

Module Statement: Main Ideas

- Individual and collective experience
- Emotions and qualities
- Motivations
- Behaviour – inconsistent, paradoxical and anomalous
- Power of storytelling
- Representation as a way of giving shape and meaning to a particular experience: helping the composer AND the audience to structure a position on an experience

What is Representation?

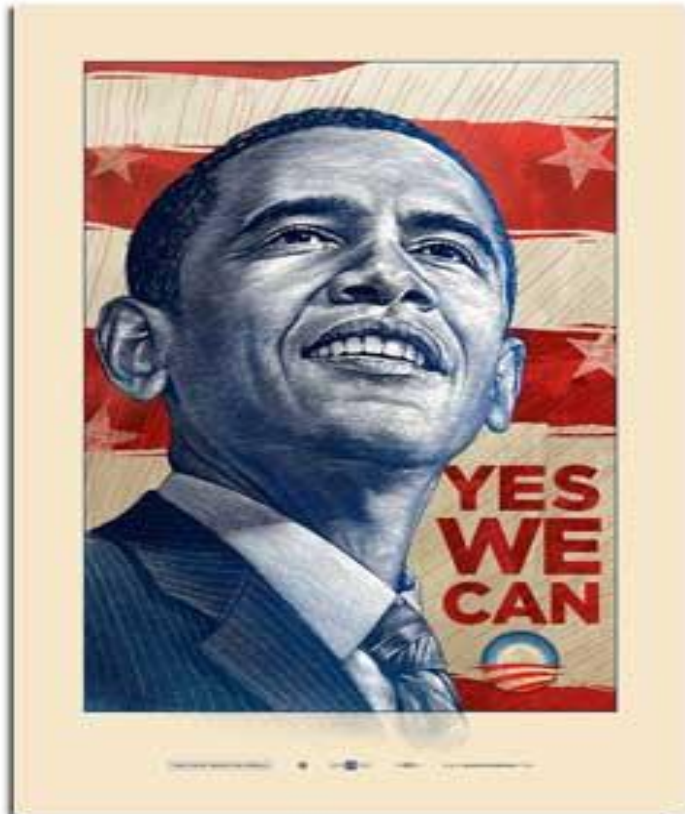
English Textual Concepts

Representation is the depiction of a thing, person or idea in written, visual, performed or spoken language. In representing we make choices from the language offered by these modes. Representation may aim to reflect the natural world as realistically as possible or may aim to convey the essence of people, objects, experiences and ideas in a more abstract way.

*There are many different ways of seeing the world as our view is framed by context and culture. This means that **representation cannot mirror actual reality but each representation offers a different construction of the world and of experience in it.***

Representation: Obama Hero Vs Villain?

Idolisation



Sold Out

Caricature



Wafa Taoube

Types of Experiences

- Growing Up
- Grieving
- Parenting/Mentoring
- Sibling Rivalry
- Political Awakening
- Sexual Awakening
- Temptation
- Rejection
- Loss of Innocence
- Crisis of Faith
- Shaping of identity
- Pursuit of existence and purpose
- Empowerment
- Disempowerment
- Disillusionment
- Persecution
- Milestones
- Psychological, Spiritual, Intellectual and Emotional

What does an experience involve?

- Tends to be active AND sensory
- **Emotional reactions and intellectual reflections**
- Voluntary and/or involuntary
- Inevitable – confrontation of mortality
- Knowledge gained by repeated trials – process
- May involve risk of some kind
- Assumptions are challenged and/or confirmed= we have been transformed in some way by an experience
- Can result in the expansion of knowledge
- Can result in the restriction of space
- Polychromatic rainbow of emotions – dynamic and shifting and recursive

Motivations Drive Human Experiences?

- Reason for why we act the way we do
- Reason for why we are willing to take risks or not
- Reason for why we set the goals we do
- Reason for why we may seem to act illogically

A dark green rectangular box with white text. The text is arranged in five lines, reading: "WHAT WOULD YOU ATTEMPT TO DO IF YOU KNEW YOU COULD NOT FAIL?". The font is a clean, sans-serif typeface.

Human Experience is a Continuum

- Religious metaphor:

We can react as:

- Fundamentalists
- Moderates
- Agnostics
- Atheists

- We can be fundamentalist in one belief and moderate in another; we are a mix of qualities and they may show up or retreat depending on the situation.

Sarah Kay: Texts AND Human Experiences

*When I hear other people's stories, I like to believe that they contribute to my 'Encyclopaedia of Human Experience.' The stories I hear help me expand my definition of what **love is**, what pain **feels like**, what sacrifice **means**, what laughter **can do**.*

Discussing this quote with students :

- a) The connotations of **encyclopaedia** points to the range of experience but also the diversity involved in experience
- b) The ideas that hearing stories can be just as effective an experience as undergoing the experience – responding to texts about human experiences is an interactive process
- c) Texts help us to define, to describe, to expand, to reflect about human experiences

Whose story is being told? Whose experience is being told?

- Composer
- Character
- Society
- Culture
- Gender
- Outsider
- Victor
- Persecuted



- Purpose
- Point of view
- Perspective
- Representation
- Choice of medium and form
- Language features
- Where it will be published? Audience

When listening to stories...

- Look for:
 - What viewpoints and events are selected?
 - What information is omitted?
 - Who is silenced?
 - Who is foreground?

Remind the student- texts are not truths; they are perspectives.



