 ‘Our Pipes’ Henry Lawson – analysis table

| Idea about language, culture, identity and individuals | Example (quote) | Language feature, technique and comment | Effect and impact (your analysis) | Affirm, ignore, challenge, reveal and disrupt |
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| Australian bush landscape shapes identity | ‘fringe of mulga’‘timber’ proper” which is ‘very thick and very dark’‘The moon looked like a big new copper boiler set on the edge on the horizon of the plain.’ | Australian botanical jargon sets contextVisual imagery creates rugged sceneSimile using Australian vernacular | The visual imagery creates a bleak, harsh environment where the characters come to rest at the end of the day. The effects of the swagmen’s journey still resonate into the nigh time with little relief. |  |
| Cultural identity of Australian ‘swagman’ | ‘We had tramped twenty-five miles on a dry stretch on a hot day – swagmen know what that means.’‘….We knew that when we sat down we wouldn’t want to get up again in a hurry…’‘Swagmen will understand.’ | Repetition of inclusive pronoun ‘we’ throughout second paragraphAnaphora of the ‘knowing’ swagman | The tone suggests to the reader they will only understand this cultural connection if they too have experienced the bush lifestyle. It creates a knowing ‘nod’ that one can only truly connect with the reality of the bush lifestyle if they have been in this situation. |  |
| Identity through language | ‘billy boiled’‘some leaves laid down for our beds and the swags rolled out.’‘johnny-cakes’‘tucker-bags’ | The third paragraph is littered with Australian idioms | Understanding what each term means helps strengthen the imagery of the Australian bush lifestyle, in particular the swagman’s experience. |  |
| Individual relationships – the masculine identity | “…our leg sinews, especially those of our calves, would ‘draw’ like redhot wires.”‘We gave our calves time to tone down a bit; then we lit up and began to answer each other. It got to be pretty comfortable..’‘We cursed society because we weren’t rich men, and then we felt better’‘…conversation…ended in that of smoking.’‘He reflected’ | Simile and inclusive pronounInference of time passing before communicating. Inclusive pronoun ‘we’Cynical tone towards a society that shuns the poor ‘bush man’Anaphora heightens his longing for past connections | Shared experience of pain and sufferingImplication that men need time before they can share in conversation. Reinforcing masculinity stereotype of little show of emotionCreates feeling of solitude for the individual placed in this situationThe continual reflection of a life long ago symbolises the changing world |  |
| Individual relationships – the feminine Identity | ‘Mother was at work out in the kitchen at the back, washing up the tea-things..’‘You’ve been smoking!’‘Give me that pipe!’ she said. I said I hadn’t got it. ‘Give – me – that – pipe!’ she said.’‘I was having a smoke outback when I heard her coming.’‘I got out of her way quick, for I hadn’t time to look innocent…’“…she got a whiff of it.”‘She went sniffing round…’‘She got the scent…’‘…he was sort of pensioned off by mother and she kept him pretty well inside his income.’ | Positional representation first female character is away from main action partaking in stereotypical feminine dutiesAccusatory toneHeated exchanged conveyed through em dash, italics and punctuationFirst person perspectiveSuspenseOlfactory imageryLikens character to a bloodhound for comic affectColloquial language and euphemism | Female voice represented in a periphery position suggests their role is removed from masculine activity. Female voice is one of authority and control.Forceful demand and angry tone convey feminine voice as the enforcer of the rules.A man’s response to the matriarch is to fear their reprimand, deceive and/or avoid themThe determination to reprimand the son provides a lack of understanding for the pleasure such an activity provides. Gender roles are divided as there is a lack of understanding. The mother’s reaction to the son’s smoking habit is one of disgust whereas the male finds pleasure in partaking in the forbiddenMatriarch dominates financial affairs of the family, likens to the stereotype of tightly controlling income. |  |
| Cultural context of smoking | ‘We gave our calves time to tone down a bit; then we lit up and began to answer each other.’‘I started smoking first when I was about fourteen or fifteen’‘clay pipe and nigger-head tobacco’‘such great admiration for Jim’‘And what did your old man do when he found out that you were smoking?’‘…he seemed to sort of brighten up – liven up – when he found out that I was smoking.‘Ah! Many a solemn, thoughtful old smoke we had together on the quiet – the old man and me.’ | Colloquial expression for smoking also a punPersonal anecdoteVisual imagery of his first pipePositive emotive languageColloquial expression for parentsPositive emotive languageColloquial languageem dash and punctuation for emphasis of the fondness of the memory | The act of smoking provides a common activity for the men to share, relax and unwind Long engrained in personal contextCreates connotation of a special experience in his youth – a coming of age ritualIdolising adults who engage in the activities we long to partake in – sense of worth, growing up, maturingThe ritual of smoking is one of collaborating – the male characters use this activity to connect Spiritual, almost sacred connection between father and son – implication of ‘men’s business’ |  |