

a memoir
Lily Chan

TOYO

A vintage, sepia-toned photograph of a young woman, likely of Japanese descent, standing and facing the camera. She is wearing a traditional kimono with a dark, patterned obi. Her hair is styled in a traditional Japanese fashion, possibly a bun or a high ponytail, adorned with a decorative hairpiece. The background is slightly blurred, showing what appears to be a wooden lattice or screen. The overall image has a grainy, historical quality.

TEACHING NOTES BY Wafa Taoube

TEACHING NOTES

BY WAFA TAUBE

Themes: identity, belonging, culture

Year levels: 9–12

PART I: INTRODUCTION TO UNIT: LANGUAGE, IDENTITY AND CULTURE

EALD Module B

Take students through an understanding of the framework of the module statement and the key ideas so they know what aspects they are foregrounding as they are reading the novel.

HSC English Prescriptions 2019-2023

EAL/D Module B: Language, Identity and Culture

Language has the power to both reflect and shape individual and collective identity. In this module, students explore and analyse the ways that language is used to express the complexities and subtleties of personal, social and cultural identity. They investigate how textual forms and conventions and language structures and features are used to communicate information, ideas, values and attitudes which inform and influence perceptions of ourselves and other peoples. Students also consider the impact texts have on shaping individuals' or communities' sense of identity.

Through the study of one prescribed text and a selection of related material, students develop awareness and understanding of how our perceptions of and relationships with others and the world are shaped by written, spoken and visual language. Through close language study, and by experimenting with different language choices, they consider and reflect on ways that texts affirm or challenge prevailing assumptions and beliefs about individuals and lifestyles, and about social and cultural groupings. They consider representations of and perspectives on culture and identity and they investigate and reflect on their own and others' experiences of adapting to changed circumstances.

Composition focuses on experimentation with variations of purpose, audience and form to create representations of selfhood, affiliation and heritage. Explicit, targeted English language study centres on the Australian vernacular, idioms, colloquialisms and other forms of cultural expression, and the ways that textual forms and features are used to represent aspects of individual and/or collective identity. Students plan, draft and refine their own written and spoken texts, applying the conventions of syntax, spelling and grammar appropriately and with increased confidence and accuracy for their audience, context and purpose.

Language – written, spoken and visual

Language refers to the choice of words (written or oral), how the words are organised and how this creates or affects meaning.

—*Edible English*

The choice of language we use to represent our ideas will be dictated by:

- The **purpose** of the text: why was this text written? Did the composer want to be critical or did they want to comment on the challenges of growing up?
- The **audience** of the text: is this for a specific or universal audience? If it is for an educated audience, how will the language be different than if it was for a mainstream audience?
- The **context** of the text: the types of idiomatic expressions the composer may use points to a specific time and place. There may be representations of characters and events influenced by the ways and thinking of the time.
- The **form/medium/layout** of the text: narrative texts may differ from analytical texts and allow composers to use more creative language, whereas other forms require more speech or a more formal register. At times we may see a hybridisation of genres and forms and we must question why there is this blurring of boundaries.

Examples of:

- **Written texts:** poems, novels, feature articles, short stories
Language may include: imagery, symbolism, verbs, modality, metaphor, connotations
- **Spoken texts:** slam poetry, drama texts, speeches, podcasts
Language may include: dialogue, stage actions and directions, sound effects, pauses
- **Visual texts:** film, interactive blogs/storytelling, documentaries
Language may include: camera shots and angles, lighting

Activity

Students consider the different text types and language features and discuss how language features can be shared across texts. For example: a film can use symbolism just like a novel can. Class discussion follows to ensure students are seeing the way language can be specific to a text or be featured across texts. They consider the way language is a code and how codes communicate meaning.

Identity

Identity comes from the Latin term *identitas*, which means ‘staying the same’. Identity refers to those things that make an individual the ‘same person’ from one moment or stage in life to the next, and that give him or her a sense of self.

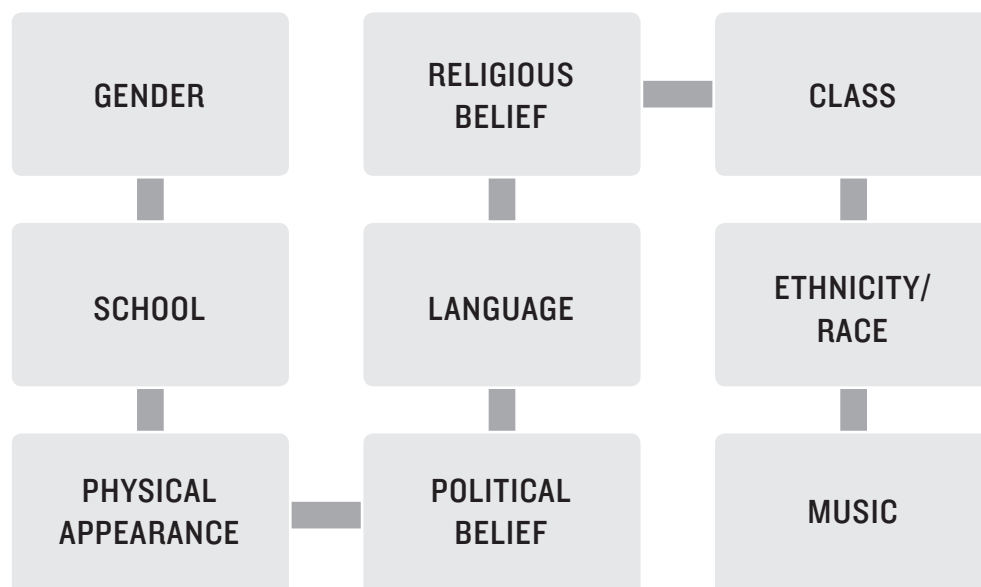
Along with a basic level of conscious awareness that is probably biological, each person also has an identity that is shaped by the practices and values of their culture.

Issues of identity are closely linked to issues of power and politics, because societies often divide people into groups on the basis of characteristics that are, or become, part of personal identity. Members of oppressed groups are often aware that identities imposed upon them by culture can limit their opportunities in ways that may not be true for members of a dominant culture.

—*Brian Moon*

Activities

Think-pair-share: Students use the following diagram to plot their identity. They may add more information if they want to create a more comprehensive map. They compare their identity map with another student in the class, and then they inform the class about what they learned of their partner.



The module asks students to explore the identity types below. View the following slam poetry performances and write down aspects of the poems that explore each of the following types of identity. Allow TWO viewings to ensure students are familiar with the content and make sure subtitles are used.

I Am Nigeria: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6aYvRuQpYok>

Uncle Sam: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OBkqJw8zr_I

How does the attitude of the second slam poet contrast with the proud tone of the first poet? How can we account for their differences in attitude?

Students explore the definition in pairs (15 minutes). They then join another pair and combine answers based on the questions above (15 minutes).

Types of Identity

- Individual AND collective identity
- Personal
- Social
- Cultural
- Activities

Students bring in FIVE images/photos of significant events in their lives, which they have either pasted onto a piece of blank white paper or collated in a Word document. If they cannot access original photos, they can find images correlating to those events online. Students write a sentence explaining why each of the chosen events is significant to them.

Now ask students to remove or delete two events from the page. What is the effect on their identity if this happens? What do they lose?

Alternative activity

Students imagine a future identity. This can relate to employment or lifestyle or any other aspect? How will they realise this identity? What might be some barriers to achieving this identity?

Culture

Refers to the social relations, practices, beliefs and values which prevail in a community of people. Cultural relations are established through basic human activities such as language use, kinship systems, and practices for producing the necessities of life. —*Brian Moon Glossary*

Even if we are all Australian, we still have a slightly different culture to each other. This is because we have different families. Each family has a slightly different way of doing things, seeing things or communicating things. —*Edible English*

Activities

Read the feature article: 'How Asian are we really? What Australia's Census 2016 showed us'.

<https://www.news.com.au/national/how-asian-are-we-really-what-australias-census-2016-showed-us/news-story/2f055e32e74cbe4341953006379b6394>

Reading and comprehension and numeracy: Explain that this is a multimodal article containing video, graphs and written language so it encompasses the three types of language cited in the module statement.

