



Gaps and Silences

Chapter Three

Verbal Linguistic Intelligence

As you read any novel you need to be discerning, noting the gaps within the story where the author assumes that you know and understand certain aspects of the characters, events or settings. Even though *Tomodachi* is set in a rather unfamiliar context, we are able to fill in some of the gaps that arise. By allowing gaps in a text, the reader is a participant in the exchange, using their knowledge of the context, eg given the clues that Higgins provides us about Daniel, we use some of our knowledge of young men to create a clearer picture of the character. We can extrapolate from the information the author provides about Daniel's relationship with his friends.

Read the exchanges between Daniel and Kenji in chapter three closely.

In dot points note the gaps which you automatically fill in.

- Difficulties arise in trying to communicate when two people have little knowledge of one another's language and culture.
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Gaps help to maintain the momentum and tension in a novel by not distracting us with information that we already know or can easily deduce using our own discursive background.

Interpersonal Intelligence

Silences, however, are deliberate decisions to not tell a particular story, eg: Higgins does not go into much detail about Otsu's life with Chiyo. There are a number of reasons for this. In pairs, spend five minutes suggesting reasons why this might be and also consider what other characters have been silenced. Note your findings on the retrieval chart below.

NAME	Otsu	Lady Nakatomi	
<i>Reason for being silenced</i>			
<i>What impact would telling the stories of these characters have upon the novel's plot?</i>			

In pairs, make a mind map of the possible storyline of one of the silenced characters if they were to be made the protagonist (main character). Ensure that you maintain the integrity of the character so that they act and react in ways that are consistent with Higgins' writing. You may, however, allow the character to develop and extend their skills and understanding, but it must be believable and in character.

Intrapersonal Intelligence

It is important to think critically about all sorts of text types, and novels provide us with an interesting way to explore how we are positioned by the author; he wants us to read his characters a certain way. Each choice an author makes about the direction their novel is going to take, leaves a wealth of stories untold.

Look at your own life and the people within it who help tell your story. You are to choose between writing about a choice you didn't make and the possible impact that might have had upon your life or to write about an event in your life from another person's perspective. This exercise not only reinforces the fact that stories always favour one reading position over another and that authors craft their work deliberately, but that we too have untold stories and favour the telling of some stories to enhance our own role within them.