

Task for *Vertigo*

Analysing characters: Anna

An individual study

Quotes from Chapters 1 and 2 have been extracted for analysis.

What quotes on characterisation can be extracted from Chapter 3 to assist in our final understanding of the character's journey and position?

Anna		
Pages	Quotes from text	Significance of quotes – What does it reveal about character and how does the language reflect this?
5	<i>It was Anna who prided herself on her fitness...For days she felt weepy and vulnerable, as if she were no longer the person she thought she was, or had willed herself to be.</i>	When Anna develops asthma, it exacerbates the discontent the couple already feels. The conjunction 'or' highlights the revelatory aspects of her character in that perhaps Anna was not being authentic to self but rather 'willing herself' into an identity.
7–8	<i>What they couldn't know, because she didn't tell them, was that like her husband she found herself troubled by a falling away of her youthful élan. There was so much money around, a dizzying spiral of excess, and yet she and Luke struggled. They worked long hours but still they could not afford anything better than the rental on their cramped apartment</i>	The discontent is linked to the materialism of the society – again, this makes the characters representative as opposed to simply distinctive in their characterisation.
8–9	<i>Though scornful of the crass material ambitions of others, she was secretly ashamed of the shabbiness of her apartment, and fed up with the cheap holidays. But this was only material lack; what was worse was the corrosive effect on her goodwill towards the world...She was past thirty, she was in a spiritual impasse and she needed to find a way out of it.</i> (PHOTOGRAPH FOLLOWS – almost like we are seeing where she is wishing to be – beach and gulls)	

16	<p><i>There were nights when Anna lay in bed with last-minute misgivings but Luke, typically, was resolute. And so...they packed up and moved, though not before Luke had upgraded their espresso machine to a more expensive model.</i></p>	<p>Contrasting Anna and Luke reflects their individual identities in that one is hesitant and the other more embracing of the sea change. Yet, there is comedic emphasis in the upgrade of the machine because it suggests a desire for a certain lifestyle.</p>
17–18	<p><i>Anna was too excited to sleep; for a time she would drift off, and then wake in a state of relaxed alertness...but the boy was afraid and would not settle...until at last she called to him through the gloom and he came and nestled beside her at the edge of the mattress.</i></p> <p>In the MORNING</p> <p><i>...she looks around absentmindedly for the boy. It's almost as if she expects him to be here every morning...if she begins to take anything for granted, anything at all, then she might break the spell.</i></p>	
20	<p>Anna and Luke identify the Pardalote bird through using a book purchased on Birds of Australia. It is a 'migratory bird who travels south in spring to breed and fly away in winter.' (Link to her and the loss of the child/stillborn and does she run away in winter?)</p>	
Chapter 2		
35	<p>Anna buys the weathered yellow canoe and gets some lessons from a local boy (Jacob). He warns them to stay away from the swans - <i>'they think they own the place.'</i></p>	
37	<p>Her habit of watching news footage at night - <i>Her father, who worked long hours, was a news junkie, and if she wanted his company she had to sit up with him on the couch, watching the late news and documentaries...Now, here in Garra Nalla, she has BBC and CNN: they make her feel connected to the outside world.</i></p>	

53	<p><i>Watts: 'Do you think, Anna, that you'll ever start a family?'</i></p> <p><i>'We've put that on hold,' says Anna, firmly. 'First we have to decide where home is.' This isn't the whole truth, far from it, and she hopes the boy isn't listening.</i></p>	
58	<p><i>'Do you realise that bloody wind has howled around here for forty-one days without a break?'</i></p>	
59	<p><i>His detachment is infuriating. It's alright for Luke, the heavy sleeper, but almost every night now her sleep is disturbed by the wind gusting against the house...he is dead to the world until resurrected at dawn like some bush Lazarus.</i></p>	
59	<p>Even lessons about how to hang washing become part of the struggle. The sheet: <i>'Sure enough, there it is on the empty block next door, draped across a patch of bracken like a collapsed parachute. She swears again, because Rodney keeps two pet sheep on this block and their droppings are all through the grass and ferns...</i></p>	
60–61	<p>Under the corner of the sheet:</p> <p><i>'There, coiled in a perfect whorl, is a black snake with a long, pointed head. And she is frozen.</i></p> <p>She is terrified – dismisses her husband who wants to get a shovel and tells him to get Gil.</p> <p><i>It's not that she has seen a snake, it's that in lifting the sheet she had bent so low, had been so close, had somehow entered the snake's zone...</i></p>	

