

ORIGINAL

## Self-Quest in Andrew Bovell's When the Rain Stops Falling

### La búsqueda del yo en When the Rain Stops Falling de Andrew Bovell

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#### ABSTRACT

This study explored the idea of identity formation in a play about missing existence, or children who do not realise their place in this world because they do not know their fathers. The faithlessness here makes a critical point in the play, which brings forth a psychological crisis in the protagonist's mind. The idea of finding one's origin springs from the need for existence. The identity crisis here comes from not finding a place in the past, which means there is no place in the future. This study aims to trace the theme of identity in a play that shows the identity crisis and formation in its purest based on Freudian psychological aspects. The past and the present for the protagonist is intertwined and inescapable. Therefore, he had to undergo an unknown physical and spiritual journey to empower and enable him to construct his targeted identity.

**Keywords:** Naturalism; Identity; Psychological Disorders; Quest.

#### RESUMEN

Este estudio tiene como objetivo plantear la idea de la formación de la identidad en una obra sobre la existencia perdida, o sobre niños que no se dan cuenta de su lugar en este mundo porque no conocen a sus padres. La falta de fe aquí es un punto crítico en la obra, que provoca una crisis psicológica en la mente del protagonista. La idea de encontrar el propio origen surge de la necesidad de existencia. La crisis de identidad aquí surge de no encontrar un lugar en el pasado, lo que significa que no hay lugar en el futuro. Este estudio tiene como objetivo rastrear el tema de la identidad en una obra que muestra la crisis de identidad y la formación en su forma más pura basada en aspectos psicológicos freudianos. El pasado y el presente para el protagonista están entrelazados y son ineludibles. Por lo tanto, tuvo que emprender un viaje físico y espiritual desconocido para empoderarse y permitirle construir su identidad deseada.

**Palabras clave:** Naturalismo; Identidad; Trastornos Psicológicos; Búsqueda.

#### INTRODUCTION

Toward the close of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, the literary atmosphere moved in the vicinity of naturalism, surrealism, expressionism, psychoanalysis, and many other theoretical schools that may enrich any literary text and open the horizon for broad interpretations and analysis. It is worth mentioning that much of the literary output of the late 19th century and early 20th century was rich with leading genres like fiction and drama. With the coming of psychoanalysis in particular, the period from the preface of 1914 to 1945 is much more important just because it heralds the major characteristics of modern drama.<sup>(1)</sup>

The leading playwrights tended to be headed toward radical technical experiments in form and techniques.

Unlike Naturalism, which looks at human beings as beasts with animalistic characteristics, and Realism, which attempts to focus on the objective mirroring or representation of life, Psychoanalysis is an objective and scientific attempt to study human beings' needs, attitudes, and behavior along with the inner conflict of the individual. Individuals are always in direct conflict inwardly and outwardly, i.e., With the immediate society, which makes them unable to cope with the biological, social, and economic forces that control their behavior and their fate. It also examines base human impulses and violence in marginal members of society like factory labor and farmhouse environments. Accordingly, the characters can be studied through their relationships to their surroundings. Usually, the characters are presented from low social and economic classes who are dominated by their environment and heredity and are in constant search of an ideal and well-constructed identity, which is mostly rooted and intertwined with the place of each character. Yet, identity has always been viewed as a complicated notion in modern studies that combines language, history, and environment.<sup>(2)</sup>

Therefore, the place should be seen as an ever-changing process incorporating the dialectical interactions of subject and object, the self, and the place of roots. In literature, those interactions occur at the point of connotation. How is space employed as a discursive medium to convey the notion of identity? To what degree does the playwright's choice of place reveal his/her approach to the issue of identity?

### Overview of Andrew Bovell's Play

The narrative unfolds across multiple decades and locations, specifically the 1960s, 1988, 2013, and 2039, primarily in London and Australia, exploring the lives of four interconnected generations.<sup>(3)</sup> Andrew Bovell employs a non-linear storytelling approach, allowing the audience to engage with the characters' reflections rather than following a straightforward timeline. The central focus is on the Law family, particularly on Gabriel, their first child, as he grapples with his identity and the conflicting influences of his parents, Mrs. Elizabeth and Mr. Henry Law, during his formative years.<sup>(4)</sup> The playwright uses the weather as a metaphor to reflect the character's inner turmoil, with constant rain, wind, and a gloomy atmosphere symbolizing their despair and devastation. It also covers Australian sensibility, whereby the overall events of the play are rooted in a specific place, which is Australian Nature.