1. Watch the video on the typical Australian embedded within the article.
How do you compare with the average Australian? How are you culturally different or similar?
2. What information from the Census was surprising?
3. What information from the Census confirmed your assumptions?
4. The teacher chooses one of the graphs in the article and shows how to interpret the data and compose a paragraph of analysis on the results.
Students then independently compose a paragraph on a second graph in the article.
5. What conclusions can you draw based on the evidence in this article?
6. Compare this article with the ABC article: <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-08-20/where-do-migrants-to-australia-come-from-chart/10133560> Is the information similar or different? Explain.

Big ideas questions: Debate – oracy activities are important for EALD students in particular so allow time to develop this skill.

Ping-pong debate: Divide the class in half. Each of the students must argue against or for the following statements.

The teacher will write each statement on the board prior to discussion.

The teacher may need to explain each statement before the discussion begins to ensure students are familiar with the meaning of each statement. Every student must speak at least twice during the debate.

Statement 1: Australia can only be made richer by having a mix of cultures.

Statement 2: Migrants who have negative experiences do so because they do not assimilate.

Statement 3: It is difficult to be Australian.

Statement 4: Culture is a burden.

After the debate, students take one statement and write a paragraph of their position on the statement in their journals. They may take a discursive approach where they argue both positions, as this will encourage their critical thinking.

View the TED-Ed Talk *How Culture Drives Behaviour* by Julien S. Bourrelle (12 minutes): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l-Yy6poJ2zs>

Main idea: ‘We all see the world through cultural glasses.’

Make sure to leave the subtitles on for students so that they can take in more information using the two modes of listening and reading.

Class discussion: The speaker claims that an individual may respond to a new culture or country by either one of these reactions:

Explore these reactions to interacting with new cultures:

- Confront: what?
- Complain: about what?
- Conform: to what?
- What words do you not understand in the video? Write them down as you listen.
- What anecdote stuck with you most? What appealed to you about the anecdote?
- How is speech a persuasive text?

View the TED-Ed talk *I Am Not Your Asian Stereotype* by Canwen Xu (10 minutes): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_pUtz75lNaw

Compare the two speeches – how do both represent individual identity and collective identity?

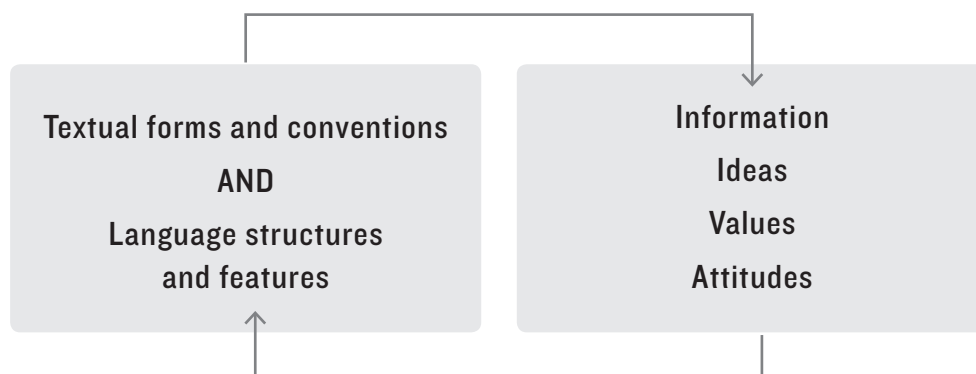
Consider how both use anecdotal evidence as part of their persuasion.

Writing opportunity

Students are encouraged to write their own TED talk for an audience of their peers about their experiences based on stereotypes. They need to consider:

- How will they immediately engage their audience?
- What selective anecdotes they will use to explore their point about their experiences?
- What other persuasive devices will they use to maintain the engagement of their audience?
- How will they organise their information for effect?
- How will they conclude to ensure a lasting message (moral or otherwise) is received?
- Representation of: selfhood (individual identity), affiliation (what interests, values and attitudes do we align with or connect to?), heritage (traditions, language, objects that still may have historical importance).

Explain to students that one of the key terms in English is ‘representation’. All texts aim to reflect the reality of the world around us BUT each of us see the world in different ways (due to our individual identity), so our reality cannot be reflected in the same way. We also come from different backgrounds (heritage) and this influences our reaction to and reading of texts. The selective process of choosing how we display the way we see the world is called representation or ‘present again’. The tools we use to represent our reality can be seen in the first column below (language and construction) and the tools highlight the aspects mentioned in the second column (content).



Both of the columns below ‘inform and influence perceptions of ourselves and other people’ (module statement).

Example: I may want to challenge the traditional notions of masculinity being connotatively associated with power and dominance. I therefore place a man and woman side by side with the woman leaning over the man and the man cowering. The body language and positioning is communicating a representation of males that challenges the cultural stereotype of masculinity and dominance. BUT not everyone will agree with me because representation is a perspective and not a truth.

Activity

Context – Short but sweet research activity

The teacher explains to students that some people may consider that Lily Chan has overlooked a deep treatment of the historical circumstances surrounding Toyo’s world. One could argue that the reason these have been peripheral to the memoir is that she uses the point of the view of the child at times and they may be oblivious to the depth of the conflict. Similarly, for adults, the immediate conflict they face on a daily basis – cultural and personal identity – is of greater consequence in the representation. Is the desire to analyse history a Western cultural practice or inherent to all cultures?

Students are divided into groups and asked to research the following historical events that feature in the novel memoir. Use Google Classroom to monitor the groups and then students present a bite-size presentation (2–3 minutes) on each of the following:

- Atomic bombing
- Nanjing Massacre
- American occupation of Japan
- Perth, Western Australia

Use this journey of researching:

- What does our group know before research?
- What does our group want to find out?
- After research, what key aspects of this place or historical event do we think are important to communicate to another person?

Prior to reading the novel, students are provided with these focus questions to support the content they will be accessing and assessing as they read.

Key questions from the rubric that should remain a focus during this unit

- How can texts shape an individual's and/or community's sense of identity?
- How do texts affirm or challenge prevailing assumptions and beliefs about individuals and lifestyles?
- How do texts affirm or challenge prevailing assumptions and beliefs about social and cultural groupings?
- How does the composer represent the experience of adapting to changed circumstances?

PART 2: CLOSE READING AND DECONSTRUCTION OF THE TEXT

Memoir

What is a memoir? Explain to students that it is a written record of a person's knowledge of events or of a person's own experiences: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/memoir>. Students need to consider that a memoir is not just a life story but an episodic narrative that delivers a series of vignettes that explore a theme or moral message in particular.

Show students the following short video, which explains the difference between memoir, autobiography and biography: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p8dd0Yics10>.

Extension activity

Read with students the following article from *The New York Times*: 'What accounts for our current – or recurrent – fascination with memoir-novels?'

<https://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/28/books/review/what-accounts-for-our-current-or-recurrent-fascination-with-memoir-novels.html>

- Identify any difficult words with students and discuss.
- Assist students in creating a summary of the main ideas from the article.
- Ask students whether they agree with these main ideas and encourage an explanation of reasons.

Class discussion: How can a memoir explore individual and collective identities?

Activity

Students fill in the following table with a partner and then share their answers in a class discussion.

Who writes memoirs?	Why do people write memoirs?	Positive effects of reading a memoir	Issues surrounding memoir writing
Politicians	To present their side of a political scandal	Develop empathy for people in certain positions	Bias can mean that the story is filtered through one person's lens Memory is fallible

Writing opportunity

Journal: Ask students to research the story of how parents/guardians/loved ones met. Students then compose a short piece of writing bringing the story to life. Students need to consider:

- Interesting language choices (simile, metaphor, alliteration, repetition)
- Sentence variation
- Structural organisation: the most effective way to organise the details of this story

The one incident should be at least a page in length. The teacher marks this writing and provides feedback for students. Students compose a second draft within one week to show how they have improved their writing and taken on the teacher's feedback.

Bildungsroman

Toyo can be described as a novelistic memoir because it has the structure and elements of a novel: characters, setting, plot, climactic points, chapters ... but it also has the features of a bildungsroman. A bildungsroman is a novel that follows a hero's passage to adulthood and may also culminate in marriage and establishment in society.

Toyo can be loosely divided into the following sections:

- Before marriage
- Marriage and motherhood
- Migration to Australia

- Spiritual development
- Confrontation of ageing

As you read, fill in the key plot elements in the table below. What can you add? What has been left out that you think might be important?

At the end of the reading journey, you will be asked to write a one-page reflection on how *Toyo* reads like a bildungsroman.

