GCSE
ENGLISH LITERATURE

Paper 1M Modern prose/drama

Time allowed: 50 minutes

Materials

For this paper you must have:

- an AQA 12-page answer book.

Instructions

- Use black ink or black ball-point pen. Do **not** use pencil.
- Write the information required on the front of your answer book. The **Paper Reference** is 8702/1M.
- Answer **one** question.
- You must **not** use a dictionary.

Information

- The marks for questions are shown in brackets.
- The maximum mark for this paper is 30.

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There are no questions printed on this page

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Answer **one** question on your chosen text.

JB Priestley: *An Inspector Calls*

Either

0 1 How far does Priestley present Eric as a character who learns important lessons about society in *An Inspector Calls*?

Write about:

- what Eric says and does in the play
- how Priestley presents Eric.

[30 marks]

or

0 2 'Priestley shows how inequality in society leads to tragedy.'

How far do you agree with this view of *An Inspector Calls*?

Write about:

- what happens in the play
- how Priestley presents what happens in the play.

[30 marks]

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Willy Russell: *Blood Brothers*

or

0 3 How does Russell present the ways Mickey and Edward are affected by their different experiences of childhood?

Write about:

- what happens to Mickey and Edward in their childhood
- how Russell presents what happens to them and how this affects them.

[30 marks]

or

0 4 'Russell shows in *Blood Brothers* that money does not always lead to happiness.'

How far do you agree with this view?

Write about:

- characters with and without money in the play
- how Russell presents the effects of having or not having money on happiness.

[30 marks]

Turn over for the next question

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Alan Bennett: *The History Boys*

or

0 5 How far do the boys' attitudes to Hector and Irwin change throughout the play?

Write about:

- what the boys say about Hector and Irwin
- how far Bennett presents the boys' attitudes as changing.

[30 marks]

or

0 6 How does Bennett use the character of the Headmaster to explore ideas about education?

Write about:

- what the Headmaster says and does in the play
- how Bennett presents the Headmaster.

[30 marks]

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Dennis Kelly: *DNA*

or

0 7 'The characters are changed by what happens.'

How far do you agree with this view of *DNA*?

Write about:

- what one or more of the characters say and do
- how far Kelly presents one or more of the characters being changed by what happens.

[30 marks]

or

0 8 How far does Kelly present Phil as an effective leader in *DNA*?

Write about:

- what Phil says and does as a leader
- how Kelly presents Phil as a leader.

[30 marks]

Turn over for the next question

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Simon Stephens: *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*

or

0 9 How does Stephens present Christopher's difficulties in dealing with other people in *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*?

Write about:

- what Christopher says and does
- how Stephens presents Christopher's difficulties in dealing with other people.

[30 marks]

or

1 0 'Christopher's father loves his son but also struggles to understand him.'

How does Stephens present the relationship between Christopher and his father?

Write about:

- what Christopher and his father say and do
- how Stephens presents the relationship between Christopher and his father.

[30 marks]

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Shelagh Delaney: *A Taste of Honey*

or

1 1 ‘Jo wants to be closer to her mother but also more independent from her.’

How does Delaney present the difficult relationship between Jo and Helen?

Write about:

- what Jo and Helen say and do
- how Delaney presents Jo and Helen’s difficult relationship.

[30 marks]

or

1 2 How does Delaney explore the prejudice faced by Geof and Jimmie?

Write about:

- what happens to Geof and Jimmie in the play
- how Delaney presents Geof and Jimmie.

[30 marks]

Turn over for the next question

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William Golding: *Lord of the Flies*

or

1 3 ‘Simon is the bravest of all the boys because he faces up to his fears.’

How far do you agree with this view of Simon?

Write about:

- what Simon says and does
- how far Golding presents Simon as brave.

[30 marks]

or

1 4 ‘Golding shows us the evil that is within every individual.’

How far do you agree with this view of *Lord of the Flies*?

Write about:

- some examples of evil in the novel
- how Golding presents ideas about evil.

[30 marks]

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AQA Anthology: *Telling Tales*

or

1 5 How do writers present characters who are uncomfortable in their environment in 'Invisible Mass of the Back Row' and in **one** other story from *Telling Tales*?

Write about:

- what the characters who are uncomfortable in their environment say and do in the **two** stories
- how the writers present these characters.

[30 marks]

or

1 6 How do writers present characters who do not really understand the people they are close to in 'Odour of Chrysanthemums' and in **one** other story from *Telling Tales*?

Write about:

- what the characters who do not really understand the people they are close to say and do in the **two** stories
- how the writers present these characters.

[30 marks]

Turn over for the next question

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George Orwell: *Animal Farm*

or

1 7 How far does Orwell present Snowball as the hero of *Animal Farm*?

Write about:

- what Snowball says and does
- how far Orwell presents Snowball as the hero of *Animal Farm*.

[30 marks]

or

1 8 How does Orwell present the ways that the pigs' clever use of language helps them to control the other animals?

Write about:

- what the pigs say and do
- how Orwell presents the ways the pigs use language to control the other animals.

[30 marks]

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Kazuo Ishiguro: *Never Let Me Go*

or

1 9 How far does Ishiguro present Kathy as a narrator whose account of events cannot always be trusted?

Write about:

- what Kathy says and does
- how Ishiguro presents Kathy as a narrator.

[30 marks]

or

2 0 'In *Never Let Me Go*, Ishiguro presents us with an optimistic vision of human nature.'

How far do you agree with this view?

Write about:

- what happens in the novel
- how far Ishiguro presents an optimistic vision of human nature.

[30 marks]

Turn over for the next question

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Meera Syal: *Anita and Me*

or

2 1 How far does Syal present Meena as a character who wants to rebel against her family's expectations of her?

Write about:

- what Meena says and does
- how Syal presents Meena.

[30 marks]

or

2 2 How does Syal explore ideas about truth and lies in *Anita and Me*?

Write about:

- characters telling the truth and telling lies
- how Syal presents ideas about truth and lies.

[30 marks]

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Stephen Kelman: *Pigeon English*

or

2 3 How does Kelman use Harrison to explore ideas about being a good person?

Write about:

- what Harrison says and does
- how Kelman presents Harrison.

[30 marks]

or

2 4 How does Kelman present the importance of friendship in *Pigeon English*?

Write about:

- examples of friendship in the novel
- how Kelman presents the importance of friendship.

[30 marks]

END OF QUESTIONS

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Surname	StemUp Model Solution
Answer booklet	Write the question number in the left-hand margin at the start of each answer.

Question number

01

Priestley presents Eric as a character who learns important lessons about society, but only through painful self-exposure, and his learning remains raw and emotional rather than fully articulate. Alongside Sheila, he embodies Priestley's hope that the younger generation can reject the selfish capitalism of their parents. Yet by showing Eric's flaws so starkly, Priestley also warns his 1945 audience that change is neither automatic nor comfortable: it has to be chosen.

At the start of the play Eric is presented as immature and uneasy. The stage direction describes him as "not quite at ease, half shy, half assertive", which suggests a young man who has not yet found his own voice in a household dominated by his father. His sudden guffaw during the engagement toast and Sheila's teasing that he is "squiffy" hint at a drinking problem that the family politely ignores. Priestley uses these small details to create a sense of something hidden beneath the comfortable surface of the dinner party, much as the "pink and intimate" lighting will later give way to something "brighter and harder". Eric is part of the comfortable world of privilege, but he is not entirely at home in it.

Interestingly, Eric shows flashes of social conscience even before he is implicated. When Birling explains that he sacked Eva for leading a strike for higher wages, Eric asks why the girls should not try for higher wages, pointing out that his father tries for "the highest possible prices". This simple logic exposes the hypocrisy of Birling's capitalism: profit is a virtue for the owner but greed in the worker. However, Priestley is careful not to make Eric a ready-made hero. His sympathy here costs him nothing, and Birling quickly dismisses him as knowing nothing about the world. Perhaps Priestley suggests that instinctive fairness is not

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the same as real understanding, which only comes when Eric is forced to face his own actions.

That moment comes in Act Three, where Eric's confession is the most disturbing in the play. He admits that he was "in that state when a chap easily turns nasty", a euphemistic phrase that strongly implies he forced himself on Eva. The casual word "chap" reveals how normal such behaviour was among young men of his class in 1912, when working-class women were seen as available to wealthy men. Eric also steals fifty pounds from his father's office to support her. His actions mirror his father's: both treat Eva as something to be used, one for cheap labour and one for sex. Priestley's structure is important here, as Eric's entrance is delayed until the end of Act Two, so the audience, like Mrs Birling, realises who the father of the child is before he returns, creating intense dramatic irony.

What Eric learns is shown most powerfully in his response to his mother. The fragmented accusation "you killed them both" and the repeated "damn you, damn you" show a total breakdown of the family's polite manners. He also tells Birling that he is not the kind of father a chap could go to when he's in trouble. Here Priestley suggests that the Birlings' obsession with respectability has destroyed real human connection, even within their own home. Eric's anger could be read as selfish, since it is partly about losing his own child. However, it also marks the moment he sees the chain of responsibility that the Inspector has revealed: "We are members of one body."

After the Inspector leaves, the play tests whether this learning is genuine. When Gerald discovers that there may be no Inspector Goole and the elder Birlings relax, Eric refuses to join them, insisting that the girl is dead and "we all helped to kill her". He also declares that "the fact remains that I did what I did". This blunt,

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monosyllabic phrasing shows that he no longer hides behind euphemism. Unlike his parents, who care only about scandal and Birling's knighthood, Eric understands that morality does not depend on who is watching. He sides openly with Sheila, so the stage becomes divided by generation, which Priestley uses to dramatise a society at a turning point.

Nevertheless, Eric's development is limited. He speaks less than Sheila in the final act, and his reactions are often shouted or bitter rather than reflective, which suggests that he feels guilt more than he has built a new philosophy. Priestley does not show us what Eric will do with his lesson; the final telephone call cuts across everything. Yet this is perhaps the point. Writing as Britain moved towards the welfare state, Priestley uses Eric to show that even the most flawed young person can change, and he leaves the audience to complete that lesson in their own lives.

02 I largely agree that Priestley shows inequality leading to tragedy, but he is careful to show that inequality does not act on its own. Eva Smith's death is caused by a system that gives the wealthy power over the poor and men power over women, yet each step towards it is a personal choice made by someone who could have chosen otherwise. By making the tragedy both social and individual, Priestley challenges his 1945 audience to build a fairer society rather than simply blaming the past.

From the opening, Priestley establishes inequality as something the Birlings take for granted. Mr Birling describes himself as a "hard-headed, practical man of business" and dismisses "community and all that nonsense", insisting that a man must look after "himself and his own". The dismissive noun "nonsense" reveals that

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he does not even consider social responsibility a serious idea. Because the audience know that his confident prediction about the "unsinkable" Titanic is wrong, dramatic irony undermines all his views. Priestley, writing after two world wars, wants his audience to see that the selfish capitalism of 1912 led not to stability but to catastrophe.

Eva's story then shows how this attitude creates suffering. Birling sacks her for asking for higher wages, explaining that it is his duty to keep labour costs down. Here economic inequality is shown directly: a few shillings a week are worth more to him than a worker's livelihood. Sheila's protest that "these girls aren't cheap labour, they're people" captures Priestley's socialist message. The phrase "cheap labour" reduces human beings to a cost, and Sheila's correction restores their humanity. In an age with no welfare state, losing a job could mean destitution, which is why the Inspector's chain of events feels so inevitable.

