AQA

GCSE
ENGLISH LITERATURE

Paper 2 Modern texts and poetry

Thursday 21 May 2020 Morning Time allowed: 2 hours 15 minutes

Materials

For this paper you must have:
- an AQA 16-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 8702/2.
- Answer **one** question from **Section A**, **one** question from **Section B** and **both** questions in **Section C**.
- You must **not** use a dictionary.

Information
- The marks for questions are shown in brackets.
- The maximum mark for this paper is 96.
- AO4 will be assessed in **Section A**. There are 4 marks available for AO4 in **Section A** in addition to 30 marks for answering the question. AO4 assesses the following skills: use a range of vocabulary and sentence structures for clarity, purpose and effect, with accurate spelling and punctuation.
- There are 30 marks for **Section B** and 32 marks for **Section C**.

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Section A: Modern prose or drama

Answer **one** question from this section on your chosen text.

JB Priestley: *An Inspector Calls*

Either

0 1 Mr Birling says, '…a man has to mind his own business and look after himself and his own'.

How far does Priestley present Mr Birling as a man who cares only for himself and his family?

Write about:

- what Mr Birling says and does
- how far Priestley presents Mr Birling as a man who cares only for himself and his family.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

or

0 2 How far does Priestley present male characters as irresponsible in the play?

Write about:

- one or more of the male character(s)
- how far Priestley presents one or more of the male character(s) as irresponsible.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

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Willy Russell: *Blood Brothers*

or

0 3 How does Russell use the character of Mickey to show the importance of education in *Blood Brothers*?

Write about:

- Mickey's experience of education
- how Russell uses Mickey to show the importance of education.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

or

0 4 How does Russell present the importance of friendship in *Blood Brothers*?

Write about:

- examples of friendship in the play
- how Russell presents the importance of friendship.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

Turn over for the next question

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Alan Bennett: *The History Boys*

or

0 5 How far does Bennett present Hector as a character who is unsatisfied in his job as a teacher?

Write about:

- what Hector says and does in the play
- how far Bennett presents Hector as unsatisfied in his job as a teacher.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

or

0 6 How does Bennett present attitudes towards the teaching of history in *The History Boys*?

Write about:

- some of the attitudes towards the teaching of history in the play
- how Bennett presents attitudes towards the teaching of history.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

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Dennis Kelly: *DNA*

or

0 7 How far does Kelly present Phil as a disturbing character in *DNA*?

Write about:

- what Phil says and does
- how far Kelly presents Phil as a disturbing character.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

or

0 8 How does Kelly present the negative effects of being in a gang?

Write about:

- what one or more of the character(s) say and do
- how Kelly presents the negative effects of being in a gang.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 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 'Ed is trying to be a good father in difficult circumstances.'

How far do you agree with this view of Christopher's father?

Write about:

- what Christopher's father says and does
- how Stephens presents Christopher's father.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

or

1 0 How does Stephens present Christopher dealing with change?

Write about:

- some of the changes that Christopher faces
- how Stephens presents Christopher dealing with change.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

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Shelagh Delaney: *A Taste of Honey*

or

1 1 How does Delaney use the character of Geof to explore ideas about friendship?

Write about:

- what Geof says and does in the play
- how Delaney uses Geof to explore ideas about friendship.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

or

1 2 How does Delaney present the attitudes of female characters towards men in *A Taste of Honey*?

Write about:

- some of the attitudes of female characters towards men in the play
- how Delaney presents the attitudes of female characters towards men.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

Turn over for the next question

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William Golding: *Lord of the Flies*

or

1 3 How far does Golding present Jack as a character who changes in *Lord of the Flies*?

Write about:

- what Jack says and does
- how far Golding presents Jack as a character who changes.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

or

1 4 How far does Golding present the island as a dangerous place?

Write about:

- what happens to the boys on the island
- how far Golding presents the island as a dangerous place.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

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AQA Anthology: *Telling Tales*

or

1 5 How do writers present misunderstandings between parents and children in 'Korea' and in **one** other story from *Telling Tales*?

Write about:

- misunderstandings between parents and children in the **two** stories
- how the writers present these misunderstandings.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

or

1 6 How do writers present the difficulties of growing up in 'Chemistry' and in **one** other story from *Telling Tales*?

Write about:

- the difficulties of growing up in the **two** stories
- how the writers present the difficulties of growing up.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

Turn over for the next question

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George Orwell: *Animal Farm*

or

1 7 How far does Orwell present Napoleon as a character who is only interested in power?

Write about:

- what Napoleon says and does
- how far Orwell presents Napoleon as only interested in power.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

or

1 8 How does Orwell present relationships between the humans and the animals in *Animal Farm*?

