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## The Role Of Comfort Zone In The Curious Incident Of The Dog In The Nighttime And The Perks Of Being A Wallflower

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime (2003) by Mark Haddon and The Perks of Being a Wallflower (2012) by Stephen Chbosky reflects the lives of two adolescent boys, Christopher and Charlie, who are struggling to find their identity. Haddon's text follows the life of Christopher, a 15 year old on the autism spectrum who is solving a murder while simultaneously discovering who he is. Chbosky's text explores similar themes and follows the story of Charlie, a freshman at a new school who is trying to make new friends and suppress his past. Sexuality is explored throughout as certain characters discover their sexual identities, evident through characterisation. Haddon and Chbosky also utilise their protagonists to push the concept of adolescent teens stepping out of their comfort zone, highlighted through the narrative perspective. Confronting the past is a concept which Haddon and Chbosky use to express the struggles youth have with their identities, displayed through levels of conflict and cinematography.

The notion of sexuality is present throughout both Haddon and Chbosky's texts as central characters discover their sexual identities, displayed through the characterisation of Judy Boone and Patrick. Characterisation is present in Christopher's mother Judy's life as she has an affair with neighbour Mr Shears to escape the emotional distress she was facing at home with her husband Ed and their son. Haddon indirectly informs the audience that Judy was having an affair when Mrs Alexander told Christopher "they were very very good friends", showing that Judy was using Mr Shears as an emotional escape sexually, characterising her as weak minded and insecure. Chbosky similarly utilises characterisation to display Patrick's sexuality as it is oppressed. Evident at the post-homecoming when Charlie catches Patrick and Brad kissing upstairs "promise that you aren't gonna say anything to anyone about me and Brad?" as he does not want anyone to find out about them as Brad's dad is against their relationship. During this, Patrick is seen wearing a black suit, burgundy bow tie and a white scarf to stereotype him as gay. This wardrobe and dialogue depict Patrick as a homosexual who is struggling to express his identity as he is not allowed to tell people about his relationship with Brad. Although both Haddon and Chbosky use sexuality to depict the struggles of adolescents discovering their identity, both authors present this concept in different ways with Haddon's use of emotional sexuality to portray how sexuality has played out in Christopher's life while Chbosky uses sexual orientation to display Patrick's struggle with coming out.

Haddon and Chbosky utilise their protagonists narrative perspective to illustrate the concept of adolescents stepping out of their comfort zone. The way Haddon uses narrative perspective is when Christopher describes how he "formulated a plan" for the train station as well as his experience there, describing the experience as scary "because I was scared so I was not noticing things very well". Providing evidence of Christopher stepping out of his comfort zone by going to the train station for the first time by himself. Chbosky has also utilised narrative perspective to showcase Charlie growing as an individual by stepping out of his comfort zone at the football game by approaching Patrick "hey Patrick" and initiating a conversation "So, uh... you like football?". This dialogue between characters shows Charlie expanding his horizons and trying to make friends. While Haddon and Chbosky both use narrative perspective to display the concept of stepping out of one's comfort zone, both authors use this with Haddon

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using internal dialogue of Christopher and Chbosky using Charlie's dialogue with another central character.

Confronting the past is a concept Haddon and Chbosky have presented to express the struggles youth have with their identities, conveyed by Haddon through levels of conflict and through Chbosky's cinematography. Haddon uses levels of conflict to express the situation occurring between Christopher and his parents; Christopher's father, Ed, fabricating that his mother was dead when in fact she had left to have an affair with Mr Shears. It was later when Christopher finds out the truth which results in external conflict between Christopher and his mother and father. Christopher confronts his mother through shared dialogue "you never wrote to me," "I know...Father said you were dead", evidence of Christopher confronting his past as he discussed the lies he was fed when he was younger. In contrast, Chbosky uses cinematography, more specifically flashback to showcase Charlie's struggle with his past. Throughout the film, Charlie has multiple flashbacks of his Aunt Helen before she dies with a secret that stayed between them. Charlie's first flashback occurs when his sister Candace is hit by her boyfriend Derek, triggering Charlie's memory of past events with him remembering young Candace saying "welcome home, Aunt Helen!" to which Aunt Helen replies "oh look at you all, dressed so nice" while smiling at Charlie. This was Charlie facing the past as he had repressed those memories due to the fact that he was tormented when he was younger by Aunt Helen as she had sexually assaulted him when he was little. Despite both authors using different techniques, the concept of confronting the past was displayed effectively through the main protagonists with Charlie and Christopher having to face similar traumas of their past.

To conclude, Haddon and Chbosky have shown the struggles of an adolescent trying to find their identity through multiple techniques. The characterisation of Judy and Patrick shows how teens struggle to sexually express themselves while also showing how someone else's search for their identity sexually affects their friends and family. Having the narrative perspective of both protagonists gives insight into how different adolescents all go through the same struggle of finding themselves and stepping out of their comfort zones. The last two techniques of levels of conflict and cinematography display the protagonists having to confront their past before moving on in their life. Both Haddon and Chbosky have successfully explored the struggles which adolescents face with finding out their identity as a young adult who is coming to terms with responsibility in their life.