Salman Rushdie: *Midnight Children*

Good essay question or angle

*'Who am I? My answer:
I am the sum total of
everything that went
before me, of all I have
seen and done, of
everything done-to-me.'*

Experience shapes our identity. This identity is determined by:

- a) Other people's experiences
- b) Our observations, reactions and actions
- c) The impacts of other people's actions and reactions towards us

Rushdie Applied to Billy

Moving students away from recount to analysis

- Other people's experiences – **Sum total of everything before me**
- Observations, reactions and actions – **all I have seen and done**
- The impacts of others on the individual – **everything done-to-me**
- Billy is influenced by his father and brother's experiences of the strike but also of the toxicity of assumptions embedded within the hyper-masculine, working class culture – the genealogy of human experiences
- Billy observes a new way of expressing himself and engages in a deliberate process of following this path despite the consequences
- The anger, ignorance and silence of his household, as well as that of society, made Billy feel restricted but it also shaped his resilience and determination to transcend what was done-to-him

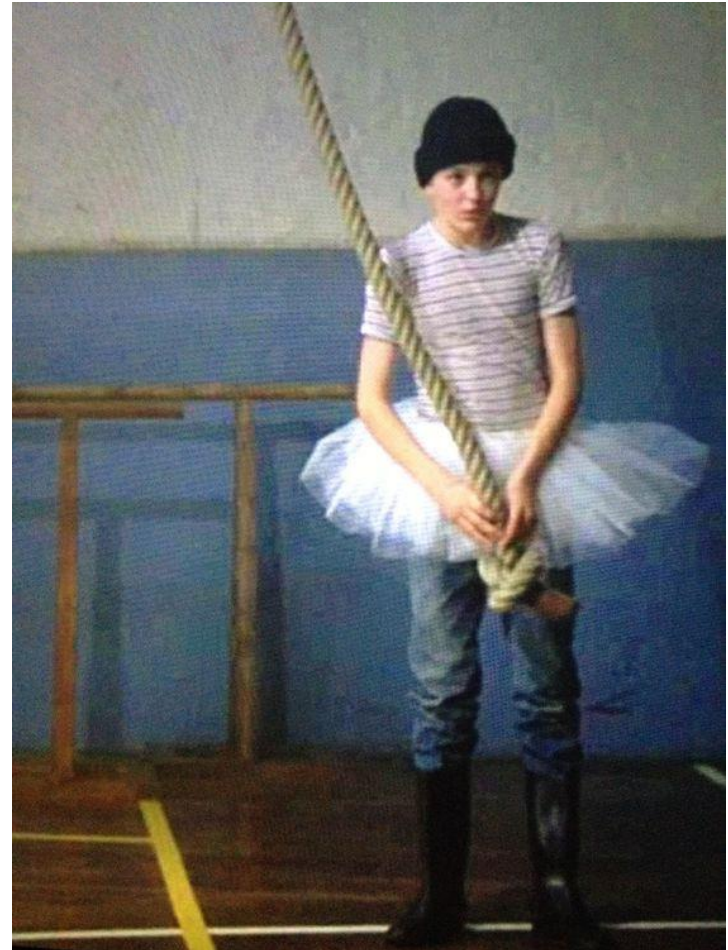
Storytelling

- It is how we make sense of the struggles and opportunities that come our way.
- We share our experiences through stories/narratives. We inform and we warn – stories are not only reactive to our experiences but may also be preventative e.g. dystopias
- Stories are the interpretation of that experience moulded by subjective viewpoints and therefore open to bias.



Even the trailer is a selective process of storytelling

- View the trailer and consider what part of the story is overlooked or foreground.
- Why might this approach be taken in the trailer?

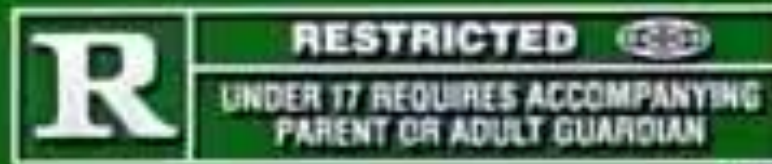


Billy Elliot Trailer

THE FOLLOWING **PREVIEW** HAS BEEN APPROVED FOR
ALL AUDIENCES

BY THE MOTION PICTURE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

THE FILM ADVERTISED HAS BEEN RATED



Director's History and Experience – Film and Representation

Short Film – **Eight**



- Daldry came from the theatre before directing this short film
- Soccer fan protagonist
- Lives in a strange town
- Deals with the loss of a father – Hillsborough disaster
- Police and ambulance services came to be found grossly negligent in this fatal crush at a sports event
- Bleak and grim colour palette
- Daldry – background – socialist workers party in University

Podcasts for Context: Stories of Human Experience

- The British Miners' Strike BBC Witness Archive 2011

Christmas 1984

10 minutes

- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00m6f11>
- How are stories represented in this podcast?



Witness Archive 2011

Podcasts for Context: How do the individual stories resonate with the collective?

- The British Miners' Strike BBC Witness Archive 2014
- **Clash between strikers and police**

11 minutes

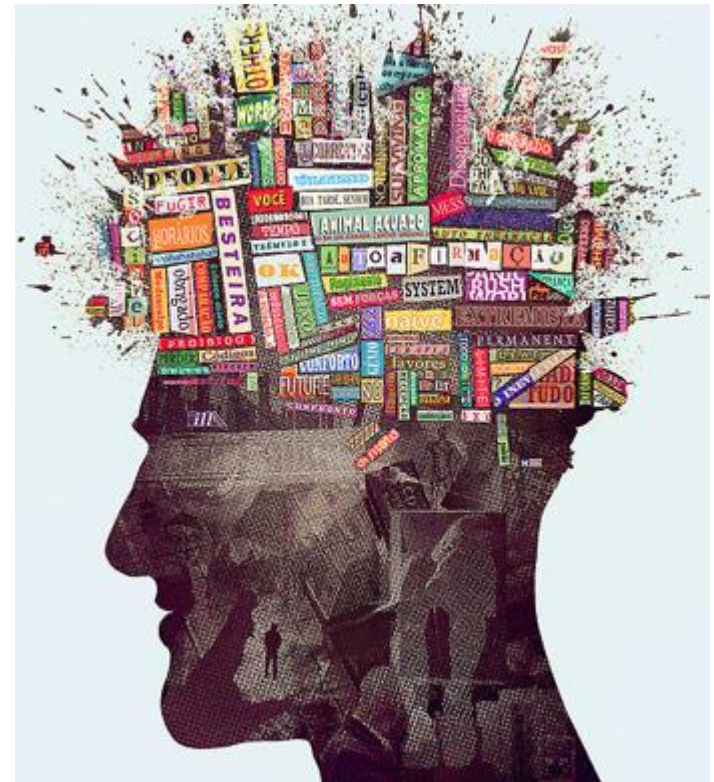
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p01strdk>



Viewing the Film

Declarative Knowledge – The Content Plot is lower order but we need it for reference

- Students cannot move to procedural knowledge (*guided response with you*) or conditional knowledge (*being able to apply their knowledge to different essay questions*) if they do not comprehend the sequential significance of what they are studying.



