Remember that. Would you kill another man?

Samuel Lapp: I would only kill the bad man.

Eli Lapp: Only the bad man. I see. And you know these bad men by sight? You are able to look into their hearts and see this badness?

Samuel Lapp: I can see what they do. I have seen it.

Eli Lapp: And having seen you become one of them? Don't you understand? What you take into your hands, you take into your heart. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing. Go and finish your chores now.

Samuel Lapp: Yes Grofvater.

Eli Lapp: You be careful out among the English.

Rachel Lapp: He's leaving, isn't he?

Eli Lapp: Tomorrow morning. He'll need his city clothes.

Rachel Lapp: But why? What does he have to go back to?

Eli Lapp: He's going back to his world, where he belongs. He knows it, and you know it, too.

John Book: What happened to Hochleitner?

Rachel Lapp: He went home. He's a friend of the family... he's like a son to Eli.

[*Notices John planing a board*]

Rachel Lapp: You know carpentry. Can you do anything else?

John Book: Whacking. I'm hell at whacking.

Rachel Lapp: Your sister says you don't have a family.

John Book: No, I don't.

Rachel Lapp: She thinks that you ought to get married and have children of your own, instead of trying to be a father to hers.

John Book: Yeah.

Rachel Lapp: Except she thinks you are afraid of the responsibility.

John Book: That's interesting... anything else?

Rachel Lapp: Mm hm... she thinks you like policing because you think you are right about everything and you're the only one who can do anything, and when you drink a lot of beer you say things like 'none of the other police know a crook from a bag of elbows!'. At least I think that's what she said.

Daniel Hochleitner: Your hole, it is better now?

John Book: Yeah, it's pretty much healed.

Daniel Hochleitner: Good. Then you can go home.

[Book moves to intervene against some locals harassing the Amish]

Eli Lapp: It's not our way.

John Book: It's my way.

John Book: Samuel, the man who was killed tonight was a policeman, and it's my job to find out what happened. I want you to tell me everything you saw when you went into the bathroom.

Samuel Lapp: Um... there were two.

John Book: There were TWO men?

Samuel Lapp: I only saw one.

John Book: *[turning to Carter]* Does anybody else know about this?

Det Sgt Elden Carter: No, no one's had a chance to talk to him.

John Book: What did he look like, the man that you saw?

Samuel Lapp: He was... like him.

[pointing at Carter]

John Book: He was a black man, had black skin?

Samuel Lapp: Ya, but not Schtulpig.

John Book: Schtulpig? What's 'Schtulpig'?

Rachel Lapp: On a farm, when a pig is born small like that, it's called schtulpig, a runt.

John Book: Oh, so he wasn't a runt. He was a big guy, like me?

[John puts his arm around an embarrassed Carter]

Samuel Lapp: Big guy!

Rachel Lapp: We're all very happy that you're going to live, John Book. We didn't know what we would do with you if you'd died.

Sample essay topics

Prompt

‘A person’s sense of individual identity is always changing in response to their experiences of life.’

Task

Use the prompt as the basis for a piece of writing exploring the idea that *a person’s sense of individual identity is always changing in response to their experiences of life*. Your piece is to be published in an anthology written by VCE students for the wider school community. You must draw on ideas and issues suggested by a text or texts from the list above.

Prompt

‘Our desires to develop as individuals may often lead us into conflict with wider society.’

Task

Use the prompt as the basis for a piece of writing exploring the idea that *our desires to develop as individuals may often lead us into conflict with wider society*. Your piece is to be published in an anthology written by VCE students for the wider school community. You must draw on ideas and issues suggested by a text or texts from the list above.

Prompt

‘The individual’s sense of personal identity is dependent upon their sense of belonging.’

Task

Use the prompt as the basis for a piece of writing exploring the idea that *the individual’s sense of personal identity is dependent upon their sense of belonging*. Your piece is to be published in an anthology written by VCE students for the wider school community. You must draw on ideas and issues suggested by a text or texts from the list above.

Prompt

‘Conflict between the individual and society is inevitable; it does not matter how it occurs but how it is resolved.’

Task

Use the prompt as the basis for a piece of writing exploring the idea that *conflict between the individual and society is inevitable; it does not matter how it occurs but how it is resolved*. Your piece is to be published in an anthology written by VCE students for the wider school community. You must draw on ideas and issues suggested by a text or texts from the list above.

Prompt

‘Keeping a sense of belonging is more difficult for people who belong to minority groups than it is for others.’

Task

Use the prompt as the basis for a piece of writing exploring the idea that *keeping a sense of belonging is more difficult for people who belong to minority groups than it is for others*. Your piece is to be published in an anthology written by VCE students for the wider school community. You must draw on ideas and issues suggested by a text or texts from the list above.

Prompt

‘People who feel alienated from mainstream society struggle to keep their individual identity.’

Task

Use the prompt as the basis for a piece of writing exploring the idea that *people who feel alienated from mainstream society struggle to keep their individual identity*. Your piece is to be published in an anthology written by VCE students for the wider school community. You must draw on ideas and issues suggested by a text or texts from the list above.

Prompt

‘It is society itself that gives individuals their sense of identity and belonging.’

Task

Use the prompt as the basis for a piece of writing exploring the idea that *it is society itself that gives individuals their sense of identity and belonging*. Your piece is to be published in an anthology written by VCE students for the wider school community. You must draw on ideas and issues suggested by a text or texts from the list above.

Supplementary texts

The Catcher In The Rye

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Catcher_in_the_Rye

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._D._Salinger

Witness

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0090329/>

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Witness_\(1985_film\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Witness_(1985_film))

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amish>

<http://www.800padutch.com/atafaq.shtml>

Bombshells

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joanna_Murray-Smith

Sometimes Gladness

<http://www.australianbiography.gov.au/subjects/dawe/>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bruce_Dawe

Final examination advice

- Analyse the key words in the topic. Brainstorm synonyms to assist your use of varied expression in the essay. Make connections to major themes.
- Do not simply summarise the plot of the text. You must show the ability to analyse the events and characters.
- The content of your essay should be based on the chosen topic. Discuss the whole topic in each paragraph. Do not incur fluency problems by totally separating the relevant ideas. Avoid including irrelevant information.
- Avoid generalizations about the characters and issues in the text. Make specific and well-supported assertions about all aspects of the text.
- Avoid repetition of examples, ideas and expression. Repetition creates the impression of a limited knowledge of the text and also reflects poor planning and structure.
- Avoid including large quotes. Key quotes should be carefully selected, limited in length and linked to the topic of discussion.
- Plan the main ideas in your essay and express them in clear topic sentences at the beginning of each paragraph.
- Write and edit clearly in pen, not pencil. Examiners cannot assess what they cannot read.
- Ensure spelling is accurate, especially of characters' names, in order to show fundamental knowledge of the text.

Do not use first person "I". There is no need to introduce ideas in a personal way, because clearly the whole essay contains what you believe and know.