 Past the Shallows

Plot Dualities

Texts are acts of representation. In studying texts we look at how composers use different techniques to represent ideas: in this case, aspects of the human condition. While the story is told through third person narration, Parrett also uses a dual mode in telling the narrative, allowing the reader insight into different perspectives of events, that is, Harry’s understanding of events and Miles’ understanding of events. Furthermore, the storytelling is two dimensional as it is told through present day events and past memories.

Also the ending of the novel replicates or repeats the beginning, as shown in the quotation:

“Out past the shallows, past the sandy-bottomed bays, comes the dark water-black and cold and roaring. Rolling out ………”

The change from “the invisible paths.” to “an invisible path, a new line for them to follow.” highlights the change in tone from dark, ominous and foreboding to light, positive and optimistic.

Task 1

Before looking at the plot summary, reflect again on what it means to be human. Brainstorm in the space provided. List any qualities and emotions and note the contradictions or paradoxes evident. Write down some of your ideas.

Did you have words such as; empathetic, ruthlessness, fallible, manipulative, giving, selfishness , selflessness, sensitive , cut throat, pragmatic, greedy, resilient, judgemental, anger, joy, shame, grief, fear, bravery, confidence, contentment, confusion?

Task 2

Add to the table below any assumptions and beliefs that we hold about Family, Home and Small Communities. Note again any contradictions or paradoxes.

| Family | Home | Small Communities |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  |

As you read through the plot summary below, jot down any possible anomalies you discover as well as any unusual comments the characters say. Consider if these foreshadow future events or give clues in connecting the actual events of the past? Write down any queries or confusions you have as a reader.

Task 3

Examine the plot summary in the table below. Events and memories are listed in the order they are presented to the reader. We can clearly see what we learn about the story and who tells us.

* Students look for quotes to represent those events and memories.
* Highlight the memories from the present day.
* Organise the memories into chronological order as you think the events of those memories would have taken place.
* Categorise the quotes in relation to memory or present day.