However, Priestley also shows that inequality of class is intertwined with inequality of gender. Sheila has Eva dismissed from Milwards out of jealousy, using her status as a valued customer to destroy a shop girl's job. Gerald rescues Eva from the Palace Bar but keeps her as his mistress and then ends the affair when it suits him. Eric uses her and implies he forced himself on her. Each man exploits the fact that a poor young woman had very little protection. Priestley perhaps chose the name Eva Smith deliberately: "Eva" recalls Eve, the first woman, and "Smith" is the most common English surname, so she becomes a symbol of every exploited working-class woman.

The final link in the chain is Mrs Birling, whose prejudice is perhaps the most shocking. She refuses Eva help from her charity, sneering "as if a girl of that sort would ever refuse money", and she is offended by the "gross impertinence" of Eva

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using the name Birling. Her language reveals that she sees the poor as morally inferior simply because they are poor. Priestley structures the scene so that she unknowingly condemns her own son, insisting that the father of the child should be punished. This dramatic irony suggests that the inequality she defends will turn back on her own family, as the Inspector warns that if people do not learn, they will be taught "in fire and blood and anguish".

Yet it would be too simple to say that inequality alone causes the tragedy. Sheila and Eric both admit their guilt, which shows that people within the privileged class can choose compassion. The Inspector, often seen as Priestley's mouthpiece, insists that Eva's life was destroyed not by fate but by the decisions of people who had power over her. His speech about "millions and millions of Eva Smiths and John Smiths" turns one death into a warning about society as a whole, and his message that "We are responsible for each other" places the burden of change on individuals. Tragedy, in Priestley's view, is avoidable.

The ending reinforces this. When the elder Birlings and Gerald decide the Inspector was a hoax, they immediately return to their old attitudes, laughing at the younger generation. The final telephone call announcing that a girl has just died on her way to the Infirmary turns the play's structure into a circle, suggesting that without change the tragedy will simply repeat. For a 1945 audience about to vote for a Labour government and the creation of the welfare state, this cyclical structure was a powerful argument that inequality would continue to kill unless society changed.

Overall, Priestley shows inequality as the condition that makes Eva's tragedy possible, but selfish individual choices as what makes it happen. This combination is what gives the play its moral force: it denies the audience the comfort of

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blaming the system and insists that everyone must act.

03 Russell presents Mickey and Edward as identical twins whose lives are shaped almost entirely by the different worlds they are raised in. Because they share the same genes, any difference between them must come from environment, and Russell uses this to argue that social class, rather than nature or fate, decides a child's future. Writing in 1983, during mass unemployment in Liverpool under Thatcher's government, he uses their childhoods to expose a society in which some children are given every chance and others almost none.

From the beginning, Russell frames the boys' story as a tragedy. The Narrator's opening description of the twins as "As like each other as two new pins" stresses that they begin as equals. The separation happens because of poverty: Mrs Johnstone, abandoned by her husband and already struggling to feed her children, cannot afford another two mouths, while Mrs Lyons, who has money but no child, offers a solution. From the moment Edward is handed over, Russell shows that wealth can literally buy a child's future. The Narrator's ominous refrain that the devil's got your number creates a sense of doom, but the real threat in the play is the class divide that the bargain creates.

Russell's most effective method is the parallel staging of the boys' childhoods. When the two seven-year-olds first meet, Mickey is loud, swearing and boastful about being "nearly eight", while Edward politely offers him a sweet. Edward is fascinated by Mickey's language, such as "bleedin'", which shows that Mickey seems freer and more exciting, while Edward's sheltered upbringing has left him lonely. The irony is that Edward, who has everything material, envies Mickey's rough freedom. Russell suggests that money provides security but not necessarily

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warmth, as shown when Mrs Lyons, increasingly paranoid, forbids Edward from seeing Mickey and even slaps him. In contrast, Mrs Johnstone's home is crowded and poor but affectionate.

The differences between the boys become more serious as they grow. In the scene with the policeman, both boys are caught throwing stones, but the policeman threatens Mrs Johnstone with court while treating Mr Lyons as a respected equal and dismissing the incident as a prank. Russell uses this contrast to show how institutions treat the poor and the rich differently, even for the same act. Education reinforces the division. Edward is sent to boarding school and later to university, while Mickey attends a secondary modern where he is bored and eventually suspended. Their song "That Guy", in which each envies the other, uses dramatic irony: Mickey envies Edward's confidence and looks, while Edward envies Mickey's ease. Yet only one of them will be given the tools to succeed.

The childhood games also foreshadow the ending. Mickey and his friends play at shooting each other with toy guns, and the "Kids' Game" sequence treats death as something to be laughed off and undone by simply getting up again. What begins as innocent play becomes horrifyingly real when Mickey points a real gun at Edward. Russell's structure suggests that the attitudes children learn early, including violence and the lack of hope, return to destroy them. The blood brothers' oath that they will always stand by each other is also tragically ironic, because their different upbringings will eventually make friendship impossible.

The effects of childhood are clearest in adulthood. Edward returns from university carefree, unable to understand why Mickey cannot simply enjoy life on the dole. Mickey, who has lost his job, been drawn into crime by Sammy and imprisoned, becomes dependent on antidepressants. His bitter reply that he grew up while

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Edward did not shows how poverty forced him to lose his childhood early, while money allowed Edward to stay young. Edward becomes a councillor, a figure of power, while Mickey is powerless, and even Linda turns to Edward for help.

Finally, Mickey's despairing cry "I could have been him!" makes explicit what the play has shown throughout: the only difference between the twins is the life each was given. The Narrator's last question about whether we blame superstition or "what we, the English, have come to know as class" directly addresses the audience. Russell rejects the idea that fate killed the twins and instead suggests that a society divided by class shapes children so differently that even brothers cannot remain equal. The tragedy is therefore a political one, demanding that the audience consider how childhood opportunity is distributed.

04 Russell does show that money does not always lead to happiness, most clearly through the lonely, anxious life of Mrs Lyons. However, I would argue that this is only half of his message. The play also shows that the lack of money is far more destructive than wealth, so that while riches cannot guarantee happiness, poverty can almost guarantee misery. Writing in 1983, as unemployment devastated Liverpool, Russell uses the two families to expose how unequal access to money shapes people's lives.

The clearest evidence that money does not bring happiness is Mrs Lyons. She has a large house, a husband with a successful business and the means to employ a cleaner, yet she is introduced as lonely and desperate because she cannot have a child. Her husband is frequently away, and their marriage is presented as cold and distant. When she persuades Mrs Johnstone to give her one of the twins, she uses her money and her status to take what she wants, but this does not make her

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content. Instead, she becomes increasingly paranoid that Edward will discover the truth, and her mental state deteriorates until she attacks Mrs Johnstone with a knife. Russell suggests that wealth can buy possessions, even a child, but it cannot buy love or peace of mind.

Edward's childhood supports this view in part. Although he is well fed, well dressed and well spoken, he is lonely, and he is immediately drawn to the energy of Mickey and the Johnstone family. His delight in Mickey's swearing and his wish to be friends with him suggest that his comfortable life lacks excitement and closeness. In contrast, the Johnstone children seem to have more fun, playing in the streets with toy guns and forming a lively community. Russell uses these contrasts to suggest that poverty does not prevent moments of joy, while money does not create them.

Mrs Johnstone is perhaps Russell's best example of happiness without money. Her song "Marilyn Monroe" shows her nostalgia for the brief time when she was young and admired, and her dancing suggests a warmth and energy that Mrs Lyons never has. Yet even here Russell undercuts the idea of happy poverty. The song tracks her decline from glamour to exhaustion, and she is constantly harassed by debt collectors who come to take back goods bought on the "never never". In "Easy Terms" she sings about having her baby only until the time comes "To pay the bill", linking her loss of Edward directly to money. Her poverty is the reason she gives her son away, the original act that leads to the tragedy.

Money also gives Edward choices that Mickey never has. Edward goes to private school and university, while Mickey leaves school with no qualifications and works in a factory making cardboard boxes until he is made redundant. When Mickey loses his job, he cannot support Linda and their baby, and his involvement in

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Sammy's robbery is motivated by desperation for money. Prison and the depression that follows destroy him. Edward, by contrast, can spend his time drinking and enjoying himself at university, and later becomes a councillor. In this sense, Russell suggests that money is closely linked to security and opportunity, without which happiness becomes almost impossible.

The relationship between the two young men shows this most painfully. When Edward returns from university and offers Mickey money, Mickey refuses it with pride, and the friendship begins to break down because their financial situations are so unequal. Edward's carefree suggestion that Mickey should simply enjoy life on the dole shows how little he understands the shame and hopelessness of unemployment. Mickey's dependence on antidepressants and his cry "I could have been him!" in the final scene reveal that he sees Edward's privileged life as the life he was denied.

Russell's Narrator concludes by asking whether the deaths are caused by superstition or by "what we, the English, have come to know as class". This suggests that the real problem is not money alone, but the way it is distributed. Mrs Lyons shows that wealth cannot buy contentment, but Mickey's tragedy shows that poverty can strip away hope entirely. Therefore, I agree that money does not always lead to happiness, but Russell's deeper point is that a fair society would give everyone the security needed to be happy at all.

05 The boys' attitudes to Hector and Irwin do change, but not in a simple swing from one teacher to the other. Bennett shows the boys moving from affectionate amusement at Hector, to fascination with Irwin's dazzling methods, and finally to a more mature recognition of what each man gave them. Through these shifting

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loyalties, Bennett explores a central question about education: whether it exists to pass exams and win places, or to shape a whole life.

At the start of the play, the boys clearly love Hector's lessons, but they do not always take them seriously. His General Studies classes are full of songs, poetry recited from memory and improvised role-plays, such as scenes performed in French or re-enacted moments from old films. The boys treat these lessons as a kind of game, and they tolerate Hector's eccentricity with indulgent humour. Even the uncomfortable fact that he gropes them on his motorbike is treated by the boys, especially Dakin, as something faintly ridiculous rather than threatening. Bennett's use of comedy here is double-edged: it makes Hector warm and lovable, but it also shows that the boys see him as a relic who is out of step with what the school now wants.

Hector's philosophy is summed up by his belief, borrowed from Housman, that "all knowledge is precious, whether or not it serves the slightest human use". This idea is attractive, but the boys are also aware that it will not, by itself, win them places at Oxford and Cambridge. Rudge's flat definition of history as just one thing after another shows that not all of them share Hector's romanticism, and his bluntness acts as comic deflation of the idealism in the classroom.

When Irwin arrives, the boys are at first sceptical. He is young, only a little older than they are, and he criticises their essays as dull and predictable. Yet they quickly become captivated by his provocative approach. Irwin teaches them that "history nowadays is not a matter of conviction. It's a performance. It's entertainment." He encourages them to argue the opposite of the obvious, for example by approaching the First World War from unexpected angles. His striking simile that truth is no more at issue in an examination than "thirst at a

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wine-tasting" reveals his cynical view that exams reward cleverness rather than honesty. The boys, especially Dakin, find this thrilling. Dakin's admiration grows into something closer to infatuation, which Bennett uses to show how easily the boys are seduced by a style of thinking that promises success.