Events and plot points

- Mother was different from the beginning
- Wanted to be a _____ and not a village woman so she escaped through domestic servitude
- Born to Mr _____ while mother was working as a maid
- Mother leaves her employment and sets up a café in O _____ where she networks with important people
- Indoctrinated into the world of social etiquette and manners as a means of social advancement and knowhow
- Toyo sent to a _____ during the bombing of Japan but experienced abominable conditions so brought back by mother
- People trying to rebuild against the backdrop of war and humiliation
- Toyo wrestling with the growing awareness of life and death as her _____ become used for soup, as her _____ suffers an unfortunate accident
- Meets her fears by maintaining fantasy narratives and acting them out – purging of anxieties
- Learning that her beauty has advantages and d _____
- Mother marries a sly conman who s _____ assaults her daughter but he leaves
- Mother passes away
- Toyo is assaulted again whilst seeking refuge so that Ryu can have his sham marriage to reinforce he does not want to be married
- Toyo is married at _____ to a 24-year-old man and loses Japanese c _____
- Toyo tries to assimilate into C _____ family
- Toyo initiated into the restaurant culture/food of the Chinese in-laws
Starts to work with husband – first in the m _____ shop and then as the family buys a hostel and moves in, she helps here too

Events and plot points

- Has to wrestle for position within the widening family of Chinese wives – copy them but also be valued as one of them
 - We learn of Ryu's family background – how his father came to Japan and the d_____ his mother had fitting into Japanese culture and the expectations she had which were not met but she adapted
 - Doubts over whether Ryu is faithful to Toyo are soon quashed
 - We learn of how Ryu got his l_____ leg
 - Desires to forcibly remember her mother so she does not forget her
 - Toyo becomes p_____ and has a son – Yoshio
 - She has an a_____ for the next baby – which was a boy – because Ryu said they were too close together (five months after Yoshio) and would be hard to take care of
 - Ryu books in an operation for his leg
 - Another child – girl – Toyomi
 - Ryu dies – k_____ infection – could have been easily rectified by a simple operation
 - Period of grief follows where the children watch adults grieve but are not told father died
 - I_____ his mother, Yoshio stops eating but not sure why
 - Toyomi and Yoshio grow up
 - Toyomi gets married and has children
 - Okaya dies
 - Otoyia dies
 - Kazuko commits _____ after being told of her terminal diagnosis
 - Mr Takahashi's granddaughter tracks them down and gives them a thick blue c_____ owned by him
 - Yoshio reveals to Toyo the girl he wants to marry – Shuying
 - Yoshio invests in l_____ like those in America and the venture thrives but the game machines begins to thrive more – an entrepreneurial spirit of the Chinese in him
 - Y_____ try to intimidate Toyo but she fends him off using her name-dropping connections
 - Shuying starts to work in family hotel, Shuying and Toyo see the world differently
-

Events and plot points

- Shuying and Yoshio have a child – Hiroto
 - Three years later, L_____ is born
 - Yoshio's coin laundry business has made him a m_____ by the time he turned thirty
 - Yoshio is fined forty thousand yen for not having his Chinese i_____ on him
 - They have another child, Annabel
 - Yoshio and Toyo leave for Australia to check it out – to P_____ in particular – Western Australia
 - Yoshio applies for p_____ residency in Australia and the whole family move
 - They start to absorb the sounds, sights and tastes of Australia
 - Toyo attends daily E_____ classes in the city and meets other migrants
 - She reacts to the behaviour of Australians in contrast to her own social standards
 - Toyo struggles with longing for h_____ and fitting in Australia
 - Family views a d_____ about how animals are slaughtered and the family turn v_____
 - Toyo decides to stay in Australia and see where it takes her
 - Yoshio goes to a psychic and is convinced of something beyond this world when he is told about the man with a limp on the bicycle who is following him
 - Toyo is taken along with Yoshio into a religious discovery – pilgrimages to I_____ – visit an ashram to meet Sai Baba
 - Yoshio names his son using a Sanskrit name
 - Yoshio moves them to a vacant plot and creates an ashram-like community
 - He builds Toyo a new h_____
 - Toyo feels a sense of value sharing her culture with her grandchildren and the wider community
 - She takes a fall
 - Toyo must start to face the inevitability of a_____ and the growing loss of beauty
 - Then she must face the loss of memory, the loss of writing, the disorientation of identity
-

Structure and form

Class discussion: The chapter starts and ends with the same chapter titles – ‘The girl from Gotoretto’ – which suggests a cyclical life story. Like memory, the memoir is told in snippets/vignettes, so Chan is mirroring the way we remember, which is why we have these random scenes and length variation. However, this memoir is constructed in chapters like a novel, and follows a chronology of time.

Why do we write in this structured manner?

Personal context and reviews

The class listens to the following interview with Lily Chan and writes down THREE pieces of information they hear that they find interesting. The class creates a mind map based around student responses.

<https://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/lifematters/lily-chan2c-my-grandmother-toyo/4242702>

The teacher provides students with the following websites to research:

<http://www.paulagrunseit.com/toyo-a-memoir-by-lily-chan-interview-bbwf2013/>

<http://theincblot.blogspot.com/2012/08/lily-chan-on-story-behind-toyo.html>

<https://emilyyuzong.wordpress.com/tag/lily-chan/>

<https://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/books/rare-asian-family-study-20121228-2byac.html>

After the students research, they are to create FIVE questions relating to this research in pairs. They join another pair and each pair answers the other pair's questions.

Narrative writing and language features

Teachers need to spend some time exploring the different narrative language features that will be used to define characters and their ways of seeing the world. Completing a pre-quiz on language features may help assess to see where the students are in terms of being able to identify language techniques. The following table shows some main language features that creative writers use and can be found in many episodes throughout this memoir.

Figurative language	Imagery	Symbolism
Define:	Define:	Define:
<p>(3) From a distance Kayoko saw the fisherman bobbing up and down on the waves like little people in giant bowls. (simile)</p> <p>(5) The farmers' flat faces were weathered and the earth pressed its thumb into their backs, marking them at birth. (personification)</p> <p>Student choice:</p>	<p>(11) <i>The scent of cinnamon and cocoa infused her clothes and she floated to school and back, unaware of her friends' rapturous sniffs as she came within their scent orbit. (olfactory)</i></p> <p>Student choice:</p>	<p>(50) The apple song: <i>Shall we sing the apple song? / If two people sing, it's merry. / If everyone sings, / It's more and more delightful – a song of hope and unity.</i></p> <p>(54) Shirasagi-jo – <i>the white heron castle with its ivory walls crowning the hilltop and its grey-blue rooftops like curved wings about to take flight.</i></p> <p><i>To Tōyo, the castle became a symbol of her country's resilience, for a bomb had fallen on its white heart but failed to detonate. It stood intact and majestic on the horizon, greeting her every morning as she walked to school.</i></p> <p>Student choice:</p>
Explanation of effect:	Explanation of effect:	Explanation of effect:

Layout and other interesting elements

Opening lines to the book (3): When Toyo was a pre-embryo floating in metaphysical space, there is a gap between this and the next line to make it seem as if the sentence is floating, mimetic of the action in the sentence.

Cohesion (4): The line ‘plotted her escape’ is then spaced, and the first element of the next paragraph is ‘Freedom came in the form of Mrs Takahashi’ to elucidate the contrast between restriction and liberation.

Change of point of view signalled from a personal identity to the identity of Mother rather than Kayoko: When Toyo takes over the narrative, Kayoko stops being named and turns into Mother.

Writing Opportunity

Students compose two paragraphs of a moment in their life, considering the use of:

- Simile
- Metaphor
- Symbolism
- Auditory imagery
- Layout of words

Conflict and context: external

A novel explores the internal conflict of the characters as well as the external conflict that adds to the drama of the internal conflict. For this module, we need to consider how the language of the composer represents how they see their identity and their relationship with others in particular social and cultural contexts. Students need to be able to identify the language features used to represent people and what these features reveal about perspective within specific historical contexts as well.

In the table below, students consider the conflicts between groups and society and how Chan represents them. Some examples are provided.