### Context and Allegorical Significance

The play's events begin in Alice Springs, Australia, in 2039. A fish descended from the sky and landed at the feet of Gabriel York in an astonishing and miraculous manner during a continuous downpour. This scenario serves as an analogy for the deluge in Noah's Ark. It anticipates an influence from the past that impacts the present. In this instance, Gabriel observes the recurrence of history, the vanishing of his father, and the anticipation of his son, Andrew. York has been deliberating on what to offer his son Andrew, who has just reunited with him after years of separation. The narrative oscillates between several time zones. Gabriel elucidates his circumstances upon receiving the fish. He asserts that this fish is the largest he has seen. This signifies the substantial disparity between the past and the present. He asserts that this fish belongs to an extinct species.<sup>(5)</sup> This may serve as an analogy for the abrupt resurgence of the past, indicating that his identity may reside in a previous time. Consequently, the enigma of the fish represents the enigma of history. A fish descending from the sky signifies concealed facts inside the psyches of Gabriel, his parents, and his kid. Gabriel was unable to locate his father, as he sought his absent parent, while Andrew yearns for the father who abandoned him during his youth.<sup>(6)</sup> This perpetual enigma resembles a sequence of identities that struggle to uncover the truth of consciousness, resulting in a dilemma and a succession of identity formation crises amidst a multitude of concealed mysteries. Consequently, the conclusion of this voyage remains uncertain, illustrating that history is cyclical and the past always leaves an indelible connection to the present. The fish navigates this enigmatic sea to its ultimate destination, the foot of Gabriel York.

### Psychological and social realism

Andrew Bovell's play projects a new era of psychological and social realism and demonstrates an interest in the topic, particularly when using the stream-of-consciousness technique in the play to display the characters' thoughts, feelings, and reactions in a continuous flow of events. The play emphasized the characters' pent-up emotions, which pose a threat in the current scenario. In *When the Rain Stops Falling*, the playwright depicts the protagonist's disarray character along with the main character's psychological state who is striving to have a life full of decency and stability at the social, financial, and spiritual levels.<sup>(7)</sup> The play explores various themes, such as identity, generational trauma, and displacement, through Bovell's unique narrative techniques, such as stream of consciousness and non-linear storytelling.

### Australian Sensibility and Paradoxes of Identity

Fyre (2010) pointed out that Australian sensibility seems to have been significantly unsettled, not only by the well-known issue of identity, which is crucial, but also by a succession of paradoxes that challenge that

identity. It is less confounded by the inquiry “Who am I” than by a conundrum such as “Where is here?”.<sup>(8)</sup>

It depicts the story of Gabriel Law, who lives in Australia and maintains a solitary existence; the story concentrates on his isolation and loneliness as a way to have a meaningful life because he had many personal strikes that led to his identity crisis. Such concern with the crisis of identity as related to the sense of displacement has been tackled in the writings of many critics, reflecting the problem of identity faced by most characters. Freud and Lacan consider man’s personality is always determined and shaped by his past, childhood memories and the way of upbringing.<sup>(9)</sup> So, Gabriel’s personality has been built based on his disturbed past that affects not only his present but also, unconsciously influencing the consciousness of the relative characters and suppressing their desires through identifying their sad responses to what they have lost, the relations between father and son, and the interpretation of dreams.

### **The Play’s Structure and Generations**

#### *The Epic Structure of Generations*

The basic structure of the play is simple in which Bovell skillfully interconnects and encompasses four generations all together in an epic form of drama, who suffer from the same essential problem which is their self-quest and assertion in two different settings i.e. the original location and the birth place of the ancestors, England, and then shifts to Australia. The events unfolded chronologically with one of the moving backwards and forwards in time that is popular in many moderns’ literary works.<sup>(10)</sup> The first generation is presented by Henry Law and his wife Elizabeth Perry who gives birth to their only kid Gabriel Law in England. At the age of seven Gabriel was abandoned by his father without any given reason leaving Elizabeth as a single mother responsible for the boy. When, Gabriel Law becomes grown up man decides to travel to Australia looking for better life chance, opportunity, and his long absent father.