However, Bennett makes it clear that this shift towards Irwin is not complete. The lesson on the Holocaust is a turning point, as Posner, who is Jewish, is uneasy with the idea that such a subject can be treated as material for a clever argument. Hector, too, objects that some things should not be turned into an angle. This moment encourages the audience, and some of the boys, to question whether Irwin's methods have a moral limit. Posner, in particular, remains loyal to Hector. In their quiet scene on Hardy's "Drummer Hodge", Hector describes the best moments in reading as feeling that "a hand has come out and taken yours", and the tender connection between teacher and pupil contrasts sharply with the competitive atmosphere of Irwin's lessons.

As the play progresses, the boys show a growing awareness of Hector's value. When the Headmaster tries to force Hector into early retirement, Dakin uses his knowledge of the Headmaster's harassment of Fiona to try to save him. This act suggests that, despite his admiration for Irwin, Dakin recognises Hector's worth. The boys' attitude towards Hector becomes more protective, while their attitude to Irwin becomes more knowing: they enjoy his techniques but begin to see them as tricks.

The ending confirms that both teachers have shaped the boys, though in different ways. After Hector's death, Mrs Lintott reveals the boys' futures. Dakin becomes a tax lawyer, suggesting that Irwin's lessons in persuasion have led to a career of clever, morally flexible argument, while Posner continues to remember the poems

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and songs Hector taught him. The final words belong to Hector: "Pass the parcel. That's sometimes all you can do." This suggests that his gift to the boys was not exam technique but something they will carry for life.

Writing in 2004, at a time of league tables and targets, Bennett uses the boys' changing attitudes to question an education system that rewards results over understanding. The boys change because they are growing up, and in the end they see that Irwin helped them pass the exam, but Hector helped them to live.

06 Bennett uses the Headmaster as a satirical embodiment of education as a business: a man who values results, rankings and reputation far more than learning itself. He is comic, pompous and frequently foolish, but he is also quietly dangerous, because he has the power to impose his narrow idea of education on teachers and pupils. Through him, Bennett criticises the target-driven culture that was spreading through British schools, and he invites the audience to question what education is really for.

From his first conversation with Irwin, the Headmaster reveals that his main concern is Oxford and Cambridge places, not because of what the boys might learn there but because of what their success would do for the school. He talks about the school's position in the league tables and wants the boys to have "polish", a word which suggests a surface shine rather than real depth. Bennett presents education here as a product to be packaged and sold. The Headmaster hires Irwin, a young, ambitious temporary teacher, precisely because he believes Irwin can give the boys the competitive edge that Hector cannot. In this sense, the Headmaster represents the cynical side of education that Irwin's methods serve.

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His attitude to Hector is particularly revealing. He describes Hector's results as unpredictable and impossible to measure, and for the Headmaster something that cannot be quantified has no value. This sets up the central conflict of the play between Hector's belief in knowledge for its own sake and the Headmaster's belief in measurable outcomes. Bennett uses the contrast to suggest that the most important parts of education, such as a love of poetry, curiosity and emotional understanding, are exactly the parts a results-driven system cannot see. The Headmaster's dismissive tone towards Hector's teaching also shows his lack of respect for anything that does not contribute to the school's image.

Bennett also presents the Headmaster as a figure of fun. In one scene, he brings Irwin into Hector's French lesson while the boys are performing an improvised scene in a brothel. The boys quickly change the scene into something more respectable, and the Headmaster, who cannot follow the French, is completely fooled. This comic moment exposes his ignorance and shows that he understands very little about what actually happens in his own school's classrooms. The audience laughs at him, but the humour has a serious point: the person with the most power over education is the person who understands it least.

The Headmaster's hypocrisy becomes clear in his handling of Hector's behaviour on the motorbike. When he learns that Hector has been touching boys, he uses it as an opportunity to push Hector into early retirement, while avoiding a public scandal that might damage the school's reputation. His concern is not really for the boys' welfare but for the school's image. This hypocrisy is underlined by his own behaviour towards Fiona, his secretary, whom he has been harassing. Dakin, who is seeing Fiona, uses this knowledge to blackmail the Headmaster into reversing his decision. Bennett's structure here is ironic: the man who tries to remove Hector for inappropriate behaviour is himself guilty of misconduct, and he is defeated not by

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moral argument but by a pupil using the same kind of manipulation Irwin has taught.

The Headmaster's relationship with Mrs Lintott adds another layer. He is patronising towards her and fails to value her solid, factual teaching, which perhaps reflects wider attitudes to women in the workplace in the 1980s. Mrs Lintott's dry, ironic comments about him, and her observation that history is "women following behind with the bucket", suggest that the people who actually do the work of education are often overlooked by those who claim the credit.

By the end of the play, the boys have won their places, which the Headmaster sees as a triumph for the school. Yet Hector's death and Irwin's injury make this success feel hollow. Bennett implies that the Headmaster has got exactly what he wanted, results, but at the cost of much that mattered. His values contrast sharply with Hector's final belief that education is about passing something on "for someone, somewhere, one day".

Writing in 2004, when schools were increasingly judged by targets and exam data, Bennett uses the Headmaster to satirise a system that reduces education to numbers. He is both a comic figure and a warning: if education is run by people who value only what can be measured, then the most valuable parts of learning may be lost.

07 I largely agree that the characters in DNA are changed by what happens, but Kelly suggests that the change is rarely a moral awakening. Instead, the group's guilt over Adam reveals and intensifies what was already inside them. Some characters crumble, some harden and some simply carry on, and this uneven pattern allows

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Kelly to explore how ordinary teenagers can become complicit in cruelty, and how differently people cope with that knowledge.

Phil is perhaps the most striking example of change, though it is a change in role rather than in nature. At the start, he is almost entirely silent, eating while Leah talks at him. When the group panics after Adam's apparent death, he suddenly takes control, calmly outlining a detailed plan to frame an invented suspect using Adam's jumper. His transformation into a leader is shocking because it is so sudden and so cold. Yet by the end of the play, Phil has withdrawn again, sitting alone in a field and refusing Richard's pleas to come back to school. Kelly's circular structure suggests that Phil has not been changed for the better; rather, the crime has exposed his capacity for ruthless control and then left him empty, alone with what he has done.

Leah is changed in a different way. Throughout the play she talks constantly, filling Phil's silence with monologues about bonobos, human nature and her own insecurities. Her nervous, rambling speech suggests that she is desperate for connection and approval. However, after Phil orders Adam's death, she cannot accept it. Her horror shows that, unlike the others, she still has a moral compass, and by the end of the play she has left the school entirely. Her absence is significant, because the person who spoke most about what it means to be human is no longer there, which perhaps suggests that the group has lost its conscience.

Brian's change is the most painful to watch. Initially he is terrified and tearful, desperate to tell someone the truth. Phil forces him into going along with the plan, and Brian is made to identify the innocent postman. By the end, he is described as being on medication and behaving strangely, a sign that the trauma has broken him. Kelly uses Brian to show the psychological cost of guilt on

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someone who is not naturally cruel. His collapse is a warning about what happens when vulnerable young people are pressured into silence.

Cathy, in contrast, seems to be changed by power. At first she is excitable and eager to please, but she grows increasingly enthusiastic about the cover-up, even enjoying the attention it brings. When Adam returns, it is Cathy who carries out Phil's order to take him into the woods. By the end, Richard reports that she has become a dominant figure in the school, with frightening rumours about her violence. Kelly suggests that, for some characters, wrongdoing does not cause guilt but instead offers a taste of authority they come to enjoy.

John Tate also changes. At the opening he is the leader, ruling through threats and banning the use of the word "dead" as though controlling language could control reality. Once Phil takes charge, John Tate loses his grip on the group and is later said to have turned to religion. His decline suggests that leadership based on intimidation is fragile, and that guilt may drive some people to look for forgiveness elsewhere.

Not every character, however, is visibly changed. Jan and Mark open each section with their short, fragmented exchanges, gossiping about events but seldom revealing any emotional reaction. Their repetitive dialogue, full of half-finished questions, suggests a kind of moral numbness; they are bystanders who are present but unaffected. Kelly perhaps uses them to show that many people in a group will drift through even the worst events without reflection. Similarly, Danny's main concern remains his future career as a dentist, showing a selfish detachment that never really alters.

Kelly's settings reinforce these ideas. The play moves between a street, a field and

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a wood, spaces with no adults, where the teenagers create their own rules. Written for the National Theatre Connections festival for young performers, the play deliberately puts young people in front of a mirror, asking how far peer pressure and fear of authority can shape behaviour.

Overall, the characters are changed by what happens, but Kelly suggests that this change reveals rather than reforms them. Leah's conscience, Brian's fragility, Cathy's appetite for power and Phil's coldness are all made visible by the crime. The real horror of the play is that, apart from Leah, very few characters change by learning that what they did was wrong.

08 Kelly presents Phil as a highly effective leader in the narrow sense that he takes control, makes decisions and is obeyed. However, his leadership is effective only at protecting the group from discovery, not at protecting anything good. By the end, the group has fractured, an innocent man has been arrested, Adam has been killed and Phil himself is isolated. Through Phil, Kelly explores the frightening idea that the qualities which make someone an effective leader in a crisis can also make them morally empty.

At the start of the play, Phil hardly seems like a leader at all. He says almost nothing in his scenes with Leah, simply eating while she fills the silence with nervous chatter. Kelly's stage directions repeatedly show him eating, a detail which makes him appear detached and self-contained, untouched by the emotional turmoil around him. His silence is a deliberate dramatic choice: it builds anticipation, so that when Phil finally speaks, his words carry enormous weight. Leah's constant need for his attention also establishes him as a figure others look to, even before he has said anything.

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When the group panics after Adam's apparent death, Phil's leadership emerges. John Tate, the existing leader, has tried to control the group through threats and by banning the word "dead", but his authority depends on fear and is clearly failing. Phil, in contrast, stays calm and delivers a clear plan: they will claim Adam was taken by a man, invent a description, and use Adam's jumper to plant evidence. His speech is precise and practical, with each member given a specific task. Kelly shows that the others instantly obey. In this moment, Phil is effective in a way John Tate never was, because he offers certainty when everyone else is lost.

Phil's leadership is also shown through his manipulation of individuals. He puts pressure on Brian, the most fragile member of the group, to go along with the story despite Brian's terror. He also uses Cathy's eagerness to please. When the plan goes wrong and a real postman matching their invented description is arrested, Phil does not panic; he adapts. Kelly perhaps suggests that Phil's greatest strength as a leader is his complete emotional detachment, which allows him to make decisions that others could not bear to make.

This becomes most disturbing when Adam is found alive. Rather than seeing this as a chance to tell the truth, Phil calmly concludes that Adam's survival threatens the group, and he orders Cathy and Brian to take him into the woods and suffocate him with a plastic bag. Leah is horrified and begs him to reconsider, but Phil ignores her. Kelly presents this as the moment when Phil's leadership is most effective and most monstrous. He protects the group from exposure, but at the cost of a human life. The contrast between Leah's emotional pleading and Phil's silence creates a powerful dramatic tension, showing that effective leadership without morality can become tyranny.

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Yet Kelly also suggests that Phil's leadership is ultimately unsustainable. In the final section, Leah has gone, and Richard comes to find Phil sitting alone in a field. Richard describes how the group has changed: Brian is on medication, Cathy has become frightening, and the order Phil created has collapsed. Richard begs Phil to come back, but Phil refuses. Kelly's structure brings Phil full circle, from silence to leadership and back to silence, but now the silence feels like emptiness rather than control. Perhaps Kelly suggests that the guilt Phil suppressed has finally caught up with him, or that, without a crisis to manage, he has no purpose.