Write about:

- the relationships between the humans and the animals
- how Orwell presents the relationships between the humans and the animals.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

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Kazuo Ishiguro: *Never Let Me Go*

or

1 9 How far does Ishiguro present Ruth as an unlikeable character in *Never Let Me Go*?

Write about:

- what Ruth says and does
- how far Ishiguro presents Ruth as unlikeable.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

or

2 0 How far does Ishiguro present hopes and dreams as important to characters in *Never Let Me Go*?

Write about:

- hopes and dreams that characters have
- how far Ishiguro presents these hopes and dreams as important.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

Turn over for the next question

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Meera Syal: *Anita and Me*

or

2 1 How far does Syal present Anita as an unlikeable character in *Anita and Me*?

Write about:

- what Anita says and does
- how far Syal presents Anita as unlikeable.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

or

2 2 How does Syal present Meena learning from a range of cultures in *Anita and Me*?

Write about:

- the cultures that Meena experiences
- how Syal presents Meena learning.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

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Stephen Kelman: *Pigeon English*

or

2 3 How does Kelman present Harrison as a character who is innocent about the realities of inner-city life?

Write about:

- what Harrison says and does
- how Kelman presents Harrison as a character who is innocent about the realities of inner-city life.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

or

2 4 'Despite its ending, *Pigeon English* is a book about hope.'

How far do you agree with this view of the novel?

Write about:

- ideas about hope in the novel
- how far Kelman presents the novel as a book about hope.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

Turn over for Section B

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Section B: Poetry

Answer **one** question from this section.

AQA Anthology: *Poems Past and Present*

Either

Love and relationships

The poems you have studied are:

Lord Byron	When We Two Parted
Percy Bysshe Shelley	Love's Philosophy
Robert Browning	Porphyria's Lover
Elizabeth Barrett Browning	Sonnet 29 – 'I think of thee!'
Thomas Hardy	Neutral Tones
Maura Dooley	Letters from Yorkshire
Charlotte Mew	The Farmer's Bride
Cecil Day-Lewis	Walking Away
Charles Causley	Eden Rock
Seamus Heaney	Follower
Simon Armitage	Mother, any distance
Carol Ann Duffy	Before You Were Mine
Owen Sheers	Winter Swans
Daljit Nagra	Singh Song!
Andrew Waterhouse	Climbing My Grandfather

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2 5 Compare how poets present family relationships in 'Walking Away' and in **one** other poem from 'Love and relationships'.

[30 marks]

Walking Away

It is eighteen years ago, almost to the day –
A sunny day with leaves just turning,
The touch-lines new-ruled – since I watched you play
Your first game of football, then, like a satellite
Wrenched from its orbit, go drifting away

Behind a scatter of boys. I can see
You walking away from me towards the school
With the pathos of a half-fledged thing set free
Into a wilderness, the gait of one
Who finds no path where the path should be.

That hesitant figure, eddying away
Like a winged seed loosened from its parent stem,
Has something I never quite grasp to convey
About nature's give-and-take – the small, the scorching
Ordeals which fire one's irresolute clay.

I have had worse partings, but none that so
Gnaws at my mind still. Perhaps it is roughly
Saying what God alone could perfectly show –
How selfhood begins with a walking away,
And love is proved in the letting go.

Cecil Day-Lewis

Turn over for the next question

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or

Power and conflict

The poems you have studied are:

Percy Bysshe Shelley	Ozymandias
William Blake	London
William Wordsworth	Extract from The Prelude
Robert Browning	My Last Duchess
Alfred Lord Tennyson	The Charge of the Light Brigade
Wilfred Owen	Exposure
Seamus Heaney	Storm on the Island
Ted Hughes	Bayonet Charge
Simon Armitage	Remains
Jane Weir	Poppies
Carol Ann Duffy	War Photographer
Imtiaz Dharker	Tissue
Carol Rumens	The Emigrée
John Agard	Checking Out Me History
Beatrice Garland	Kamikaze

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2 6 Compare how poets present the ways people are affected by difficult experiences in 'Remains' and in **one** other poem from 'Power and conflict'.

[30 marks]

Remains

On another occasion, we get sent out
to tackle looters raiding a bank.
And one of them legs it up the road,
probably armed, possibly not.

Well myself and somebody else and somebody else
are all of the same mind,
so all three of us open fire.
Three of a kind all letting fly, and I swear

I see every round as it rips through his life –
I see broad daylight on the other side.
So we've hit this looter a dozen times
and he's there on the ground, sort of inside out,

pain itself, the image of agony.
One of my mates goes by
and tosses his guts back into his body.
Then he's carted off in the back of a lorry.