The second generation continues with Gabriel Law who changes his place of residence to Australia to make up all the loss in his life. He meets a lovely lady who by chance shares with him the same first name, Gabrielle York. Gabriel Law and Gabrielle York had also one boy, Gabriel York. The third generation of this family is Gabriel York and Eliza Price who are the parents of Andrew Price, representing the last of the third generation and the young of the fourth one. The play deals with family, treachery, and forgiveness that spans four generations and two hemispheres.<sup>(11)</sup>

#### *The Past and Identity Conflict*

The past in the play is something the main character tries to escape by all means possible because it distracts Gabriel’s future life and might be a threat rather than a relief. As the play unfolds and glimpses of the family past are revealed, it becomes evident that the desire to deny the truth about the former life of London and the reason behind Henry’s disappearance leaving behind him a seven -year- old son, Gabriel, and to escape the past is more than understandable. He has been victimized by irresponsible father in addition to unstable life style that toxicated his life and personality leaving him swaying on edges.<sup>(12)</sup>

### **Character and Theme Analysis**

In dramatic literature, characters serve as a means for playwrights to assess the effectiveness of their portrayal of psychological and cultural experiences. Across generations, characters strive for self-improvement but often encounter failures that impact them on multiple levels—culturally, physically, spiritually, and financially—leading to significant psychological distress. The playwright explores the blurred lines between reaction and violence, suffering and patience, and fear and security through these characters. The tragedy unfolds as the protagonist struggles to connect with a reality that feels disconnected from his own. This quest for identity is poignantly expressed by the father, Gabriel, who reflects on his son Andrew’s turmoil between past and present, reality and illusion, and different geographical identities. Ultimately, the play presents a grim view of humanity, highlighting the challenges of achieving a coherent sense of self amidst shattered ideals. Characters embody aspirations and the capacity to envision their desired lives as Bovell (2008) quoted “Gabriel York: I know what he wants. He wants what all young men want from their fathers. He wants to know who he is. Where he comes from. Where he belongs. And for the life of me I don’t know what to tell him.”<sup>(13)</sup>

Gabriel York who is unable to face the harsh realities of his world therefore he left him and ran away but, in the end, Andrew came looking for his father. The past for the father is a realm wants to escape but for the son is chain of puzzles that should be solved to enjoy his future times. For Andrew past, present, and future should always be reasonably related together to have stable long life. The failure of the father who wanted to create an opportunity to avoid poverty and have a good way in lifestyle led him to the boy’s abandon. The fatherlessness here makes a critical point in the play, which brings forth a psychological crisis in the mind of the protagonist. The idea of finding one’s origin springs from the need for existence. The identity crisis here comes from the fact that not finding a place in the past means there is no place in the future.<sup>(14)</sup>

The text discusses the themes of alienation, exploitation, and the search for identity in the context of

modern industrialization in Western countries. As urbanization and secularization erode traditional values and religious beliefs, individuals experience a profound sense of alienation, akin to the character Andrew's quest for self-understanding. The rise of industrial capitalism leads to the exploitation of workers, forcing many to become migrant laborers in search of survival amidst poverty and instability. The narrative reflects the harsh realities of life in the post-modern age, characterized by a struggle for basic needs and a longing for a sense of belonging and stability.<sup>(15)</sup>

The play captures the complexities of human experience, revealing the coexistence of beauty and despair in a world marked by both joy and tragedy.

