

From the bestselling author of *Unpolished Gem*

ALICE PUNING



One Hundred Days

Teaching Notes by Christine Davey-White

Teaching notes

BY CHRISTINE DAVEY-WHITE

THEMES

- ◆ Romantic love
- ◆ Motherhood and maternal love
- ◆ Displays of love
- ◆ Power
- ◆ Parenting
- ◆ Racism
- ◆ Individualism and autonomy
- ◆ Growing up and shifting perspectives
- ◆ Generational and cross-cultural clashes
- ◆ Generational trauma and the impact of the past
- ◆ Role of make-believe and fantasy
- ◆ Class, poverty and expectations of the poor

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Part A

Synopsis and author biography

SYNOPSIS

One Hundred Days, written by Alice Pung, is the story of Karuna Kelly – a sixteen-year-old girl who becomes pregnant and battles with her mother over who will parent the child. Karuna feels objectified by her mother and looks for ways to create a sense of individuality in a world where her mother exerts full control.

Once pregnant, Karuna is confined to the housing commission flat she and her mother live in, and is told she will be this baby's sister. Karuna writes a journal addressed to her unborn child as way of ensuring the baby can read the truth at a later date, and the reader is privy to the shift in both Karuna's understanding of her mother and their tenuous relationship.

One Hundred Days is a fractured fairytale that employs multiple intertextual references to explore the way love and control can become entwined, to the detriment of those in the relationship.

Alice Pung is a lawyer, teacher and writer, and published her first novel in 2006. She has written award-winning memoirs and novels, and had articles published in *The Age* and *The New York Times*. She also edited the Black Inc. anthology *Growing Up Asian in Australia* (2008). Alice Pung lives in Melbourne, Australia.

PART B

Pre-reading tasks

Before reading, it might be helpful to understand some of the following:

- ◆ Fairytales and their tropes – Cinderella, Rapunzel, Sleeping Beauty, The Little Mermaid, The Princess and the Pea
- ◆ The sexualised nature of stories such as Rapunzel, Little Miss Muffet, and The Little Mermaid
- ◆ Features of fractured fairytales
- ◆ Disney versions of fairytales and the role of Disney princesses in creating feminine expectations
- ◆ Disney's *Lady and the Tramp*
- ◆ Walt Whitman and his poem "Song of Myself"
- ◆ Judith Wright and her poem "Woman to Man"
- ◆ Kahlil Gibran and his poem "On Children"
- ◆ The 1986 Jim Henson fantasy film *Labyrinth*
- ◆ The 1984 film *Sixteen Candles*
- ◆ Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*
- ◆ Rodin's sculpture *The Kiss*

- ◆ Racial pejoratives – *halfie, ang moh girl, wog, skip, ghost*
- ◆ The 1987 Grim Reaper television commercial created by the National Advisory Committee on AIDS
- ◆ The way white or pale skin is considered a sign of wealth and beauty in some cultures
- ◆ Wobbies World and its infamous advertisements
- ◆ Migrant history in Australia from the 1970s and 1980s
- ◆ History of racial vilification of people of Asian heritage in Australia
- ◆ José Rizal
- ◆ The 1965 film *The Sound of Music* and the song “Do-Re-Mi”
- ◆ Shakespeare’s *Love’s Labour’s Lost*
- ◆ The role of *Dolly* magazine in Australian teenage lives in the 1980s
- ◆ 1980s Neighbourhood Watch and Safety House programs
- ◆ *Binukot* women
- ◆ Diana Spencer, Princess of Wales
- ◆ Dr Frankenstein and his creation
- ◆ Delicacies such as bird’s nest soup and *balut*
- ◆ Victorian-era women writers – Mary Shelley and the Brontë sisters
- ◆ The Bible story of King Solomon

PART C:

Questions to provoke discussion and thinking while reading

EPIGRAPH

- ◆ The epigraph features an excerpt from Walt Whitman’s poem “Song of Myself”. How does the chosen extract reflect the conflict found within the parent and child relationship?