Conflict	Examples: quotes from text	Analysis of language features
Samurai	<p>(33) <i>They leaned in towards each other, their brows gleaming, their noses sharpening like beaks.</i></p> <p>(33) <i>They rushed like a black storm and whipped swords from their waists into silver arcs, into a forest of blood and hacked cries.</i></p> <p>(33) <i>There were rules to be followed, protocols to observe, traps to avoid, a language hidden behind the spoken one. Mother dissected conversations and motives, traced the shadows of people's thoughts. She taught Toyo to do the same.</i></p>	<p>The simile 'noses sharpening like beaks' characterises the Samurai as an intimidating and aggressive group (collective identity), the emotive word 'sharpening' demonises their appearance and extends that to their intent.</p> <p>Additionally, the verbs 'rushed', 'whipped' reinforce their belligerence; combined with the gothic visceral imagery of a 'black storm' and 'forest of blood', the Samurai are represented as forces of terror and fear who are enforcing their beliefs through violence.</p>
Kayoko works for Mr Takashashi in China and she wears the kimono (Japanese were hated after the Nanjing massacre)	<p>(5) <i>Kayoko hid her face behind a fan to protect herself from the occasional pebble thrown by locals. Their contorted faces frightened and excited her.</i></p>	<p>The body language of Kayoko ...</p>
War	<p>(34–35) <i>Toyo did not long for food; she was fed on imperial rice and steamed buns delivered from a factory operated by her mother's government contact.</i></p> <p>(31) <i>The Japanese were always winning. Their planes and ships were the best in the world. Their soldiers were dedicated to driving away foreign vermin. She imagined the red-faced, hook-nosed gaijin advancing in hordes like rats, their eyes glittering. The Japanese army swarmed through them in neat Khaki uniform, and the Boy Who Loved Aeroplanes led them all, brandishing the beloved flag.</i></p>	<p>The prepositional phrase 'by her mother's government contact' reinforces the inequity of treatment during the war and reminds us that the experience of war was not necessarily a collective experience but a distinctive experience for some.</p> <p>Cultural attitudes and beliefs are enforced through the language of propaganda, which is used to embellish the collective superior identity of the Japanese. The high modality of 'always winning' and the superlative of 'best in the world' is combined with the visual actions of 'brandishing' which adds a mythical characterisation to the military effort.</p>

Conflict	Examples: quotes from text	Analysis of language features
	<p>(41) <i>Toyo and Yuki examined the lining of their knickers and shirts and discovered thousands of white and yellow eggs like intricate beadwork ... Brown scabs, pus eruptions and oozing blood dotted the landscape of their skin.</i></p> <p>(42) <i>As the days went by, they began to look less like children and more like stray cats ... If one child's serving seemed bigger, they were pushed and pinched for the rest of the afternoon. (Irony and parallel of war outside and war within the children as they act out basic animal urges.)</i></p> <p>(46) <i>A gigantic god had consumed the city and violently excreted it in clumps of wood, rocks, dirt and charcoal.</i></p> <p><i>Mother stopped before a plot of land, the wooden planks twisted and black, a chair and a table poking out of ground. It took a while before Toyo recognised their home. This was the café. She began to howl.</i></p> <p>(47–48) <i>She recounted tales of humans, dogs, cats and horses rushing into the nearest water to escape, only to be boiled into bloated carcasses ... Rats attracted by the smell of breast milk, eating away at a baby's face.</i></p> <p>(49) <i>The adults talked about the end of the war with a mixture of weariness and shame. The children did not feel ashamed. They searched for food. They planted radishes, cabbages, cucumbers, mushrooms and onions in the fields. They liked this much better than running to the bomb shelter. (Children look to the future and adults look to the past; children want to be empowered whilst the adults are demoralised.)</i></p>	<p>We can see the destructive capacity of technological warfare because of the analogy to 'gigantic gods'; however, it is the visceral imagery of rats 'eating away at a baby's face' and the auditory imagery of 'howl' that shows how war has left the Japanese feeling utter hopelessness, a stark contrast with the propagandist reports on the radio.</p>
Rejection of Western culture before the war	<p>(12) <i>When the police made rounds to confiscate Western music and literature ... Mother gathered up the forbidden records and handed them to Toyo, who scampered upstairs and hid them under a tatami mat.</i></p>	

Conflict	Examples: quotes from text	Analysis of language features
When working in China as a Japanese woman – Kayoko (Toyo's mother)	(6) Contact can dissipate suspicion: Kayoko makes contact with an old woman bending over and coughing along the road: <i>The next day she bought the old woman a tin of wheat flour. The woman's suspicion gave way to a surprised gratitude. She invited Kayoko into her small house.</i>	
Chinese vs Japanese practices	(92) The mother-in-law frying fresh salmon alive: <i>The salmon leaped up and down, banging against the metal lid like a gong. Toyo listened to it dying and bit her lips in horror. Okaya announced, 'It tastes much better when you fry it alive.' Okaya was right. Toyo had never before tasted such succulent salmon.</i>	
Assumptions: Japanese vs Chinese	(78) On her deathbed, to Ryu: <i>'The Japanese are a little crooked, a little bit snobby. The Chinese work hard. Once you earn their trust, they are simple and open about their motives.'</i>	
	(78) <i>She knew that he knew that the Chinese were a small minority in Japan, bristling with the tension of the Japanese invasion of China and the ghosts of the massacred thousands in Nanjing ... They made themselves essential in the provision of services and products, staples of the consumer industry, their shops growing into local institutions.</i>	

Conflict	Examples: quotes from text	Analysis of language features
	<p>(83) Decision to marry a Chinese man in Japan: <i>She had seen the way the Chinese were treated. The Japanese could spit in disgust at them. They were not permitted to vote in elections. They were excluded from the health-care schemes and prohibited from working in the public services ... She would be marrying into a group of 'third-class residents'.</i></p> <p>(84): When she utters that she intends to marry Ryu, <i>a small gap appeared between her and each of her friends.</i></p> <p>(84) Ironical that his Chinese family don't want him to take a Japanese wife: <i>My mother greets me daily with the words, 'If you don't set an example, then all your siblings will fall into bad ways.'</i></p>	
Yakuza	(143) Yakuza demands money but family fights back: <i>She thought that there had never been a more exciting moment than this, never more alive than when the entire house gathered to protect itself.</i>	
American occupation of Japan: advantages and disadvantages	(67) Not only does this structurally follow the predatory abuse by her mother's partner but then it blends into comparison of 'limp man's' love with the lust of the American soldiers: <i>They talked in that lanky English with its fast nasal syllables ... He said something to her and she looked up, startled, as he touched her hair. The two other soldiers gestured in amazement and began to stroke her hair as though she were a cat.</i> (Objectification of the male gaze – exoticising her/the way women are treated in a sexualised manner – feminist perspective) <i>The passengers edged away, ignoring her humiliation.</i>	
Romanticisation of Hollywood culture – not real American culture but what has been selected for the screen and sent to other countries	(113) <i>Toyo avidly watched every Takarazuka Revue extravaganza: adaptations of Casablanca, Romeo and Juliet and Dark Brown Eyes ... Toyo dreamed of dancing on the stage with them, the orchestral music swelling to an emotional crescendo ... She became what she saw. She lost herself in the television, the cinema screen and books.</i>	

Conflict	Examples: quotes from text	Analysis of language features
	(114) Romanticisation of Hollywood: <i>A strange languor enveloped her when she watched Elizabeth Taylor ... Toyo felt the dust of Texas staining her marble skin, that her pillows and bed-sheets smelled of saddles and sweat.</i>	

Identity certificate

Writing Opportunity

Explain to students the difference between sympathy and empathy.

Sympathy: feel sorry/pity for someone but you may not necessarily know what it feels like to be ‘in their shoes’

Empathy: feel what they feel (outsider/marginalised, powerless)

Students compose a reflective piece in their journal that explores whether they empathise or sympathise with individuals facing the conflicts explored in the table above.

Cultural/social identity markers

Students compare their cultural practices with that of the main characters prior to analysing characters.

Markers of collective identity	Examples in Toyo	Examples in your culture/family
Food	(211) Blending of cultures and rituals: <i>Toyo initiated her grandchildren into the precise way to drink tea, rest chopsticks on the plate, and smile without baring the teeth ... She preserved her mother's rules and passed them on.</i>	
Clothing/costume	(47) Costume as culture: <i>Before the war the city folk had considered themselves more sophisticated than their city counterparts. Now the cities had been turned inside out while the countryside was relatively untouched. Farmers' wives could afford to wear expensive kimonos and richly embroidered cloth, traded in exchange for root vegetables, rice and meat.</i> (55) <i>A kimono, kept well, could last three generations. Every respectable family had an heirloom kimono embroidered by hand.</i>	
Songs	(20) The neighbour's son teases Toyo through song: <i>She didn't understand the song, but she was shaken. His face was scrunched up and leering. Songs to demean.</i> (21) Mother describes the performance of Kabuki theatre: <i>The naga uta chorus chanting the long history of the emperor's reign. Leadership and power.</i> (21) Mother and Toyo singing the doll song at the baths: <i>My doll is/ a good doll/ her skin is very white/ her small mouth.</i> Representing goodness equating to looks.	