The play is a complex mixture of contradictions related to identity crisis. This identity reflects its influence on Gabriel York's identity in the sense of his indifference to life, to his son and to even faith. (Hermann 7) states that God designed a conscience or a testimony that governs our relationship with Him, nature, and our place in the world. He divides this testimony into four main activities that represents the conscience:

- First: the appropriate knowledge of the truths, standards, beliefs which help us to understand out morality and the function of our conscience.
- Second: the conscience induces the sense of guilt, approval, in our hearts and minds according to our relation to God.<sup>(16)</sup>
- Third: through the belief in the Holy Spirit, the psyche realizes the importance of awareness of the meaning of sin and the need for forgiveness.
- Fourth: the conscience of the follower of God if complied with the deeds of the Christ will form a positive integration with love, conscience and the new balanced identity. If we want to project these four activities to the Super Ego of Gabriel, we find that they fall apart because he states from the very beginning "I do not believe in God."<sup>(17)</sup>

As conscience is a principal concept of the human nature that God placed in him and was assigned to self-assessment of morals, the modern biblical studies focus on act-centered ethical deeds instead of virtue-based deeds (Spaeth 2). The function of conscience is to guide human psyche to the path of good, molding human identity, and encouraging human thrive. This is what Gabriel York misses because of his disbelief. This lack of conscience from which Gabriel suffers causes him what (Mong 13) names the trust-mistrust crisis. It is certain that this crisis took place in the first stages of his life which made him leave his son the same age his father left him, and this caused that he took his mother's second name just like his son. This made him distrust everything from his father, environment and even his God. This made him leave his son. Perhaps he thinks that this was better for his son who lived with a stepfather this is because of the lack of identity he has.

This analysis aims to pinpoint how Bovell's play addresses the generational issues of identity, trauma, and displacement. This study considers structural analysis, symbolic meaning, and psychological implications to understand the play's larger significance in relationship-building and existential dilemmas.

## DATA ANALYSIS

### Text 1

"Gabriel York: wrong number, I thought, who would call me? At this hour? It was my son Andrew, I have not seen him for many years, I left him when I was a boy. it was cowardly of me I know, but I was not the fathering type and to be perfectly honest I thought the boy would have better chances without me. I sent him money when I could and a card. Yes, this Andrew your son. I am here in Alice(Austrelia) and I want to see you."<sup>(18)</sup>

From the Marxism point of view, personalities are product of cultural and ideological forces. Knowing what the consequences will be. The financial difficulty in the family was the external reason that produced inner strife inside the mind of each character for generations. This play reveals that Gabriel York does not come from a wealthy family. He revealed that he had recently lost his job, which added to his internal strife. Feelings of disappointment motivated him to leave his only son Andrew for long period of time. He recounts his family's financial predicament by turning his back to them and lives apart. Gabriel York is jobless and who takes refuge in the grimy room in Austrelia by himself. He is a man who has lost everything, even his identity.

### Text 2

"Gabriel York: Adrew I would like to see you why don't you come for lunch tomorrow? But as soon as I gave him my address I and hang up I knew that I was a mistake. What was I thinking? What would I give him. I can hardly feed my self let alone a son I have not seen for 20 years. what will he think of my clothes and shoes that are torn .I donot wear socks. And what would he think of my room. A one- room-sit-bed on the twelfth floor. Not a kind of place a father should live."

Anxiety, also, is the source of his inner conflict which functions as an ego that alerts people to the likelihood



of a risk so that an adaptive response might be prepared. Similarly to his response for his son phone call when he rejected the call and started to read a book as if nothing happened. After absorbing the shock of his son's arrival, Gabriel started to think. His frustration caused him to get more enraged. The loss of self-identity is also a symptom of his sadness as he realizes that his life is no longer the one, he imagined. The storyline has been replaced by a dramatic transition all characters are conflicted all the time, and the storyline is essentially rooted to show such individuals' instability and restlessness. Gabriel in his soliloquy above appears not only as an irresponsible father but also, a fragile man his attempts to escape the past and reality are what ultimately lead to his self-delusion and torn identity. <sup>(20)</sup>

The idea of poverty is very much emphasized by the characters in the four generations when having their meals they have nothing to eat but fish soup which is neither tasty nor delicious to be served. Elizabeth conversation with Henry exemplifies to what extent they hardly earn their living "I have heads of the fish boiled and added some herbs to prepare the soup" (Bovell 16). They eat fish soup only to avoid slow starvation. The dissatisfaction of all characters stems from their inability to meet the social and economic needs of the family.