End of story, except not really.
His blood-shadow stays on the street, and out on patrol
I walk right over it week after week.
Then I'm home on leave. But I blink

and he bursts again through the doors of the bank.
Sleep, and he's probably armed, possibly not.
Dream, and he's torn apart by a dozen rounds.
And the drink and the drugs won't flush him out –

he's here in my head when I close my eyes,
dug in behind enemy lines,
not left for dead in some distant, sun-stunned, sand-smothered land
or six-feet-under in desert sand,

but near to the knuckle, here and now,
his bloody life in my bloody hands.

Simon Armitage

Turn over for Section C

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Section C: Unseen poetry

Answer **both** questions in this section.

I Am Offering this Poem

I am offering this poem to you,
since I have nothing else to give.
Keep it like a warm coat
when winter comes to cover you,
or like a pair of thick socks
the cold cannot bite through,

I love you,

I have nothing else to give you,
so it is a pot full of yellow corn
to warm your belly in winter,
it is a scarf for your head, to wear
over your hair, to tie up around your face,

I love you,

Keep it, treasure this as you would
if you were lost, needing direction,
in the wilderness life becomes when mature;
and in the corner of your drawer,
tucked away like a cabin or hogan*
in dense trees, come knocking,
and I will answer, give you directions,
and let you warm yourself by this fire,
rest by this fire, and make you feel safe

I love you,

It's all I have to give,
and all anyone needs to live,
and to go on living inside,
when the world outside
no longer cares if you live or die;
remember,

I love you.

*hogan: wooden hut/shelter

Jimmy Santiago Baca

2 7 . 1 In 'I Am Offering this Poem', how does the poet present the speaker's feelings about love?

[24 marks]

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2 7 . 2 In both ‘The sun has burst the sky’ and ‘I Am Offering this Poem’ the speakers describe their feelings about love.

What are the similarities **and/or** differences between the methods the poets use to present these feelings?

[8 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 Mr Birling as a man who cares, above all, for himself, and only for his family insofar as they reflect and extend his own status. His claim that "a man has to mind his own business and look after himself and his own" is the creed of capitalist individualism that the play sets out to demolish. Birling is less a rounded character than a dramatic device: Priestley makes him pompous, wrong and unteachable so that his 1945 audience, voting for a new welfare state, will reject everything he stands for.

From the opening, Priestley signals that Birling's world is narrow and self-serving. The stage directions describe him as "heavy-looking" and "rather portentous", and the dining room is "substantial and heavily comfortable", so that his physical bulk and his solid furniture seem to embody complacent wealth. Even Sheila's engagement is treated as a business merger: he looks forward to Crofts and Birling working together "for lower costs and higher prices". The celebration of his daughter's happiness slides almost instantly into talk of profit, which suggests that his family matters to him partly as an asset. His hope of "a knighthood" reveals that his deepest ambition is social advancement for himself.

Birling's long speeches before the Inspector arrives are crucial to how Priestley undermines him. He calls himself "a hard-headed, practical man of business" and dismisses the idea that "everybody has to look after everybody else" as "community and all that nonsense". The simile "like bees in a hive" is meant to sound absurd, yet the image of a hive actually suggests cooperation and shared survival, which is exactly the message the Inspector will bring. Priestley's dramatic irony is relentless: Birling declares the Titanic "unsinkable, absolutely unsinkable" and

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predicts there will be no war. An audience who had lived through two world wars would see that a man so wrong about history is also wrong about society. Significantly, the doorbell rings just as he is lecturing Gerald and Eric about looking after themselves, as if the Inspector's arrival is a direct answer to his philosophy.

When questioned about Eva Smith, Birling's selfishness becomes cruelty. He sacked her for leading a strike for a small rise in wages, and he insists "I can't accept any responsibility". He argues that if he did not "come down sharply" on such workers "they'd soon be asking for the earth", a hyperbole that reveals his contempt for the working class and his fear of losing control. Eric's simple question about why the girls should not try for higher wages exposes how little Birling has thought about anyone outside his own class. In the context of 1912, when strikes and unions were growing, Priestley presents Birling as the kind of employer whose greed created the inequality the post-war Labour government hoped to end.

However, Priestley complicates the idea that Birling cares for his family. Although he claims to protect "his own", his concern is really for the family's reputation. When Eric's theft from the office is revealed, Birling is angrier about the money and the scandal than about Eric's distress, and Eric's bitter accusation that he is not the kind of father "a chap could go to" when in trouble suggests a home without real love or communication. Birling's first thought on learning everything is that there will be a public scandal that might cost him his knighthood. In this sense, he does not even care properly for his family; he cares for himself, and the family is simply part of his public image.

