Representations of relationships and their impact on the individual help us to understand, more broadly, the collective human experience.

Composers will often explore the impact of supportive and violent affiliations, manifested within relationships, in order to reflect an individual’s transition into adulthood. Abusive and Manipulative relationships will often culminate in “rough” and “unsettled” transition into adulthood. Within Favel Parrett’s sombre, yet tranquil novel “Past the Shallows” (2010), the impact of relationships are represented through the protagonist characters, Miles and Harry and their experience of childhood. Accordingly, Parrett intentionally portrays the suspension of the characters idealised existence, in order to evoke sympathy, alienation and confusion from her stratified audience. As characters relationships are broken by “bad” familial influences, they endure hardships that serve as a catalyst for their transition into adulthood, in relation to Parratt’s Bildungsroman genre. Ultimately the universal exploration of familial and fraternal relationships within “Past the Shallows” will reveal and underpin a character’s identity.

In “Past the Shallows”, Parrett explores the profound effect destructive relationships have on the construction of individuals identity and ability to transition into adulthood, through the destructive nature of the familial relationships between the protagonists and their abusive father. Within “Past the Shallows” the protagonist character attempts to surpass his father oppressive and patriarchal order, within his domestic household, as he develops a subservient relationship with his “wild” and “uncontrollable” father. The impact of destructive relationships on an individual’s transition into adulthood is exemplified through Miles interpretation of the water, as his perception reveals the symbolic nature of the water to humanities struggles and fear by representing the destructive characteristics shared between the ocean and Miles’ father. As their both portrayed as having a “violent” and detrimental impact on Miles transition into adulthood. Furthermore, due to Miles father’s “unsteady head”, his childhood “disappeared instantly” not even “leaving a mark on the surface”, revealing the metaphorical and physical impact destructive relationships have on the youth fragility. Correspondingly Miles’ metaphorical “return” to the
inexorable, hardships of relationships evokes and develops Parrett’s characters, aligning with the bildungsroman genre. Furthermore, Miles’ desire to escape his despotict filial relationship is represented through the utilisation of water and surfing motifs, to emphasis its “dark” impact it’s had on his life. As accentuated through his focalised narration and melancholy tone that “things were bad at home… working on the boat was bad…. And he didn’t know what to do” amplifying his father’s oppressive and abusive characteristics, symbolising the significance of parental relationships in shaping an individual’s experience of life, subsequently providing insight on the impact of destructive relations and their universal influence on an individual’s transition into adulthood.

Contrastingly as the presents of abuse and inequality in relationships cause negative influences on an individual’s transition into adulthood. Responsibility and protection in relationships will culminate in an improved upbringing of individuals, accentuated through Miles and Harry “deep” and “peaceful” familial relationship. Throughout the novel Harry’s innocence was continuously “sucked, moved and smashed against the rocks”, by conflictual tension manifested within his family’s “shallow” relationship with one another. Furthermore, Miles responsibility is manifested within his familial relationship with Harry, as he guards Harry from the “dark water” “past the shallows”(adult hood), thus why in “Past the Shallows”. Miles is perceived to be eponymous character, as attempts to protect Harry from the “murky darkness” and “rise and fall of the ocean”, symbolic of his father’s domesticity and delirium which resulted in Miles’ abrupt transition into adulthood. As Miles “knew the water, he could feel it. And he knew not to trust it” exemplifying his excretion of the eponymous character through the symbolic and fearful connotations of the water, corresponding to the pathetic fallacy, as the water refers to their fathers “wild” and “roaring” nature which culminated in Miles’ loss of childhood, reflecting that a successful transition into adulthood encompasses strong, protective and supportive familial relationships. Thus, presenting the universal notion of family as a fundamental component of shaping an individual’s identity.
Similarly, as composers explore the effect responsibility and protection have on an individual’s identity through familial relationships. Parrett reveals the contrasting impact filial relationships have on constructing an individual’s individuality through accentuating the positive and negative ramifications of a parental figures have on their children’s upbringing. These ramifications of parental behaviour and attitudes are represented through the impact of the filial relationship between protagonist character, Miles and his abusive father. In Past the Shallows, Parrett accentuates the loss of innocence and fragility of youth through Miles’ complex characterization. As depicted through the juxtaposition between the excited tone of Miles’ as “the wave was his. He’d get their first, get the first wave” and the images of cold and darkness reflected in Miles’ focalised monologue that “things were bad at home … working on the boat was bad … and he didn’t know what to do”. Accentuating the violence of his intentionally unnamed and destructive father figure, thus illustrating the profound effect destructive relationships have on the construction of individuals identity and ability to transition into adulthood. Through the destructive nature of the familial relationships between the protagonists and their abusive father.

Ultimately composers explore the supportive and violent affiliations, manifested within relationships in order to reveal an individual’s transition into adulthood. Through the exploration of positive and negative ramifications of destructive, familial and filial relationships composer reveal the impact they sustain on an individual’s individuality. Parrett intentionally portrays a characters idealised existence in order to reveal the manifestation of human experience within the universal idea of relationships, ultimately reflecting a character’s unique identity.