For Bovell identity is closely related to the place, thus, Australian cultural identity is rooted in the wilderness of Australian nature. Therefore, *When the Rain Stops Falling* takes place in his native land of Australia, where the protagonist seeks protection in nature away from city life, which symbolizes exploitation and power. Nature, in its symbolic content, must reflect the struggle for freedom and the pursuit of identity in this play. In her conversation Gabrielle asks Gabriel who comes newly from London "What are you doing here?". On Coorong. In the middle of winter? along way from London?" <sup>(21)</sup>

### Text 3

"Gabriel: my father came here once and sent a postcard. It had a picture of the ninety-mile beach, and I wanted to see it for myself.

Gabrielle: what did the letter say?

Gabriel: "dear Gabriel, the Coorong is a dangerous place. Caught between the land and the sea, it belongs to neither. I miss you, Dad. My father left when I was seven Gabrielle: do you remember him?

Gabriel: I wish I could say yes. He is a mystery. What I remember is his absence and my mother's silence."

It is a scholarly axiom that internal conflict consists of decisions that do not correspond to aspirations, a reluctance to deal with difficulties, and expectations that do not match reality. Gabriel's personality had an internal conflict, which caused him to lose his sense of belonging (his identity). This became clear when Gabriel had to choose between leaving and staying to continue his search for his father. Hope is not the same as reality. When Gabriel pursues his plan to terminate his life, hope does not match reality. Gabriel was affected by external things, such as his family and other individuals. The medium to low family economy variable reflects external factors from his family. This was manifested by others in a different form of Mrs. Joe Ryan's compassion problem and Henry's dismay. Gabriel: "so that's what am doing here. Trying to see what my father saw. Trying to think what he thought. trying to understand why he went away." <sup>(23)</sup> Astonishingly enough, Henry, Gabriel's father, abandoned him at the age of seven in London and travelled to Australia not for the sake of luxury but rather an escape from the British authority that accused him of kid's sexual abuse. As a result, Elizabeth urged him to leave the country and spare them a moral scandal and needless stain of shame upon their reputation. Some critics categorized Henry as an escapist character who seeks outlet via nature. Escapism is usually used as a way to unwind and remove oneself from the difficulties of daily life. However, facing reality and all its complexities is inevitable. In the play, escapism is represented by Henry's character that is unable to face the harsh realities of his world or to prove his innocence concerning the child's abuse.

### Text 4

"Elizabeth: two policemen came to our flat. They wanted to question me about an incident in the park involving you and a seven-year-old boy.

Henry: the boy was having difficulty.

Elizabeth: what kind of difficulty a seven-year-old may have?

Henry: He wet himself and I was helping him. He misunderstood and became upset. he may have told his mother something. Beth, do not let your mind runaway.

Elizabeth: nevertheless, they still want to talk to you.

Henry: I have not done anything; this is not right.

Elizabeth: that is what I told them. how dare you accuse my husband of something against nature.

Elizabeth: have touched the boy?

Henry: no, I have not, but I am frightened Beth.

Elizabeth: you will have to go, of course.

Henry: of course, I will find a room somewhere.

Elizabeth: no henry no, I want you gone out of the country, out of our lives, out of the existence. Where will you go?

Henry: Australia would be far enough."

Due to this shameful behavior Elizabeth prevented any direct contact between the boy and his father even when Henry travelled to Australia sent his son postcards, she deliberately hides them till the boy grow up and found them by chance in his mother's sewing basket. As a result, he decided to travel to Australia to uncover the truth beyond the father's disappearance since his mother rarely told him about his father.

In one conversation between Elizabeth and Henry, she tells him that he is aimless and has no ambition in life even their marriage is about to be ended "we have drifted far that I can hardly see you. You are just a shadow, an outline, a vapor of man." (Bovell43). Henry becomes lazy as he loses interest in regular life and no longer wants to do many activities or the things he used to do. And his lack of identity caused him to be self-defeating, as he began to do things that harmed him mentally or physically. Who prefers detaching himself from others. Henry states clearly that he is lost and lonely even in Australia the new content that he was pending hopes upon it to have new life" I am so lonely"<sup>(24)</sup>. The playwright aims at investigating the character's identity and belonging needs and to classify the obstacles to fulfill love and belonging demands the play. Elizabeth talking to Henry: we are what we think who we are. Not who God or nature determines us to be.