PROLOGUE

- ◆ How is the epigraph alluded to on the first page? What are some possible reasons for the subtle shift in language?
- ◆ How could the direct reference to the epigraph foreshadow the upcoming conflict?
- ◆ Who is the narrator speaking to and why does the author use this device?
- ◆ How does addressing the narrative to “you” create a sense of connection between the narrator, the recipient of the story and the reader?
- ◆ Consider the imagery of the iron lung. How is it used to create sympathy for one character and villainise another?
- ◆ What is the purpose of the language used to describe the foetus? How does this create a sense of joy for the reader?
- ◆ What dichotomy is there between the ideals presented in the epigraph and the reality lived by the narrator as presented in the prologue?

- ◆ Karuna mentions a possible return to school. What concerns could the reader have about this?
- ◆ What is Karuna's role in supporting and comforting her mother?
- ◆ Consider the way men and masculinity are presented in fairytales. What tropes have been developed so far?

THEN

CHAPTER 1

- ◆ What is the change Karuna undergoes well before becoming pregnant? How does it relate to her relationship with her mother?
- ◆ What is Karuna's role as the central character in the fairytales made by her mother? What level of narrative control does Grand Mar seem to have?
- ◆ How does Karuna portray her father? What role is he playing in the fairytale at this stage of the novel?
- ◆ How are Karuna's parents shown to have conflicting methods of showing love? In what ways does love equate to ownership, and what items symbolise this?
- ◆ What does the pet name (hypocorism) used by Karuna's father say about their relationship?
- ◆ Re-read the scene when Grand Par describes Grand Mar's behaviour as "backwards shit". How does this anecdote continue to create a disparity between the parents, and further strengthen the villain-versus-prince trope?
- ◆ How does Karuna's retelling of the way her mother cried when cleaning up the broken shrines, and the way her father behaved when collecting items from Thanh, highlight the issues prevalent with a child or adolescent narrator?
- ◆ Karuna is seen as *This One*. Why is she admired and considered lucky, and what impact does this assessment have on Karuna's self-worth?
- ◆ How does Karuna learn to equate beauty and skin tone to love? Does she struggle to maintain this expectation as she gets older?
- ◆ How do the men in Karuna's life react to her beauty and how does their behaviour highlight her father's sense of ownership over her?

CHAPTER 2

- ◆ Karuna describes herself as a "dusty, back-of-the-shelf version of a white girl". How does this line highlight the disconnection she feels between herself and her mother?
- ◆ Karuna's explanation of the way her friend Teresa acquired the nickname Tweezer is the first time the reader is exposed to Grand Mar's pronunciation. How does this enlighten the reader? Consider if Karuna's retelling portrays her mother positively or negatively.

- ◆ Teresa is obsessed with Disney princesses. How does this impact her ability to break free from her family's expectations?
- ◆ How does this chapter reveal migrant parents' concerns about children growing up and being influenced by Australian values?
- ◆ Jareth, the Goblin King, "ignited" something in Karuna. How is this anti-hero the beginning of Karuna's journey into self-discovery? How does this intertextual reference foreshadow the way Karuna will be seen, and will see herself?
- ◆ How does the sculpture (*The Kiss* by Rodin) symbolise the way Karuna realises her thoughts and desires are separate to her mother's? What is the significance of this?

CHAPTER 3

- ◆ Does Karuna's description of her father match the stereotypical Australian man? How?
- ◆ Consider the way Karuna's parents are portrayed. How does this make use of the fairytale tropes? How does this influence the reader's perception of the characters?
- ◆ Karuna's father uses the malapropism "grandular". What is this showing about how he might see himself?
- ◆ What is the significance of the location of the Catholic school?
- ◆ In what ways did the divorce cause Karuna and her mother to become ostracised? What does this section of the novel show about the way Anglo-Australians treat people they see as different?
- ◆ How are the stories of Rapunzel and Cinderella alluded to? How does Karuna align herself with the downtrodden princesses, and what narrative is this creating about herself?
- ◆ What does the reader learn about Grand Mar's attitude towards Karuna? Discuss the pejorative Karuna is called and what it could say about why the mother and daughter struggle to connect.
- ◆ How do the confines of the flat replicate the relationship between mother and daughter?
- ◆ Grand Mar describes feeling tricked into marriage, and choosing to marry for the wrong reasons. What are these reasons and how could her own fairytale fantasy have contributed to her actions?
- ◆ What clues does the reader get regarding the cultural expectations of marriage and how these are different in Australia and other countries?
- ◆ By aligning Aunt Yenny's restaurant "Siamese Please" with the Disney film *Lady and the Tramp*, Pung makes comments on the way Asian culture often becomes a caricature. What does she show the reader about cultural clashes and ideals?
- ◆ Karuna mentions attention from men ranging from "simple appreciation", to "complicated danger". What do these terms mean, and how do they affect someone like Karuna?
- ◆ What is shown about Grand Mar's old-fashioned ways of dealing with sickness? Does this challenge the narrative built by Karuna?