Markers of collective identity	Examples in Toyo	Examples in your culture/family
Songs	<p>(200) Songs as culture: in India – Toyo clapped her hands and sang the repeat chorus. <i>Without worshipping you in the mind, we cannot cross the turbulent ocean of life.</i> Yoshio told her that was the first song Sai Baba had taught his followers after declaring his divinity.</p> <p>(241) Memory is identity and if we lose our memory then we start to lose identity: <i>A song drifted up from the depths of her mind, a song she hadn't sung since she was five years old. My doll is a good doll.</i> (This song becomes a marker that she is remembering something at last.)</p>	
Religion	<p><i>She told Toyo the water was an offering to the gods, being pure and clear, but by the end of the day it was tainted with impure thoughts, ghosts and evil spirits, and should be discarded.</i></p>	
Behaviour	<p>(17) Culture as performance: <i>The old couple exclaimed at her perfect manners. She was proud of her manners. Her mother was proud of her manners.</i></p>	
Marriage	<p>At the same time, she has to maintain the social connections for her daughter's marriage potential: <i>The Dans kept taking them out for dinner ... Toyo felt breathless at the expectation that the meals be reciprocated. It was an exchange of social currency. Her daughter for their boy. It was love as a series of transactions.</i></p>	
Respect for elders	<p>(153) Taking care of marriage and old people: <i>They juggled a care routine for Okaya between them; cooking her rice porridge and miso broth, changing her clothes and helping her walk up and down the stairs.</i></p>	
Funeral rituals	<p>(131) Otoy did not attend the funeral. He kept repeating, brokenly, the Chinese proverb White hair has to send black hair first.</p> <p>(132) Funeral rituals: <i>With each fold the paper money increased in value. She prayed that Ryu would be richer in heaven than he ever was on Earth.</i></p>	

Characterisation

Discuss the following characterisation definition with students before exploring the character analysis sections in *Toyo*.

Character is traditionally viewed as a description of a fictional person. As a construct, it is made up of verbal or visual statements about what that **fictional person does, says and thinks and what other fictional characters and the author of the text say about him or her**. The reader, listener or viewer fleshes out these statements to imagine a person-like character, sufficiently individualised and coherent to establish the sense of an identity. In this way, representation of a 'real' person invites personal identification and judgements about the character's morality and value to their society. This kind of analysis can contribute to shaping one's own sense of a moral and ethical self and so becoming a way of enculturation.

Characters may also be created and/or read as representations of ideas, of groups of people or of types that serve a function in a narrative genre.

<http://englishtextualconcepts.nsw.edu.au/content/character>

Activity

In pairs: Students discuss who are their favourite characters and why. Characters can be drawn from all forms of literature. Are students drawn to the characters' actions and values?

The two main characters we will explore are Kayoko and Toyo. As students complete each of the tables, they compose an analytical paragraph that answers the following question:

How does Chan show the way that cultural practices and expectations define an individual's identity?

Alternatively, students can be placed in groups to complete activities on a character and share with the class.

Kayoko (Toyo's Mother)

Example quotes showing adherence to culture	How language techniques reflect aspects of characterisation	Link to module
(5) <i>The tea was brewed before Mr Takahashi asked for it; the accounts were paid and noted in a neat hand on the register before they fell due; his kimono folded just so; his rice cooked to a certain softness.</i>	Chan uses successive semicolons to communicate the dutiful and obedient nature of Kayoko who attends to the man's needs. Her attentiveness also reflects the patriarchal nature of her surroundings and the submissive position of her role.	Affirming the assumption: that women were dutiful and obedient and submissive to the male.
(8) <i>Every morning in the pre-dawn, Kayoko greeted the gods. She prayed in front of the small wooden shrine; a carved box anointed with flowers, incense and a ceramic cup of water. Toyo usually awoke at the sound of her mother's hands clapping twice.</i>	The temporal phrase <i>every morning</i> and the repetitive actions of <i>clapping twice</i> reflect Kayoko's adherence to the cultural expectation of praying, which colours how she perceives the world and its dangers.	Religious practice connected to cultural actions. This is later carried through in Toyo's actions, highlighting how cultural practices are embedded in daily rituals even when we are away from those who taught us these rituals.
(6) <i>Kayoko stopped by every few days. She picked up phrases and used them on the boys and their grandmother, studying reactions. From a combination of sharp, high pitched syllables and gestures, Kayoko gathered that the boys' parents were further inland, working the farms.</i>	Connotations of mother/horse humorous at first because they suggest contrast, but not if both are viewed as symbols of labour. Chan explores the notion that it takes time to be let into the nuances of cultural expressions and you have to be willing to learn.	Realising that her social advancement meant being able to learn the language Willingness to understand others is crucial to integration
(6) <i>She liked the Chinese. She liked their pragmatism, their sly humour and the multi-layered intonations of their language. A subtle flick of the voice, like a whip, was the difference between the words mother and horse. The children's faces were impenetrable, but as the months passed Kayoko began to detect the emotions flickering at the edges of their lips and eyes and shoulders.</i>		Connected with the Chinese as they were considered inferior because of their race; she was inferior because she was not married – affiliation. We may be culturally different but still have similarities because of the way language defines us as other.

Kayoko (Toyo's Mother)

Example quotes showing challenging culture	How language techniques reflect aspects of characterisation	Link to module
(3) <i>She wanted doctors to rely on her without a second glance at the patient's clipboard or dosage of medicine.</i>		Challenging the tradition of the village expectations of women. The assumption was that people would continue in the line of family work but she was aspirational and wanted an education.
(4) <i>Her father caught her studying a diagram of lungs. He burned the books and beat her. Kayoko wept tears of anger and plotted her escape.</i>	The plosive alliterative sound of 'b' in <i>burned, books</i> and <i>beat</i> shows the draconian character of her father, but the following compound sentence – which contrasts the passive verb <i>wept</i> with the active action of <i>plotted</i> – shows her determined character despite the adversity of her father's punishment.	The act of punishment here seems illogical until one considers the cultural tradition being enforced – knowledge is good if you are a man but not if you are a woman.
(3) Difference breeds fear: <i>The villagers noted Kayoko's strange blue-green eyes and murmured about ghosts and demons and possession.</i>	The adjective <i>strange</i> and the terminology of <i>ghosts and demons and possession</i> characterise the world in which Kayoko lives as framed by superstition.	
(6) <i>When Kayoko's belly swelled with his child ... she moved to a two-storey apartment in Osaka and began to convert the ground floor into a small café. (She understood that the compromise of being a maid provided her with autonomy in a different way.)</i>		
Entrepreneurial and resourceful – makes kimonos to supplement income.		
(55) <i>She obtained scraps from the abattoir and turned them into delicious skewers so that the Yakitori stall made more than the kimono stall.</i>		

Example quotes showing challenging culture	How language techniques reflect aspects of characterisation	Link to module
Mother's elbows were weapons (metaphor) and she erupted in angles, the characters slashed over the walls like wounds (simile).		This reflects a personal identity crisis – Freudian subconscious unleashing what she really wants to communicate; she is doing this in her sleep as Toyo watches her and then cleans up after her.
(64) Composure and stoicism of the Japanese: <i>Mother calmly greeted the debt collectors. She did not shout or cry. The two men were expressionless, but their shoulders fell when they saw she was a woman.</i>		
(11) Kayoko's café: <i>The café was a retreat for the upper crust of Osaka society in the late 1930s. She deftly knitted her regular customers into a network of artists, government ministers, police officials, traders and their wives.</i>		Consumer spaces can serve as a mix of languages and cultures – capitalism can encourage connection.
(22) <i>She played jazz and blues in the café when jazz and blues were forbidden. The music came from the same place as those rare nights where she covered the walls with kanji, her face as blank as a scroll. It came from somewhere Toyo did not know.</i>		
(25) Toyo's uncle: <i>He shouted at Mother. There were words Toyo didn't understand, like 'honour' and 'disgrace' and 'disowned', but she knew they were bad, that when they were shouted in the house, bruises appeared on her mother's face. (Tone of language can serve as universal understanding of emotion.)</i>		
(119) Secrets of her past and her identity: <i>Nobody knew about her mother and father except Ryu and that was the way she intended to keep it. She and Ryu had told the Zhangs that her parents had died; and surely that was not far from the truth.</i>		Heritage denied and silenced to fit in.

