

# Mosaic Mind

## *Reflection Statement*

My Major Work tackles the age-old existential question: 'Who am I?' The media and society shapes our preconceived ideas surrounding identity. We're told that our selfhood must be stable, consistent. That a coherent identity is attainable and normal. Yet, my investigation into psychological and sociological theory proves otherwise. I sifted through theory after theory, each proving that the postmodern world is nonlinear and transient. My short story, "*Lights, Camera, Fracture*" intertwines narrative and script elements. It discusses the outcomes of following the concept of a single coherent self, addressing anxieties and pressures faced by individuals struggling to adapt to this unrealistic archetype. Through criticising imposed Western Imperialist understandings of identity, I enforce the idea of the postmodern self, exploring fragmentation of identity and its implications when preconceived Essentialist ideologies clash with Anti-Essentialist reality. The inextricable relationship between form and concept extends upon this criticism, whereby the fragmented nature of the hybridised text mirrors disjointedness in life, reflecting fractured selfhood colliding with the fantasy of a fixed identity.

My major work aims to challenge essentialist views of identity by exploring the complexity of postmodern subjectivity. I subvert unrealistic opinions of identity that potentially leads to frustration, offering reassurance for both a young adult and adult audience who may struggle with managing the illusion of cohesive identity. My short story aims to modify dominant ideologies, encouraging new viewpoints of identity. Postmodern adult audiences that are cynical towards coherent notions of identity in the media, may find my piece appealing in its questioning of simplistic models of self image. Western 21<sup>st</sup> century audiences value knowledge, and through my

composition, will be engaged in discovering how identity reflects uncertainty and contradiction, demonstrating lived experience. Furthermore, through investigating the film industry and life as a writer, the heart of my story explores obstacles faced in a competitive and consumerist business, raising the issue of struggles between writer's desires to create new ideas, against inherent demands for mass-produced content.

The link between concept and content discusses the "multifaceted" nature of the film industry, regarding relationships between writer, director and investors. It humorously criticises difficulties within film production, maintaining ideas of fragmentation. My playful commentary on the film industry may appeal to those passionate about popular culture and film, and are curious about the processes that take place. It would also be appropriate for culture and lifestyle magazines akin to Oyster Magazine and Dazed Magazine. These magazines are renowned for their exhibition of creative works that address contemporary discussion. Through discussion of a modern issue presented in a unique way, my major work could appeal to the creative and intelligent demographic of readers of these types of magazines.

Extension 1 Navigating the Global encouraged my fascination with identity. *Lost in Translation* introduced postmodern subjectivity; death of the subject, and deconstruction of grand narratives. Both the prescribed film and my additional text, *Mrs Sen's* by Jhumpa Lahiri, discussed identity issues, including dislocation that

occurs when individuals experience new worlds. These texts depicting postmodernism and philosophical paradigms provided ideas that I've explored regarding fractured selfhood. Furthermore, people and landscapes in *Advanced* influenced my concept, establishing the inextricable connection between identity and environment. Hollywood's film industry as my context highlights a fragmented sense of self through conflicting values. I have reinforced the importance of environment in influencing identity within my context through Nick, the director. His demeanour changes depending on his surroundings, as depicted through comparing dialogue regarding attitudes towards the protagonists' script – *"Awesome. And there you have it, guys. Art."* And, *"It's just a bit... well, messy."*

My concept was influenced by Stuart Hall's psychoanalytical theory of fractured identity. Hall (1987) distinguishes the postmodern subject as 'formed and transformed continuously in relation to the ways we are represented or addressed in the cultural systems which surround us', extending upon Anti-Essentialist views, that identity depends on social and cultural circumstance. Similarly, research into postmodernism and poststructuralism developed these ideas, challenging aspirations for coherence. In comparing Part I of my composition; *"I'm running and skipping and swinging past florists and boutiques, shaking my hair back into its organic, frazzled mane"*, with Part IV; *"The clock ticked by as I hurled knives, forks, pens – anything with a pointed edge –"*, the use of structure and vignettes allow me to communicate ideas of disconnection and fluidity, in addition to manipulating language and form to show contrasting tone and behaviour. My disjointed structure allows in-depth exploration of fragmentation, reflecting multiple layers of identity.