The final act confirms that Birling is incapable of change. Once Gerald suggests that the Inspector was not a real police officer, Birling becomes "jovial" again,

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mocking "the famous younger generation who know it all". Priestley uses this structural contrast with Sheila and Eric, who accept their guilt, to show that the older generation is locked into selfishness while the young can learn. The final telephone call announcing that a girl has died and an inspector is on his way punishes Birling's complacency: the lesson he refused to learn returns, just as the Inspector warned of "fire and blood and anguish".

Therefore, Priestley presents Birling as caring almost entirely for himself, with his family valued mainly as an extension of his status. Through him, Priestley warns that a society built on "look after himself and his own" will keep producing Eva Smiths, and urges his audience to accept instead that "we are responsible for each other".

02 Priestley presents the male characters of the Birling world as deeply irresponsible, using their power over a working-class woman for profit, pleasure and convenience and then refusing to answer for the consequences. Yet he does not present all men in the same way: the degree of irresponsibility varies, the younger Eric shows that change is possible, and the Inspector, the most powerful man on stage, embodies responsibility itself. Through these contrasts Priestley suggests that irresponsibility is not natural to men but produced by a patriarchal, capitalist society that his 1945 audience had the chance to rebuild.

Mr Birling is the clearest example of irresponsibility disguised as good business. He sacked Eva Smith for asking for higher wages and defends this as his "duty", insisting "I can't accept any responsibility". The repeated first person in his speeches shows a man who sees the world only in terms of himself. Priestley makes his irresponsibility comic as well as cruel: his confident predictions that the

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Titanic is "unsinkable" and that war will not come expose him as a man who will not take responsibility even for understanding the world he lives in. For an audience who had survived two wars, his blindness would seem not just foolish but dangerous. The Inspector's reminder that "public men" have "responsibilities as well as privileges" pointedly highlights the gap between Birling's status and his conduct.

Gerald is presented more sympathetically, which makes his irresponsibility subtler. He rescued Eva, now Daisy Renton, from the predatory Alderman Meggarty, "half-drunk and goggle-eyed", and Priestley allows him some genuine feeling when he leaves the room, distressed. However, he also kept her as his mistress while Sheila waited for him, and his admission that "I didn't feel about her as she felt about me" reveals the imbalance of power in the relationship: she gave her whole life, while he could end the affair whenever it suited him. Sheila's sarcastic label, "the wonderful Fairy Prince", deflates his self-image as a rescuer and suggests that his kindness was really a form of self-indulgence. In the Edwardian period, when wealthy men could treat working-class women as disposable, Gerald's behaviour would have been socially acceptable, and Priestley invites his audience to see how ugly that acceptance was.

Eric's irresponsibility is the most shocking. He drinks heavily, forces himself on Eva, gets her pregnant and then steals money from his father's office to support her. His confession that he was "in that state when a chap easily turns nasty" uses casual, euphemistic language, "a chap", to soften something violent, which perhaps reveals how men of his class excused such behaviour. Yet Priestley presents Eric as changing. He becomes the moral voice of the final act, accusing his parents and insisting that what matters is that the girl is dead. His bitter claim that his father is not the kind of man "a chap could go to" when in trouble suggests that Eric's irresponsibility was learned in a household where money

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mattered more than love.

Structurally, the final act is where Priestley weighs how far the men are irresponsible. Once Gerald returns with the theory that the Inspector was a hoax, he and Birling seize the chance to escape. Birling becomes "jovial", and Gerald offers Sheila the ring again, saying "Everything's all right now, Sheila". The repetition of the old engagement scene shows that, for these men, nothing has been learned, and the ring becomes a symbol of a relationship based on concealment. By contrast, Eric and Sheila refuse to return to normal, and Priestley uses this split to suggest that irresponsibility belongs to the older generation and those who share its values, while the young can learn.

Finally, the Inspector shows that power need not mean irresponsibility. He creates "an impression of massiveness", controls the pace of every revelation and speaks for the voiceless Eva. His final speech, warning that if men do not learn "they will be taught it in fire and blood and anguish", uses the generic "men" to mean humanity, but it also lands pointedly on the men in the room, whose choices have destroyed a woman's life. Priestley seems to argue that the male characters are irresponsible to a great extent, but that this is a product of their privilege and their society, not of being male. The play's final telephone call warns his audience that if they repeat those choices, the consequences will return.

03 Russell uses Mickey to show that education is not simply about lessons and exams, but about opportunity, confidence and the power to shape your own life. Mickey begins the play as a lively, imaginative child with as much potential as his twin, yet because he is born into the wrong class he is failed by a system that rewards Edward. Through Mickey, Russell, who himself left school with almost no

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qualifications, argues that a lack of education is a social injustice rather than a personal failing, and that it can quite literally be fatal.