| Quotations | Harry | Miles | Quotes |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Pages 1, 4, 5 | Section 1  Page 1 – Description of Cloudy Bay in winter  Harry’s relationship to water established  Harry’s reaction /connection to clearing in the dunes and pile of shells –how ancient it is. |  |  |
|  |  | Section 2  Page 7 – In dinghy on way out to boat  Learn about death of Uncle Nick and the night of the crash  On the boat –Martin , Jeff, Dad & Miles near the Hazards of Bruny  Miles relationship with water established | Pages 8, 9 |
| Page 20 | Section 3  Page 11 – Family home.  Harry getting ready to go to Regatta with Aunty Jean in Hobart  Car trip to the Regatta  Harry loses the game then finds $20  Aunty Jean watches the woodchop  Harry buys show bags  Goes to the animal shed see the goats….. Memory of Mum and him with the baby goat. |  |  |
| Pages 23-25, 27 | Section 4  Page 23 – Aunty Jean and Harry having lunch in café. Aunty Jean crying.  Learn Dad and Aunty Jean don’t speak because she made dad pay for Uncle Nick’s share in the boat.  Home – Miles hurt and exhausted from being on the boat. Dad drinking beer with headache.  Harry is excited. Miles despondent. |  |  |
|  |  | Section 5  Page 29 – On the Boat Miles feels the place is ancient. Abalone fishing, illegal size. Martin and Jeff description of Abalone diving experiences with Miles  Dad gets a big catch- is optimistic about the future. | Pages 29, 30 |
| Pages 37-39, 41 | Section 6  Page 35 – Harry going to Stuart’s without permission  Description of surrounds  Listens for logging trucks- no one home  Description of Lune River-throwing rocks into the river, finds dead bandicoot. Learn about Joe’s road kill collection.  Meets Jake the dog Follows him to George Fuller’s place.  Runs away in fear as George appears  George calls Harry’s name. |  |  |
|  |  | Section 7  Page 43 – Boys going surfing to Roaring  Description of poor housing  Description of water surfing  Joe’s boat finished  Learn that Aunty Jean contested Granddad’s will  Miles wants to be at Grandad’s with Joe | Pages 44, 46 |
| Pages 49, 50 | Section 8  Page 49 – Miles sick but still going out on boat.  Harry caring for Miles  Harry decides to go back to meet puppy again.  Miles caring for Harry |  |  |
|  |  | Section 9  Page 51 – Out on boat caught full quota  Saw salmon so keep fishing  Shark attack  Jeff shoots shark  Loss of catch and equipment  Jeff throws dead shark pup at Miles  Martin’s injured so Miles will have to work  Martin warns about Jeff  Go to hospital  Learn about Grandad’s illness |  |
| Page 67 | Section 10  Page 61 – Going back to George’s  Description of George’s place  George and Grandad knew each other  Learn about how George rescued Jake from Darryl Jarratt and Dad bought a chainsaw out of spite. |  |  |
|  |  | Section 11  Page 71 – Boat won’t start  Dad storms off to pub  Meet Mr Roberts who helps Miles  Learn about his background – son is Justin  White lilies flowers tied to gum tree.  Learn about car accident  Mr Robert’s advises Miles not to get stuck with his dad. | Pages 75, 77-79 (foreshadows) |
|  | Section 12  Page 81 – Harry making Milo for Miles who is sick and asleep |  |  |
|  |  | Section 13  Page 83 – Aunty Jean’s Saturday arvo roast  Very prim and proper house  Miles discovers old dark wooden box with baby’s clothes | Page 87 |
|  | Section 14  Page 89 – Grandad’s shed they find backseat of Mum’s car and the white pointer tooth and other remains of car- steering wheel, bumper bar and axle.  Miles wishes Joe would stay |  |  |
| Page 97 | Section 15  Page 95 – Harry and Joe going to the tip reflecting about accident.  Conversation in van about Harry’s memory of accident  Joe definitely leaving - resilience |  |  |
|  |  | Section 16  Page 99 – At the beach wondering where the shark tooth came from.  Garry Bones takes the tooth and Miles fights him. Garry drops tooth in sand.  Miles lies to Joe about the fight-says he fell.  Miles says he knows what happened to Mum. Joe responds angrily and gives his version. | Pages 99,100, 104 |
| Page 105 | Section 17  Page 105 – George wants Harry to accompany him on the boat.  Learn about Harry’s first experience on a boat. They fish from the jetty, catch, cook and eat flathead. |  |  |
|  |  | Section 18  Page 113 – Dad has been to cannery. Driving dangerously in cat night. Almost crash with truck. Truck hit bull and kept going. |  |
| Pages 120, 121 | Section 19  Page 117 – Harry and George follow river upstream to orchard and burnt out farmhouse where he grew up. Have lunch. George tells Harry about his Mum when she was young. Harry knows they are friends now. |  |  |
| Pages 124, 125 | Section 20  Page 123 – Visit from the Fisheries officers. |  |  |
|  |  | Section 21  Page 127 – Granddad’s house (Harry’s collections) and workshop. Miles going to be a furniture maker like Granddad. Finding the wood. Reflecting on the forests in the past compared to the degradation today. Miles going to turn something for Joe’s boat. | Pages 129, 130 |