CHAPTER 4

- ◆ What can the reader deduce from Karuna's choice of clothing?
- ◆ Explain the irony of the tutoring program – what does Karuna actually learn?
- ◆ How does Karuna's school text (*The Handmaid's Tale*) foreshadow the way her life will change? In what ways does this also allude to the concept of a fractured fairytale? What does Ray's lack of knowledge about the text reveal?
- ◆ What superpower does Karuna realise she has? How does this make her feel?
- ◆ Ray makes Molly Ringwald and Long Duk Dong references. What does this suggest about Karuna's own coming of age? What is highlighted about Australian society in this discussion?
- ◆ What is suggested about Ray's future pathway by the José Rizal reference? Also consider the later line, "Girls like me didn't stop men from carrying on with their lives."
- ◆ What do the lines from "Do-Re-Mi" (*The Sound of Music*) suggest about what Karuna sees as Ray's purpose in her life?
- ◆ Karuna writes, "I may have been in the passenger seat, but I knew exactly what I was doing." What does she mean?
- ◆ What did Karuna realise about herself once she had lost her virginity? What did she realise about how Ray perceived her?
- ◆ Why might Ray have reacted in the way he did when he found out Karuna was wearing her father's clothes?
- ◆ What issues of bodily autonomy are raised in the later stages of this chapter? What impact does this have on Karuna?
- ◆ What does the relationship between Ray and Karuna show about social class?
- ◆ Why does the book of poetry mean so much to Karuna?

CHAPTER 5

- ◆ How different is Karuna's new school? How does the new school compound the isolation Karuna feels?
- ◆ Consider the role of fantasy and daydreams in this chapter. How do pop culture and friendship hinder or fuel this type of thinking? What does the fairytale mash-up highlight about Karuna's life?
- ◆ How do the changing literary references continue to mimic Karuna's mindset and/or life?
- ◆ How does Karuna convince herself she cannot be pregnant? What does this reveal about the way she has been controlled and/or sheltered from reality?

CHAPTER 6

- ◆ How has Karuna's superpower altered? What does the phrase "superpower" reveal about how she thinks about herself?
- ◆ In what ways does the vernacular used by Karuna's mother in the Maribyrnong Medical Centre highlight the differences between her and Karuna? What exactly is revealed about the way the two are seen by the world?
- ◆ Compare Grand Mar's reaction to Karuna's pregnancy to the reaction of the nurses. What sort of consequence is Karuna's mother worried about, and why doesn't this concern the nurses?
- ◆ Nurse Chin highlights a hierarchical way of thinking about people like Karuna's mother. What is this thinking, and what does it reveal about their country of birth?
- ◆ Nurse Chin refers to an "us" being humiliated. What does she mean by "us"?
- ◆ Dr Masano becomes an important figure in Karuna's life. What role is she playing in this initial stage of their relationship?
- ◆ What do the headlines and stories in *Dolly* magazine show about teenage problems?
- ◆ How is Karuna still feeling a sense of power regarding her ability to conceal aspects of her life? Why is this important to her?
- ◆ What is the significant difference between how Dr Masano treats Karuna and how Karuna is treated by her mother? How does this allow Karuna to see herself as the unborn child's mother?
- ◆ What ultimatum is Karuna offered and why does it anger her so much?
- ◆ "I will look after MY baby." Who says this and what does it show about the way Karuna is seen by her mother?
- ◆ The intertextual reference of *Labyrinth* is further explored. How does the discussion of the Goblin King further villainise Karuna's mother?