Teaching Opportunity – Use the DVD titles to open a discussion on the structure of a bildungsroman

1. Main title - intro to Billy's world	7. Private Lessons	13. Dad's Decision
2. A Disgrace to the Gloves	8. A Ghost Story - Swan Lake	14. The Audition
3. The Ballet Class	9. Tony's Arrest	15. The Interview
4. To Be a Dancer	10. The Chance to Dance	16. The Letter
5. Dad Finds Out	11. Christmas	17. Billy's Big Night
6. Mrs Wilkinson's Offer	12. A Dance of Defiance	

Writing Opportunity – Use one of these DVD chapter titles as the opening to a story where one voice is foreground and the other is silenced

1. Main title - intro to Billy's world	7. Private Lessons	13. Dad's Decision
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Approach: Conquering the Leviathan

Conflict is at the heart of the human experience

CONFLICT AND CHARACTER STUDY

- These conflicts usually occur in an embedded and connected way but separating them can help us understand the forces that act on the individual
- **Conflict within self**
- **Conflict with others**
- **Conflict with society**
- If we consider the conflict being faced, we come to an understanding of the motivations of individuals.

- Start at Conflict = MICRO-NARRATIVES and the individual stories

and transition students into

MACRO-NARRATIVE:
collective experiences – this is where the thesis statements are most likely to come from

1. Conflict within Self

- Moral Dilemma
- Doubt
- Insecurity or weakness
- Indecisiveness
- Confusion
- Frustration
- Disorientation
- Competing desires
- Can create mental anguish
- Good vs evil within the individual

MACRO – THESIS

- When individuals feel helpless they will find other avenues by which to gain control.
- When individuals struggle to reconcile competing desires, they may experience conflict. Overcoming or succumbing to this conflict can define their experience and identity.
- **WRITING OPPORTUNITY : diary entry /journal**

Billy: Conflict within Self

- **Competing desires:**
 - Wants to pursue his dream BUT also understands his family is undergoing loss of employment
- **Grief**
 - Needs to find an outlet for coping with the loss of his mother but his outlet is barricaded by the disapproval of his father
- **Doubt**
 - Wants to run away from the audition because he cannot read the judgment of the panellists (which magnifies his insecurity) but at the same time he craves their acceptance.



Jackie: Conflict within Self

- **Competing desires:** he is a respected man in the union movement (which is defined by a working class, hyper-masculine mentality) and he has a son who he needs to support to be a ballet dancer (upper class ambition)
- **Competing motivations:** he attempts to cope with his grief which makes him vulnerable but he also feels that he needs to maintain a façade of control. Instead, we see repeated failures of communication with both sons that leads to his frustration. Accepting that he cannot control the situation eventually helps Jackie to become active in assisting Billy to realise his ambition.

Mrs Wilkinson : Conflict within Self

- Dissatisfied and unfulfilled in her marriage
- Billy accuses Mrs Wilkinson's of vicariously living through him and she slaps him which suggests that he may be correct.
- Intertextuality: Swan lake is a story of disillusionment of the fairy tale being broken – it is both romantic and dark. It represents the dichotomous nature of human experience – warmth and coldness, and the destruction of the metanarrative of the fairy tale . A young prince brings the woman alive but eventually abandons her.
- In nurturing Billy's talent, Mrs Wilkinson comes alive but then Billy abandons her in pursuing his dream outside the ballet hall.

Students must be encouraged to use the language of the module statement

Billy's secrecy (*behaviour*) is dictated by his desire to pursue his passion (*motivation*). His passion for dance (*quality*) and his creative capacity (*quality*) leaves him feeling a sense of liberation and satisfaction (*emotions*). He can express himself in a world of limitations and rigid expectations. (*context*)



Individual vs. Collective Experiences

From the micro to the macro

- Although the conflicts are represented as individual stories, what gives all these experiences a sense of collectiveness?

What have I learned about human experiences?

- Moments of loss and gain
- Moments of conflict between competing positions
- Moments of dissatisfaction/discontentment

2. Conflict with Others

- Struggling for victory over another
- Clash of values
- Clash of agendas or pathways
- Clash of goals/intentions



When individuals are motivated by different values and agendas, conflict can dominate the experience. If there is no reconciliation, an individual may...

- **WRITING OPPORTUNITY : Write a DIALOGUE between two people experiencing a particular point of contention**

Billy vs. Mrs Wilkinson

- Billy conflicts with Mrs Wilkinson :
 - She challenges him to transcend the values that are expected of him – masculinity, mining pathway
 - At one point, he believes that she is acting in her own interests rather than in his interests. Is this anger towards her amplified because of how others in his life want him to follow their pathways and dreams?