Toyo

Personal Identity	How language techniques reflect aspects of characterisation	Link to module
<p>(8–9) Toyo is introduced to her father for the first time and she describes him as ‘huge as a sumo wrestler’. She uses the term ‘dad’ to define his identity, which makes us question his absence because a dad is supposed to have presence beyond the term.</p> <p>(8) ... <i>she ran to him and shouted ‘Otosan!’ with the smile she had held inside for so long.</i></p> <p>(9) <i>She loved to say that word. Otosan. Father. She couldn’t say it enough.</i></p> <p>(9) <i>By noon he was gone.</i></p> <p>(10) Upon meeting her stepbrother for the first time: ‘<i>Out of this sea of shoppers stepped a handsome young man.</i>’</p> <p>(10) <i>Toyo treasured these moments with Father; she held them in her mind and rotated them like origami sculptures, folding and unfolding.</i></p>	<p>The short sentence reinforces the brevity of her father’s visit – again, language is an expression of the emotional.</p>	<p>Language brings experiences and connections to life – expression of relationships or absence of them.</p> <p>Language can help us create myths around people and these myths become memory.</p>
<p>(11) Her futon became a stage from which she waved gracefully at her fans as she strode up and down.</p>		<p>Language of performance and imitation.</p>

Personal Identity	How language techniques reflect aspects of characterisation	Link to module
<p>(12) Her mother trains her to respond to heritage questions using certain statements and eventually it becomes second nature. We are shown that if we repeat language enough, we can believe even that which is not real: <i>Toyo repeated these statements after her, one by one, and as she did, she began to see them form in her mind, the farm far away in the countryside with rice paddies and her grandmother bending down ... she could see Father on a ship sailing home from China, his arms full of gifts for her and her mother ...</i></p> <p>(22) Signature and naming as identity, ownership, connection and belonging: <i>She practised writing Takahashi Toyo. This was her father's name; she was her father's daughter ... Toyo copied the characters over and over again. One day when he visited, she would show him her calligraphy.</i></p>		<p>Cultural assimilation links to having an acceptable heritage, so people engage in deception in order to remain connected and accepted.</p>
<p>(34) Naivety: <i>This was the gruel her classmates and their families lined up for every week. She had wanted to be included in the masses, in this city-wide queue, but now she could not fathom relinquishing her diet for theirs.</i></p>	<p>Toyo's growing awareness of the world is represented through the contrast between the past tense <i>had wanted</i> and the present disjunction <i>but now</i>.</p>	<p>The irony here is that conformity is not always the most comfortable.</p>
<p>(58) Always the performer of culture: <i>Her fingers were long and smooth and beautiful like an actress's. She had legs like an actress's. She imitated her favourite actress's way of talking, of walking with perpetual girlish surprise and innocence.</i></p>	<p>Toyo's beauty is referenced through the anaphoric simile <i>like an actress's</i>, which also points to the way she mimics the way she is supposed to perform culturally.</p>	

Personal Identity	How language techniques reflect aspects of characterisation	Link to module
<p>(88–89) Marrying a Chinese man means that she no longer is a Japanese citizen. When she sees the clerk cross out her certificate with a red cross: <i>She felt as if her body had been crossed out, as if she no longer existed.</i></p> <p><i>Her new identity pass was issued by Alien Registrations ... her new name: Dong Yang Zhang. The Chinese words were harsh and alien to Toyo. She could not fathom this change, the soft syllables of her mother's name evaporating and the creation of this new entity.</i></p>	<p>The visual symbolism of the cross is significant because ...</p> <p>Toyo's fear of losing her identity is illustrated through the emotive language of <i>harsh</i> and <i>alien</i> reinforcing her anxiety over loss of heritage.</p>	<p>Being a citizen is important because ...</p> <p>Our names are more than just words or signatures; they signify ...</p>
<p>(91) The words <i>Okaya</i> and <i>Otoya</i> – Mother and Father – <i>felt awkward on Toyo's tongue, but she forced herself to address them in the same way their own children did. How else would she come to belong?</i></p>	<p>The rhetorical question ...</p>	
<p>(94): Chinese affection vs Japanese lack of display, and Toyo moves from a single-mum family into a boisterous one: <i>She was startled by their warm affection. They touched; they embraced; they patted shoulders; arm-wrestled; pinched bottoms; yelped; tickled.</i></p> <p>(94) The irony is that as Toyo is trying to fit into Chinese culture, her husband's younger sister is imitating her: <i>She wanted the same scarves, coats, boots and blouses that Toyo wore.</i></p>		<p>Needs to adapt to new circumstances within a family and the cultural behaviours that may have seem offensive are now accepted.</p>
<p>(96) <i>The brothers teased her, poked her, made her laugh. She revelled in their attention. But when they began to bring their own brides to live at the hostel ... she grew conscious of her odd and sidelined upbringing, her lack of siblings, of a father, of a family she could rotate in and out of.</i></p>		

Personal Identity	How language techniques reflect aspects of characterisation	Link to module
<p>(193) How language defines identity: <i>The country still failed to accept Toyo, or perhaps she had not accepted it wholly, and this conflict was embodied in her growing disconnection from her grandchildren. Yet there were parts of herself she had renounced because she had absorbed Australia, retaining elements of it despite herself. She grew faster at unscrambling English signs and notices ... By contrast, her grasp of Japanese was shrinking.</i></p>		<p>Intergenerational conflict can be exacerbated by not having access to similar tools of language.</p> <p>As we take on facets of another culture and adapt, we may find ourselves less connected to our previous culture.</p>
<p>(194) <i>Toyo felt a rush of nostalgia and fondness for her friend and for the life she had left behind. There was no history in Australia, no long friendships she could rely upon without thinking, like falling back upon a mattress...</i></p>	<p>The repetitive use of <i>no</i> combined with the simile comparing support to a mattress illuminates Toyo's sense of isolation and longing for home because the new culture lacks the permanency of her former world.</p>	
<p>(214) Toyo taught her grandchildren origami. Their delight in these paper creations triggered a desire to share her knowledge. (She teaches kids in primary schools how to do origami and interest garnered leads to her photo in the newspaper.) <i>Children ran to their parents at the bell, brandishing their boats and birds and frogs and sumo wrestlers. She felt complete.</i></p>		<p>In order to feel valued, we must absorb ourselves in a new culture while also sharing our own with them.</p>
<p>(221) <i>She could not help viewing the gradual encroachment of old age with horror, at her skin growing lines and speckles ... The world began to divide itself up into before and after: this happened before she grew old; that happened after.</i></p> <p>(222) <i>Toyo felt restless with jealousy. The girls were at the brink of puberty. The mirror was unforgiving.</i></p>		<p>Once valued for her beauty, Toyo must reassess how she is valued when age encroaches upon that defining feature; identity is not always a fixed entity.</p>

Personal Identity

How language techniques reflect aspects of characterisation

Link to module

(231) Ageing identity: The pressure of taking care of Toyo's needs on the family:
The moat of language divided her from any respite carer; they feared Toyo would grow more confused if an English-speaking stranger appeared in her room.

(232) She loses the ability to remember writing: *Toyo wrote l v then paused, wrote an e, and tried to hide the card so nobody could see that she couldn't spell love anymore.*

Toyo

Adherence to culture

How language techniques are used

Link to module

Culture as imitation of behaviour: In front of the shrine Toyo sleepily murmurs *kyo mo yoroshiku onegaishimasu* and claps her hands twice in perfect imitation.

(81) After her mother dies, she seeks out connection to Ryu. When he hugs her publicly, she hisses, reminding him of the public display of affection. He learns that the way into her heart is to take care of the official things – things a 17-year-old does not know.

96: Culture and marriage: *Toyo felt that she had married into a business to locate wives for the Zhangs. There was a complex process of match-making, wedding preparations and ceremonies that were prolonged and elaborate.*

(97) Competition between the wives and survival within this cultural group.

She tested out loyalties, alliances, saw fractures and widened them when it suited her, quickly assessed the Wives as they were introduced to her, one by one, newly married and slightly nervous; leaned her weight against one, then the other, in this ever-widening war between her and Haruko.

Now has to adapt to the family and customs of Chinese culture.