In Act 1, Russell establishes that Mickey is not unintelligent. Aged seven, and proudly "nearly eight", he is quick-witted, funny and inventive, and it is Mickey who introduces Edward to the "F" word and the language of the street. Edward's delighted response, "You know the most smashing words", is comic, but it also suggests that Mickey has a different kind of knowledge, rich and vivid, which school will never value. His Liverpool dialect, with its dropped letters and energetic rhythms, marks his class from the start, while Edward's polite, standard English signals privilege. Russell perhaps implies that the twins are equal in ability and differ only in the cultural capital their homes give them.

The structure of the play then drives the boys apart through their schooling. While Edward is sent to a private boarding school, Mickey attends the local secondary school, and the classroom scene in Act 2 presents education as dull, chaotic and hostile. The teacher's questions are met with jokes and backchat, and Mickey, now a self-conscious fourteen-year-old, uses humour to hide his embarrassment and his lack of interest. Both boys are suspended, which creates a deliberate parallel, but the consequences are very different. Edward's suspension for refusing to remove his locket has no effect on his future, whereas Mickey's lack of qualifications leaves him with only factory work. Russell suggests that, in 1970s and 1980s Britain, a working-class boy could fail at school and never recover, while a middle-class boy is protected by money.

The contrast is sharpest after Edward returns from university. Mickey has been made redundant from the cardboard box factory, a symbolically fragile and repetitive job, and has joined the growing ranks of the unemployed in Thatcher's

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Britain. Edward, full of carefree confidence, cannot understand why Mickey is unhappy and offers him money, which only deepens the gulf. Mickey bitterly points out that he grew up while Edward never had to, suggesting that education has kept Edward in a protected childhood, while poverty forced Mickey into adulthood far too soon. The audience sees that education has given Edward choices, while Mickey has none.

Without education or employment, Mickey is drawn into crime with Sammy, who has also been failed by school. The robbery leads to prison and to depression, and Mickey becomes dependent on pills, telling Linda that he takes them so he can be invisible. This is a devastating reversal of the energetic child in Act 1: the boy who once dominated the stage now wants to disappear. Russell uses the Narrator's ominous refrain about the devil to suggest that fate is at work, but the play makes it clear that this "fate" is really social class. Mickey's decline is the result of a society that offered him no route out.

In the final scene, Russell makes the importance of education explicit. Mickey discovers that Edward, now a councillor, has arranged his house and job, and that Linda has been seeing him. His cry "I could have been him!" is the emotional climax of the play. The repetition and broken syntax capture his realisation that the only difference between them was upbringing, including the education his mother could not give him. Mrs Johnstone's decision to give away a baby she could not afford to raise is, in a sense, the origin of everything, and Mickey's death shows the tragic cost of that inequality.

Ultimately, Russell uses Mickey as a construct to show that education shapes destiny. Mickey's wit and warmth are never developed because his school and his society see no value in them. The Narrator's final question asking whether we

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should blame superstition or "what we, the English, have come to know as class" invites the audience to recognise that Mickey is not the victim of fate, but of an unequal education system that decided his future before he was born.

04 Russell presents friendship as one of the most precious and natural forces in Blood Brothers: instinctive, joyful and blind to class in childhood. However, he also shows that friendship is fragile, because it cannot survive the pressures of a society divided by money and opportunity. The tragedy of Mickey and Edward is that their friendship is genuine, yet the class system, and the adults who uphold it, turn it into rivalry and finally death.

Russell makes the first meeting of the twins immediate and joyful. At seven, Mickey and Edward are drawn to each other at once, and the discovery that they share a birthday seems to confirm a bond that the audience knows is really one of blood. Edward offers Mickey sweets freely, and Mickey teaches Edward forbidden words, so each gives the other something his own world lacks. Their decision to become "blood brothers", cutting their hands and swearing to stand by each other, is full of dramatic irony: the audience knows they are already brothers, so the ritual becomes both touching and ominous. Russell suggests that children, untouched by prejudice, form friendships on the basis of character and fun rather than class, and the playful, rhythmic songs of Act I capture this innocence.

From the start, though, adults try to destroy this friendship. Mrs Johnstone, bound by her pact, tells Mickey to stay away, and Mrs Lyons forbids Edward to mix with children from Mickey's street, insisting he is different. Her increasingly frantic attempts to separate the boys, including moving the family to the country, reveal how middle-class fear of the working class shapes relationships. Yet the boys keep

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finding each other, which implies that friendship is stronger than parental control. The Narrator's warnings about superstition and the devil create a sense that the friendship is doomed, adding a fatalistic tension to every happy moment.