Kelly's presentation of Phil reflects wider ideas about leadership and group psychology. Like Jack in Lord of the Flies, Phil rises to power when the normal structures of authority disappear. The settings of the play, a street, a field and a wood, are spaces with no adults, where the teenagers create their own rules. Written for young performers in the National Theatre Connections festival, the play invites young audiences to consider why groups so readily follow a confident voice, and what responsibility followers have for the decisions made in their name.

In conclusion, Phil is an effective leader in that he controls the group and protects them from discovery, but Kelly shows that his leadership is built on fear, manipulation and the absence of conscience. It is effective in the short term but destructive in the long term. Through Phil, Kelly warns that the most dangerous leaders are not always the loudest, but those who can make terrible decisions without hesitation.

09 Stephens presents Christopher's difficulties with other people not as a simple flaw in him, but as a mismatch between his literal, logical way of seeing the world and

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the unspoken rules that everyone else takes for granted. By placing the audience inside Christopher's perspective, Stephens makes us notice how strange, loud and contradictory "normal" social behaviour can be, and he invites us to question who really struggles to communicate.

From the opening scene, Christopher's difficulties are shown through action rather than explanation. Kneeling beside Wellington's body, he is confronted by Mrs Shears, whose screaming and swearing he cannot interpret or calm. When the policeman arrives, he asks too many questions too quickly, and when he takes hold of Christopher, Christopher hits him. To the policeman this is assault; to Christopher, who cannot bear to be touched, it is a reflex. Stephens uses dramatic irony here: the audience understands both perspectives at once, so the comedy of the exchange is mixed with discomfort. The arrest shows how quickly a society that expects certain behaviour can criminalise someone who does not share its rules.

Much of Christopher's difficulty comes from language. He does not tell lies, he takes words literally and he finds metaphors confusing, because they say one thing is something it is not. This creates humour when he answers questions with exhausting precision, but it also isolates him, since so much of human conversation depends on implication, politeness and small talk. When he begins his "detective" work and knocks on neighbours' doors, his directness unsettles people, and he notices what they say but not always what they mean. Mrs Alexander is kind to him, yet she also reveals the affair between his mother and Mr Shears, information Christopher has no way of processing gently. Stephens suggests that adults often hide the truth in coded language, and that Christopher's honesty exposes that habit.

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Stephens's staging makes Christopher's experience of other people physical. The bare, grid-like set, the projections and the ensemble who move around him allow the audience to feel his sensory overload. When he is overwhelmed, he groans, curls up or covers his ears, and the stage directions present these reactions as his way of shutting out a world that has become too much. By choosing not to show other characters' thoughts, only how they appear to Christopher, Stephens keeps the audience at the same distance from them that he feels.

The journey to London in the second half is where these difficulties are most intense. Swindon station is a chaos of signs, announcements and strangers, and Stephens uses the ensemble to create a wall of noise and words which Christopher must decode. The policeman at the station, the man on the train and the crowds at Paddington are all ordinary people, yet each encounter is an ordeal. Interestingly, Christopher copes by using his own strategies: he works out patterns, follows rules he sets himself and uses his maths to calm down. Stephens presents him as resourceful and brave, which complicates any view of him as simply helpless.

His difficulties are also shown in his closest relationships. Christopher wants order and trust, so the discovery of his mother's letters, and of his father's lie, destroys his ability to feel safe with Ed. Once he learns that Ed killed Wellington, he decides he cannot live with him, because someone who killed a dog might kill him. This conclusion is logical by his standards, but it also shows how hard it is for him to see that people can be good and bad at once. With his mother in London, the cramped flat, Mr Shears's hostility and her emotional outbursts again leave him struggling. Only Siobhan, who speaks clearly, explains what she means and never touches him, seems to know how to communicate with him. Stephens's use of Siobhan as narrator of his book suggests that understanding is possible when

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people adapt to him rather than demanding he adapt to them.

The play never names Christopher's condition, and Mark Haddon, author of the original novel, has said he did not want Christopher to be reduced to a label. This leaves the audience to judge whether the problem lies with Christopher or with a society that has narrow ideas about acceptable behaviour. By the end, after passing his A-level Maths, Christopher asks Siobhan whether this means he can do anything. His hope moves the audience, yet the question remains open, suggesting that his difficulties with people will not simply disappear. Ultimately, Stephens presents those difficulties sympathetically, showing that the effort to understand others is something everyone, not just Christopher, needs to make.

10 Stephens presents the relationship between Christopher and his father as one built on fierce, practical love that is repeatedly undermined by Ed's inability to see the world as his son sees it. The statement is largely right: Ed loves Christopher deeply, but his lies and his temper show a man struggling to parent a child whose needs he cannot fully understand. Through Ed, Stephens explores what good parenting means when a parent is exhausted, abandoned and frightened, and he asks the audience to judge him with both sympathy and criticism.

Early in the play, Ed is presented as protective and loyal. When Christopher is arrested for hitting the policeman, Ed comes to the police station, and his weary patience suggests this is not the first crisis he has handled. He understands Christopher's routines: he knows that Christopher will not be touched, so instead of hugging him, they spread their fingers in a fan and touch hands. This gesture, repeated through the play, becomes a visual symbol of their love: a connection that is real but carefully limited. Stephens shows that Ed has learned to love

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Christopher on Christopher's terms, which suggests understanding as well as affection.

However, Ed's understanding has limits. He repeatedly tells Christopher to keep his nose out of other people's business and to stop investigating Wellington's death, but he cannot explain why, because the truth would expose him. The audience senses Ed's anxiety before Christopher does, which creates dramatic irony. Ed's instructions are also a sign that he expects Christopher to obey rules the way a "normal" child might, even though Christopher's literal mind treats a promise only in the exact terms in which it was made. When Ed finds Christopher's book and discovers he has carried on, his temper erupts and he grabs and hits him. Stephens stages this violence shockingly, and it reveals Ed as a man at the end of his patience. It also echoes Christopher's own lashing out when touched, which suggests that father and son are more alike than either realises.

The central betrayal is Ed's lie about Christopher's mother. He told Christopher that Judy had died of a heart attack, when in fact she had left to live with Mr Shears in London. When Christopher finds her letters hidden in a shirt box in Ed's room, he is so overwhelmed that he curls up and is sick. Ed's confession follows, and he admits that he also killed Wellington after a row with Mrs Shears. Stephens gives Ed a confession which is raw and halting, and he insists that he lied to protect his son. This could suggest love, but it also shows that he could not trust Christopher to cope with the truth. For an audience, the lie raises uncomfortable questions about whether parents should shield children from pain, and how easily protection can become control.

Christopher's reaction exposes the gulf between them. He reasons that because his father murdered a dog, he might murder him, so he runs away to London. Ed, who

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perhaps expected tears or forgiveness, cannot follow Christopher's logic, and his confusion and grief show how little his love can achieve once trust is gone. Stephens uses the episodic structure of the second half, with Ed largely offstage, to show the emptiness left by that broken trust.

In the closing scenes, Stephens presents Ed's attempts to rebuild the relationship with humility. He gives Christopher a golden retriever puppy, Sandy, and suggests a project to spend time together, proposing that trust must be earned back gradually. The gift is quietly significant: a dog's death began the play, and a dog's arrival offers a new start. Ed also supports Christopher in taking his A-level Maths, a sign that he believes in his son's abilities. Some of his lines in these scenes are gently comic, as he tries to speak in the careful, practical way Christopher needs, which shows both his love and his effort to change.

Context deepens our sympathy. Ed is a single father, working as a heating engineer, abandoned by his wife and given little support, and Stephens suggests that the challenges of caring for Christopher have affected both parents. Judy's letters admit that she could not cope, and Ed, though he stays, is also cracking under the strain. Ultimately, Stephens presents a relationship in which love is never in doubt, but understanding has to be learned. Ed is a flawed, sometimes frightening parent, yet the final image of father and son tentatively reconnecting suggests that understanding, like trust, can grow.

11 Delaney presents Jo and Helen's relationship as a restless cycle of need and rejection: Jo longs for the care and attention of a mother who rarely gives them, yet she is also determined not to become like her. The statement captures this tension well. Through sharp, bantering dialogue and sudden shifts of mood, Delaney

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shows a mother and daughter who are bound together by poverty and history but pulled apart by selfishness, and in doing so she challenges the 1950s ideal of motherhood.

From the opening scene, Delaney establishes a relationship in which roles are reversed. Helen and Jo arrive at a shabby flat in Salford, and Helen immediately complains about her cold and reaches for her drink, while Jo is left to notice the damp and the shared bathroom. Helen's careless remarks and Jo's sarcastic replies create a comic double act, but the humour masks something painful: Jo is a teenager who has been moved from lodging to lodging and has never had stability. Jo's admission that she is afraid of the darkness inside houses, not outside, suggests that home itself has never felt safe. Here Jo's desire for closeness is clear, but so is Helen's refusal to provide it.

Delaney shows that Jo's bitterness is a form of independence. She mocks Helen's drinking and her men, and she refuses to be impressed by Helen's attempts at glamour. Yet Jo also seeks Helen's attention. When Helen comes across Jo's drawings, she notices her talent, but the moment passes almost at once and Helen shows no real interest in helping her. Delaney uses these brief, almost throwaway moments to show how much Jo still wants her mother to care about her future. Helen, meanwhile, swings between flashes of affection and casual cruelty, mocking Jo's looks and dismissing her worries. The rapid changes in tone reflect Theatre Workshop's music-hall style, and Helen's direct address to the audience reminds us that she is a performer, more interested in her own story than in her daughter's.

The arrival of Peter intensifies the rivalry. Jo is jealous of Helen's attention, and she competes with Peter by being rude to him, while he is openly contemptuous of her. When Helen decides to marry Peter and leaves Jo alone in the flat, Delaney

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uses the structure of Act One to show the cost of Helen's choice. Jo's response is to find her own comfort with Jimmie, the black sailor, and her relationship with him is partly an act of independence, perhaps even a deliberate imitation of her mother's pattern of brief romance. The irony is that in trying to escape Helen, Jo repeats her life: she becomes pregnant and is left alone, just as Helen once was.

In Act Two, Jo's independence is tested. Living with Geof, who cooks, cleans and prepares for the baby, Jo is cared for in a way Helen never cared for her. Yet she lashes out at him, and her fear of motherhood, shown in her violent rejection of the baby doll Geof brings, suggests she has no model of loving parenthood to follow. When Helen returns, having been thrown out by Peter, she pushes Geof out of the flat and resumes control. Jo protests, but she also lets her mother stay, which reveals that her need for Helen remains stronger than her pride.

The ending is deeply ambiguous. When Helen learns that the baby's father is black, she reacts with shock and goes out for a drink, leaving Jo alone again. Her promise to return may or may not be kept. Jo is left humming a nursery rhyme, a childlike moment that suggests she is both about to become a mother and still a child longing for one. Delaney refuses a neat resolution, perhaps because she wanted to show that such relationships do not mend easily.

Delaney, writing at nineteen in 1958, was reacting against plays that presented the working class from a distance. As a kitchen sink drama, A Taste of Honey places the conflict between a single mother and her daughter at the centre of the stage, and Helen is far from the selfless mother 1950s audiences expected. Through Jo, Delaney explores a young woman's struggle for self-realisation in a world that gives her few choices. Ultimately, the play presents a relationship in which closeness and independence are equally impossible: Jo can neither fully

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reject her mother nor rely on her, and that unresolved tension is what makes their relationship so painfully real.