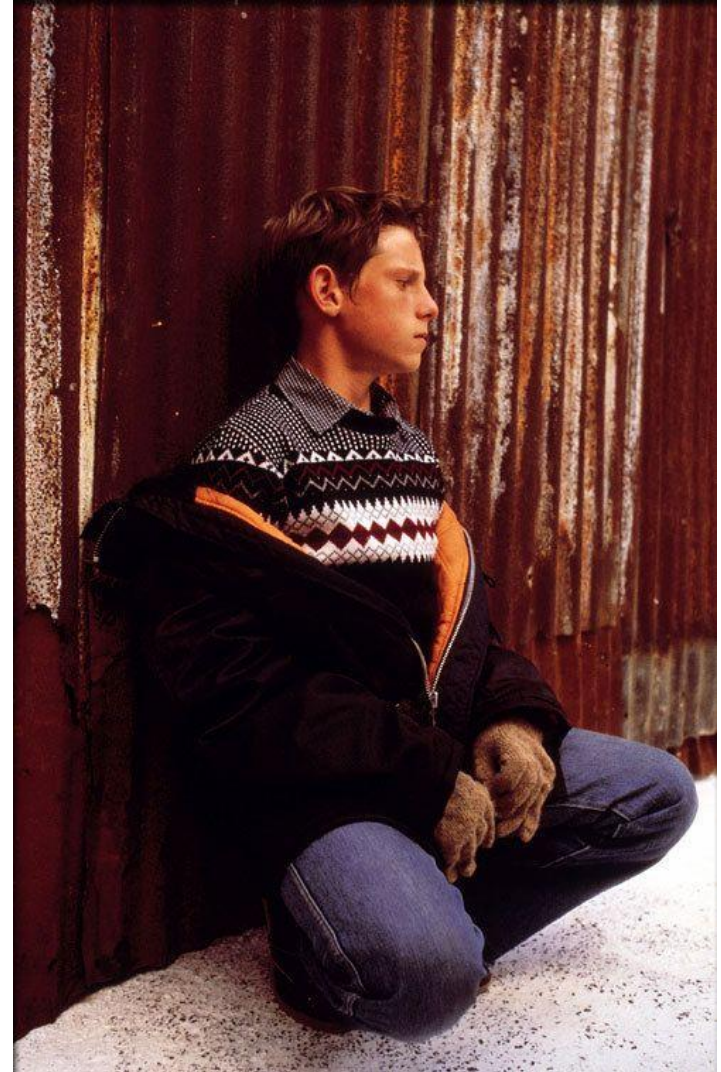
Billy vs. Debbie

- She wants to experiment sexually BUT he wants to channel his emotions and focus towards ballet; the outlet for emotional pleasure is different. Debbie deliberately hangs up on Billy when he tries to inform Mrs Wilkinson that he cannot make the audition which shows she has been hurt by his rejection of her advances; she is human after all. (*Debbie: challenges assumptions about males making the moves in relationships*)
- Debbie is also the confronting voice of feminism urging Billy - like her mother- to cross over into the feminine world. Billy quotes Debbie's examples of athletes when arguing with his father.

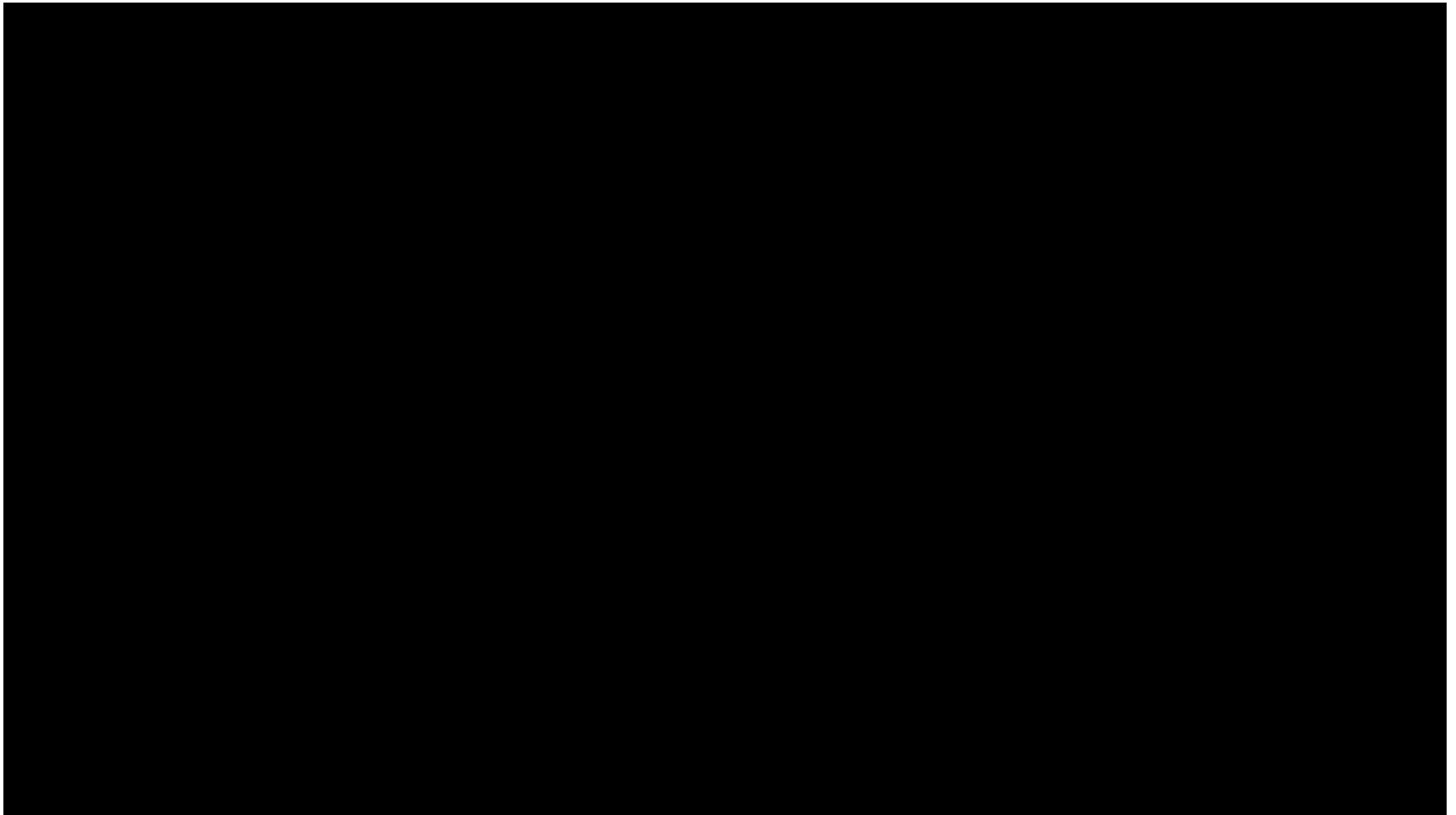
Individual vs Collective

Micro to Macro

- Moments of fear when people encourage us to transcend the boundaries of expectations
- Moments of enlightenment when people challenge our assumptions
- Moments of anger when people doubt our motivations
- Moments of rejection when people do not react in mutually emotional ways



Differentiation: Plato and the Allegory of the Cave. What happens when Billy leaves the cave?