Linda's friendship with both boys is equally important. As a child she defends Mickey fiercely, and as teenagers the three form a close group. The duet in which Edward and Mickey sing about wanting to be like each other shows that admiration runs both ways: Edward envies Mickey's ease with Linda, while Mickey envies Edward's confidence. Russell uses the parallel structure of their duet to emphasise how similar they are underneath their different accents and lives. Linda's role also complicates friendship, because the triangle of affection between the three becomes a source of later jealousy.

In Act 2, Russell shows the friendship breaking under the weight of class. When Edward returns from university, carefree and comfortable, Mickey has been made redundant and is struggling to support Linda and their baby. Edward's inability to understand Mickey's situation, and his offer of money, reveal the growing gulf between them. Mickey's bitter remark that he has grown up while Edward never had to suggests that the friendship has been poisoned by inequality: Mickey sees Edward not as his friend but as a reminder of everything he has been denied. The friendship that once crossed class boundaries now exposes them.

Russell's structure makes the collapse of friendship tragic. After prison and depression, Mickey discovers that Edward has secretly helped him and has been meeting Linda. His sense of betrayal is complete, because friendship has turned into charity and then into theft of his wife. In the final scene, holding a gun, Mickey cries "I could have been him!", and his anger is directed less at Edward as a person than at the life Edward was given. When Mrs Johnstone finally reveals

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that they are twins, the truth comes far too late. The two boys who promised to stand by each other die together, and the "blood brothers" oath is grimly fulfilled.

Russell's final message is that friendship matters deeply, but that it cannot overcome the structures of a divided society on its own. The Narrator's closing question, asking whether we blame superstition or "what we, the English, have come to know as class", directs the audience away from fate and towards society. For a 1980s audience living through rising unemployment and social division, the destroyed friendship of Mickey and Edward becomes a warning: a society that separates people by class will turn even brothers against each other.

05 Bennett presents Hector as a man who loves teaching but is profoundly unsatisfied with almost everything that surrounds it: the exam-driven school, the Headmaster's obsession with results, and, perhaps most painfully, himself. His dissatisfaction is not with the act of teaching, which gives his life meaning, but with a system and a culture that no longer value the kind of teacher he is. Through Hector, Bennett mourns an idea of education as a gift to be passed on rather than a commodity to be measured.

At first, Hector appears to be in his element. His lessons are anarchic and joyful: the boys act out scenes from old films, perform a French role play set in a brothel, and recite poetry learned by heart. Bennett uses this theatrical chaos to show Hector's belief that knowledge should be absorbed for its own sake, and his love of quotation reflects his conviction, taken from Housman, that "All knowledge is precious whether or not it serves the slightest human use". There is real satisfaction here. Hector is witty and theatrical, and the boys clearly adore him, so on one level Bennett presents a teacher who has found his vocation.

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However, Hector's satisfaction depends on resisting the purpose the school expects. He dismisses exams as the enemy of real education, and refuses to see his lessons as preparation for anything. The Headmaster, by contrast, wants results and Oxbridge places to raise the school in the league tables, and he regards Hector's teaching as unquantifiable and therefore worthless. Bennett sets the play in the 1980s, when Thatcherite ideas about measurable outcomes and competition were transforming schools, and Hector's dissatisfaction reflects the frustration of teachers whose methods no longer fitted a target culture. The arrival of Irwin, who teaches the boys to be clever, contrary and exam-ready, makes Hector's sense of being sidelined acute.

Hector's dissatisfaction is also personal. His habit of giving boys lifts on his motorbike and fondling them is exposed, and the Headmaster uses it to force him into early retirement. Bennett handles this ambiguously: the boys treat it as a joke, almost as a ritual, while the audience is invited to feel both discomfort and pity. Hector's description of the behaviour as a kind of benediction rather than gratification suggests that he cannot fully face what he has done. His loneliness, his odd and distant marriage and his repressed sexuality suggest a man whose inner life is deeply unfulfilled, and his teaching becomes a way of finding the intimacy and connection he lacks elsewhere.

Bennett's most moving presentation of Hector's satisfaction comes in the scene with Posner and Hardy's "Drummer Hodge". Hector explains that the best moments in reading are when it is "as if a hand has come out and taken yours". The metaphor of touch, in a play where Hector's physical contact with the boys is so troubling, is poignant: here, the connection is purely intellectual and emotional, and it shows what Hector most longs to give. The gentle, unhurried dialogue of the

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scene, so different from the rapid wit of the classroom, reveals a teacher at his most fulfilled. Yet elsewhere in the play Hector breaks down and weeps in front of the boys, which reveals how deeply his forced retirement and the loss of his role have wounded him.