CHAPTER 7

- ◆ What battle of ownership and loyalty is being explored? Who is pitted against whom, and how are the allegiances developed?
- ◆ In what way are Eastern and Western cultures continuing to clash? What is causing this?
- ◆ Karuna begins to feel invisible and no longer a person in her own right. Where is this explored in this chapter?
- ◆ How does the Judith Wright poem detail the loss of personhood Karuna is feeling? What does this literary reference show about Karuna's mindset?
- ◆ What fears are confirmed when Karuna visits Tweezer?
- ◆ Tweezer was the only person to assume Karuna made a choice to get pregnant. Why is this significant, and why did this information scare Tweezer?
- ◆ What role does the vending machine ring play in the fairytale narrative? Why is this important to Tweezer?
- ◆ Karuna eventually sees Tweezer as a coward. Why?
- ◆ How does Mrs Allen debunk Karuna's feelings of invisibility?

CHAPTER 8

- ◆ What consequence did Karuna receive for shaming her mother? How is the reader encouraged to remain loyal to Karuna's plight?
- ◆ What is revealed about the vending machine ring and what it meant to Karuna?
- ◆ This chapter sees a shift in the way Karuna views her father. What causes this shift?
- ◆ "I don't want a daughter of mine to learn she has to chase useless men down, only to be hurt a hundred times worse." What does this advice suggest about Karuna's parents' relationship?
- ◆ How does Karuna reveal she loves her mother and sees the truth in her statements?
- ◆ How are the assumptions made about the father of Karuna's child shown to be incorrect? What do these assumptions reveal about society's lingering classism?
- ◆ Karuna feels controlled by her mother, but refers to nursery rhymes that suggest a child has universal power to hurt a mother. How has Karuna internalised blame for the negative things that have happened to her mother, and how does this differ from the role she sees her own child playing for her?
- ◆ How does the fairytale fantasy become tainted? Consider how Karuna no longer sees herself as worthy of a princess's title.
- ◆ How is Karuna treated by the people who drive past her? What does this suggest about the way women, especially women of Asian descent, are viewed?
- ◆ How is Karuna failed by the very systems and people who should be looking out for her? What does she learn about perception versus reality?
- ◆ "They couldn't see that the bigger I got, the smaller I became, and they didn't understand that once the baby came, I would be gone!" Karuna fears for her future self – what exactly does she worry will disappear?
- ◆ What does Karuna realise about her father at the end of this chapter? How does this new knowledge taint her fairytale narrative?

CHAPTER 9

- ◆ What is the job at Mrs Osman's salon a solution for?
- ◆ While working in the salon, what does Karuna start to notice about beauty and its role in women's lives?
- ◆ How is the reference to the prized *Binukot* women used to comment on the lives of Karuna and her mother?
- ◆ Grand Par is described as having a "busy eye". How is this version different to the way he was portrayed earlier in the novel?
- ◆ How does Mrs Osman begin to be an ally for Karuna? Why is this important?
- ◆ There is a level of financial disparity highlighted between the salon staff and their clients. How does Pung use this scene to comment on the way Australian society "others" people?

- ◆ Why is it important that the second-hand clothes bought for Karuna look like those worn by Princess Diana?
- ◆ What does the discussion of the Miss Universe competitions reveal about the role of beauty in overcoming poverty or adverse life circumstances?
- ◆ What is exposed when Aunt Yenny discovers Karuna's pregnancy? How and why does Aunt Yenny show a level of compassion for Karuna's mother?
- ◆ This chapter highlights an ongoing misalignment of values in regards to money and finances. How does this reach a climax, and what does this show about money as a means of exerting power and showing love?
- ◆ Grand Par's car is described as a Dr Frankenstein creation. What does this literary reference suggest about the way he views himself, and how does the car highlight his true feelings for Karuna?
- ◆ Karuna realises her father is not as strong as she first thought. What causes her to see him through a new lens?

