



"It is... a masterpiece" says Veronica Brady in *Spirals of Hidden Truths*. "Cloudstreet by Tim Winton is indeed a masterpiece, depicting post war Australian life. It contains many readings which help to further our understanding of the novel, such as historical, where the post war past has been portrayed through events and Australian vernacular; spiritual, where Winton has used symbolism and combined the physical and spiritual world to create true realism, that these exist equally to make life. The relationship of Quick and Fish, and also the relationship between Quick and <sup>his</sup> ~~his~~ ~~extended~~ ~~family~~ <sup>marriage to Rose</sup>, clearly explores these readings and ~~the~~ hold an extreme significance.



in the novel as a whole, as this time ~~is~~ allows for universal recognition.

One of the critical readings explored in historical; as it is set in a time and place that no longer exists. Cloudstreet gives a nostalgic picture of Australia's post war past over a twenty-year time span, and in that time readers witness the large country town slowly being transformed into a blossoming city. It has a parochial atmosphere and innocence until the Nedland's Monster Serial Murders destroys this, and casts it into a new, more brutal era, reinforced through Rose's statement to Quick " ... I'm frightened."

Social change and urban developments



such as the home that Rose and Querc build are given negative connotations, and portrayed as being repressive rather than progressive. Close family and community links were lost as history progressed, and with this loss of networks the moral and ethical values of society declined. Housing Development was destroying these links, and Sam refusing to give Cloudstreet to the developers is a symbol of family reconciliation.

, verisimilitude,  
World War Two, is explored in the novel, ~~and~~ representing the conflict between the families and characters themselves, while intertextuality adds to this through newspapers and diary entries, allowing for

historical interpretation.

Winton's novel is very Australian in its language, locations, characters and themes, which help to give an insight into the setting of Cloudstreet and stay true to the period of time. The use of Australian vernacular and slang / colloquialism helps to ~~at~~ further stay true to this period; "dunny", "fourbetwo." As Catherine Byrnes states, "His license to create words such as prawnkick and waterlap does describe the sight and sound of what he is describing." Cloudstreet does not use speech marks which makes the writing more conversational, and represents laid-back Australian speech.



One of the most important readings explored in Cloudstreet is spiritual, where Winton has combined the spiritual and physical worlds to create true realism; that these exist equally to make life, a Jungian concept. As Miels states, ~~his~~ ~~line~~ "the spirit and physical worlds... naturally interact... there seems to be a third dimension". Fish has lost part of himself due to a fishing accident, "Because not all of Fish Lamb had come back. Fish and Quide had always been close, however this accident causes their bond to become stronger, as it forges their relationship with spirits; Fish due to his other half remaining ~~in~~ in the water, and Quide due to his



survivor guilt. As Veronica Brady States, ~~"the world"~~, especially in Winton's novel, the characters have a doubleness about their lives, they seem to walk through worlds which are living." Fish and Quick's relationship is pivotal to the story as it is only through Quick that the families are able to reconcile with each other and the spirits; a gift from Fish.

~~The~~ Cloudstreet use to be the home of an elderly woman who took in Aboriginal girls to teach them White man's ways; "The mission girls climbed into bed with one another at night and cried... They had been taken from their families and were not



happy." One of the girls committed suicide, and her spirit haunted the house. Fish and Quick could sense the spirits suffering; Quick due to survivor guilt. Fish's continuous playing of Middle C represented the connection between the spiritual and physical world, and the house was personified through words such as 'gaped' and 'sighed' which made it "one of them" and represented the people who lived there.

Yes The spirits were most active during times of sadness, especially in Quick's room, where "the people in all the pictures - were dancing - had never known



such terror as coiled in him  
~~then~~ then." When he and Rose  
make love in the library, their  
happiness causes the spirits  
to leave; "the girls hadow  
and hogshadow go limped  
and spermarthead<sup>the</sup> slipping  
down walls torn by their  
halfness", therefore this relationship  
is ~~an~~ significant as it rids  
the house of spirits and  
begins the healing process  
amongst the two families.  
The house is finally rid of  
spirits through the birth of  
Wax Harry, a biblical illusion  
symbolising a baby Jesus  
figure, significant as he  
brings peace, reconciliation  
and harmony between the  
spiritual and physical worlds



Fish is retorted, however as the narrator, very sophisticated. It is only once the family connects to the spiritual world that Fish can tell his story of his "gift to them, the man, the woman, the baby, a gift bought with pain and shortening."

It is by "the River, the beautiful, the beautiful, the river," that the characters experience the greatest conflict as well as greatest resolution to their problems. As Dilbert says

"Winton makes throughout his novel associations of <sup>divine</sup> purity and spiritual renewal." It is when Fish returns himself to the water, a spiritual event as he drowns, that he can



tell the story of Cloudstreet  
"know my story for just  
that long... and I am Fish  
Lamb for those seconds  
It takes to die..."

Therefore, it is extremely evident  
that the human relationships  
explored in Cloudstreet are  
significant. This is due to  
the fact that Fish and Quick's  
relationship eventually enable the  
families to reconcile with each  
other and connect to the spiritual  
world, and Rose and Quick's  
relationship bring the members  
of each family and not the house  
of spirits. The human relationships  
are significant as it is a  
universal theme, which allows for  
captivation for readers all over  
the world.