Structurally, Bennett shapes the play so that Hector's dissatisfaction ends in tragedy. He is killed in a motorbike accident, with Irwin riding behind him, before he can leave the school on his own terms. Mrs Lintott's closing account of the boys' futures is bleak: many of them become successful but unfulfilled, with Posner isolated and Dakin a tax lawyer. Hector's final message, recalled at the end, is "Pass the parcel. That's sometimes all you can do". The image of passing knowledge on "Not for me, not for you, but for someone, somewhere, one day" suggests that Hector believed the true rewards of teaching come later and cannot be measured. Perhaps this is the deepest source of his dissatisfaction: he cannot see the results of his work.

Overall, Bennett presents Hector as largely unsatisfied, but not with teaching itself. He is unsatisfied with a system that measures learning by grades, with his own flaws, and with a life outside the classroom that offers little love. Bennett invites his audience to see Hector as both a flawed man and a symbol of a disappearing kind of education, and to question what is lost when schools value results over wonder.

06 Bennett presents the teaching of history as a battleground between competing ideas of what education is for. Hector sees learning as a lifelong gift to be valued for its own sake, Irwin treats history as a performance designed to win, and Mrs Lintott teaches it as a body of reliable facts. By setting these attitudes against

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each other, and by letting the boys and the ending of the play judge them, Bennett questions whether history should be about truth, success or humanity, and warns his audience against a culture that values cleverness over meaning.

Mrs Lintott represents the traditional, solid approach. She has given the boys a thorough grounding in facts, and her teaching has secured their excellent A level results. Bennett gives her some of the sharpest lines in the play, and her view that history is "a commentary on the various and continuing incapabilities of men" reveals a dry, ironic understanding of the past. Her later complaint that history is "women following behind with the bucket" adds a feminist perspective that none of the men consider. Bennett uses her as a voice of reason and also as a reminder that history teaching has excluded women's experience, though she is herself overlooked by the Headmaster in favour of the new male teacher.

Irwin's approach is radically different. Hired by the Headmaster to help the boys win places at Oxford and Cambridge, he teaches them to be contrary, to look for the unexpected angle and to treat truth as secondary to making an impression. He argues that history nowadays "is not a matter of conviction. It's a performance. It's entertainment." The short, declarative sentences make his philosophy sound confident and modern, but Bennett invites his audience to feel uneasy. When Irwin encourages the boys to see the First World War or even the Holocaust in surprising ways, Posner's anxiety about whether such subjects can be treated as material for clever essays raises a serious moral question. Bennett suggests that a history which values novelty over truth can become cynical and even dangerous.

Hector, although he does not officially teach history, embodies a third attitude: that education should not be "useful" at all. His lessons on poetry, film and language aim to give the boys something to carry through life rather than to pass

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exams. The tension between Hector and Irwin is dramatised in the joint lessons, where the boys are caught between two worlds. Hector's belief in knowledge "whether or not it serves the slightest human use" is set directly against Irwin's emphasis on technique and presentation. Bennett's sympathy seems to lie with Hector, yet he also shows the limits of Hector's method, since the boys need Irwin's tricks to succeed in the system they live in.

The boys themselves offer varied responses that help Bennett explore these attitudes. Dakin is dazzled by Irwin's cleverness and becomes his eager disciple. Posner, more sensitive and Jewish, feels the moral weight of history more keenly, especially when the Holocaust is discussed. Rudge, often underestimated, offers a blunt definition: history is "just one fucking thing after another". This comic line deflates the intellectual games of both teachers, and ironically Rudge wins his Oxford place through family connections and sporting ability rather than either method. Bennett uses this to satirise the idea that any single approach to history guarantees success.

Contextually, the play is set in the 1980s, when schools were under growing pressure from league tables and measurable outcomes, yet it was written in 2004, during New Labour's focus on targets and results. Bennett, who studied and briefly taught history at Oxford, is clearly questioning whether such pressures distort the purpose of education. The Headmaster, obsessed with rankings, sees Hector's teaching as unmeasurable and Irwin's as a means to an end, which suggests that institutions often value whatever produces results.

The ending of the play delivers Bennett's final judgement. Hector is killed, Irwin is injured and later becomes a television historian, the ultimate performer of history. Mrs Lintott's account of the boys' futures shows that many achieve worldly

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success without lasting fulfilment. Hector's final words, urging that knowledge be passed on "Not for me, not for you, but for someone, somewhere, one day", suggest that the true value of teaching history lies not in exams or entertainment but in a shared inheritance of human experience. Bennett seems to argue that history should be taught with both rigour and humanity, and that when it becomes merely a game, something precious is lost.