(97) *She tried to replicate their movements and imitate the behaviour expected of a wife, a young woman, and follow the rules operating within the sprawling family. There was a particular way of eating, of meal preparation, of cleaning ... and she had to replace the rituals she learned from her mother with these new ones.*

Now has to adapt to the family and customs of Chinese culture.

(117) *When the labour pains started, Toyo gritted her teeth and would not cry out. Women had to be tough, they could not scream at the mere touch of pain. She had been initiated into toughness by her mother, who had held her little hand proudly in the street, ignoring curious glances and queries about an absent father, a kimono wrapped around her statuesque frame. So Toyo hemmed in her screams.*

Challenging culture	Language techniques	Link to module

Setting

People react to places and spaces differently; at times, two cultures within the same space may clash because they see the setting differently.

View this short song lyric from a film: ‘This land is mine/This land is me’ by Paul Kelly.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qok6YM3E1z8>

How is the Indigenous perspective different from the English perspective?

In *Toyo*, we see people move from rural to city settings, move within the country and move across countries.

Ask students to consider how each of these settings may represent a different identity and support different beliefs and attitudes. They can add to any column, and provide supporting quotes.

Fishing village: Fukue Port	Osaka	Australia	India
Heritage	Entrepreneurial spirit	Rebirth	Spiritual experience
Conservatism v Idyllic	Political importance	Vast and open	Different standards of cleanliness
	Multicultural	Landscape as spiritual	
		Isolation	

Class discussion: How does Toyo’s movement through these settings challenge cultural assumptions?

Students may be given a map of the world and plot her migrations visually.

Themes and values

A theme is a statement about life, arising from the interplay of key elements of the text such as plot, character, setting and language. These work together in a coherent way to achieve the purpose of the text.

Theme differs from the topic of a text (war, the sea) or an idea addressed by a text (prejudice, friendship) in that the theme conveys an attitude

or value about an idea. (By accepting difference we are enriched. True friendship survives adversity.)

At its most basic level a theme may be regarded as the message or even the moral of a text. Themes may be used for a didactic purpose or may add a philosophical dimension, inviting us to think about our place in the world. A theme is a statement about human experience that is profound and which responders may accept or reject, depending on their own worldview.

<http://englishtextualconcepts.nsw.edu.au/content/theme>

The class discusses the following table; examples are explored as to how the theme is communicated in the text. Students must find their own quotes to support the representation of these themes.

<p>FAMILY</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – as a source of angst but also as a source of support. – Examples: Toyo's lack of relationship with father and her 'pretend' heritage as well as Kayoko's abusive father and Toyo having to give up her family name to be with Ryu. However, support is shown through the warmth from Toyo's adopted Chinese family, and Toyo has a strong connection with her son.
<p>ADAPTATION</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – can be seen in the way migrants must adjust to their new worlds and people have to adjust to their new roles. – Examples: Kayoko moving away from family and having a child out of wedlock, Toyo's mother-in-law moving from China to Japan and having her expectations challenged, Toyo and family moving to Australia and losing the sense of familiarity but also recognising opportunity, Ryu fashioning situations to make him feel powerful.
<p>STORYTELLING</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – as a means of sharing and preserving identity. – Examples: Toyo's mother's 'story' about heritage, Chinese family sharing of stories to create bonds of kinship and reinforce autonomous identity over Yakuza, selectivity of storytelling and its fallibility because Toyo recognises that Ryu did not die as suddenly and unexpectedly as she told it, memoir-writing itself as Lily Chan preserves the history of her grandmother and family.

Close analysis of themes: Gender and violence

Gender is used to reinforce perceptions of power and powerlessness but it can be challenged at times.

Gender is a term of social classification, like age, sex or religion. Sex is used to refer to biological difference, while gender is used to refer to social and cultural differences that are built upon sexual differences.

It can be argued that differences in occupation, social roles, power and influence are the result of a gender system that operates in society to 'install' men and women in different positions. The problem with such a system is that it seems to perpetuate some social inequalities.

—Brian Moon

Students view the short Tropfest film *Marry Me* to develop a visual understanding of gendered behaviour.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XFdbZHMBxfg>

How does the composer use filmic language to communicate gender differences? How does the structure of the plot adhere to and challenge gender?

Students work in pairs or groups to fill in the following table on gender in *Toyo*.

Adherence to gender	Language analysis	Gendered behaviours
(3) <i>The men dived into the sea for pink coral. The women crafted the pink coral into jewellery to sell in Nagasaki.</i>		Employment and lifestyle linked to cultural roles – men hunt and women create.
(4) <i>Her mother stood silently at the door and patted Kayoko's hair when he left.</i>	Mother shows deference to the power of the husband by remaining silent rather than assisting her daughter to vocalise her aspirations to an unforgiving father. The sibilance of <i>stood silently</i> emphasises her submissive body language.	Husband makes the rules Patriarchal culture

Adherence to gender	Language analysis	Gendered behaviours
<p>(6) Having sex with employer: <i>She let him touch her shoulders, her back, her breasts.</i></p> <p>(6) <i>She understood, without being told, that her place in the Takahashi household had been designed with this in mind; that perhaps Mrs Takahashi had even been complicit in her selection.</i> (Woman as sexual gratification for man and to carry his legacy with a child. Word <i>complicit</i> suggests woman committing a crime against a woman.)</p>	<p>Although the phrase <i>let him</i> implies permission, it is because Kayoko recognises her low position in this household and that the way to her autonomy here is to compromise some power.</p>	<p>Gender and class assumptions</p> <p>As a maid, she had a limited voice and as a woman she was passive here ...</p> <p>Women supporting the servitude of other women.</p>
<p>(12) Body language and social etiquette and repression of heritage questions – the silencing of true identity: <i>One day each week Mother strapped a wooden ruler to Toyo's back against her undershirt to prevent her slouching... She crafted her daughter into fine lines of feminine poise ... She also instructed Toyo on how to respond to the range of questions that might be raised by a wall of angry mouths and demanding eyes, wanting to know where she hailed from, what she did.</i></p>		<p>The idea of instilling feminine behaviours through severe methods.</p>
<p>(51) <i>Every night Toyo and Yuki packed their favourite clothes in preparation for escape from evil demons, samurai lords and lusty pirates. They were princesses fleeing from arrows, spiked pits, trapdoors, demons.</i></p> <p>(The fire happens after this, bringing them back to reality.)</p>		<p>Intertextuality and the naturalisation of gender roles: the adoption of fairytale narratives reinforces their passive positions as princesses rather than having agency in their fate.</p>
<p>(81) <i>He saw her barriers guarded by soldiers, spikes and an iron drawbridge, chained and fastened. He knew how to dissolve the locks. He ordered the death certificate, cleaned up the house and packed her mother's belongings.</i></p>	<p>The parallelism of the sentence structure at the end of the quote shows the active actions of the man – her saviour. The intertextual fantasy narrative of Toyo as an imprisoned princess is carried through the narrative.</p>	
<p>(105) <i>Toyo would not shout at him when the Wives were within hearing. She was determined to set an example of feminine docility and serene contentment.</i></p>		<p>Adhering to wifely behaviour in Japan of remaining silent.</p>

Adherence to gender	Language analysis	Gendered behaviours
<p>(122) <i>Ryu took [Yoshio] to the onsen and scrubbed his body with a soaped cloth. Yoshio began to cry. 'You have to be tough, Yoshio. Be a man, be tough, don't cry at these little things!'</i></p> <p>(126) Inheriting narrative discourse of masculinity: <i>When they grow up, how can I walk by their side with pride? Their in-laws won't give a man with a limp a second look, especially a Chinese. I want my children to be proud of me.</i> (Ryu books an operation for his leg – discrimination against culture and physical appearance)</p>	<p>Dialogue is reinforcing the cultural belief of masculinity and toughness and repression of emotions.</p> <p>Ryu's dialogue shows his insecurity about his masculinity because he does not look like the masculine ideal with his limp.</p>	
<p>(129) <i>The attending doctor almost spat in frustration. Ryu had had a kidney infection, easily rectified by a simple operation.</i></p>	<p>Irony: instead of operating on his kidney infection, Ryu was more interested in fixing a cultural imperfection – his gaze was fixated on cultural health rather than his physical health and he paid the ultimate price.</p>	
<p>(159) When Kazuko commits suicide, she leaves a letter that shows the enforcement of appearance in her letter:</p> <p><i>If you are the first to find my body, please check to see my face is presentable for my family's sake.</i></p>		

Challenging gender	Language analysis	What is being challenged?
(52) <i>Sometimes Toyo sported the low voice of a prince, riding in on his white stallion to fight the armies of evil.</i>		Toyo challenges the normalised heroine and instead plays the role of the male here, rejecting the metanarrative.
(12) Kayoko to Toyo when she catches her dancing: ' <i>Gyrating your hips is not lady-like.</i> ' (Irony in that Kayoko is carrying on the conservatism of her culture despite leaving it.)		Toyo is perhaps adopting Western-style dancing, which is a challenge to the traditional culture.
When they visit Father it is discovered that his second-in-command has taken his money and he can no longer be their provider. It is at this time that we see Toyo adopting the role of a male in costume by virtue of her height, but it is also symbolic of the loss of traditional institutions of power: (62) <i>The make-up lady scribbled a moustache on her upper lip. Toyo strode onto the stage, leading her smaller female partner with all the chivalry she could muster.</i>		Patriarchal institutions are challenged as providers for women.
(182) <i>Australians: Perhaps they were tall and loud because their country gave them the space to be.</i> (Geographical influence on culture.) (182) <i>Here, women acted like men: they moved with quick assurance, voices ringing out without hesitation.</i> Toyo watches a woman towel off, wearing a sports bra, and her mouth <i>fell open</i> .		