3. Conflict with Society – Identity

- When an individual's values conflict with society, it can serve to shape and define their identity and status.
- An individual may question the norms of a society and this may lead to alienation.
- **WRITING OPPORTUNITY:**
Speech – graduation speech and what has been learned about reaching a milestone



BILLY VS FATHER VS DURHAM

- Billy's conflict with his father is essentially the broader conflict with societal prejudices and assumptions that have shaped his father. Gender identity and hyper-masculinity are all shaped by this context as well.



Michael

- Michael's cross-dressing is linked to his father who he has observed 'dressing up'. Both father and son know that this identity is not accepted by society and so engage in cross-dressing in their private world. However, Michael's appearance at the end of the film shows that he has transitioned his private identity into the public world.



Class and Government

- The divisions of class caused by economic imperatives also create this conflict:
 - a) Miners fighting for their identity and livelihood—what else are they equipped to do?
 - b) Tony and Jackie suspicious of Mrs Wilkinson because of her class background. Inherited prejudice?



Trans-historic experiences:
David vs. Goliath battles are often repeated across time and culture.

Individual vs Collective

Micro to Macro

- Moments of the individual clashing with authority
- Moments of the individual having to maintain their identity in private
- Moments of economic hardship creating restriction and consequent conflict in familial spheres
- Moments of suspicion directed at those who lack our experiences or lived stories



Paradoxes and Inconsistencies

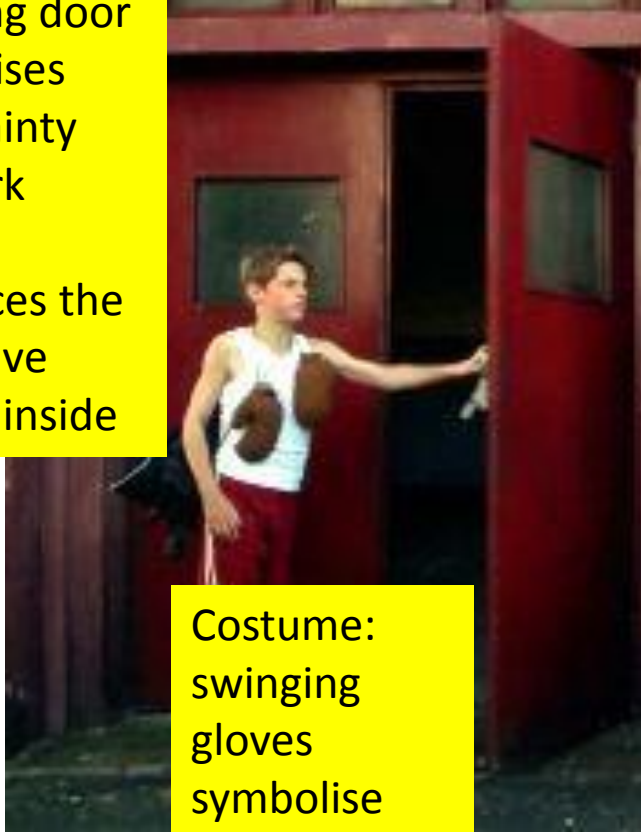
Argue points in groups:

- 1) Jackie is affectionate and violent – why do these contradictory qualities exist? Explain.
- 2) Mrs Wilkinson is maternal and indifferent. How does her relationship with Billy and Debbie reinforce this interplay between warmth and coldness?
- 3) Billy is a child-man. How do we see the child and adult versions of Billy and why do these two parts co-exist?
- 4) Collective: police are supposed to protect but they are represented as brutal?



Teaching through Stills

Swinging door symbolises uncertainty and dark lighting reinforces the restrictive culture inside



Costume: swinging gloves symbolise masculine culture

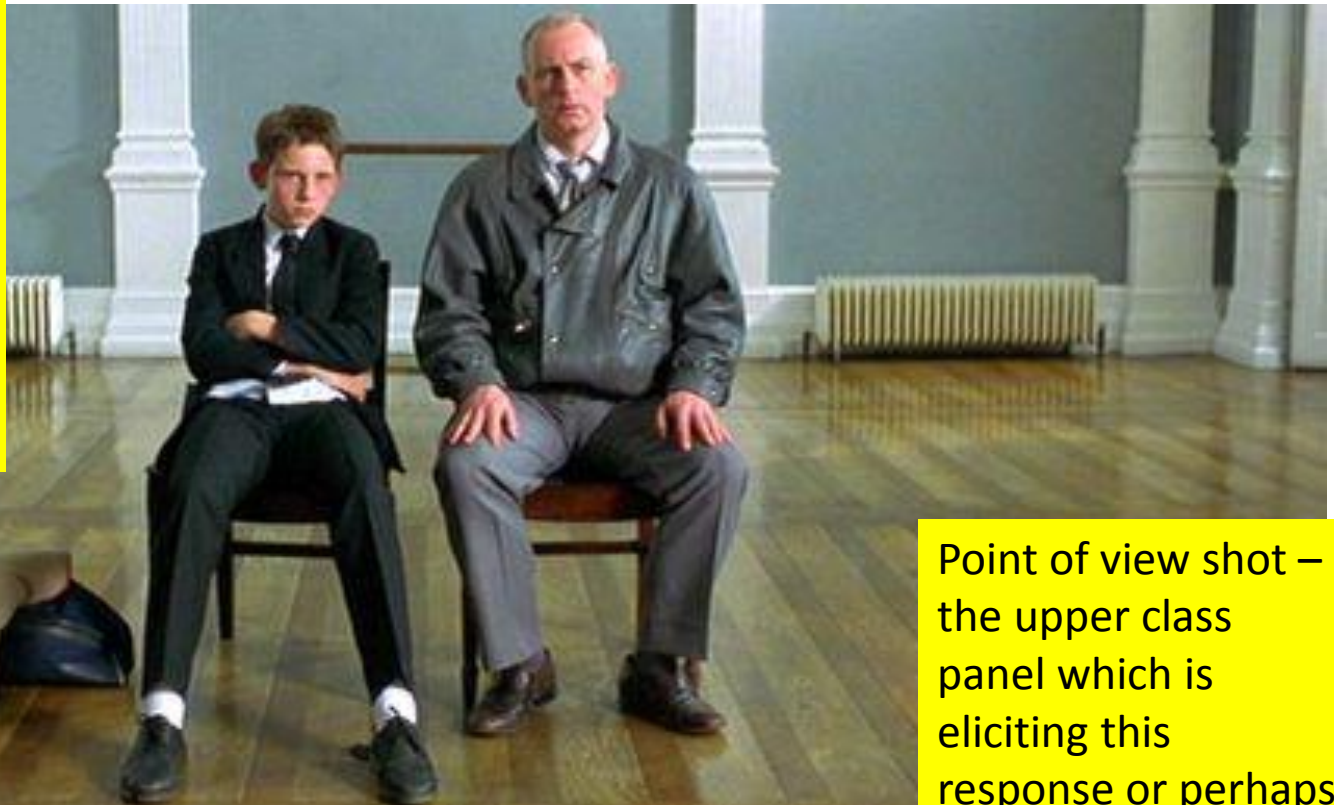
Michael positioned in the centre on bin and the director uses rule of thirds to...



