



	<b>Ladybird</b>
Where	Sacramento, California
When	2002-2003
Narrator	Christine 'Lady Bird' McPherson, protagonist
Theme or issue	Adolescence, Parenthood, Social class, Money, Relationships, Home, Religion/Catholicism
GVV and its evolution throughout the text	The GVV combines levity with the underlying seriousness of the challenges presented to the McPherson family. These challenges begin to mount as the film progresses, but any sense of hopelessness is held back by Lady Bird's determination and the moments of humour that punctuate the narrative.
Cultural context	Social class, Religion/Catholicism
Literary genre	<p><b>Plot dynamics:</b> The twists in the film come from the lack of clichés normally present in coming-of-age productions. The experiences of the characters feel authentic which creates a more unpredictable narrative.</p> <p><b>Characterisation:</b> Lady Bird is self-centred and often oblivious to the feelings of others. Her determination and heart-warming relationships with characters such as Julie, Danny and her father make her lovable despite this. Marion is an equally strong character, and it is their similarities that often cause conflict.</p> <p><b>Setting:</b> Sacramento is a city, but the film focuses on quite an insular community, which allows us to experience a feeling of familiarity along with the characters. Gerwig herself grew up in Sacramento and her depiction of the city is loving while simultaneously aware of its flaws.</p> <p><b>Other style devices:</b> Muted lighting creates a feeling of nostalgia and helps to immerse ourselves in the early 2000's. As do costumes and glimpses of the Iraq war on the news. Artists such as Alanis Morissette and Dave Matthews Band are included in the soundtrack to evoke the time period.</p>



<b>Social class</b>	Sacramento's social divide is present throughout the film. The clique of wealthy students is juxtaposed against Lady Bird and Julie, whose families struggle to get by. Lady Bird does not seem to recognise this as problematic and simply yearns to be one of them. Marion is more aware of the consequences of appearing to be from a "lower" class, but these anxieties often create tension with her daughter.
<b>Money</b>	The film emphasises that while money doesn't necessarily lead to happiness, a lack of it can pose a barrier. Lady Bird's idealism is constantly crushed by her mother's worries about finances. Her dream of going to college in New York is hindered solely by lack of funds. Career struggles and being unable to help his family financially is a contributor to her father's depression.
<b>Parenthood</b>	Marion is on similar growth trajectory to Lady Bird, but through her experiences of parenthood. Her concerns for her daughter often cause her to become over-bearing and critical. Her insecurities about their social status are also misdirected towards her daughter as she repeatedly expresses doubts about her daughter's abilities despite her good grades. This appears to stem partly from the fear of losing her daughter to adulthood.
<b>Home</b>	Sacramento is portrayed through the eyes of both Lady Bird and her mother. Despite Lady Bird insisting that she hates her surroundings, we see the attention that she pays to each area of the town. It is only when she is about to leave that she truly realises its beauty and the connection she feels for her home.
<b>Relationships</b>	Ladybird's friendship with Julie is behind some of the most heart-warming moments of the film. Her romantic relationships are disastrous but allow her character to evolve. Despite feeling hurt by Danny and distancing herself from Julie she eventually shows growth in seeing circumstances outside her own.
<b>Adolescence</b>	A clear and varied picture of adolescence is created through the characterisation of Lady Bird and her classmates. This ranges from exploring one's sexuality to experimenting with drugs and skipping school. Kyle represents the scorn for



	society and adults while Ladybird takes a more overtly rebellious stance.
<b>Religion/Catholicism</b>	Religion is deeply embedded in Lady Bird's daily life: however, her independence ensures she thinks for herself and finds the humour in attending a Catholic girl's school. Along with the more light-hearted moments, its taboo stance on topics such as abortion, suicide and sexual orientation are also framed as slightly ridiculous. This allows Gerwig to provide commentary without creating a gloomy atmosphere.
<b>Symbols</b>	<b>Crash into me by Dave Matthews Band:</b> Lady Bird and Julie cry to this song after her breakup with Danny and it becomes representative of Lady Bird's true feelings and opinions. It acts as the trigger for her return to Julie on prom night where she realises that Kyle and Jenna don't make her happy.
	<b>The blue mansion:</b> Danny's grandmother's house represents what Lady Bird and Julie see as the ultimate life goal. What they view as the perfect life turns out to be a façade when it is revealed that Danny's sexuality puts him at risk of rejection. Inside the house is dim and antiquated which reflects the staleness of this American dream.
	<b>Sacramento:</b> The city represents not just Lady Bird's but anyone's home. The overly familiar elements sometimes make us want to leave in search of something more unpredictable and exciting. However, leaving only makes us appreciate these familiar surroundings all the more.
<b>Real world contemporary cultural movements/beliefs</b>	Pro-life/Pro-Choice movements, LGBTQ+ acceptance
<b>Some key moments</b>	<b>Opening scene:</b> The sight of Lady Bird and her mother asleep next to one another is an endearing first image. The car journey reveals a more complex and relatable side to their relationship as their bonding over <i>The Grapes of Wrath</i> devolves into a heated argument.
	Lady Bird and her mother go dress shopping for prom. Frustrated with Marion's disapproval she tells her "I just wish



	that you liked me". Her mother struggles to find the words to reassure her which creates a poignant moment.
	Sister Sarah Joan praises Lady Bird's writing about Sacramento, who attempts to brush it off as merely paying attention. Sister Sarah Joan responds "Don't you think maybe they are the same thing? Love and attention?"
	Lady Bird arrives home to discover her dad has lost his job. Instead of explaining the situation to her, Marion confronts her daughter about how messy her bedroom is. This scene highlights the immense stress Marion is under but also how misdirected her emotions can be.
	<b>Closing scene:</b> After waking up the hospital, Lady Bird gravitates towards a church. The familiar music makes her miss home even more. The voice message she leaves shows she has a better understanding of her mother's motives and this signifies the beginning of their reconciliation.