



Peer-Review Report Form

Manuscript Title:	An Indexicality Analysis of Post-Traumatic Growth: Kya Clark in <i>Where the Crawdads Sing</i>
Type of Article:	Original Article

FIRST ROUND

Editor

<u>General Comments and Recommendations</u>
The reviewers acknowledge the significance of your manuscript and recommend several revisions to further improve its clarity, coherence, organization, and overall scholarly quality. In addition, you are advised to thoroughly review and validate all references included in the manuscript. Please ensure that all cited sources are accurate, accessible, and retrievable through Google Scholar to uphold the credibility and reliability of the study. Additionally, make sure to include the DOI or website link for every reference whenever available to facilitate verification and accessibility of sources. Furthermore, only sources that are cited within the manuscript should appear in the References section, and all entries listed in the References section must also be cited in the text. For example, if 20 unique sources are cited in the manuscript, then only those 20 sources should be included in the References section. Please also note that repeated citations of the same source within the text are counted as a single reference entry; therefore, the total number of references may be lower than the total number of in-text citations.

Reviewer 1

<u>General Comments and Recommendations</u>
The manuscript presents a relevant and interesting discussion on how Kya Clark's discourse reflects trauma, resilience, and identity transformation. The topic has value, especially in linking indexicality with post-traumatic growth, but the paper needs stronger methodological clarity and deeper textual evidence to support its interpretations.

<u>Specific Comments and Recommendations</u>
The study should clarify whether the analysis is based on the film, the novel, or both. Some parts refer to the film adaptation, while other sections mention the novel. This creates confusion about the actual corpus and may affect the validity of the findings.
The selection of discourse excerpts needs clearer explanation. The authors should explain how the lines were chosen, how many excerpts were analyzed, and why these excerpts were considered representative of Kya's trauma and growth.



The coding and validation process needs more detail. The manuscript mentions open coding, thematic categorization, and expert validation, but it does not clearly show how coding decisions were made or how agreement among validators was established.

The results are useful, but the discussion often repeats the same theoretical explanation. The authors should reduce repetition and provide deeper analysis of selected excerpts instead of repeatedly stating that the findings support the theories.

Some claims appear too broad based on a limited fictional corpus. The proposed framework is interesting, but the authors should present it more cautiously as an interpretive tool, not as a general model for all trauma and post-traumatic growth discourse.

The references need careful checking. Some cited works appear very recent or broad, and the authors should make sure all sources are accurate, accessible, and directly connected to indexicality, trauma discourse, and literary analysis.

Please indicate your recommendation by checking the appropriate box below.

<u>Decision</u>	
☐	Accept the manuscript for publication.
☐	Reconsider the manuscript after the authors have satisfactorily addressed and complied with the reviewers' comments and recommendations.
☐	Reject the manuscript, as it is not suitable for publication.

Reviewer 2

<u>General Comments and Recommendations</u>
The intersection of sociolinguistics (Silverstein's Indexicality) and psychological concepts like Post-Traumatic Growth (PTG) and Narrative Identity is very fascinating. It is a creative way to look at how a character evolves. You made a good effort to structure the paper clearly, and the flow of your arguments is mostly logical. However, as a reviewer, I must point out some major issues that need your serious attention before this paper is ready. My biggest concern is a conceptual confusion throughout the text. You constantly refer to "literary discourse" and "literary texts," but your actual data comes from a film transcript (the 2022 movie). Film dialogue is cinematic discourse. It is heavily edited, shaped by actors' delivery, and different from a novel's prose. If you want to claim "literary discourse analysis," you should analyze Delia Owens' original book. If you stick with the movie, you must change your terminology to "cinematic discourse" or "film discourse" and acknowledge how spoken movie dialogue affects your indexicality analysis. Another big thing is that your claims sometimes feel too grand. You propose a whole new analytical framework (Figure 1) based on just one single fictional character from one movie. It is a bit of a stretch. You need to tone down the generalizations and be more modest, presenting this framework as an "initial proposal" or "exploratory model" rather than a definitive framework. Also, the tone in your Results section is very repetitive. You sound like a robot repeating "The findings strongly support..." in every paragraph. You need to vary your writing and dig deeper into the why and how, rather than just saying the theory is supported.



<u>Specific Comments and Recommendations</u>
Title and Abstract Since you are using the movie, I suggest adding "(2022 Film)" or "Cinematic Adaptation" to the title. Right now, everyone will assume you analyzed the novel. You also write "contributes to literary discourse analysis". Again, please change this to film or cinematic discourse, or clarify why a movie script counts as literary here.
Introduction You mention Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 4 and SDG 3). Honestly, this feels very forced and unnatural. It looks like you just inserted it to hit some keywords. Unless your study actually measures educational or health outcomes, I strongly suggest removing the SDG paragraph. It distracts from your linguistic focus. You also mention a gap in literature, but you don't cite enough recent studies from 2020-2025 that analyze movies using linguistics. Try to add 2-3 recent papers that do something similar so your gap is more believable.
Theoretical Lens You use Silverstein's theory, which is great. But be very careful. Sometimes in your analysis, what you call "indexicality" is just plain literal meaning. For example, if a character says "I am sad," that is not deeply indexical; it is direct. Make sure in your text you emphasize how the linguistic forms (like silence or metaphor) point to the social meaning, not just the semantic meaning of the words.
Methodology 4.1 You say you used the "official transcript" and cross-validated with the film. Did you account for the actress's intonation, facial expressions, or crying? Indexicality in spoken speech includes prosody (how they say it). If you only looked at the text on the paper, you are missing a lot of indexical markers. You need to clarify this. 4.2 There are many authors in this paper. How did you do the coding? Did you use software like NVivo or ATLAS.ti, or was it manual? Also, if two authors disagreed on a code, how did you resolve it? You must mention your inter-coder reliability or consensus process.
Results and Discussion 5.1 In Table 1, "They hated me" is coded as collective social positioning. This is okay, but the explanation in the text is a bit shallow. Dig deeper into the pronoun "they" versus "I". 5.2 Please rewrite the opening sentences of your discussion paragraphs. You wrote "The findings in Table 1 strongly support..." , "The findings in Table 2 strongly support..." , and "The findings presented in Table 3 strongly align...". It is very tiring to read. Mix it up. Tell me a story with your data. 5.3 Figure 1 is beautiful and very clear. I like the three movements. But as I said in general comments, you cannot confidently say this is the universal framework for "literary discourse" based on Kya Clark alone. Add a paragraph in this section acknowledging that this framework needs testing on other characters and genres before it can be fully validated.
Conclusion and Implications 6.1 The conclusion is a bit like a copy-paste of the abstract. Try to synthesize what we learned that we did not know before, rather than just summarizing the steps you took. 6.2 For the implications, it is good that you broke it down for different groups. But again, correct "literary texts" to "multimodal or cinematic texts" where appropriate, since your actual data is a movie.



Please indicate your recommendation by checking the appropriate box below.

<u>Decision</u>	
	Accept the manuscript for publication.
/	Reconsider the manuscript after the authors have satisfactorily addressed and complied with the reviewers' comments and recommendations.
	Reject the manuscript, as it is not suitable for publication.

SECOND ROUND

<u>Decision</u>	<u>Editor</u>	<u>Reviewer 1</u>	<u>Reviewer 2</u>
Accept the manuscript for publication.	/	/	/
Reconsider the manuscript after the authors have satisfactorily addressed and complied with the reviewers' comments and recommendations.			
Reject the manuscript, as it is not suitable for publication.			