Juxtaposition of two signs and colour symbolism in this wide shot to...

Father and son appear to be the underdogs in this space; symmetry of pillars behind them creates a mood of claustrophobia and disempowerment. Vectors of the floorboards also lead to the reinforcement of this restricted space. The paradoxical nature of a vast space and father and son contained within it serves to reiterate their struggle against a wider world.

Though Billy's body language shows defiance/resistance and his father's body language reflects apprehension, both are sharing this experience of judgement.



Point of view shot – the upper class panel which is eliciting this response or perhaps this IS how the panel sees them???

STILL analysis and Mis-en-Scene

- Students are organised in groups and responsible for analysing stills:
 - a) What is the main situation and conflict?
 - b) How is it represented?
 - c) What does it suggest about human experience?
- Turn the group discussion into an opportunity for writing a collective analytical paragraph.

Mis-en-Scene – HSC question

Checkpoint HSC ESSAY

Mis-en-scene of Billy and Michael outside the boxing hall as Billy swings the door deciding whether to enter or not.

- We see a long shot of three significant elements. On the left side of the frame, Billy stands in an open doorway where the lighting is dark symbolising a sense of fear or entrapment. In the middle is Michael, sitting on top of a rubbish bin, refusing to enter. On the right side of the frame, is a distinctive blue sign 'Everington Boys Club' denoting the masculine nature of the setting, further highlighted by the textural focus of the solid brick wall on which the sign hangs. The rule of thirds technique points to its prominence in Billy's decision: does he enter the hall of conservatism or avoid it like Michael?

Mis-en-Scene – HSC question

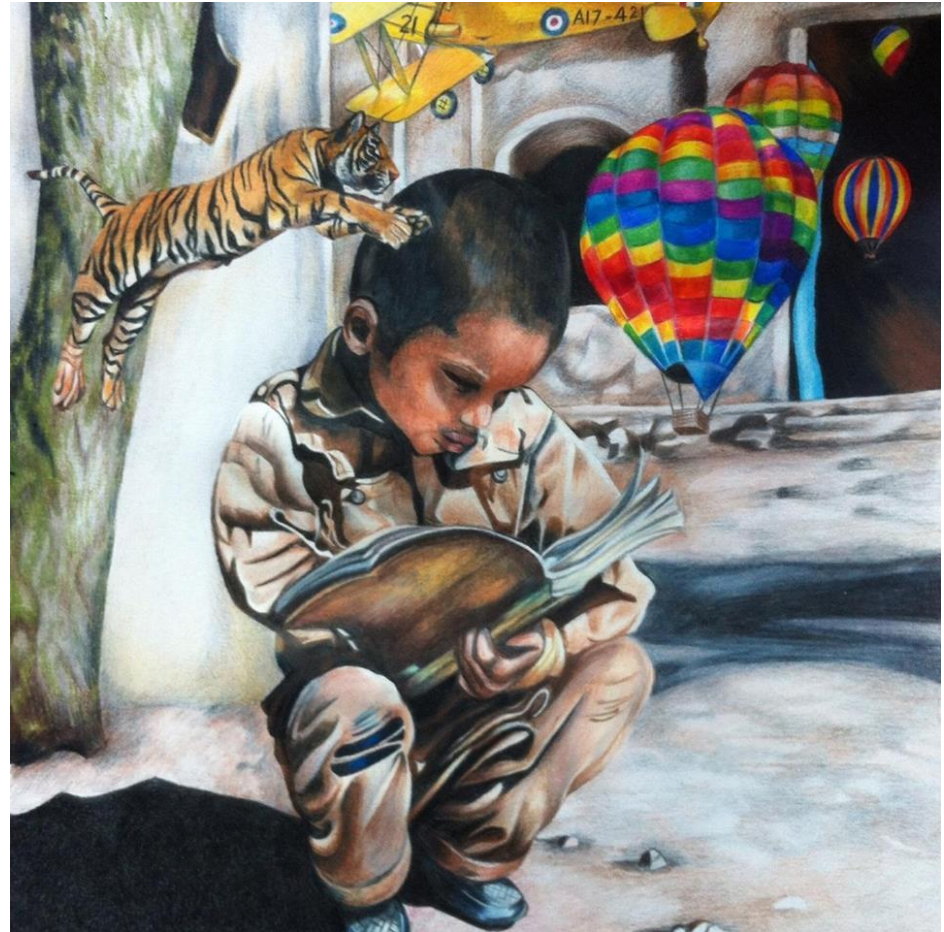
Checkpoint HSC

- The mis-en-scene is a powerful representation of how our heritage and ancestry clearly dictates our venturing into new experiences. Billy is imitating the experiences of his father and thus is moving towards developing into the same type of man, adhering to the same philosophy. Michael serves as a foil to Billy here when he rejects the conservatism of boxing and remains outside the space. The difficulty of rejecting such an experience is visually seen by his outsider status, alone on the bin, as if his identity was discarded because of the experience he rejected.

Second HSC example - General

- *Through the telling and receiving of stories, we become more aware of ourselves and our shared human experiences.*

Examine this statement with close reference to your prescribed text.



Macro-Techniques: Intertextuality

Ask students: How could I use these techniques to prove a point about human experience?

