

Explore the representation of adolescence in 'stand by me' essay sample

[Life](#), [Childhood](#)



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The main theme within 'Stand by Me' is the closeness of pre-teen boys, 'hanging around' in gangs and generally trying to grow up too fast. It is in the 'coming of age' movie genre. The opening sequence reflects the close bond still shared by the two main characters (Gordie and Chris); as we see from the headline that Chris has been shot dead. The young boys wanting and trying to grow up quickly is shown in the tree house; they have decided upon a secret knock to gain entry to the tree house, as if they are part of a very important secret gang. The whole film watches the boys go on a journey, not just physically but mentally as well; the journey to adulthood.

The non-diegetic narration helps fill in the gaps along the way so we understand jokes and other events that may happen throughout the film. For example, when Gordie meets the deer after the emotional scene with Chris, the narrator (older Gordie) explains the significance of this meeting. As well as the explanation, the audience recognises the similarity between Gordie and the deer. The innocence of both is reflected in the other. I also think Gordie's obsession with the body which grows throughout the film stems from the death of his brother, as when Gordie sees the body; he starts crying and wondering why his brother died when he did. As Chris comforts Gordie, we see that they are the closest within the group. This is also shown when Gordie stands up to Ace to save Chris's life, which has connotations with the western genre as Gordie holds the gun up into the air and shoots.

We see the boys smoking whilst playing cards, and this has connotations of adulthood as if they are trying to mimic their fathers as they feel they are shadowed by them and their older brothers. We also hear the boys swearing;

uncommon among young boys in the fifties when the film was set. This also shows us how they aspire to be older than they are. Gordie is ignored by his parents, and we find out via flashbacks and through the narration that his father sees him as inferior to his elder brother who has recently been killed in a car crash. Gordie feels he belongs when he spends time with his friends. see how the boys aspire to be older by the constant swearing that is not normally seen from young boys, especially in the fifties when the film was set. The whole film shows the four boys on a journey, which is what will happen when they grow up as they are leaving childhood and going in to adulthood.

Vern is portrayed as the most immature of the gang, as he protests when it is suggested that they trick their parents and find the dead body of the child in the papers. He also has an obsession with finding the pennies he buried months before - as he lost the map he drew to find them again. Vern drawing a map has connotations with young children wanting to be pirates and find a buried treasure. When Vern finds a penny in the road at the end of the film when the boys part ways it shows us as the audience that Vern has stayed immature, and has probably pushed the whole horrible experience to the back of his head and will forget about it. Vern is portrayed as the 'goof'; he is always asking about food and is slightly chubbier than the rest. He seems to be younger than the rest, and as a result the others pick on him constantly. Vern's immaturity compared to the other gang members is shown when he starts a discussion about which superhero would win a fight;

we are told by the narrator that this is typical of pre-teen boys. They haven't found girls yet.

Teddy is the rudest member of the gang as his younger childhood has been rough. He lives in the shame of what his dad did to him, as well as having a dad in jail. When the junkyard owner is rude to him, Teddy replies with insults just as bad. He is also the rebel of the group, as he doesn't care about the consequences of his actions. This is shown when he decides to walk across the field instead of doing the safe option of walking on the tracks, even though they didn't know if the woods were going to be more risky. He has an obsession like Vern, but his is with making something of himself and standing up for his father. When the friends split off at the end, he jokes that his mother has probably put him on the 'ten most wanted list'. However, in an ironic twist, we find out from Gordie's narration that he does actually end up in jail.

Chris is portrayed as the 'tough guy', as he steals the milk money at school and is rude and plucky to the older boys. This is shown at the beginning of the film in the tree house when he tells the other boys a rude joke involving a Frenchman, and Teddy complains that he is French, but Chris tells the joke anyway. However, throughout the film we see Chris open up to Gordie with fears about his future and the fact that he hates the way people think of him. As the audience we see another side of him. He tells Gordie and the audience that people only think of him as 'the Chambers kid' and that he wants to go somewhere where nobody knows him, to start afresh. On the

other hand, when with Vern and Teddy, Chris comes across as the tough guy to keep up the representation of 'hard-nut' within the gang.

'Stand by Me' as a whole shows how fast children want to grow up, and how they aspire to adults, even if they have been or are treated badly by the adults they know and/or love.