#### Text 5

"Elizabeth: talking to Henry: you have been with another woman.

Henry: there is no another woman Beth, only inclement weather.

Elizabeth: Diderot says," only passions, great passions can elevate the soul to great things. But woman without passion in her life has nothing to do but wait."

The portrayal of identity loss is caused by despair. He describes the issue of loss that caused the identity delusion among the characters in a qualitative descriptive way. Then the features of despair are spotlighted by using Existential and psychological theories. Also, the signs of hopelessness and the loss of interest in daily activities, self-defeat, emotionality, and loss of self-identity are depicted uniquely. Despite the fact that any individual should have free will to pursue his life time goals and attempts to reject recurring in his lifestyles through making his very own decisions. Man has "unfastened will" and may pick out how he's going to stay via the state of affairs he chooses. But the characters were crippled with delusional thoughts that led to their pointless, shallow life and eventually to their catastrophic ends.

This ambiguity in pain also appears when Gabriel goes to Australia to look for traces of his father, because he felt the need to complete himself, and when he understands that this is not a deficiency with the contrary to one's wishes, being unwilling to confront problems, and having expectations that do not match reality.<sup>(25)</sup> First and foremost, Gabriel's inner conflict involves the conflict between decisions that are not in accordance with wants, doubts in dealing with problems, and expectations that are not in accordance with reality. Overall, Gabriel's troubles were controlled by the Id rather than the Ego. Gabriel experienced conflict as a result of Id control over Ego as the variation of doubt in coping with difficulties is the most dominating form of inner conflict in Gabriel. Personality is viewed as a structure made up of three elements or systems, namely the id, ego, and superego. Firstly, the id according to Freud, is the source of all psychological energy and thus the most important component of personality. Secondly, the ego is a personality system that serves as an individual impact on reality's objects and performs its functions based on the reality principle. Thirdly, the superego is produced by internalization, which means that prohibitions or instructions from outside are processed such that they eventually come from within.

The words vividly portray the human existence of the family which was full of tragic implication and philosophical insight sometimes men's dreams and plans often go wrong, and bring trouble and heartache instead of joy as described by fire that may destroy and burn everything. Gabriel Law's connection with his mother Elizabeth in the same London flat in 1988 has soured due to her reluctance to discuss his father Henry's strange disappearance when his son was just 7 years old. Here, we are in the present: we see Gabrielle, an adult suffering from the scars of the crises he went through. A conversation between Elizabeth and her son Gabriel Law who asks a very usual and simple "how are you mum? she replies in words that also exemplify her sense of loss and agony.

#### Text 6

"Elizabeth: I never knew how to answer that, Gabriel. I am never sure whether people want me to say the truth or whether just want to go through the motion. However, I am very well thanking you.

Cabriel Law: I want the truth mum

Elizabeth: I had a fall."

The fire in the wood also signifies the inward intensity of the characters, which yearn to have their hopes and dreams come true, but the smallness and helplessness of man when pitted against the force of fate and destiny prevails. Usually nature is represented by birds, trees, mountains, gardens, and fruits in this drama. Elizabeth: "Nature is quite close, but you are uninterested in it; you, Gabriel, are disconnected from reality and live in a fantasy world" Gabriel rejects his real life, and from there he begins to. <sup>(26)</sup>

#### Text 7

"Gabrielle: I do not want you to go up there, tonight.

Gabriel: what?

Gabrielle: Do not climb it.

Gabriel: I have come a long way to do this.

Gabrielle: I do not care how far you have come.

Gabriel: it is something I have to do.

Gabrielle: why?

Gabriel: because he went up right there. He climbed up that rock. Fair skinned-English man and he never come back.

Gabrielle: let the dead take care of the dead.

Gabriel: are you making me choosing?

Gabrielle: yes.

Gabriel: then I choose him."

#### Text 8

"A lost person requires a map of the area with his position recorded on it so that he may know where he is in connection with everything else. Literature is not just a mirror; it is also a map, a mental geography. If we can learn to understand it as our literature, as the product of who and where we have been, our literature is one such map. We absolutely need such a map; we need to know where we are because this is where we live. Shared awareness of one's place, there here, is not a luxury but a need for members of a country or culture. We will not exist without that information."