To familiarise myself with current beliefs, I studied a variety of different texts. These reinforced my perception of imposed knowledge – nearly all texts were examples of Essentialist ideologies. Stories such as Eloisa James' *Paris in Love*, Sarah Cisneros' *The House on Mango Street* and multicultural films including Cristiano Bortone's *Rosso Come il Cielo*, and Luca Miniero's *Benvenuti Al Sud*, recounted the concept of the core self, fostering this misconception of identity within society. Through immersing myself in contemporary popular culture, I was pushed to break boundaries in challenging the grandnarrative, and the stable self.

My concept of fragmented identity encouraged hybridised textual form. The parallel storylines of the live-action sequence and cinematic vision explore fractured selfhood and diversity within identity. The protagonist's understanding of fragmentation allows for acceptance of different adaptations of her identity. Her context in Part V allows positive representation, although she has undertaken identity shifts throughout. This is seen through metaphorical use of bright, quirky clothing and nature – *"Like the herds that move in for the summer, the sequined bag, the foulard scarf, the lime shoes made their return"*. Yet, the film element depicts anxiety upon discovering fragmentation, enforcing my criticism of essentialist perspectives. Lighting, camera angles and facial expressions demonstrate this – *"The scene is grey, dull, there's no brightness or warmth of the sun... A tight shot of face shows her staring into the distance... She's nervous..."* This diversity acknowledges the variation of life experience and how Anti-Essentialist views can result in stress.

My favourite director, Harmony Korine's film *Gummo* inspired my use of experimental film, as its obscure, yet mesmerising nature made it unforgettable. I researched experimental techniques and viewed a range of films including; Kenneth Anger's *Scorpio Rising*, Luis Bunuel's *An Andalusian Dog*, and René Clair's *Entr'Acte*. I found the focus on visual imagery incredibly interesting, especially as I enjoy writing visually. Furthermore, I discovered the importance of symbolism in this form, hence the extensive symbolism used, including motifs of dolls and clothing. The title of the cinematic piece, *Pas Une Poupée*, alludes to the importance of symbolism and acknowledges the influence of French experimental filmmakers I explored. The symbolism effectively demonstrated deconstruction throughout the text. I utilised visual imagery and symbolism to reinforce postmodern ideas through evoking emotion. *"Immediate cut to silence. Clinical white light. There is an aerial shot of a white basin filled with water... A drop of red falls..."* Harsh visual imagery paired with the colour red represents danger and anger, instilling a sense of fear. I believe that unforgettable compositions are emotive, hence my decision to employ aspects of experimental film. Additionally, the non-conformist and non-linear expression of this genre expands upon notions of fragmentation.

My hybridised composition began as a script. However, cinematic visual and aural imagery could not be created as scripts rely on dialogue alone. Alternatively, Garry Disher's form in *Love and Grudges*, inspired me, as it combines short story and film, using visual description to describe what would be on-screen. This style is effective in allowing me to achieve the visual aspect I love, and is utilised throughout vignettes, such as; *"The shot begins in darkness and fades into an extreme*

*establishing shot... illuminated only by the warm glow of the lamps. Follow with a series of panning shots...*” This form was unrestrictive, allowing me to achieve my purpose of the creative cinematic exploration of life. Effective utilisation of visual imagery here is more engaging, provoking meaningful responses and altered perspectives of identity.

Whilst research into experimental film originally led my genre to realistic fiction, I developed a comedic style, inspired by Meg Cabot’s *The Princess Diaries* and Louise Rennison’s *Confessions of Georgia Nicolson*. These texts inspired the somewhat bizarre sense of humour, depicting a bubbly aspect of the protagonists’ identity. *“It is the literary equivalent of Michelangelo’s ‘David’ or Hanson’s 1997 hit ‘MmmBop’.”* Also, frequent popular culture references link to comedic genre. English linguist Isabel Ermida (2008) noted that allusions are a “central strategy in constructing narrative humour, as well as a means of signalling the humorous communication mode”, articulating how popular culture can enhance my work. Quentin Tarantino’s extensive use of allusion was incredibly influential as I enjoy the references throughout his films, particularly in *Pulp Fiction*. These references give my protagonists’ voice credibility and authenticity, all whilst underpinning her quirks and enriching the subject of the film elements.

The process of my Major Work was a highly enjoyable experience as it allowed independent study, creative freedom and has built upon both my writing skills and my ability to effectively research and present a concept.

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