61	<p><i>Gil: 'Your first snake. Now you can call yourself a local.'</i></p>	
62	<p>To her sister Stephanie in Hong Kong:</p> <p><i>'It's hard to describe the effect this weather has on my state of mind...I don't know if I can stand the drought much longer. I keep wondering if we've made a mistake.'</i></p>	
63	<p><i>When she says as much to Luke, he listens patiently. 'Let's give it another year,' he says. 'Weather goes in cycles. It changes all the time.'</i></p> <p><i>Luke always did have a way of blotting out distraction, of drawing the world in around him on his own terms, whereas she seems to bleed out into it...Some days she feels like a fly caught in an invisible web. (different approaches to nature - different people.)</i></p>	
71	<p>Anna can see the animals are coming from the bush to seek water as the drought and heat continues:</p> <p><i>...if echidnas are on the move, can the snakes be far behind?</i></p> <p><i>Whilst Luke observes the white-bellied sea eagle with his field glasses, Anna even without glasses she can see the distinctive contour of the raptor's broad upswept wings.</i></p>	
72	<p><i>'You know, I don't think I could live here all my life,' she says.</i></p> <p><i>Anna tires of waiting for an answer and gets up from her chair in a huff. Though he gives the appearance of being absorbed in the eagle, Luke is alert to her every movement.</i></p>	

75	<p>Anna excited to be back in the city.</p> <p><i>Even if the air is fouled with exhaust fumes and the nights are broken with sirens, there is much here that is sensual and exciting, and not all of it in neon...the dark, blockish shapes of the city skyline, the contrast of their sharp-edged silhouettes against a fiery sky, confer on nature an even greater drama.</i></p>	
75-6	<p><i>But then, somewhere in the middle of the second week she begins to feel claustrophobic. She misses her house, its many rooms; the wide veranda; the great glittering expanse of the lagoon; the feeling of gliding across the water in their canoe. And she misses the she-oaks with their wispy canopies that seem to hum and vibrate in the heat. Damn Luke, damn his stupid ideas. All he has succeeded in doing is creating a situation where she doesn't feel at home anywhere. Now she belongs in neither place, like some migratory bird that has lost its bearings. But the most disturbing thing is this: here in the city there has been no sign of the boy.</i></p>	
76	<p><i>Or could it be that she is losing her power to summon him?</i></p>	
77	<p><i>Quietly, she has resolved to give it another year in Garra Nalla...But secretly she has made up her mind: they must go. One day.</i></p> <p><i>She needs a project, and since the winds are eroding the topsoil of her garden it makes sense to plant more trees. And of all the tress, the casuarinas are her favourite. Here, for once, nature is on her side. According to her book, these hardy pines are the great coastal survivors...Better still, they attract the birds.</i></p>	

79	<p><i>'I wouldn't plant she-oaks,' says Gil, when she tells him of her plan.</i></p> <p><i>'Because they burn like buggery...Get a fire in these parts and they'll endanger your house.'</i></p>	
79	<p>She investigates on the net and finds Gil is right.</p> <p>Her research tells her: <i>'Some Australian species respond to fire as others do to rain'...Australia, it seems, is a land of phoenix trees: fertile in extremity.</i></p>	
81	<p><i>Anna is distraught. What is the point of this rural idyll if they are at the mercy of the consortium? Luke, too, is unsettled by this news, at least for a time, but after a few days he seems to be able to shrug it off, to imply that she is taking it too personally...See, she says to the boy. See, he doesn't deal with things. But the boy skitters away... True to form, he remains loyal to his father.</i></p>	
82	<p><i>In the weeks that follow, Anna begins to resent her husband...For what kind of cul-de-sac has he led them into? He came here out of his protectiveness towards her, but now it seems that he has become complacent, has lost all ambition.</i></p>	
83	<p><i>Now he goes about with a happily bemused expression on his face, like he's stoned, or sits cross-legged on the veranda drinking wine with Rodney. Yesterday she overheard them having an inane conversation about crows.</i></p>	
84–6	<p><i>Around his neck hang the two objects that accompany him on all his walks, his field-glasses and his USB memory stick, and there is something strange about him, something beyond her...it is as if she is encountering a stranger. She finds she is looking at her husband...as though at a figure in the landscape, or one of those birds he is always gazing</i></p>	

	<p><i>at. Perhaps that's all any of them are, figures in a landscape. In each era new figures come, others go, but the land remains and their sense of ownership is an illusion... At any moment they could disappear from this place and nothing would change, nothing of consequence, so vast is the land and so small are they. And the thought of this brings on a rush of vertigo, a dizzying sense of disorientation, as if she is about to fall, but that when she falls she will be weightless. She has lost her roots, her anchorage to the earth; she might float away into the blue of the sky and never be heard of again...Perhaps it's to do with the boy, for it feels like he's abandoned them. Since she returned from the city he eludes her; she sees him nowhere and this is making her unhinged...Something is dying, something is leaching away from them...</i></p>	
Chapter 3		