Cultural identity as expressed in literature is a map, a hallmark for Australians who must struggle with a sense of loss and displacement, according to Bovell, who feels that Australians are "all immigrants" on Australia's huge territory. Even if we were born here, we are all immigrants to this place: the nation is too large for anyone to dwell completely and in places unknown to us" (Bovell, 18). This play embodies the feeling of loss of identity and displacement when Gabriel expresses his feelings of isolation even while in his native place because he suffers from major problems, "home land" which appears to be "foreign land" (Bovell 17) when he comes back from the city seeking his father, who apparently disappeared in the forest. The setting is related with identification in this play; it finds out that the missing father, who has become a terrible existence in the middle of the forest, is an image of individual and collective identities, the hero's identity, and the author's interest in his country's national culture. Most psychiatrists believe that old age is the stage of second childhood; he behaved childishly like a baby who was dissatisfied and lacked attention in his life. Gabriel exhibits emotional swings, such as violent outbursts and the expression of few or no emotions. He has no hope for the future.

Gabriel's house is a site of individual and collective memory; the house on the brink of the mountain, with windows opening to the mountains, can be considered a symbol of both private and collective identities. It is a place where the past is regularly brought up. Gabriel Law's search for a new self when reflecting national identity is exemplified by the country house's placement on a hill overlooking the "blue waves of the mountains."<sup>(27)</sup> According to Bovelle, water and fire are contradictory metaphors connected with both life and death. In this light, we can consider destruction to be rebuilding, and death to be a necessary step towards rebirth. Perhaps the destruction of nature, the play's emblem of identity, is part of a larger reconstruction, the rebuilding of a "third space" with a new hybrid identity.

Even the setting suggests the lack of identity formation. The time is Friday, which can be an allegory of the Great Friday of the Christ. This Friday represents the end of the past and beginning of the present and the future which seem to have no beginning. Also, the book he is reading represents the end of the American Empire. The year is 2039 and suggests the end of the American Empire from 1975 to 2015. Thus, the lack of identity here is resulted in the lack of past connection which is a Freudian concept because Freud depended on studying the past experiences to analyze the current psychic aspects.

Finally, the end of this journey is unknown and shows that history repeats itself and the past cannot leave without a trace that links it with the present. The fish swims in this sea of mystery to its final port, the feet of Gabriel York. The mystery of the fish is the mystery of the past. Also, a fish falling from the sky is a sign of

some evidence that is hidden in the psyches of Gabriel, his parents and his son. Gabriel could not see his father because he went to look for his missing father, and Andrew misses his father who left him in his childhood as if this endless chain of mystery is but a chain of Ids that cannot find their way to the truth of the conscious and cause a dilemma and a series of identity formation crises in this sea of hidden riddles.<sup>(28)</sup>

## RESULTS

As this analysis and in-depth review highlight, the play is an amalgamation of various areas of concern, such as the disjointed combinations of fragmented identities, transgenerational trauma, economic hardship, and the interplay of various areas that affect the characters' lives. Following are the findings gleaned from the play:

### Economic Hardship as a Driving Force of Conflict

The cycle of poverty and economic hardship inflicted upon the characters for generations magnifies the intensity of their emotional and personal conflicts: poverty that manifests through fish soup, abandonment, and broken relationships, such as Gabriel York's abandonment of his son because he could not provide.

### Identity Loss and Psychological Turmoil

#### *Breaking Down of Identity and Emotional Turmoil*

Blurred lines of the past draw a fractured identity among Gabriel Yoke and his ancestors through historical trauma and emotional disengagement. The struggle comes when they face their self-image, being always inferior or never good enough for those with whom they claim some familial connection. This emptiness later surfaces through avoidance behavior, self-isolation, and internalized shaming, as Gabriel's reaction to his son demonstrates.

### Generational Patterns of Abandonment and Escapism

On close examination, this play strengthens the concept of intergenerational displacement through themes of fathers abandoning their sons, where flight to Australia serves as Henry's coping, and reading becomes an escape for Gabriel York. Not facing one's past becomes a cycle where emotional distancing and self-destructive tendencies keep being reinforced.