CHAPTER 10

- ◆ How are Grand Mar's predictions for the baby's looks shown to be baseless? How do these predictions further drive Karuna away?
- ◆ Karuna does not understand why her mother continues to source delicacies such as *balut*. What do her mother's actions show about how she feels about Karuna? Consider the rarity and cost of such foods.
- ◆ Karuna has her hair cut and her work station moved to the back of the salon. How do these actions comment on the part beauty ideals play in Karuna's life?
- ◆ How is the sanctuary offered by the Walt Whitman poetry book ruined?
- ◆ Grand Par does not bring his car the next time he sees Karuna. What does this say about how he sees her, and how does the altercation with the drunken passenger on the bus further highlight the breakdown of his relationship with his daughter? How is Karuna's fantasy of being rescued ruined by this trip?
- ◆ How does Grand Par make his ex-wife the villain in the tale?

CHAPTER 11

- ◆ Karuna calls herself Cinderella and begins to see other teens through a new lens. How does this highlight the way she is changing and growing up?
- ◆ Grand Mar uses two malapropisms early in this chapter. Why is she shown to speak in the way she does?
- ◆ How does this chapter reflect the change in fantasy about Ray and his potential rescue of Karuna? What is being said about the fairytale prince?
- ◆ Mrs Osman gives Karuna a makeover and takes her photo. How does Karuna's mother's refusal to allow the photo to be displayed compare to her actions when Karuna was a baby? What does this say about how she feels about her daughter?

- ◆ Karuna describes her unborn baby as a “new model”. What does she mean?
- ◆ What does Mrs Osman’s revelation about the baby’s birth certificate allow Karuna to finally understand?
- ◆ Mrs Osman offers new insight into the reality of Grand Mar’s life. What is this new insight and how does it begin to alter how Karuna sees her mother?
- ◆ What does Mrs Osman say about love?
- ◆ Mrs Osman gives Karuna a notebook. What is significant about the words on the notebook, and what does this notebook become?
- ◆ What does Karuna plan to do with the protective charm she receives from Mrs Osman?

NOW

- ◆ Where in the timeline does “Now” begin?

CHAPTER 12

- ◆ Why can’t Grand Mar trust Karuna?
- ◆ Karuna receives conflicting and contradictory advice from two strong figures in her life – her mother and her doctor. What do these contradictions show?
- ◆ Karuna refers to an egg breaking. What fears does she have for herself once her child is born?
- ◆ How does the notebook become a means of Karuna both defying her mother and building a sense of autonomy?
- ◆ What is the purpose of the Princess and the Pea reference?
- ◆ Describe Karuna’s mental state at this stage of her pregnancy.
- ◆ How do the television advertisements instruct Karuna about motherhood? How does this add to the fantasy life she has created? How is the fantasy affected by the Grim Reaper advertisement?
- ◆ What simple treasure does Karuna acquire and why does she save it?
- ◆ Karuna’s baby clothes are brought out of storage – how does this incite both anger and fear?
- ◆ Why does Karuna hope her baby is a boy?
- ◆ The family celebrating a birthday in the park forces Karuna to acknowledge the type of love she and her mother share. What type of love is it, and why has their love developed in this way?
- ◆ What role does the journal play in creating a truthful narrative?
- ◆ Karuna begins to see Jareth the Goblin King as a flawed man. What does this reveal about her thinking?
- ◆ “They wave and think they are helping but all they are doing is blocking out the light.” Who is Karuna discussing in this line and what is shown about these people?

CHAPTER 13

- ◆ This chapter begins with the reality of labour and birth. How does this compare to the fantasy built up throughout the novel?
- ◆ What is the significance of Karuna not recognising that the midwife is calling her “Mum”? How does the midwife’s language begin to shift Karuna’s thinking?
- ◆ Karuna’s beliefs regarding the baby’s gender are shown to be a fantasy. How is this done?
- ◆ How does Grand Mar experience a loss of power in the hospital? What role do the nurses play here?
- ◆ What promise does Karuna make to her daughter?
- ◆ Karuna has been referring to her mother as “your Grand Mar” when writing in the journal. When she speaks to her mother she calls her “Mah”. What does this language and spelling shift highlight?
- ◆ Why is the baby’s skin colour significant? Does this impact the love she receives from her Grand Mar?
- ◆ How does the experience in the taxi highlight the similarities between Karuna and her mother? What differences are also exacerbated?
- ◆ What role does Mrs Osman play in the child’s wellbeing at this stage of the story? How are the tropes of mothering and motherhood being challenged?
- ◆ There is a shift from “my” to “our” when discussing the new baby. What does this show?
- ◆ Why does Grand Mar treat Karuna as she does, and how does the comparison to Mrs Kelly Sr highlight the different ways motherhood is viewed?
- ◆ What is the comparison Karuna makes between herself and the Victorian-era writers?
- ◆ How is Karuna left feeling abandoned and without support again?
- ◆ Why does Karuna celebrate her mother’s return to work?