12 Delaney explores the prejudice faced by Geof and Jimmie by presenting them as the gentlest, most generous men in the play, and then showing how society, and even Jo, treats them as outsiders. In 1958, a black man and a gay man would have been almost invisible on the British stage, so Delaney's decision to give them central roles is itself a challenge. Through them, she exposes the narrow ideas of what was considered acceptable in post-war Britain and suggests that prejudice says more about those who hold it than about those who suffer it.

Jimmie is introduced in Act One as a black sailor who walks Jo home, and from the first their scenes are playful and affectionate. Delaney uses light, flirtatious dialogue to show a relationship of equals, and when Jo teases him about where he comes from, expecting perhaps an exotic answer about Africa, he tells her he was born in Cardiff. This small comic moment exposes the assumptions that white Britons made about black people, even when, like Jimmie, they were British. Jo is not hostile to him, but her curiosity shows that she sees his colour first. Jimmie also anticipates the reaction of others, wondering what Jo's mother will say, which suggests he is used to being judged. Delaney's structure places this tender relationship right after scenes of Helen's selfishness, so that Jimmie's warmth contrasts with the coldness of Jo's home.

Jimmie's proposal and ring seem sincere, and Jo wears the ring on a ribbon round her neck, hidden. The hiding is significant: it suggests that the relationship must be kept secret from a society that would disapprove. Jimmie then sails away and never returns. Delaney leaves his motives unclear, and some audiences may see

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him as just another man who abandons a woman. Yet his absence also makes him a figure onto whom other characters project their prejudice. When Helen learns at the end that the baby's father is black, her shocked reaction shows that the racism Jimmie anticipated was real, and it is directed at an unborn child. Writing in the year of the Notting Hill riots, Delaney shows that such attitudes existed not only in violent mobs but in ordinary homes.

Geof is presented with even more sustained attention. An art student who has been thrown out of his lodgings, he arrives to help Jo and quietly takes on the domestic role: cooking, cleaning, buying things for the baby and caring for Jo through her pregnancy. Delaney never states openly that Geof is homosexual, which reflects the fact that homosexuality between men was illegal in England until 1967. Instead, she uses Jo's probing questions about why he was evicted, and his embarrassed evasions, to make the audience understand. Jo's teasing is a form of prejudice in itself: she enjoys making him uncomfortable, and her taunts reveal attitudes she has absorbed from the society around her.

Yet Delaney also shows the depth of Geof's love. He proposes to Jo, perhaps sincerely, perhaps hoping to give her and the baby the respectability that marriage brought, and his kiss is awkward and unconvincing. This moment is both comic and sad, because Geof is offering the kind of conventional family that society expects, even though it would deny who he is. His love for Jo is more maternal than romantic, and Jo, despite her mockery, relies on him completely. The irony is that the most nurturing character in the play is a young man, while the biological mother, Helen, is selfish and neglectful.

Helen's return brings open hostility. She mocks Geof and treats him with contempt, implying that he is not a real man and does not belong in the flat.

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Delaney stages his departure quietly at the end of the play: he leaves while Jo is asleep, so that the person who cared most for her is pushed out by prejudice. The audience is left to feel the injustice of his exclusion.

Delaney's use of humour throughout prevents either character from becoming a victim only. Both are witty, warm and resilient, and both seek the same thing as Jo and Helen: personal happiness. By showing their kindness alongside the prejudice they face, Delaney exposes the hypocrisy of a society that judged people by race and sexuality while tolerating Helen's neglect and Peter's cruelty. Ultimately, Geof and Jimmie show how prejudice destroys the very love and care that the characters so desperately need.

13 Golding presents Simon as the bravest of the boys, but his bravery is of a very particular kind. It is not the physical daring of hunting or fighting, which Jack values, but the moral and spiritual courage to face the truth about the beast: that it is not an external monster but something inside every human being. I largely agree with the statement, although Golding also shows that Simon's courage is fragile, and that facing fear alone, without the power to make others listen, cannot save him.

From his first appearance, Simon is marked out as different. He arrives with Jack's choir and faints in the heat, and Jack dismisses him with the remark that "He's always throwing a faint". This physical weakness seems the opposite of bravery, and Golding perhaps wants the reader to begin by underestimating him. Yet early in the novel Simon quietly helps the littluns, picking the best fruit from high in the trees for them, and he is the only boy who keeps working on the shelters with Ralph. Golding presents his goodness as natural and unselfconscious, which already

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suggests a different kind of strength from the noisy aggression of the hunters.

Simon's solitary walks into the forest reveal his willingness to be alone with the island in a way the others are not. In his secret place among the creepers, surrounded by candle buds and butterflies, Golding uses rich, almost religious imagery that links him to nature and spirituality. The other boys fear the forest at night and fill it with imaginary "beasties", but Simon is calm there. This is perhaps the first sign that he faces fear differently: he does not project his terror outward onto monsters.

His bravery becomes clearest in the assembly about the beast. While the others argue about ghosts and creatures from the sea, Simon suggests that "maybe it's only us". Golding notes that he becomes "inarticulate in his effort to express mankind's essential illness", and the boys laugh at him. It takes great courage to say something so unwelcome in front of a hostile crowd, and Simon is the only boy who even begins to grasp the truth. Golding's narrative comment makes the meaning explicit for the reader, but within the story Simon's insight is wasted because no one can hear it.

Simon's confrontation with the Lord of the Flies, the sow's head on a stick, is the novel's moral centre. Golding uses Simon's trance-like state and the head's mocking voice to dramatise his encounter with evil. The head tells him that the beast is not something "you could hunt and kill", and that it is part of him. This is a terrifying revelation, and Simon faints again, but crucially he does not run away. Instead, he climbs the mountain alone to find the "beast" that has terrified everyone. Discovering that it is a dead parachutist, he frees the body from the tangled lines. This is the bravest act in the novel: he faces the thing the others have fled from, and he acts with compassion even towards a corpse.

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However, Golding suggests that bravery is not enough. Simon stumbles down to the beach to tell the boys the truth, but they are caught up in the frenzied dance, and in the darkness and storm they take him for the beast. Their chant of "Kill the beast! Cut his throat! Spill his blood!" turns into an act of mass murder, and even Ralph and Piggy take part. The structure here is devastatingly ironic: the one boy who has overcome his fear is killed by boys who have been consumed by it. Golding's description of Simon's body carried out to sea, surrounded by luminous creatures, gives him a dignity and peace that contrast sharply with the savagery of his death.

Golding, a Christian writer shaped by his experiences in the Second World War, presents Simon as a Christ-like figure who brings an unwelcome truth and is killed by those he tries to save. His bravery is spiritual rather than heroic in the conventional sense, which may be why the other boys never recognise it. By contrast, Jack's apparent courage is really a cover for fear, and Ralph's leadership depends on others. In that sense the statement is convincing: Simon alone faces his fears honestly. Yet Golding also suggests that in a world dominated by fear and violence, such bravery may be destroyed rather than rewarded, which makes Simon's courage both admirable and tragic.

14 Golding's novel is a deliberately pessimistic fable in which a group of ordinary British schoolboys, freed from adult rules, descend into violence and murder. To a large extent, I agree that he shows evil within every individual: he once remarked that man produces evil as a bee produces honey, and the novel tests that belief relentlessly. However, Golding does not present all the boys as equally evil. Simon, Piggy and Ralph suggest that while the capacity for evil is universal, the choice to

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resist it still matters.

At the start, Golding presents the island as an Eden, a paradise of fruit, warm lagoons and freedom. The boys' first reactions are excitement and play, and Ralph's delight in the thought of a world without grown-ups suggests innocence. Yet even here there are hints of corruption. The "scar" cut into the jungle by the crashed plane suggests that the boys have brought damage with them, and Jack's first appearance, leading his choir in black cloaks like a military unit, introduces a love of control and power. Golding implies that evil is not created by the island but carried there inside the boys.

Roger is one of the clearest examples of latent evil. Early in the novel he throws stones near Henry but deliberately misses, because "Here, invisible yet strong, was the taboo of the old life." Golding shows that Roger's cruelty is restrained only by the memory of parents, school and police. As the novel progresses, that restraint weakens, and by the end Roger releases the rock that kills Piggy, and he is said to have sharpened a stick at both ends to hunt Ralph. The gradual removal of the taboo suggests that civilisation is only a thin layer over violent instincts.

Jack's transformation is even more revealing. At first he cannot bring himself to kill a piglet, because of "the enormity of the knife descending and cutting into living flesh". Yet once he paints his face, he is "liberated from shame and self-consciousness", and the mask allows the savage inside him to emerge. The sow hunt is described with violent, sexualised language that makes the killing disturbing, and Golding presents the hunters' pleasure in cruelty as a revelation of what was always there. Jack's leadership by fear, punishment and ritual echoes the totalitarian regimes Golding had seen in Europe during the Second World War, when he served in the Royal Navy.

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The most powerful evidence for the statement is Simon's death. Here even Ralph and Piggy, the symbols of reason and civilisation, join the dance and the chant of "Kill the beast!" In the frenzy, Simon is torn apart. Golding's point is that evil is not only found in sadists like Roger, but in ordinary, decent boys caught up in a crowd. Afterwards Ralph admits "That was murder", while Piggy tries to excuse it, showing how people deny their own guilt. This moment strongly supports the idea that evil lies within every individual, including those we see as good.

However, Golding complicates this view. Simon understands the truth about evil when he suggests that "maybe it's only us", and the Lord of the Flies confirms it, telling Simon that the beast is part of him. Yet Simon himself is presented as kind, spiritual and selfless, helping the littluns and freeing the dead parachutist from the lines. Piggy, too, though often mocked, stands for rational thought and fairness, and his final plea for rules and rescue over hunting and killing shows that he chooses civilisation. Even Ralph, who feels the thrill of the hunt, retains his conscience. Golding suggests that everyone has the capacity for evil, but not everyone surrenders to it.

The ending deepens this ambiguity. The naval officer who rescues the boys is shocked that British boys could not "put up a better show", yet he is himself part of an adult war, with a warship waiting offshore. Golding's irony suggests that the adult world is merely a larger version of the island. Ralph's tears "for the end of innocence, the darkness of man's heart" show that he has recognised the evil within humanity, including himself.

Overall, I agree that Golding shows evil within every individual, as his religious ideas about original sin and his wartime experience shaped his belief that human

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nature is flawed. Yet the presence of Simon, Piggy and Ralph suggests that goodness is also possible, even if it is fragile and often defeated. Golding's warning is not simply that all people are evil, but that civilisation depends on individuals constantly choosing to resist the darkness inside them.

15 In 'Invisible Mass of the Back Row', Claudette Williams presents Hortense as a girl made uncomfortable by environments that refuse to see her: first a Jamaican classroom shaped by colonial values, then a London school where she is once again placed at the back. In 'Odour of Chrysanthemums', D. H. Lawrence presents Elizabeth Bates as a woman uncomfortable in the mining community and the marriage that confine her. Both writers use these characters to expose the forces of class, race and gender that make an environment hostile, but while Hortense's discomfort grows into understanding and resistance, Elizabeth's leads to a painful recognition that comes too late.

Williams establishes Hortense's discomfort through the title and setting. The "back row" is where the pupils the system has written off are seated, and the phrase "invisible mass" suggests that these children are not individuals to their teachers but a faceless group. Hortense's first-person narration allows the reader to share her sense of being overlooked, and her voice, which blends Standard English with the rhythms of Jamaican speech, is lively and defiant. This contrast between a vivid inner voice and outward invisibility is central to Williams's method: the reader sees a clever, observant girl whom the classroom treats as nobody.