- **Genre and the Bildungsroman**

- Assists the structure of the film
- Sets up a type of human experience
- Rite of passage
- Coming of age
- Growing up
- Moral awareness

- **Swan Lake story**

- Subversive fairy tale
- Ballet scene at the end – male swan

- **Song Lyrics**

- non-diegetic music supports the mood and tension of the experience



Macro-techniques: Allusion



- Do you agree with Judith Lancioni's comment about Billy's transformation:

Billy Elliot is Cinderella because, through the intervention of a chain-smoking fairy godmother, he is transformed from a gangly working class kid, destined for the coal mines to a mature, self-assured ballet star. Instead of boxing gloves or a glass slipper, he dons ballet shoes, and in doing so he transforms not only himself, but his family's and his community's concept of masculinity.

Macro – Techniques: Symbolism

Integrate in module or at the end?

Symbol	Connection to individual experience	Connection to collective experience
Boxing gloves	The gloves belonged to his father and to his grandfather so they symbolise connection to family, to expectations and to the past. Billy is expected to perform in this arena but he cannot, breaking the tradition symbolised by the gloves	The gloves are symbolic of traditional masculinity and the working class mentality of empowering oneself through physical and aggressive outlets. They are symbolic of traditional forms of socialisation into this class
Ballet Shoes		
Doors/Doorways		
Piano		
.....		

Scene 6: Swan Lake 46.13 - 48.22		
Dialogue	Other cinematic techniques	What does it reflect about the character's experience or their impact on others' experiences?
<p>Billy to Mrs Wilkinson: <i>Can I put a tape on, Miss?</i></p> <p>Billy: <i>So is there a story then, Miss?</i></p> <p>Mrs Wilkinson: <i>It's about a woman who is captured by an evil magician.</i></p> <p>Billy: <i>Sounds crap.</i></p> <p>Mrs W:</p>	<p><i>Swan Lake</i> diegetic music playing in the car with the mechanistic sounds of the machinery as they drive onto the barge to cross the river.</p> <p>Low angle on the machinery makes it appear overwhelming.</p> <p>Two shot of Billy and Mrs Wilkinson in the one frame but Mrs Wilkinson's figure is reflected in the car window.</p> <p>Long shot of the barge crossing the river; the orchestral music makes it seem elegant and even more majestic.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This scene reflects the importance of storytelling and how we use fiction to understand reactions to circumstances. As Billy is told of the story of <i>Swan Lake</i>, his immediate reaction is that it is 'crap'. But perhaps he is not ready to appreciate a story about love at his age. Mrs Wilkinson, however, is more taken with the story because she suffers from an 'unfulfilled' marriage. • Another way to consider the story is that Billy is her 'young prince' that makes her come alive for a few hours when she teaches him, but, as is the case in the story, he will abandon her for other opportunities.

Moving from what to why – analysis of telling and receiving stories

Complex Sentences: Academic Writing

- **Independent clause:**

Billy was angry. (Subject/verb)

- **Adding a dependent clause (which cannot make meaning without the independent clause):**

because his father was inflexible.

- **Complex sentence:**

Billy was angry because his father was inflexible.

- **We can change the order of the clauses:**

Because his father was inflexible, Billy was angry.

More Academic – Nominalise

- *Because of the **inflexibility** of his father, Billy's **frustration** escalates. Such **rigidity** from his father leads Billy to seek **acceptance** elsewhere.*

Inflexible – inflexibility

Frustrated – frustration

Accept – acceptance

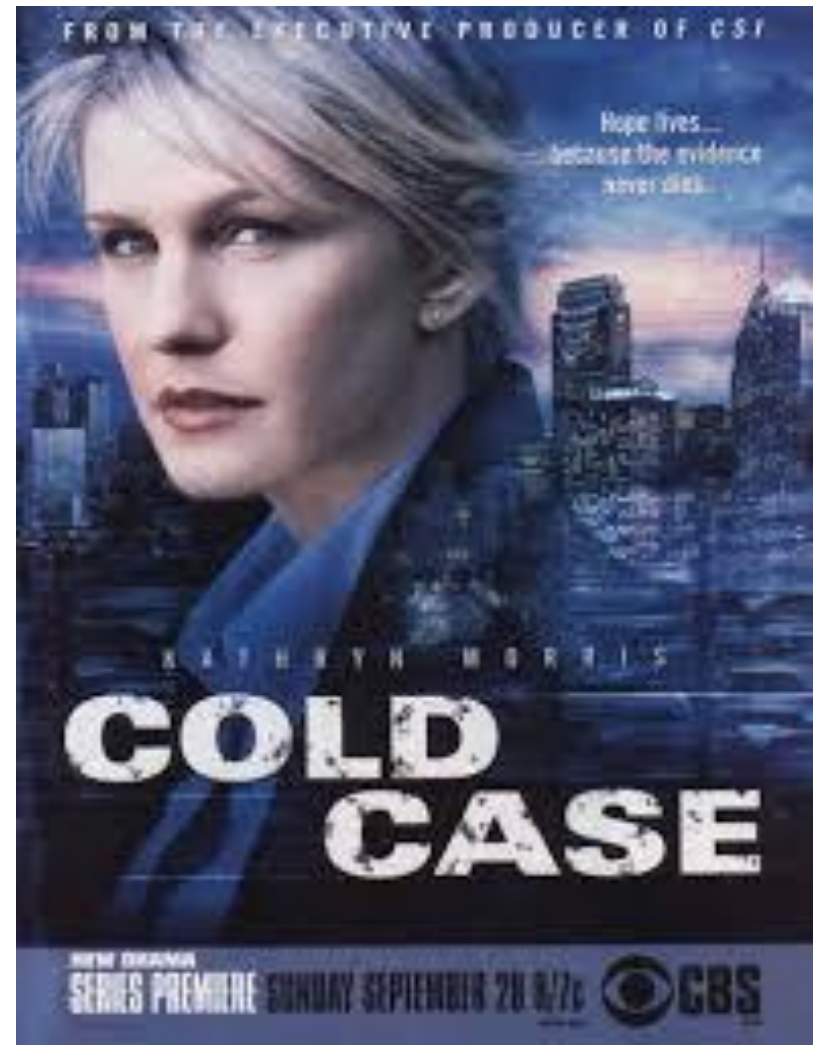
*Synonyms create cohesion
– inflexibility to rigidity*

