

9.4 The function of conflict in a text

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____ **Total: 12 marks**

KEY WORDS resolution and catharsis 净化

Objective

Build the skills to explain **resolution and catharsis** 净化.

You must be able to:

- define catharsis in the CED’s terms
- state what unseen elements may do
- state the CED’s claim about unresolved endings
- explain why a lack of resolution can be meaningful

1 Worked examples

Study these first. Each one shows the method for a task used later.

■ Catharsis

The resolution of the anticipation, suspense, or central conflicts of a plot may be referred to as the moment of catharsis or emotional release.

■ Unseen elements

Sometimes things not actually shown in a narrative, such as an unseen character or a preceding action, may be in conflict with or result in conflict for a character. What the text does not show can still act.

■ Unresolved endings

Although most plots end in resolution of the central conflicts, some have unresolved endings, and the lack of resolution may contribute to interpretations of the text.

■ Meaningful absence

An unresolved ending withholds the release the reader has been prepared for. That withholding is a choice, and it usually says something about whether the conflict was the kind that admits resolution.

2 Practice

2.1 Define catharsis in the CED’s terms. [2]

2.2 State what unseen elements may do. [2]

2.3 Some endings are unresolved.

(a) State the CED’s claim. [2]

(b) Explain why the absence can be meaningful. [1]

3 Exam-style questions

3.1 Catharsis is the resolution of anticipation, suspense or [1]

- | | |
|---|---|
| A | B |
| C | D |
- A central conflicts
B page numbers
C allusions
D rhyme

3.2 The CED says lack of resolution [1]

- | | |
|---|---|
| A | B |
| C | D |
- A may contribute to interpretations of the text
B is always a flaw
C never occurs
D ends the analysis

3.3 A novel ends without settling its central conflict.

(a) State what the reader is denied. [1]

(b) Explain what the denial may say about the conflict. [2]