Lawrence's opening places Elizabeth in a similarly oppressive environment, but he uses a third-person narrator to show it from outside. The story begins with a small locomotive clanking past the colliery, and the landscape of pit-banks, ash

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and cold dusk is bleak and mechanical. When Elizabeth appears, she is "a tall woman of imperious mien, handsome, with definite black eyebrows", and the word "imperious" suggests someone who feels above her surroundings. Her discomfort comes from pride: she resents the pit, the pub and her husband Walter, whose drinking she sees as a humiliation.

Both writers use a key incident to dramatise the clash between the character and her environment. In Hortense's classroom, a visiting inspector asks about Christopher Columbus, and Hortense's answer does not match the version of history the system expects. The inspector is angered, and her teacher raps her knuckles with a ruler. Williams presents this moment as a collision between a child's honest thinking and an education system that teaches Jamaican children to see their history through European eyes. The punishment shows that, in this environment, questioning authority is not allowed, and Hortense's resentment grows, leading her and her friends to plan revenge on a favoured pupil from the front row.

In Lawrence's story, the tension is built more slowly. As Elizabeth waits for Walter, her anger becomes clear in her sharp words to her children, and her threat that she will not wash him when he comes home dirty and drunk, "He can lie on the floor", shows how bitterly she rejects the life she has married into. Her speech about the chrysanthemums, the flowers present at her wedding, at her daughter's birth and when Walter first came home drunk, shows that even beauty has become tainted by her unhappiness. Lawrence presents her as trapped by economic dependence on a man whose work and habits she despises, reflecting the limited options for working-class women in the early twentieth century.

Both characters are then moved into new environments. For Hortense, a letter

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arrives from her parents in England, who have sent for her. Williams presents her move as part of the experience of the Windrush generation and their children, and in London she must adjust to a different kind of English and finds herself again in the back row. The repetition is significant: the environment has changed, but her position has not, suggesting that racial and social prejudice crosses oceans.

Elizabeth's new environment is the reality of death. When Walter is brought home, killed in the pit, she and his mother wash his body in the parlour. Lawrence slows the narrative to show Elizabeth's growing realisation that "they had met in the dark and had fought in the dark", never truly knowing each other. Her discomfort turns inward: she is forced to see her own part in their estrangement, and the story ends with her submitting to life as "her immediate master".

The endings contrast sharply. In London, when Hortense is asked about Columbus again, her answer is still rebellious, but now it rests on a deeper understanding of her people's history and situation. Williams suggests that discomfort can become a source of strength, as Hortense finds friends, books and ideas that help her make sense of her place. Elizabeth's discomfort, however, leaves her alone with shame and grief. Both writers present characters who are out of place, but Williams offers hope that the invisible can make themselves seen, while Lawrence suggests that some people only understand their environment when it is too late to change it.

16 In 'Odour of Chrysanthemums', D. H. Lawrence presents Elizabeth Bates as a woman who believes she knows her husband completely, only to discover, as she washes his dead body, that she never understood him at all. In 'Korea', John McGahern presents a son who realises that the father he has lived and worked beside is capable of weighing his life against money. Both writers explore how

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closeness in daily life can hide deep emotional distance, and both suggest that understanding, when it finally arrives, is painful and isolating.

Lawrence presents Elizabeth's misunderstanding from the opening, through her certainty. As she waits for Walter, she assumes he is drinking in the pub, and her anger is sharp and controlled. Lawrence's description of her as "a tall woman of imperious mien" suggests pride and judgement, and she treats Walter's absence as further proof of his selfishness. Her threat that she will not wash him when he comes home, "He can lie on the floor", shows how fixed her view of him has become. The irony, which the reader senses through the growing darkness and delay, is that she is condemning a man who may already be dead.

Her failure to understand others extends beyond Walter. When her father calls, he tells her he intends to remarry, and she reacts coldly, disapproving of his choice. Lawrence suggests that Elizabeth judges those close to her by her own standards of respectability, and her relationships with her children are also tense: she speaks sharply to John and keeps her feelings hidden from Annie. Her speech about the chrysanthemums, which were there at her wedding, at Annie's birth and when Walter was first brought home drunk, is one of the few moments she reveals her inner life, yet even here she turns memory into a list of grievances.

McGahern's narrator, by contrast, begins the story apparently close to his father. They work together on the river, and the narrative voice is calm and reflective. The father tells his son about his experience in the War of Independence, describing an execution he witnessed in 1921, and the son listens with fascination. McGahern presents this storytelling as a form of intimacy, a father sharing his past. Yet the story of a young man's death foreshadows the son's own danger, and the son begins to sense that his father's mind is elsewhere.

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The turning point in 'Korea' is the son's realisation of his father's plan. Luke Moran's son has been killed fighting for the Americans in Korea, and the family has received money in compensation. When his father begins to urge him to go to America, the son understands that he too could be drafted, and that his death would bring his father money. McGahern presents this discovery through restrained first-person narration: there is no outburst, only a quiet shift in the son's perception. The father does not realise that his son has seen through him, which shows that he, too, does not truly understand the person closest to him.

Lawrence presents Elizabeth's moment of understanding with far greater intensity. When Walter's body is brought home, she and his mother wash him in the parlour. His mother remembers him as a happy, loving boy, which contrasts sharply with Elizabeth's bitter view and suggests that each woman knew only a partial version of him. As Elizabeth touches his body, she realises that "they had met in the dark and had fought in the dark", never knowing each other. The repetition of "in the dark" emphasises their isolation, and Lawrence's omniscient narrator moves deep into her consciousness to show her shame. She recognises that she had denied him his own self, and the story ends with her submitting to life as "her immediate master", while death, her "ultimate master", fills her with fear.

Both stories are shaped by their contexts. Lawrence, a miner's son writing in the early twentieth century, shows how the dangerous work of mining and rigid gender roles kept husbands and wives apart: Walter's world is the pit and the pub, Elizabeth's is the home. McGahern's story reflects the poverty of 1950s rural Ireland, where emigration was common and families struggled to survive, which may explain, though not excuse, the father's calculation.

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Ultimately, both writers present characters who do not understand the people they are closest to, and who are changed by the discovery. Elizabeth learns too late that she never knew her husband, and her grief is mixed with guilt. McGahern's narrator learns that he did not know his father, and the closeness of their working life becomes something colder and more watchful. In both stories, understanding arrives not as reconciliation but as a lonely recognition of the distance that has always been there.

17 Orwell presents Snowball as the closest thing Animal Farm has to a hero, but only up to a point. He is brave, intelligent and genuinely committed to improving the animals' lives, yet he is also a pig who accepts his own privilege and helps build the system that later destroys him. Through Snowball, Orwell suggests that idealism alone cannot protect a revolution from tyranny, and that even its most admirable leaders may share some of the blame for its corruption.

From the start, Orwell sets Snowball up in direct contrast to Napoleon. The narrator describes Snowball as "a more vivacious pig than Napoleon, quicker in speech and more inventive", while Napoleon is only said to have a reputation for "getting his own way". The adjectives attached to Snowball suggest energy and imagination, qualities associated with a leader who inspires rather than bullies. He reduces the Seven Commandments to the maxim "Four legs good, two legs bad" so that even the stupidest animals can understand Animalism, and he throws himself into organising committees such as the Egg Production Committee and the Clean Tails League. Orwell's gentle irony here is revealing: the Wild Comrades' Re-education Committee fails completely, which perhaps hints that Snowball's enthusiasm runs ahead of reality. He is a hero of ideas, but some of those ideas are faintly absurd.

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Snowball's heroism is clearest at the Battle of the Cowshed. Having studied a book of Julius Caesar's campaigns, he plans the defence, leads the charge himself and is wounded by pellets from Jones's gun. Orwell's narrative here is fast and physical, and Snowball is awarded "Animal Hero, First Class", which shows that, at this moment, the animals see him exactly as the question suggests. Significantly, Napoleon is absent from the account of the fighting, so Orwell uses structure to contrast a leader who risks his life with one who will later steal the credit.

However, Orwell does not make Snowball flawless. When the milk and apples are taken for the pigs, the narrator notes that all the pigs agreed, "even Snowball and Napoleon". This short phrase is quietly damning. Snowball, for all his idealism, accepts the first sign that the pigs are becoming a privileged class, and so he helps establish the inequality that grows into dictatorship. Arguably, Orwell wants readers to see that the corruption of the revolution began not with one villain but with the shared assumption that the clever should be rewarded. Even Snowball's great project, the windmill, has a grandiose quality: his promise of electric light and a shorter working week is attractive, but it is also a kind of speech-making that relies on dazzling the less intelligent animals rather than including them.

The turning point comes when Napoleon's nine dogs chase Snowball off the farm. Orwell describes him racing across the pasture and slipping through the hedge, and from this moment Snowball vanishes as a character and becomes a myth. This is where his heroism is most powerfully inverted. Squealer first claims Snowball's courage was exaggerated, then that he fought on Jones's side, and finally he becomes a scapegoat blamed for every broken window and failed harvest. Boxer's hesitant protest that he remembers Snowball fighting bravely is crushed when Squealer insists Napoleon has said otherwise, and Boxer gives way. Orwell shows

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that a hero can be rewritten out of history entirely, and the animals' confused memories make the reader feel how fragile truth becomes under propaganda.

The allegory sharpens this reading. Snowball represents Trotsky, the gifted orator and organiser of the Red Army who lost the power struggle to Stalin, was exiled in 1929 and was later demonised in Soviet propaganda as a traitor behind every failure. Orwell, a democratic socialist who had seen Stalinist lies at first hand in the Spanish Civil War, clearly sympathises with Trotsky's fate. Yet he refuses to present him as a lost saviour. Perhaps Orwell implies that had Snowball won, the animals might still have been ruled by clever pigs, simply more pleasant ones.

Ultimately, Orwell presents Snowball as heroic in courage and vision but not as the hero who could have saved Animal Farm. His real function is to expose Napoleon: by showing what was erased, Orwell lets readers measure how far the revolution has fallen. The novella has no true hero, and that absence is perhaps its most important warning, that a revolution depends not on one brilliant leader but on ordinary animals who remember the truth and refuse to be silenced.

18 Orwell presents language as the pigs' most effective weapon, more lasting even than Napoleon's dogs. The pigs control the other animals by shrinking language until thought becomes impossible, and by inflating it until the truth is buried under jargon and statistics. Writing in 1945, Orwell uses this fable to warn that totalitarian regimes, such as Stalin's Soviet Union, rely as much on the manipulation of words as on violence.

At first, the pigs' simplification of language appears helpful. When the less intelligent animals cannot learn the Seven Commandments, Snowball reduces them

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to the single maxim "Four legs good, two legs bad". The neat, chant-like rhythm makes it easy to remember, but Orwell shows how quickly a slogan replaces thinking. The sheep bleat it for hours, and later they are used to drown out any debate at the Sunday meetings. The irony is that a phrase meant to unite the animals becomes a means of silencing them. By the end of the novella the same sheep bleat "Four legs good, two legs better", and the effortless change of one word shows how slogans can be emptied and refilled with whatever meaning those in power require.