|  |  | Section 22  Page 133 – Surfing with Joe at Southport Bluff, known as Bone Yard. Learn that Joe had yelled at him about getting stuck.  Miles finds the courage to brave the water.  Elated after the surf only to be brought down with the news that Joe is leaving early tomorrow morning.  Miles feels trapped. | Page 138 |
|  |  | Section 23  Page 139 – Miles cooking meagre dinner  Reflects on going to Potato Man at Huonville market with Mum.  Harry tells Miles about visit from the fisheries. |  |
| Pages 142, 143 | Section 24 Harry and Miles  Page 141 – Harry and Miles lying low because Dad and Jeff have been drinking for 2 days.  Jeff and Dad abuse Harry when he comes out to toilet by forcing him to drink alcohol.  Miles tries to rescue harry by lunging at Jeff but hits his head on coffee table Jeff pinning him down with his foot. Harry vomits on Jeff.  Miles remembers the night Dad broke Joe’s arm. Harry and Miles leave the house. |  |  |
|  | Section 25  Page 149 – Taking respite at Georges. Harry recognises cups. Sleep in front of the fire. Miles recognises the smell of George’s pipe tobacco. He remembers being on the floor playing with matchbox cars as a small boy. |  |  |
|  |  | Section 26  Page 155 – Flashback to toolbox from Granddad and night Mum stopped the car and was crying leaning against a tree.  Breakfast at George’s. Miles says they have to leave. Harry asks if Joe’s gone. Miles couldn’t answer. | Page 157 |
| Pages 162, 163 | Section 27  Page 161 –Leaving George’s Harry realises why Miles is scared. Harry left at Stuart’s. Harry offers Miles his leftover money from the show. Miles returns with Harry’s backpack containing clothes, chocolates, dart gun and Bertie Beetle show bag. |  |  |
|  |  | Section 28  Page 165 – Miles returns home to cleans house, Photo of Mum “that day at Cloudy” Describes surfing on Uncle Nick’s long board. | Pages 166, 167 |
|  |  | Section 29  Page 169 – Dad brings home fish and chips- grenadier for Miles. Dad’s has tuned the boat and expects Miles to work on it. Miles wants to ask about the fisheries but doesn’t. | Pages 170, 171 |
| Pages 176, 178 | Section 30  Page 173 – Harry sees girl at bus stop on way to shop with Stuart and his Mum. Harry buys tea for George and gives Stuart the dart gun before |  |  |
| Pages 180, 183 | Section 31  Page 179 – No one home at George’s. Leaves tea and kindling. Waits Looks at photo of George’s brother. Ponders on what if Miles got lost. Leaves George’s “looking back one last time” |  |  |
|  |  | Section 32  Page 185 – End of a day fishing. Hardly any boats out as bad weather brewing. Miles resting in the ute remembering the car accident until jolted awake by the horn. Harry on the road near George’s. Dad grabs Harry yelling at him. Drops him. Drive home in silence. |  |
| Pages 191 | Section 33  Page 191 – Miles forbids harry to go to George’s again. Miles foreshadows bad weather tomorrow. Harry worries about George being OK but promises to stay home. |  |  |
|  | Section 34  Page 195 – Harry scared in bed. Sees the Southern lights again for the first time since Mum died. |  |  |
|  |  | Section 35 Miles and Harry  Page 197 – Dad making Harry come out on the boat. Miles gives Harry the shark tooth. Jeff teases Harry about being tied to the outside of the railings if he got sick. They go to The Last Islands. Miles tells the story of the lady. Engines stop cutting off air to divers. Panic about the consequences. | Pages 199, 201, 205 |
|  |  | Section 36  Page 207 – Get Dad and Jeff into boat. Dad attacks Miles holding him underwater. Harry attacks Dad screaming. Calls over radio. Dad slams Harry against rails and discovers he is wearing the shark tooth. Miles sees Dad push Harry before boat capsizes. | Pages 208, 209, 211 |
|  |  | Section 37  Page 213 – Dad interrogates Miles and confesses. Miles jumps into the sea. Finds Harry. Lost at sea. Miles remembers the time he fell in the river when Harry was very young. Miles realises Harry is gone. | Pages 213, 214, 221, 222 |
| Pages 223, 224 | Section 38  Page 223 – Harry follows Jake to George at the top of the hill to find the whole world “as it has been forever- untouched”. Harry is free through death. |  |  |
|  |  | Section 39  Page 225 – Miles giving into the ocean to die. | Pages 225 |
|  |  | Section 40  Page 227 – Miles rescued. Wakes up in hospital with Joe. Learns about Harry. Slides into sleep. Remembers more about the accident. Gains consciousness fully. Tells Joe what he remembers about the accident. | Pages 223, 230, 231 |
|  |  | Section 41  Page 233 – On Joe’s boat then return to the brown house. Miles not going to Harry’s funeral. Joe invites Miles to come away with him. Miles cries with Joe’s arms around him. | Pages 235, 237 |
|  |  | Section 42  Page 239 – The calm after the storm and relationship to water. Surfing with Justin Roberts at the bluff. Reminiscing about surfing with him in the past Miles feels Mum and Harry’s presence. Joe waiting for him in the van. | Pages 240, 242, 243 |
|  |  | Section 43  Page 245 – Boys leaving Cloudy. Leaving Harry’s treasures in the sand dunes. Finding the shark egg. Miles keeps the cuttlefish. George returns the shark tooth. Harry free to run along the beach. “Until the end of time”. Last lines circle back to the beginning. | Pages 250,251 |