CHAPTER 14

- ◆ Why didn’t Karuna notice how trapped she was?
- ◆ How does Karuna assert herself as the mother, and how does her own mother belittle this?
- ◆ Why does Karuna insist on breastfeeding the baby?
- ◆ How does the key become a symbol of power and control?
- ◆ Once again the film *Labyrinth* is conflated with Karuna’s experiences. What does this continued reference show about Karuna’s life at this point in time?
- ◆ How does Nurse Barbara assert Karuna’s authority over the baby?
- ◆ What does this latest experience of racism show about the different ways Karuna and her mother approach motherhood?
- ◆ How does money continue to be a point of contention in this relationship? What does it show about responsibility and trust?
- ◆ What does Karuna realise after she runs away from her mother?
- ◆ What does the end of the chapter suggest about Karuna’s success in creating a bond with her baby?

CHAPTER 15

- ◆ Karuna sees the journal as proof of ownership (of the baby). Why does she see this as a necessity?
- ◆ Why does Karuna find it difficult to explain the danger she is in? How have her past experiences moulded her thinking?
- ◆ What new fantasy has Karuna created and how will it save her?
- ◆ When the help Karuna so desperately craved arrives, she is both relieved and scared. Why does she have these mixed emotions? What has she come to understand about her mother, and what is it she wants changed?
- ◆ What is revealed as Karuna and her mother's greatest fear?
- ◆ How does the *Labyrinth* character Sarah act as an example of bravery to Karuna?
- ◆ What is revealed about Grand Mar's life?

CHAPTER 16

- ◆ What does Grand Mar learn and how does this new knowledge change her behaviour?
- ◆ What is important about the letter Karuna has written and sent?
- ◆ How does the poem "On Children" by Kahlil Gibran allow Karuna to understand the next phase of her life?
- ◆ What incident finally makes Karuna face the reality of her mother's actions?
- ◆ How does the story of King Solomon show the depth of Karuna's fears?
- ◆ What courageous act does Karuna perform? How does this reveal the power of love?

CHAPTER 17

- ◆ Where did Karuna's wildness come from?
- ◆ How does the way Grand Mar describes the new baby change? What does the pronoun reveal?
- ◆ "One hundred days" initially referred to a period of confinement, but now celebrates a life. What does this shift highlight?
- ◆ Lan is described as "sister". What does this language choice say about the type of father Grand Mar is to Karuna?
- ◆ What else does Karuna come to realise about Lan? What does Grand Mar's lack of surprise show?
- ◆ What courageous act has Tweezer performed? Why is this important to Karuna?
- ◆ How is the fantasy Karuna had built around her father finally removed and debunked? Compare the way his actions and style of parenting is described in this chapter to the way it was described in Chapter 1.
- ◆ What role does Mrs Osman take in giving Karuna a truthful picture of her mother?
- ◆ How does the cheque from *Reader's Digest* begin the shift in financial control?

- ◆ What has Grand Mar been trying to do all along?
- ◆ What final thought is revealed about ownership of the child?

EPILOGUE

- ◆ How is the fairytale convention of “Once upon a time” subverted and shown to be flawed?
- ◆ What does Karuna realise about Ray, and why is she able to see this reality now?
- ◆ Where is love revealed to be from?
- ◆ What exactly does Karuna celebrate about herself?

PART D

Learning Activities

After reading, the following themes can be further explored:

ROMANTIC LOVE

Consider the role of media and pop culture in creating romantic ideals and expectations, especially for girls and women. This could also involve an exploration of the Princess and Prince narrative trope, and the concept of women being rescued or the “damsel in distress” trope.

The reader should also consider the parts beauty and beauty ideals play in a woman being deemed worthy of romantic love.