Is gender difference reinforcing this permissiveness of sexual abuse against females? Consider the following quotes and experiences mentioned below.

- ‘he would hold her waist so briefly that sometimes she convinced herself that she had imagined it. He would slide a finger along her collarbone ...’ (61)
- When Toyo’s mother notices how her doctor has been grooming her daughter, she stops it by changing doctors and letting Ryu take care of things – foregrounding him in their lives for her daughter. (77)
- When Ryu leaves her with a friend of his sisters, he attacks her: ‘Aren’t you Ryu’s plaything? Aren’t you my plaything, too?’ (85)
- Toyo’s breasts are fondled by a stranger and Ryu says: ‘You do wear figure-hugging sweaters, so it’s partly your fault.’ (120)
- Toyo’s daughter Toyomi has a perky bottom. When she is seven years old, her male teacher pinches it. (150)
- The detective’s insensitivity after a woman commits suicide: ‘She has a great figure, what a shame, what a shame.’ (160)

Other thematic areas that teachers may like to explore with students include:

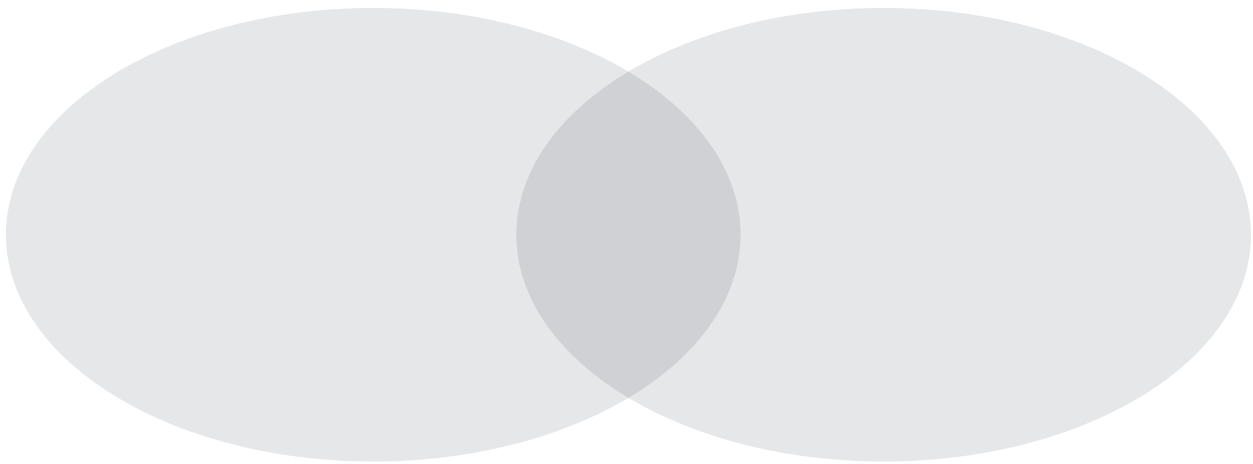
- The transience of life and the inevitability of loss
- The importance of dreams in helping individuals experience emotions or realise new situations

Values

Values are principles or standards which we believe are significant and may change our behaviour or even sacrifice our lives to adhere to these. Cultures can reinforce collective values but an individual may also have their own distinctive set of values.

Students complete the following Venn diagram to show how the representation of values in the text is similar or different to their values. They use the list of words provided and may add some of their own values.

Beauty	Money	Family	Marriage	Manners
Concealment	Masculinity	Femininity	Autonomy	Respect /power
Cleanliness	Resilience	Tradition	Religion	Globalisation



Students may even rank the values they chose and compare with another student.

Essay writing

Teachers can use the HSC essay question provided by NESAs as a practice question with students.

How does your prescribed text invite you to question cultural assumptions?

The teacher should complete a reminder lesson on essay structure and reinforce the following:

Introduction: thesis which answers the question and mentions the name of the text and author.

Body paragraphs: each paragraph should have a topic sentence, an elaboration sentence that follows, at least 3 pieces of evidence from the text (language techniques especially), and a linking sentence back to the thesis.

Conclusion: what we have learned through the analysis – go beyond a summary.

Example of essay plan for this practice essay question could include:

Introduction/ Thesis:	Main focus of the essay: Chan invites the responder to question cultural beliefs through her complex characterisation, powerful use of imagery and debunking of traditional metanarratives.
Body paragraph 1	<p>Assumptions that patriarchy are linked to stability and security BUT Chan invites us to question this through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The way language of propaganda moves to language of loss • Motif of abused women • Single mum characterisation as one of admiration through resilience
Body paragraph 2	<p>Assumptions that we are born into a culture and into fixed beliefs BUT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Toyo finds a new spirituality in India – like-minded individuals across the world: anecdotal evidence • Toyo connects with the Australian landscape: powerful imagery
Body paragraph 3	<p>Assumptions into marriage and fairytales – Chan debunks fairytale through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Debunking intertextual fairytale through the merging of a ‘limp man’ and a woman born out of wedlock • Integration of other stories like Toyo’s mother-in-law, who came from China to Japan and experienced an economic fairytale
Conclusion	Cultural assumptions appear to be embedded, but individuals can contest these socially constructed aspects of their world to create their personal identity.

Extension activity

Writing focus: Paralanguage

Teacher introduces students to the term ‘paralanguage’, which is used to describe the language we use to communicate other than words, namely body language, eye contact, intonation, facial expression and other communicative features.

More information can be found at the following website:

<https://visme.co/blog/what-is-paralanguage/>

Students are to compose a narrative piece of 500 words that shows the power of paralanguage in communicating a mood and attitude. They may use extracts from *Toyo* as inspiration for their use of language.

They need to consider:

- Who is the character?
- What setting will they place them in to shape their behaviour?
- Will they have the character adhere to or challenge cultural expectations?
- What part of the narrative do they wish to represent: orientation, complication or a significant point of tension in the narrative?

Student will need to use:

- Authentic characterisation
- A mix of dialogue and description
- Powerful imagery and word choice
- Figurative language such as similes, metaphor, personification and alliteration
- Cohesive sentences and variation in sentences

Drafting:

Encourage students to brainstorm ideas, create a character profile, write a paragraph. Students must present at least two drafts of their work to ensure they are using the feedback on syntax, grammar and character construction.

Assessment suggestions

Task 1: Students are to compose a new book cover for *Toyo* that is targeted towards senior students. They will then present this cover and pitch it to the company as a 2019 cover.

For the cover, students will need to consider:

- Font
- Layout
- Use of vectors
- Use of images and symbolism

For the pitch, students will need to consider:

- An engaging introduction with an awareness of what teenagers may value reading
- A comprehensive understanding of TWO themes and how they have been represented in the book as well as on the cover
- Detailed textual evidence to support a close reading
- Thoughtful and persuasive uses of language because their speech is persuasive

Other students will then vote on the most convincing speech and book cover and submit a 250-word explanation of their choice.

Task 2: View the following short video on cultural globalisation to stimulate your thinking prior to answering the question:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AmiJgEoFoMo>

Toyo's treatment of cultural globalisation is an ultimately positive one. Do you agree? (900–1000 words.)

Use the criteria on essay writing seen earlier in this booklet.

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