

Analyse how characters were used to explore the concept of justice?

Justice in society is the ultimate destination for those who wish to uphold the truth; however, morality is contradicted by an individual's choice to be uninvolved when personal serenity is at stake. The novel *Jasper Jones* upholds this idea through the portrayal of silent bystanders as the driving force that powers the events of injustice that take place in Corrigan. Ultimately, this dilemma is revealed to the audience through the lens of Charlie Bucktin's experiences, which act as a catalyst in assisting him piece together the reality that achieving justice is not always a clear-cut matter.

Breakdowns within relationships are spurred into being by the inability of individuals to acknowledge their personal liability and condemn others of their misdemeanors. As Charlie witnesses his mother's accumulating verbal abuse towards his father's misbehavior, he understands how his mother attempts to feed her dissatisfaction in life by criticizing those around her: "She called him a poor parent, a useless husband. She accused him of not caring for either me or her." However, since Charlie's father stays uninvolved in order to restore peace, he is allowing injustice to linger; in fact, he is ironically being scapegoated as the excuse for his wife's affair. As Charlie states, "I wanted him to take umbrage with her questioning of his heart and his loyalty. But he didn't." Although the peace of passiveness is eventually made most evident to the audience within the motif of Charlie's antipodean snowdome, Charlie also understands the safety of being a silent bystander. His experiences force him to regret opening his window to Jasper Jones: "I'd choose to forget. I'd sleep safe in my settled snowdome." Therefore, the Bucktin house can also be viewed as a microcosm of the Corrigan community, as the silent bystander sustains wrongdoings and allows the innocent to be accused for others' mistakes.

Silvey adapts his ideas about truth and responsibility to the Wishart family; Pete Wishart's brutal abuse of Laura was facilitated by Eliza's and Mrs. Wishart's continuous suppression of the truth. The narrative demonstrates Laura's encounters through a metaphorical spectacle highlighting how quickly evil was propelled "Like a cork from a bottle. A train with no brakes." Here, the use of simile heightens the intensity of Eliza's recounting to Charlie of her inability to oppose the villainy under her own roof. In a uniquely Australian voice Silvey personifies the intense heat of the Australian climate "summer heat crept in" symbolizing nature growing in tension in parallel with the events within the Wishart family. Dissolution of relationships within the Wishart family thrived from the subduing of truth and the abrogation of responsibilities as parental guardians from both Mr. and Mrs. Wishart. The powerless and marginalized are often scapegoated for the mistakes of those higher up in societies hierarchy to uphold faultless public appearances. Society's animosity towards Jasper Jones is enunciated during Charlie's first encounter with him "They think I'm a bloody animal. They think I belong in a cage..." The image of Jasper as an animal represents the ironic label that impugns his sensitive and misunderstood nature and presents him as dangerous to society. The first person narrative within the novel positions Charlie as the narrator allowing us to recognize the duality of Jasper which may not be known by others. Subsequently these

experiences are what fuels the novel and forces Jasper and Charlie to adapt methods contrary to the traditional to achieve justice.

Jasper's character is inexorably linked to accumulated stereotypical labels "a Thief, a Liar, a Thug, a Truant" that allows the powerful figures such as Pete Wishart to demonstrate a destructive power of injustice and scapegoat Jasper Jones for his misdemeanor. This supports his attempts in masking his identity as an alcoholic, immoral, sexually violent man and uphold his authority as the Shire president. Capitalization of these titles demonstrate the dominance of the assumptions of the community and promotes Jasper's vulnerability to be scapegoated. However, during his encounter with Mad Jack Lionel Jasper is indirectly accused of the same mistake of judging by appearance without understanding reality, as he himself engages in scapegoating the innocent. Represented through an imperative narrative voice tied together with aphorism, Silvey highlights the ability of the Corrigan citizens to disfigure the truth so extremely, despite their personal egregious practices, that it forces Jack Lionel to resort to an isolated life, "The story became truth...And Jack Lionel's portrait was smudged with ink and smeared in shit". Silvey alludes this image of Lionel to the character of "Boo Radley", a reclusive social outcast in "To Kill a Mockingbird". During Jasper's blindness of the truth he fails to understand the positive intentions of Lionel to reunite with his grandson. "Or maybe he knew...Maybe he knows about his place. Maybe it was him." The repetition of "Maybe" accentuates Jaspers uncertainty and lack of evidence in accusing Jack Lionel. Even though Jasper doesn't have an image he needs to support, he needs to accuse someone else to hide the possibility of his actions driving Laura to her death. Therefore by relieving oneself of mistakes by antagonizing the innocent we are able to eliminate possibilities of moral misadventure.

Justice and truth are intertwined as the handling of truth by individuals are influenced by human experiences and the reinterpretation of it brings about justice or injustice. People's encounters within certain relationships shapes their view of the truth as only those willing to peel away the layers and explore it will truly understand reality. Charlie's intelligence and compelling attitude to discover the truth before judging places characters in their authentic form, which assists in piecing together the different events within Corrigan. As a result of this he and Jasper were able to discover the ultimate injustice within Laura's death and perceive Corrigan through a different lens. Craig Silvey poignantly completes this novel through the revealing of human nature and its role within unearthing the truth and bringing about Justice.