### The Role of Nature in Identity Formation

The play juxtaposes the Australian environment as a kind of sanctuary, as well as the battleground, with Gabriel's journey across the Coorong representing the very search for meaning that, instead, worsens his existential crisis. The perspective of natural landscapes counters the banality of urban life, throwing the characters' struggle outwards as they seek an anchor in this world.

### Freudian Analysis of Inner Conflict

The psychical stress that characters are subjected to comes about due to the imbalance created within the Id, Ego, and Superego. The Id of Gabriel York sparks the rival approach to escaping responsibility or confronting the realities dictated by his circumstances.

Henry's case can be envisioned as an ideal example of a moral conflict, where the Superego of societal judgment impels him into exile despite claims of innocence.

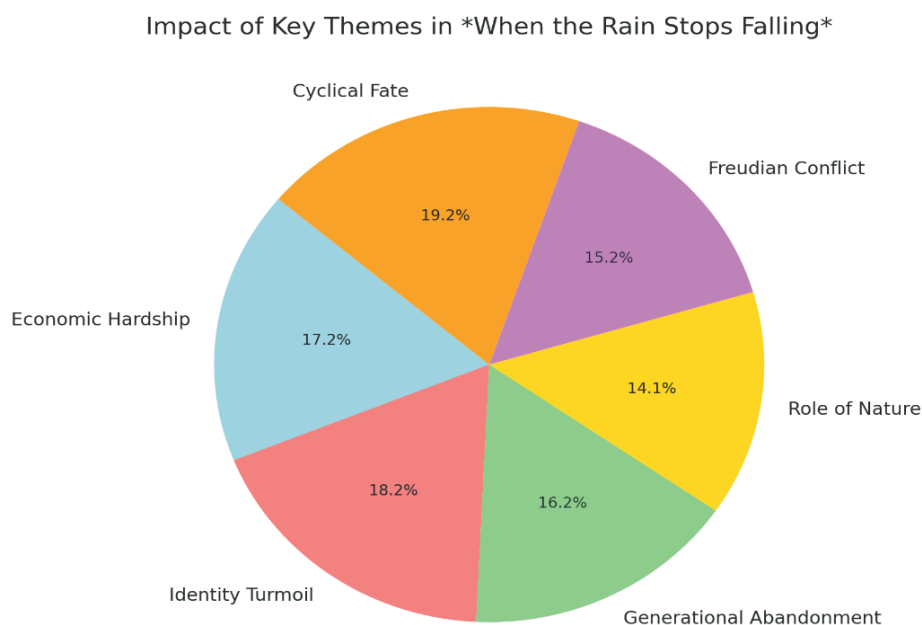
### The Recurring Theme of Fate and Cyclical History

This play suggests that every subsequent generation inherits the burden of the previous one, which must be addressed. The dying fish represents how destiny consumes the lives of all the characters, with Gabriel's quest for his father reflecting his unresolved grief.

Table 1. Key themes with impact

Key themes	Impact Percentages
Economic Hardship	85
Identity Turmoil	90
Generational Abandonment	80
Role of Nature	70
Freudian Conflict	75
Cyclical Fate	95





**Figure 1.** impact of key themes in “When the Rain Stops Falling” with percentages

## CONCLUSIONS

Andrew Bovell’s play “When the Rain Stops Falling” delves into identity through generational trauma and psychological conflict, tracing the Law family’s struggles across four generations. The narrative highlights how past experiences shape present identities, particularly through the character of Gabriel York, who faces the challenge of reconciling his history with his aspirations for the future. Symbolism, such as rain representing despair and fish signifying hidden truths, underscores the emotional turmoil and cyclical nature of familial issues. The play emphasizes the importance of confronting one’s past to forge a coherent identity, particularly within the context of Australian culture and the immigrant experience. Bovell’s work poignantly illustrates the complexities of modern identity, revealing the necessity of understanding one’s roots to navigate contemporary challenges. Ultimately, the characters’ unresolved journeys reflect the ongoing struggle for self-understanding and the profound connections between past and present, offering a commentary on the human condition.

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