Squealer is the centre of this manipulation. Orwell tells us that he "could turn black into white", and his very name suggests the high, persuasive noise of a pig as well as someone who will say anything. When the milk and apples are taken for the pigs, Squealer explains that they contain substances "absolutely necessary to the well-being of a pig", supported by the claim that this "has been proved by Science". Here Orwell exposes the way complex, authoritative-sounding language is used to justify privilege. Squealer then adds the rhetorical question that becomes his most powerful tool: "Surely, comrades, you do not want Jones back?" Fear of the past is used to make any objection seem like treachery, so the animals are manipulated into consenting to their own exploitation.

As Napoleon's power grows, the pigs use language to rewrite history itself. After Snowball's expulsion, Squealer first presents Napoleon's sudden support for the windmill as "tactics", repeating the word until the animals accept it without understanding it. Later, Squealer turns Snowball from a war hero into a traitor who was in league with Jones from the beginning. When Boxer hesitates, Squealer simply states that Napoleon has declared it, and Boxer replies "If Comrade Napoleon says it, it must be right." Orwell shows how authority replaces evidence, and how the animals' poor memories make them dependent on the pigs' version of

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the past. Squealer's long lists of figures proving that food production has increased work in the same way: the animals feel hungry, yet they cannot argue with numbers they do not understand.

Most chillingly, the pigs alter the Commandments while pretending nothing has changed. "No animal shall sleep in a bed" gains "with sheets", and "No animal shall kill any other animal" gains "without cause" after the executions. Orwell's structure makes these small additions devastating, because the reader sees each one coming while the animals, unable to read well, can only doubt themselves. The final version, "All animals are equal but some animals are more equal than others", is a paradox that destroys the meaning of the word "equal" altogether. It reflects Orwell's belief, explored in his essay "Politics and the English Language", that political language is designed to make lies sound truthful.

Nevertheless, Orwell suggests that language alone is not the whole explanation. The dogs stand growling behind Squealer during his speeches, and after the show trials and executions few animals dare to question him. The pigs' words succeed partly because they are backed by terror, and partly because of the other animals' own ignorance and loyalty, embodied in Boxer's motto "Napoleon is always right". Even Boxer's death is covered by Squealer's lie about the vet and the old knacker's van, and the animals are relieved to believe it.

By the final scene, when the animals look "from pig to man, and from man to pig", the pigs have used language so thoroughly that the revolution's ideals have been turned inside out. Orwell's message is that control of words is control of thought, and that a population which cannot read, remember or question will always be vulnerable to those who can.

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Ishiguro presents Kathy as a narrator who is honest in intention but not always reliable in effect. She rarely lies to the reader, yet her account is shaped by faulty memory, by her need to protect herself from painful truths, and by her loyalty to Hailsham. Ishiguro uses this gentle unreliability deliberately: by making us see the clones' world through a voice that accepts it, he forces the reader to notice what Kathy cannot or will not say.

From the opening line, "My name is Kathy H.", Ishiguro gives us a calm, conversational voice that invites trust. She tells us she is thirty-one and has been a carer for over eleven years, and she speaks with quiet pride about how well her donors do. Yet the confident tone hides a disturbing gap. Words such as "carer", "donor" and later "completed" are used without explanation, as if the reader already shares her world. Kathy often seems to assume that we were raised as she was, perhaps at another institution, and this assumed knowledge means the reader has to piece together the horror of organ donation that she treats as ordinary. Her reliability is therefore limited less by dishonesty than by what she takes for granted.

Kathy also openly admits the limits of her memory. Throughout Part One she qualifies her recollections, saying that she may have the details wrong, or that Ruth might remember an incident differently. The narrative is non-chronological, drifting from her life as a carer back to Hailsham and forward again, so that memories are triggered by association rather than ordered fact. This structure suggests that Kathy is not giving us a record but reconstructing a past she is desperate to hold on to. Arguably, the very frankness of these admissions makes her seem more trustworthy, because she shows us where her account is uncertain.

However, Kathy's account is also shaped by self-protection. Her relationship with

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Ruth is told almost entirely from Kathy's side. In the episode of the pencil case, Kathy uses her knowledge of the Sales register to hint that Ruth's gift from Miss Geraldine was not genuine, and then recalls feeling guilty. She presents herself as kinder than Ruth, yet we only have her word for it. Similarly, her feelings for Tommy are understated for most of the novel. She describes her search through the pornographic magazines at the Cottages as a hunt for her "possible", but she hesitates to admit what it reveals about her own desires and fears. The reader senses that Kathy, like the guardians, has learned to tell herself things only partly.

The clearest sign of her unreliability is her idealised view of Hailsham. Kathy speaks of it with nostalgia, as though it were a privilege, and donors ask her to describe it because it represents comfort. Yet Ishiguro gradually undermines this view. Miss Lucy's warning that the students have been "told and not told" exposes the deception at the heart of the school, and in Part Three Miss Emily reveals that their art was collected "to prove you had souls at all". The guardians' kindness was a campaign, not simple love, and Kathy has spent her life misunderstanding the place she cherished. The three-part structure, moving from childhood to the Cottages to donation, mirrors her slow movement from innocence towards knowledge that she never fully voices.

Ishiguro uses the song "Never Let Me Go" to show how memory distorts meaning. As a child Kathy imagined the singer holding a baby she had been told she could never have, while Madame, watching her, saw a girl clinging to "the old kind world". Neither interpretation is the "truth" of the song, and Ishiguro suggests that all memory is an act of interpretation shaped by need.

Ultimately, Kathy's account cannot always be trusted in its details, but it can be trusted emotionally. Her final image of rubbish caught on the fence in Norfolk,

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where she imagines everything she has lost has washed up, is honest about longing even as she refuses to break down, turning back to drive off "to wherever it was I was supposed to be". Published in 2005, after the cloning of Dolly the sheep, the novel uses Kathy's restrained, unreliable voice to make readers question what we ourselves accept without asking, and how easily people can be persuaded to tell themselves that cruelty is normal.

20 I agree only partly with this view. Ishiguro does present moments of profound tenderness, loyalty and forgiveness, and these suggest that love and the desire to create are fundamental to being human. Yet these qualities appear most strongly in the clones, while the "normal" society that created them is complacent and cruel. The novel's vision of human nature is therefore deeply divided: hopeful about the capacity of individuals to love, but bleak about what societies will tolerate for their own benefit.

The pessimistic side of the novel is established by its premise. Kathy's opening, in which she tells us calmly that she has been a carer for over eleven years, reveals a world where young people are raised to give up their organs and "complete". Ishiguro's euphemisms, such as "donations" and "completed", mirror the language a society might use to hide its own guilt. Miss Lucy's blunt warning, "Your lives are set out for you", is the moment the students are finally told the truth, and it is significant that she is dismissed for saying it. Ishiguro suggests that most people prefer not to know, and that the comfort of a cure for cancer has made a whole nation willing to look away.

Even the kindest adults are compromised. Madame's flinch when the children surround her, which Kathy compares to a fear of spiders, shows that the guardians

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cannot see the clones as fully human. In Part Three, Miss Emily reveals that the art was collected "to prove you had souls at all", and she refers to the students as "poor creatures". Her campaign was humane by the standards of her world, but the fact that the clones' souls needed proving is itself an indictment of human nature. Set in an alternative late twentieth century and published in 2005, not long after the cloning of Dolly the sheep, the novel asks how readily people might accept exploitation dressed up as progress.

However, Ishiguro balances this with a quieter optimism found in the clones themselves. Kathy, Ruth and Tommy remain loyal to one another over many years, despite jealousy and hurt. Ruth's apology near the end of the novel is a powerful act of redemption: she admits she kept Kathy and Tommy apart and gives them Madame's address so that they can seek a deferral. This suggests that human beings can recognise their own wrongs and try to repair them even when there is little time left. Kathy's patient care for her donors, and her decision to become Ruth's and then Tommy's carer, show compassion persisting in a system designed to treat people as parts.

Ishiguro also suggests that creativity and love are signs of an inner life that cannot be destroyed. Tommy's detailed drawings of imaginary animals, mocked at Hailsham, become his attempt to prove his love for Kathy. Their search in Norfolk, the "lost corner" of England, for a copy of Kathy's lost tape, and her joy when they find it, show that even small hopes give their lives meaning. The song "Never Let Me Go" itself becomes a symbol of the longing to hold on to what one loves.

Yet the novel's structure keeps undercutting hope. The three parts move steadily from childhood to adulthood to donation, and the rumour of deferrals turns out to be false. The clones never rebel or run away, and their passive acceptance,

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reflected in Kathy's understated language, could be read as a pessimistic comment on how easily people of all kinds submit to the roles they are given. Tommy's image of two people in a fast river, unable to hold on to each other, suggests that love, however real, cannot save them.

The ending captures this tension perfectly. Standing by the fence in Norfolk, Kathy imagines that everything she has lost has washed up there, and allows herself a brief fantasy of Tommy appearing. She does not let herself cry, and drives off "to wherever it was I was supposed to be". Her dignity is moving, and it suggests human resilience. But the phrase "supposed to be" reminds us that her fate has been decided by others.

Overall, Ishiguro offers an optimistic vision of what individuals are capable of, in friendship, forgiveness and love, but a deeply pessimistic vision of collective human nature. The tragedy is that the characters most fully human in their feelings are the ones society refuses to treat as human at all.

21 Syal presents Meena as a girl who rebels against her family's expectations for much of the novel, but whose rebellion is less a rejection of her family than a search for identity. Growing up as the only Punjabi child in the Black Country village of Tollington in the late 1960s, Meena feels caught between two cultures, and her lies, thefts and friendship with Anita are attempts to belong. By the end, Syal suggests that true maturity comes not from rebelling against her family but from accepting the parts of herself she once tried to escape.

From the opening, Meena's rebellious streak is presented through her own voice. She admits "I'm not really a liar" and then explains that those "deprived of history"

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sometimes need to "turn to mythology" in order to belong. The adult narrator looks back with wry humour at her younger self, and this retrospective first-person voice lets Syal present Meena's misbehaviour sympathetically. Her rebellion is framed not as wickedness but as a child's response to feeling that her own history is missing from the world around her.

Early in the novel, Meena rebels in small but revealing ways. She steals money from her mother's purse to buy sweets, and when she is found out she lies and tries to shift the blame, which shocks her parents because honesty is central to their values. Her parents expect her to be a polite, studious Indian girl, like her well-behaved cousins Pinky and Baby, whom Meena finds unbearable. Syal uses this comic contrast to show that Meena feels the weight of being a "good" daughter, and much of her rebellion is a way of escaping that expectation. Her longing for fish fingers and chips over her mother's cooking is another small sign that she wants to fit into the white working-class world around her.

Meena's rebellion becomes more serious through her friendship with Anita Rutter. Anita is loud, confident and careless about rules, everything Meena's parents are not, and Meena is thrilled to be accepted into her gang. Syal shows the appeal through Meena's adoption of local dialect, which contrasts sharply with her parents' careful, educated English. When she follows Anita into trouble, or sneaks out against her mother's wishes, she is choosing a different identity, one that seems to promise freedom. Yet Syal makes the reader aware of what Meena cannot see: Anita's family life is chaotic and neglectful, and the friendship is unequal. Meena's rebellion, therefore, partly reflects her innocence.

However, Syal complicates the idea that Meena simply rejects her family. Meena loves her parents and admires her father's singing at the mehfils, even when she

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feels embarrassed by the gatherings of aunties and uncles. The turning point is the arrival of Nanima, her grandmother from India. Nanima's warmth and her stories give Meena a connection to her Punjabi heritage, and she begins to see her culture as something rich rather than something to hide. Here Syal suggests that Meena's rebellion was never really against her family, but against her feeling of being an outsider in both worlds.

