

## Creative Reflection

My piece's theme is optimism, specifically the resilience of humanity. This idea stems from English Advanced and the study of human experiences, one such experience being grief and loss. I wanted to write about this as post covid there has been a post covid there has been a 25% increase to anxiety and depression worldwide according to W.H.O. My intended audience is young adults who may be going through these mental health issues or have potentially lost a loved one, and I seek to help them see that there is a light at the end of the tunnel and that they can surmount any challenge they are faced with as. This is seen through Jones who is the personification of the human spirit. Jones' journey that he goes on and the challenges he faces, is all to show that no matter how much hardship and strife that humanity endures, they will always prevail.

Throughout my time of writing my piece has changed a lot. Not just the character(s) but also myself. The main elements of my piece of growth and overcoming adversity, were heavily influenced by my structure which follows a dual split between the narration of the events that take place throughout the story. I was intrigued to do this as, my studies from English Ext 1 and literary mindscapes help me to further develop Jones. This was done through a duelling sense of diegesis created from auto diegetic journal entry's that give insight into Jones' mindscape as well as a heterodiegetic narration over the events that the entries are written about.

It started out very simple, one man against the world. This was inspired from my own experiences, and I wanted to prove that the human spirit is stronger than evil. This man of hope soon grew into the character Jones. Who would wander a post nuke city in search of his next adventure facing down any challenge without fear.

But this soon changed somewhat as I found this concept to be lacking a certain *something*. It was missing a motive or a goal. Jones was aimless. During the beginning of my writing, I was reading a book called 'The Road'. This book gave me a great deal of inspiration for my piece, but it also made me realise the something that was missing. In 'The Road', one of the main stylistic features is the amount of information in what's not being said. I used this feature throughout my piece to further enhance Jones' character and his potential for

growth. This links to the protagonist in 'The Road' living for his son. Everything he does is to help his son survive and continue on living.

His son.

Enter scene, Hamish. A boy who will change the story forever. While I wasn't going to give Jones a son, I could give him a son like figure and soon this figure evolved into the form of Hamish. The innocent boy who fate had deemed the unfortunate. By giving Jones Hamish, I could progress the story to a new height. I knew that Hamish had to be the one to push Jones to the brink. To make him truly embody humanities will to prevail. To unleash his true optimism. I thought about numerous ways to do this. In the end I chose for Hamish to die. By killing off Hamish it forced Jones to preserve. Without Hamish's death, there is no reason for Jones to be. In the beginning Jones didn't have a care in the world. He didn't feel any emotion other than relaxed happiness. And for a while I was adamant to keep it this way. I don't really know why. I just didn't want Jones to change.

However, I wanted my piece to be a tearjerker. A piece where you get so attached to the characters that you feel like you're missing something when one of the characters dies. But to do this I had to make Jones vulnerable, otherwise nothing will affect him and anything that does will seem odd. In order to do this, I used the multi dimensionality of Jones and his journal. This was sparked by my second main source of inspiration. 'The Last of Us', which tells a story of loss, pain and grief as well as the ability to move on. You watch the characters grow closer over the period of the game as they deal with challenge after challenge. The audience of this game connect with the characters for a number of reasons, the main one being their simple and honourable goal which comes through the plot structure and the character conflicts. This is what I wanted my piece for be. Growing with the characters and rooting for them to achieve their goal.

I found this to be the hardest struggle of all. 'How do I make people care for my characters?'. My main solution was trauma; pain and loss. I originally gave Hamish a horrible backstory to make the readers sympathise with him. However, I found through feedback that readers cared more about Jones. So, I flipped this and gave Jones a rough childhood. This makes everything he deals with far more emotional and impactful. I used visceral imagery in the piece such as "*pieces of meat and bone*" to help give more emphasis to Jones' overcoming of these challenges. This way it makes the world that Jones is in seem much more unpleasant. However, I also used Jones' positive attitude and colloquial

dialogism to contrast this sordid environment, such as his remark of “*Heh, Black Friday*” to contrast the dark world and create a sense of Jones, a regular person, being unswayable. This shows people who may be struggling with mental health issues, that they do have the strength to overcome adversity. Jones does experience grief and loss, though, following Hamish dies. I made Jones write five separate journal entries as he copes with Hamish’s death. Each entry is a representation one of the five stages of grief. This is where the real multi-dimensional diegesis comes through with poetic eloquence. The first entry he is in denial and unable to accept what happened to Hamish. The second entry he is angry and looking for someone to blame. The third entry is him trying to bargain and find reason with Hamish’s death. The fourth entry is Jones’ lowest point as he experiences depression and attempts to kill himself. The final entry, however, is the most positive as Jones comes to accept that Hamish and dead and can move on with Hamish’s memory.

The ending is made to truly reinforce the message of resilience. Despite everything that Jones faced and the friend he lost, he is still able to remain positive and work towards a better future for both him and others as he seeks to reopen the bookstore he stayed in for most of the story to help both himself and others get their stories out for the world to see and be inspired to overcome any wall of adversity they are face with.

Overall writing this piece has definitely helped me to grow as a writer and a person. Looking back on it, my experience gradually worsened as time went on. I found that as I went on, I encountered more and more walls that would seemingly halt progress. As the class shrunk, I began to wonder if I really had what it takes to write this piece and truly enforce my message the way I wanted too. Moments went by where I seemed to hate my piece. However, I managed to turn this around by the end as I looked at the character, I had created to help others and realised that he too, was the embodiment of my own personal spirit and that no matter what happened, I couldn’t give up. So, I struggled on, much the same way Jones did, to produce a story that represented the true nature of humanity and that I was proud of. By doing this I could look to the future of my writing ability, knowing that I had what it takes to overcome anything the world threw at me.