Related Texts – for a range of Standard and English Studies students

- *Only Ten* by Alan Baillie – short story
- *Araby* by James Joyce- desire and disappointment
- **Ken Liu** – *Paper Menagerie* – short story
- *The Song of the Old Mother* – W.B.Yeats – poem
- *My Father Began as a God* – Ian Mudie – poem
- *Picture of Childhood* by Yevgeny Yevtushenko – poem
- *Cold Case – Shuffle Ball Change* (50 minutes) – television show
- Feature Article: Teen Survives in Amazon
<https://www.9news.com.au/2018/11/02/16/01/juliane-koepcke-german-teen-plane-explosion-survivor-peru-amazon-jungle-survival-story>
- **Stephen** Herrick – verse novel *Lonesome Howl* – teenage characters, domestic violence, Romeo and Juliet allusion
- *Catcher in the Rye* (novel)
- *Tomorrow When the War Began* (novel)
- *The Story of Tom Brennan* (novel)

Cold Case: Crime and Human Experience

- Crime texts highlight the intensity of human experience and emotions as they explore the motivations of human behaviour.
- Jealousy
- Competition
- Rage
- Admiration
- Doubt
- Insecurity
- Loss



Intertextuality: Prior to Viewing

- Sibling rivalry – what assumptions come to mind?
- Original tale of sibling rivalry – allusion to Cain and Abel



Cold Case; Dance Scene Shuffle Ball Change



Cold Case Part 2: Cain and Abel Allusion



Son's voice

Paper Menagerie

In my lap was a square of creased wrapping paper, the plain side up. It was filled with dense Chinese characters. I had never learned to read Chinese, but I knew the characters for *son*, and they were at the top, where you'd expect them in a letter addressed to you, written in Mom's awkward, childish handwriting.

I went to the computer to check the Internet. Today was Qingming.

I took the letter with me downtown, where I knew the Chinese tour buses stopped. I stopped every tourist, asking, "*Nin hui du zhongwen ma?*" *Can you read Chinese?* I hadn't spoken Chinese in so long that I wasn't sure if they understood.

A young woman agreed to help. We sat down on a bench together, and she read the letter to me aloud. The language that I had tried to forget for years came back, and I felt the words sinking into me, through my skin, through my bones, until they squeezed tight around my heart.

Mother's
voice – in
a letter;
story
within a
story

But then you were born! I was so happy when I looked into your face and saw shades of my mother, my father, and myself. I had lost my entire family, all of Sigulu, everything I ever knew and loved. But there you were, and your face was proof that they were real. I hadn't made them up.

Now I had someone to talk to. I would teach you my language, and we could together remake a small piece of everything that I loved and lost. When you said your first words to me, in Chinese that had the same accent as my mother and me, I cried for hours. When I made the first zhezhi animals for you, and you laughed, I felt there were no worries in the world.

Moving to a Thesis – macro to conceptual

1. Texts are distillations of human experiences which showcase the limitations and potential of individuals.

2. Texts represent how human experiences are dependent on one's context and their ability to transcend the limitations of context.

- Essay Plan

- Consider two characters
- What conflict area reflects their limitations
- What conflict area reflects their potential?

Conclusion: How important is it to face limitation and when do we find potential?

More Theses

3. Although there may be contextual factors that impact the representation of key human experience, we often find that human motivation remains essentially the same.

4. The representation of human experience illuminates how our stories are often about the struggle between public conformity and private resistance.

Assessment Examples: with a Related Text

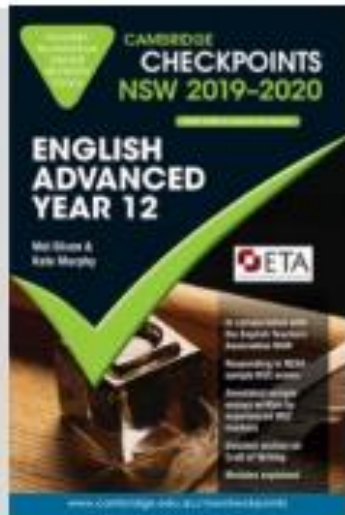
Traditional essay:

Valuable human experiences always arise from a state of conflict.

How is this statement reflected in or challenged by your prescribed text and a related text of your choosing?

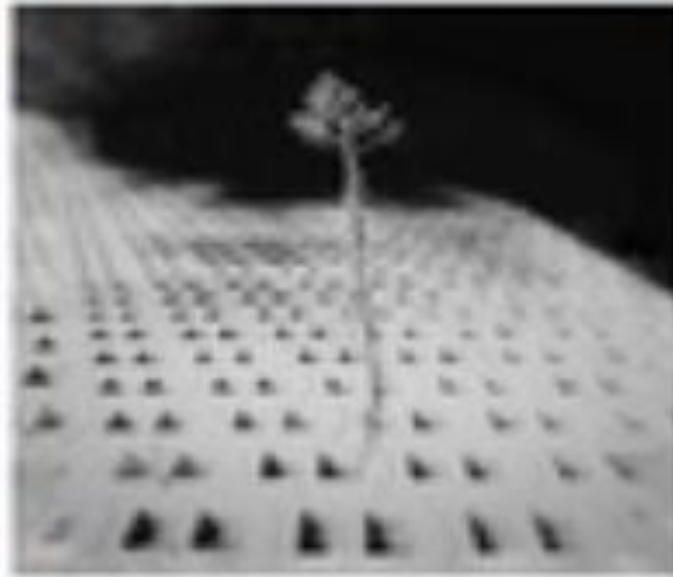
- You work for a bookseller and your aim is to convince HSC teachers to buy your book/related text because it would make a perfect companion to Billy Elliot as it shares similar ideas about the representation of human experience. Your persuasive pitch must use a diagrammatic focus of key ideas in order to demonstrate the text's potential for synthesis with the prescribed text.

If you are interested...



For more information on the HSC examination and sample essays on all the modules (including an annotated sample essay on *Billy Elliot*) go to *Cambridge Checkpoints 2019* a collaboration of ETANSW and Cambridge University Press





Billy Elliot

Common Module: Texts and Human Experiences