As the novel progresses, the violence and racism in Tollington force Meena to reassess her choices. Sam Lowbridge's racist hostility, and Anita's willingness to side with him, shatter Meena's belief that she can belong to Anita's world. Her stay in hospital after breaking her leg, and her friendship there with Robert, give her time to reflect, and her narration becomes noticeably more mature and thoughtful. When Tracey falls into the pond near the end, Meena is tempted to lie but finally tells the truth, which suggests she has grown out of the mythology she once relied on.

The ending confirms this change. Meena passes the eleven-plus and the family moves away from Tollington, so she accepts the educational future her parents always wanted for her. Syal does not present this as surrender, however. Meena leaves with a stronger, more confident sense of who she is, both British and Punjabi.

Overall, Syal presents Meena as rebellious, but her rebellion is a stage in growing up rather than her defining trait. Writing in 1996 about a childhood like her own, Syal uses Meena to explore how children of immigrant families negotiate between parental expectations and a society that often rejects them, and she suggests that identity is something one must eventually build, not something one can borrow from someone else.

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Syal explores truth and lies as part of Meena's journey from childhood to maturity. At first, lying is a creative survival strategy for a girl who feels she has no place in the story of the village she lives in. As the novel progresses, Syal shows how lies can become dangerous, both personally and socially, and Meena's final decision to tell the truth marks her growth into someone secure enough in her identity no longer to need invention.

Syal establishes the theme in the very first lines. The adult Meena announces "I'm not really a liar", before explaining that those "deprived of history" sometimes "turn to mythology" to feel they belong. This opening is playful and self-aware, and it immediately makes the reader question the boundary between truth and storytelling. Paradoxically, by admitting her habit of invention, the older narrator earns our trust. Syal suggests that for a British Asian child in a 1960s mining village, where her own heritage is invisible, inventing stories is a way of filling a gap left by a culture that does not see her.

Many of Meena's early lies are harmless and comic. When she eats with her fingers at a neighbour's table and claims that this is simply how everyone in her culture eats, she plays up to the white villagers' ignorance. The humour is double-edged: Meena exploits stereotypes for her own amusement, but Syal also reveals how little the villagers actually know about Indian life, so that her lie works only because of their prejudices. Truth and lies here are tied closely to cultural misunderstanding.

Other lies are more serious. Meena steals money from her mother's purse to buy sweets, and when confronted she lies and tries to blame someone else. The

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reaction of her parents shows how much honesty matters in her family. Syal presents them as people of strict integrity who have sacrificed a great deal to build a decent life in England, and Meena's dishonesty is a betrayal of those values. The retrospective narrative voice looks back on this episode with shame as well as humour, so the reader sees both the child's thrill and the adult's understanding of what she did wrong.

Anita is presented as a far more practised liar, and Syal uses her to show the darker side of deception. Anita's boasts and invented stories are exciting at first, but they often hide a painful home life, including her mother's neglect and eventual departure. Her lies are a defence against a world that offers her little. Yet they can also be cruel, as when she manipulates Meena and other girls to keep control of her gang. Syal suggests that Anita's lies, unlike Meena's, are bound up with a damaged sense of self that she never escapes.

Syal also explores the lies that a community tells itself. The villagers of Tollington often present themselves as friendly to the Kumars, yet casual racism lies beneath the surface, and Sam Lowbridge's hostility exposes the truth that many feel but do not say. Even Meena's parents keep some truths from her, such as painful memories of Partition, which she begins to learn through Nanima's stories. Syal implies that silence can be as powerful as lies, and that Meena must uncover hidden histories in order to understand who she is.

The climax of this theme comes near the end, when Tracey falls into the pond. Meena is tempted to lie, perhaps to protect herself or Anita, but she chooses to tell the truth. This moment is structurally significant, because it reverses the opening: the girl who once relied on mythology now values honesty. Her narration has become more mature and reflective, mirroring her growth. Syal suggests that

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telling the truth is an act of independence, as Meena separates herself from Anita and from the version of herself that tried so hard to fit in.

Overall, Syal presents lies as understandable responses to exclusion, but ultimately as a barrier to genuine identity. Meena's movement from invention to honesty reflects her acceptance of both her Punjabi heritage and her English upbringing. Writing in 1996, Syal uses this semi-autobiographical novel to show that the truth about who we are, however complicated, is more valuable than any story we invent to belong.

23 Kelman uses Harrison Opoku to explore the idea that goodness is an instinct which survives even in an environment designed to destroy it. Harri, an eleven-year-old boy who has recently moved from Ghana to a London estate, is kind, curious and loyal, and his innocent narration constantly contrasts with the violence around him. Yet Kelman does not present goodness as a simple reward: Harri's decency cannot protect him, and his death at the end suggests that society fails the children who most deserve to be protected.

From the opening, Kelman establishes Harri's goodness through his response to the murder of a local boy. Rather than turning away, Harri wants to find the killer, treating it as a mission to put things right. With his friend Dean he begins an amateur investigation, borrowing ideas from television detective shows, collecting "evidence" and watching suspects with binoculars. Kelman presents this comically, but the humour has a serious purpose. Harri's sense of justice is childlike but genuine: he believes the world can be fixed if someone is brave enough to try, and this belief is the foundation of his goodness.

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Kelman's use of first-person narration is central to this presentation. Harri's distinctive voice, mixing Ghanaian expressions such as "asweh" and "hutious" with London slang, is full of enthusiasm and wonder. He often fails to understand the unpleasantness around him, describing violent or sexual behaviour in innocent terms, and the gap between what he says and what the reader understands creates dramatic irony. This unreliable narrative style emphasises his uniqueness: he sees the estate with a freshness and optimism that the older characters have lost. His goodness is shown not through moral speeches but through the way he notices and values the people and creatures around him.

Harri's love for the pigeon that visits his balcony is a powerful symbol of this. Others regard pigeons as dirty and worthless, yet Harri feeds and protects it. Kelman suggests that being a good person means extending kindness to those that society ignores. The pigeon's own italicised sections, philosophical and protective in tone, present it almost as a guardian angel watching over Harri. Similarly, his friendship with Altaf and his tenderness towards Poppy, whom he plans to marry, show a capacity for warmth that the hardened teenagers around him have abandoned. Their innocent relationship, built on small gifts and shared jokes, contrasts sharply with the crude language of Lydia's friends and the swaggering threats of the Dell Farm Crew.

Harri's love for his family is another expression of his goodness. He longs for his father, grandmother and baby sister Agnes, who are still in Ghana, and he is fiercely protective of his mother and Lydia. Kelman shows that Harri's values come partly from this close, religious family, whose standards are very different from those of the estate. His mother's warnings, and his own repeated reminders to "advise yourself", show that he understands, at some level, the dangers around him.

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However, Kelman complicates Harri's goodness by showing how the estate tests it. Harri is drawn towards the Dell Farm Crew because they represent power and belonging, and he is tempted to prove himself to them. Jordan, his sometimes friend, presents violence as normal and even impressive. These moments show that goodness is not fixed: Harri must choose it again and again. Crucially, his investigation and his refusal to give up on finding the killer bring him to the attention of the gang, and his determination to do the right thing leads directly to his death.

The ending is therefore deeply troubling. Harri is stabbed, and as he dies the pigeon's voice returns, offering a fragile sense of comfort. Kelman, who was partly inspired by the real killing of ten-year-old Damilola Taylor in Peckham in 2000, uses Harri's death to make readers confront the cost of urban violence and neglect. Harri was good, but goodness alone could not save him.

Ultimately, Kelman uses Harri to suggest that being a good person involves kindness, curiosity and moral courage, qualities children often possess naturally. The tragedy of the novel is that the world around Harri does not nurture these qualities but punishes them, and Kelman challenges his readers to consider what kind of society allows such innocence to be lost.

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Kelman presents friendship as both essential and precarious in Pigeon English. For Harri, a newly arrived Ghanaian boy on a London estate, friends offer belonging, fun and a sense of safety in a world he does not fully understand. Yet Kelman also shows that friendship in this environment is unstable and sometimes dangerous, because the pressure to belong can draw children towards violence.

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Through Harri's innocent narration, Kelman suggests that genuine friendship is a source of hope, but that society too often leaves it unprotected.

Harri's friendship with Dean is the warmest and most important in the novel. Together they launch their investigation into the murder of a local boy, collecting fingerprints with sellotape and watching suspects through binoculars, inspired by crime dramas on television. Kelman presents their partnership with gentle comedy, and the humour reveals how friendship allows them to make sense of something frightening. By turning the murder into a mission, they create a shared purpose and a feeling of control. Their friendship also crosses cultural boundaries, which reflects Kelman's interest in integration on a multicultural estate. Harri does not see Dean as different; they are simply partners.

Kelman's first-person narrative is crucial to how we experience these relationships. Harri's voice, mixing Ghanaian phrases such as "asweh" and "hutious" with London slang, is enthusiastic, matter-of-fact and full of rankings and comparisons. He reports even serious events in a cheerful, literal way, so the reader often understands more than he does. This dramatic irony makes his friendships seem especially precious, because we can see the dangers around them while he remains optimistic. His habit of telling himself to "advise yourself" suggests he knows the estate is threatening, but his loyalty to his friends rarely wavers.

Friendship with Poppy shows another, more tender side to Harri. Their innocent romance, built on sweets, playground games and Harri's plans to marry her, is presented with affectionate humour. It contrasts sharply with the crude sexual language of his sister Lydia's friends and the older teenagers, which Harri repeats without fully understanding. Kelman uses this contrast to show how quickly childhood innocence can be lost, and to suggest that friendships rooted in

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kindness, rather than status, protect the young from growing up too fast.

However, Kelman shows that not all friendships are positive. Jordan, who is sometimes Harri's friend, is boastful and fascinated by violence, and their relationship shifts between companionship and rivalry. More dangerous still is the Dell Farm Crew. For a boy who wants to be accepted, the gang offers a powerful form of belonging, and Harri is tempted to prove himself to them. Kelman presents this as a twisted version of friendship, based on fear, loyalty tests and the threat of violence. The contrast between Harri's playful speech and the gang's aggressive street language highlights how different these relationships are. Kelman suggests that teenage violence on estates is often driven by a desperate need to belong, especially among boys whose families are absent or struggling.

Kelman also extends the theme beyond human relationships through the pigeon. Harri befriends a pigeon that visits his balcony, feeding it despite others' disapproval. The pigeon's italicised sections, in a calm, philosophical voice, present it as a kind of guardian watching over him. This unusual friendship suggests that Harri's capacity for love is wide and generous, and that true friendship is about care rather than gain.

The ending exposes the fragility of all these bonds. Harri's investigation brings him to the attention of the gang, and he is stabbed. His friends cannot save him, and the pigeon's final presence offers only a fragile comfort. Kelman, partly inspired by the real murder of ten-year-old Damilola Taylor in Peckham in 2000, uses this ending to show how environments of poverty and violence can destroy the trust on which friendship depends.

Overall, Kelman presents friendship as one of the most important forces in a

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child's life: it brings joy, courage and a sense of home to a boy far from his birthplace. Yet the novel suggests that friendship alone cannot overcome the dangers of an unsafe society. By making readers care so deeply for Harri and his friends, Kelman challenges us to recognise that children's relationships deserve protection, and that the loss of innocence is a collective failure, not an individual one.