MOTHERHOOD AND MATERNAL LOVE

Look at the ways in which motherhood forms a part of the expectations women are expected to fulfil, and the judgement that often comes with failing to adhere to the social norms placed on mothers. This could also explore the way the “true” mother can become something to be exposed.

DISPLAYS OF LOVE AND POWER

Often the two conflicting ideals are mistaken for each other, and love becomes a bargaining aspect in a relationship. A key question would be a definition of unconditional love versus conditional love.

PARENTING

Parenting decisions are often judged in hindsight, and can become a means for creating a divide when the parenting relationship sours. What can occur when the parents lack a common ground or base?

RACISM

Consider how racist behaviour is shown to impact the victim, and create a misguided sense of superiority for the person behaving in a racist manner. What societal issues are highlighted and shown to be contributing factors to racism in Australia?

INDIVIDUALISM AND AUTONOMY

How does one develop and show autonomy? What role does a parent have in creating this sense of autonomy, and what are the consequences of failing to allow it to happen?

GROWING UP AND SHIFTING PERSPECTIVES

A child is only able to interpret the world using the information they have been given, and shielding them from alternative perspectives ensures they cannot see the truth in events and opinions.

Explore how a child's understanding of the world can be challenged and altered as they become privy to more information.

GENERATIONAL AND CROSS-CULTURAL CLASHES

The differences of lived experiences result in individuals perceiving the world in multiple ways. When people are expected to find commonality, they can struggle to understand why the alternative generation or culture acts as they do. It is often only when the reasons for behaviour and attitudes are understood that people can find ways to avoid the clash.

GENERATIONAL TRAUMA AND THE IMPACT OF THE PAST

Individuals will often seek to shelter their offspring from undergoing the same trauma they have experienced. This can teach the child to be wary of events or people that have not yet (or may not) hurt them, or may result in an inability to understand the other person's reasoning and perspectives.

ROLE OF MAKE-BELIEVE AND FANTASY

When an individual is struggling to cope with a situation, they can often resort to fantasy to help them feel hopeful. They may also be unable to face or accept the realities of the life experience they find themselves undergoing, so they protect themselves from the pain with an alternative narrative. This narrative can be cultivated by pop culture or media.

CLASS, POVERTY AND EXPECTATIONS OF THE POOR

Despite Australia considering itself to be an egalitarian society, there are still disparities in wages, access to education, and life experiences. This can result in judgement from others, or a reduced expectation of success. This becomes an invisible barrier people also need to overcome in order to achieve, and can be further impacted by the language used, as language becomes a means of separating people into groups of those who can access opportunities and those who cannot.

EXTENDED RESPONSE TO TEXT

- ◆ Consider the structure of the text: an epigraph and prologue, “Then”, “Now” and an epilogue. How does each section build upon the meaning offered in the last?
- ◆ Karuna’s name means “compassion” in Pali. How do she and her mother learn compassion and empathy by the end of the text?
- ◆ *One Hundred Days* shows the importance of knowing the truth of someone’s story. Discuss.
- ◆ How do the intertextual elements of the novel *One Hundred Days* contribute to the reader’s understanding of love?
- ◆ Effective parenting is learning how little control one has over their child. To what extent do you agree?
- ◆ Romantic love is shown to be a flawed ideal that can only lead to heartache. Discuss with reference to the text *One Hundred Days*.
- ◆ **“They couldn’t see that the bigger I got, the smaller I became, and they didn’t understand that once the baby came, I would be gone!”**
Why is it important that people have a sense of purpose in the world?
- ◆ **“Don’t call me that. I’m not her sister.”**
How are courage and defiance shown to be worthy characteristics?
- ◆ **“I didn’t hurl terrible truths at people I loved.”**
To what extent is growing up accepting the reality of life?
- ◆ **“Girls like me didn’t stop men from carrying on with their lives.”**
Alice Pung’s *One Hundred Days* explores the myriad barriers women face when trying to assert their individuality. Discuss.
- ◆ The way Alice Pung addresses her story to “you” creates a sense of allyship that is vital to the way the reader interprets Karuna’s life. To what extent do you agree?

Teaching Notes by Christine Davey-White

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