

Analysis of the identity change issue in the novels mister pip and a complicated ...

[Literature](#), [Novel](#)



Throughout the novels *Mister Pip* and *A Complicated Kindness*, the main characters struggle with influential identity changes due to their hometown. Matilda, the main character in the novel *Mister Pip* and Nomi, the main character in the novel *A Complicated Kindness* were both raised from a place that lacked freedom. Both Matilda and Nomi suffered from the loss of a parent and lived in extremely depressed mental states due to the sad state in which their lives were. Each of these events caused extreme changes in both Matilda and Nomi's identities and were connected to the suffering which their hometowns caused them.

In *A Complicated Kindness*, the main character Nomi's identity is influenced severely by her lack of overall freedom. An example which displays an overall lack of freedom can be observed when Nomi discusses listening to music, Nomi says " the elders knew it was better for little children to listen to names of dead people being read out in terrifying monotone than the Beatles singing all we need is love." In this example, Nomi describes how listening to funeral arrangements is much less frowned upon in comparison to listening to music. Another example of an overall lack of freedom that Nomi experiences is when she states " The other day I found her passport in her drawer when I was putting away my dad's laundered handkerchiefs. I wish I hadn't. For the purpose of my story, she should have it with her. I sat on my dad's bed and flipped through page after empty page. No stamps. No exotic locales. No travel-worn smudges or creases. Just the ID information and my mother's black-and-white photo which if it were used in a psychology textbook on the meaning of facial expressions would be labeled: Obscenely, heartbreakingly hopeful." This is an example of lack of overall freedom as

Nomi observes ways in which her parents were held back in life, as she describes how her mother's passport was blank, meaning that she was unable to leave their hometown, and unable to live freely. These examples display the types of strict rules and steps that citizens like her had to follow, and the ways in which these rules altered their overall lives and influenced their identities. The lack of overall freedom that Nomi experienced altered her identity in a way that created an unhappy life, and an unhappy home.

In the novel *Mister Pip*, the main character Matilda's identity is altered at an extreme level due to the lack of overall freedom that she has. The novel *Mister Pip* is set during the civil war, where Matilda's safety and freedom is much more extreme in comparison to Nomi's from the novel *A Complicated Kindness*. An example of Matilda's lack of overall freedom is when she is being spoken to in her own home and hears "' They want girls,' she said eventually. Strange. I had not felt included until she barricaded our sleeping place." This displays Matilda's lack of overall freedom in her home as she is being told that the soldiers want females and that they must barricade their home in order to remain safe. Another example which displays Matilda's lack of overall freedom is when she says " I had discovered that the plainest house can crown a fantasy or daydream. An open window can be tolerated. So can an open door. But I discovered the value of four walls and a roof. Something about containment that at the same time offers escape." In other words, Matilda feels extremely held back by her hometown and is ' day dreaming' about what her true home could be, which was much different in comparison to her current home, where her current home is a home that

nobody wants. These events are examples of Matilda's lack of freedom overall, as well as her level of discomfort in her home. In Mister Pip, the main character Matilda lacks safety in her home, as well as happiness, which alters her life, and influences her identity extremely and permanently.

In the novel *A Complicated Kindness*, the main character Nomi suffers the loss of both her mother and sister due to her hometown life. This event caused Nomi to become extremely emotional and struggle mentally due to the loss, as she felt that she was completely alone. An example of the emotional deficits which Nomi suffered from can be observed when Nomi states "it was like I was dying, the way I missed her." This displays Nomi's mental state, as well as how much the pain of the loss is causing her to suffer. Another example of Nomi's depressed mental state due to home life can be displayed when Nomi states "Being seasick at sea is not the same as being homesick at home." In this example, it can be observed that Nomi is suffering severely from her situation at home and that she is describing her feelings of feeling lost even when she is at home. Throughout *A Complicated Kindness*, Nomi suffers severely due to her home life, causing her identity to be altered, as her suffering causes her a large amount of emotional pain.

In *Mister Pip*, the main character Matilda suffers the loss of a family member in the same way in which Nomi the main character from the novel *A Complicated Kindness* does. Matilda, the main character in *Mister Pip* suffers the loss of her father at a young age, as her father had to leave their home due to the war. An example that displays Matilda's suffering can be observed when Matilda describes an object sent from her father as she states "we

treasured a postcard my father sent from Townsville.” This example shows Matilda’s upset due to the loss of her father, as well as how one object makes her feel connected to her father. This example also shows how little of a connection Matilda truly had to her father, as her only connection to him is a postcard. Another example which displays Matilda’s negative feelings towards her hometown can be observed when she states “ I didn’t ever see myself leaving the island.” This example describes Matilda’s confidence and lack of overall freedom, as her hometown has pressured her into feeling that she cannot leave. This example also displays Matilda’s confidence in seeing her father again, as she knows he cannot come back to her hometown, and she has no hope or confidence that she will ever be able to leave it. Overall, these events display Matilda’s suffering and losses using one symbolic memory and describe her feelings of being stuck in her hometown, and feelings that she could never truly leave.

In *A Complicated Kindness*, Nomi is extremely unhappy living in her hometown. An example of this can be seen when it is stated that “ People here just can’t wait to die, it seems. It’s the main event. The only reason we’re not all snuffed at birth is because that would reduce our suffering by a lifetime.” It can be observed that Nomi believes that the only thing that there is to do in her hometown is to die, as nothing else ever happens. Another example of Nomi’s negativity towards her hometown is when it is stated that “ we can’t have church members setting fires... and... He glanced at me briefly.” This example displays Nomi’s actions of rebellion against her hometown and their rulings, where she begins to act against their rulings,

not for them. This is very out of character for Nomi and is a large influence on her identity. To conclude, the main character Nomi dislikes living in her hometown to the point that she begins to act against it, which is altering her identity.

In *Mister Pip*, Matilda, the main character, is very unhappy and extremely unsafe living in her hometown. An example which displays Matilda's unhappiness can be observed when Matilda states "The last boat. That sentence made our faces droop. We'd have to walk on water to get off the island now." This example displays Matilda's feelings of being stuck, unable to escape, and forced to stay in a place that does not make her happy. Another example of Matilda's feelings towards her hometown can be seen when Matilda hears "For me, Matilda, *Great Expectations* is such a book. It gave me permission to change my life." This example displays the feelings that Matilda has against not reading *Great Expectations*, where it was described as a life changer, and Matilda feels that she has no place to go and that reading this could change her life. In other words, Matilda sees this as an opportunity to turn her life around or search for a new way to be happy with her life and home. To conclude, these situations alter Matilda's identity as she feels that she is stuck in a place that she is not happy in, and she is acting in a way which she normally would not, causing her overall identity to be negatively influenced, as her necessity to escape is extremely out of character.

Throughout both novels, it is clear that the main characters in each novel suffer due to their hometown to the point that it alters their identities. Both

Nomi and Matilda suffer from lack of freedom, where they are held back from strict rules created by their community, as well as their feelings of being trapped in their hometowns and being unable to escape. Throughout each novel, it is learned that both Nomi and Matilda suffer from the loss of family members, where they have little to no symbolic connections with the member. These events alter both Nomi and Matilda's identity extremely, as each source of suffering was at an extreme level. It is clear throughout each novel that each character is nearing the point of depression or is in a state of depression, where they feel that they are trapped in their lives, with no way to escape. In conclusion, throughout *A Complicated Kindness* and *Mister Pip*, lack of freedom, feelings of being trapped, and loss of family alter the identities of both main characters.