

This year I read a variety of text including What's Your Problem by Bali Rai, The Last Spin by Evan Hunter. The other two texts included the visual text Billy Elliot by Stephen Daldry and written text Tomorrow When The War Began by John Marsden. All these texts have presented differing ideas all based on the nature, result and cause of violence. What's Your Problem and Billy Elliot addresses conflicts that arise as a result of stereotypes and prejudice. Tomorrow When The War Began and The Last Spin both look at the violence and deaths that occur due to conflicts. In addition to this, both Billy Elliot and The Last Spin are to do with forming an individual identity and how this causes conflict. Finally the texts What's Your Problem and Tomorrow When The War Began both showcase how with determination one can attempt to resolve a conflict.

What's Your Problem and Billy Elliot are two texts that convey the idea of conflict through portraying the idea of stereotypes. In both the texts, stereotypes are the cause of conflict. In What's Your Problem, the stereotypes within the isolated English village that Jaspal has just moved into allows the people to be very racist towards his family. In Billy Elliot, Billy wants to do ballet dancing but there are stereotypes within the society that try to forbid him from pursuing his dream. During this text, the conflict is caused as a result of the nature of prejudice of people in society which lead to stereotypes being built up against boys like Billy doing ballet dancing. Billy is aware of these stereotypes but still decides not to give up on his passion for ballet and is eventually successful in being a famous ballet dancer. This is shown when Billy is playing the lead role in an all male act of '**Swan Lake**'. Billy is aware that it will not be easy to convince everyone to his passion but he is willing to give it a try. Even his own family initially is against his dream. Moreover, in What's Your Problem Jaspal faces a horrific experience of racism. He thinks he is as English as anybody else in the country but yet is subjected to people labelling him and his family with names such as '**Paki**'. From this terrifying experience, Jaspal learns that the village he lives in is extremely racist to brown people like him and as a result, the '**hooligans**' set fire to Jaspal's home and shop killing his mum in the process and leaving his father scarred for life. Racism is never right and is one of the worst kinds of conflict as it not just leaves external scars but lots of mental and emotional scars as well. Conflicts can result in violence. Violence that is filled with prejudice is even more vile as it harms many lives. It is the selfish act of violence that destroys lives.

Tomorrow When The War Began by John Marsden and The Last Spin both deal with the violence that is part of any conflict. In both the texts a lot of violence occurs as a result of the conflict and in both cases there is death involved. In Tomorrow When The War Began Ellie is forced to kill the soldiers as she tries to protect herself and her friends. In The Last Spin by Evan Hunter, Danny dies a violent death at his own hand playing the deadly game of '**Russian Roulette**.' In this story, the conflict is caused by the fact that Danny and Tigo are from different gangs. During this game Tigo and Danny come to know each other quite well and want to become friends but are being hindered to do so by the conflict in gangs. "**Can't we pick our own ...friends**". Many times violence that occurs is not a result of our own prejudices but is often is someone else's war that we continue fighting. No one ever attempts to question why they are fighting. They will fight because they can. Furthermore in

Tomorrow When The War Began, Ellie is forced to accept that during a war it did not matter whether you have a personal conflict or not with the person on the other side of the war. What the teenagers realise that **“This is war now and normal rules don't apply. These people have invaded our land locked up our families... The moment they left their country to come here they knew what they were doing. They're the ones, not us.”** The teenagers learn that war is never right no matter which side of the war you are on. In both the texts the readers learn that conflict which is closely related to violence will only generate more violence and deaths. Conflicts should never result in such destruction. What one does not realise is that we are all quite similar rather than different.

Further to this both Billy Elliot and The Last Spin are to do with forming an individual identity and how this causes conflict. Many a times conflicts arise as people try to form their own unique identity which is different to the identity that the society has assigned. In Billy Elliot, all Billy wants is **“to be a ballet dancer.”** He does not care for what his family expectations are. Although he comes from a family of strong men, he is determined to make a mark on the area which is considered more feminine. Many a times we are forced to go against what the norms of the family are and this can result in conflicts but with determination one can fulfill their dreams. My family is filled with cousins pursuing engineering degrees. This is considered a norm for my family. Any attempt to differ from this norm will result in conflict. Similarly in The Last Spin, both Tigo and Danny want to get out of the gang. The idea of identity is so important as Tigo and Danny realize that they have more similar than different. Both the characters come from similar background and yet belong to different gangs. The only reason they belong to the gangs is **‘(you) live on the next block.’** There is no other reason. This conflict is not of their making. This conflict can only be resolved by someone dying. Both texts show how it is essential for all to form their own unique identity that has nothing to do with the commonly held idea of what one can become. Billy proves everyone wrong as he successfully performs the lead role in a male only performance of **‘The Swan Lake.’** Danny with his death also enables Tigo to think about leaving the gang and adopting his own identity rather than carrying on with the group identity.

Finally the texts What's Your Problem and Tomorrow When The War Began both showcase how with determination one can attempt to resolve a conflict. In both these texts the main characters are very determined. This determination is clearly demonstrated in the novel as the family gets threatening letters from **‘The Brotherhood of the White Fist’** demanding them to leave. The family is subjected to further humiliation and adults and children walk in to their shop and openly ask them to leave. This leads to Jaspal having a showdown with the school bully who is also part of this extremist group. Although Jaspal knew that this action would get him in trouble with adults around him, he was determined not to let the racism affect him and his family. We are all determined to change our circumstances. Some may stop at the hint of a failure while others continue despite multiple failures. This is what separates the successful from those who will remain where they started off. Determination is one way to resolve conflicts. In Tomorrow When The War Began, Ellie is determined to save herself and her friends from the soldiers who are invading the town of Wirrawee. The attack against the teenagers gets larger but the teenagers do not accept defeat - they carry on determinedly fighting for survival.

Despite knowing that the teenagers were under attack and one gunshot could kill anyone, the teenagers continue to avoid the soldiers and eventually manage to establish Hell as a base. **'Let's go home,' 'to Hell.'** It is with sheer determination that this group of teenagers change and survive. They realise that if they took no action they would also come to the same end as the others. Even today people have to be determined to end conflicts that seem centuries old. Developing a sense of resilience will allow individuals to continue to take a stand against conflicts.

In conclusion, What's Your Problem by Bali Rai, Billy Elliot directed by Stephen Daldry, Tomorrow When The War Began by John Marsden and The Last Spin by Evan Hunter all convey the important idea of conflict. All these texts have presented differing ideas all based on the nature, result and cause of violence. What's Your Problem and Billy Elliot addresses conflicts that arise as a result of stereotypes and prejudice. Tomorrow When The War Began and The Last Spin both look at the violence and deaths that occur due to conflicts. Further to this, both Billy Elliot and The Last Spin are to do with forming an individual identity and how this causes conflict. Finally the texts What's Your Problem and Tomorrow When The War Began both showcase how with determination one can attempt to resolve a conflict.