07 Kelly presents Phil as a deeply disturbing character, not because he is loud or violent, but because he is calm, silent and utterly in control. While the others panic, Phil thinks; while they feel guilt, he plans. Through Phil, Kelly explores how easily a group will hand power to a cold, rational leader, and how frightening it is when intelligence is cut off from conscience. Yet Kelly also suggests, by the end, that Phil is damaged by what he has done, which makes him not only disturbing but disturbed.

From his first appearances, Phil's silence is his most unsettling quality. In the scenes with Leah, she talks almost continuously, filling the space with anxious questions, theories and confessions, while Phil eats and says almost nothing. Kelly's stage directions repeatedly show him eating, which creates a darkly comic contrast: Leah agonises about morality and human nature while Phil is absorbed in his food. His refusal to respond makes him seem powerful and unreadable, and the audience, like Leah, is left wondering what he is thinking. Leah functions as a foil, her nervous chatter highlighting his stillness, and perhaps Kelly suggests that silence itself can be a form of control.

Phil's leadership emerges when the group's original leader, John Tate, loses control. When the others are panicking about Adam's apparent death, Phil speaks at length

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for the first time, calmly laying out a detailed plan to invent a fictional attacker and plant false evidence. The contrast with his earlier silence is striking: when he finally speaks, the others obey without question. His plan is ruthlessly practical, involving Adam's jumper, an invented description of a man and planted evidence, and the precision of his instructions is chilling because it shows no emotional response to Adam's fate. Kelly perhaps draws on ideas about obedience to authority, such as Milgram's experiments, to show how quickly frightened people follow whoever seems certain.

The most disturbing moment comes when Adam is discovered alive, living rough in a hedge. Instead of seeing a chance to put things right, Phil sees a threat to the cover story. He persuades Cathy and Brian to take Adam away and kill him by putting a plastic bag over his head. The decision is made in a cold, logical way, as if a human life is a problem to be solved. Leah's horrified protests are ignored, and her inability to stop him reveals how completely Phil has come to dominate the group. Kelly structures the play so that each act raises the stakes, and Phil's decisions move the group from cruelty to cover-up to murder.

Phil is also disturbing in the way he uses other people's weaknesses. Brian, the most vulnerable member of the group, is threatened and manipulated into identifying the innocent postman, and later breaks down completely. Cathy, by contrast, is drawn by Phil's leadership into enjoying her power, and becomes increasingly cruel herself. Kelly suggests that Phil does not need to commit violence personally; he creates a structure in which others do it for him. This links to wider ideas about how gang leaders control groups through fear and a sense of shared guilt.

However, Kelly complicates the picture in the final act. Leah has gone, and Phil

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has withdrawn from the group, sitting alone in a field and apparently no longer eating. Richard tries to persuade him to come back, explaining that the group is falling apart and that Cathy has become frightening, but Phil does not respond. His silence now seems very different from his silence at the start: rather than control, it suggests emptiness or guilt. The fact that he no longer eats, when eating once defined him, is a powerful visual symbol of his change. Perhaps Kelly suggests that Phil has been hollowed out by what he has done and by the loss of Leah, the one person who challenged him.

Overall, Kelly presents Phil as profoundly disturbing because he shows how a calm, intelligent teenager can lead others into atrocity with frightening ease. Yet the ending prevents the audience from seeing him simply as a monster. By leaving Phil isolated and silent, Kelly raises unsettling questions about responsibility, conscience and the cost of power, and invites the audience to consider how ordinary young people can become capable of terrible things.

08 Kelly presents being in a gang as something that offers teenagers safety and belonging but costs them their individuality, their conscience and, in some cases, their sanity. The group in DNA is never named as a gang, yet it behaves like one: it has leaders, rituals of loyalty and a shared secret that binds everyone together. Through the escalating consequences of Adam's "death", Kelly suggests that the need to belong can lead ordinary young people into cruelty, lies and murder, and that nobody leaves the group unharmed.

The most obvious negative effect is on the victim. Mark and Jan's reported account of what happened to Adam in the woods, delivered in quick, fragmented dialogue, reveals that he was humiliated, made to perform increasingly dangerous

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dares to prove he belonged, and finally fell, or was pushed, into a grille. Kelly's choice to have this violence described rather than shown makes it more disturbing, because the casual tone of the speakers suggests how normal such cruelty has become within the group. Adam's desperate wish to be accepted shows the darker side of belonging: the gang's approval becomes something he will risk his life for.

The gang's shared guilt then traps its members. Early in the play, John Tate tries to control the situation through intimidation, forbidding the others to say certain words and threatening anyone who might break the silence. Kelly shows how fear rather than loyalty holds the group together, and how quickly authority can shift. When Phil takes over, his calm plan to frame an imaginary attacker is accepted without challenge. The group's willingness to obey links to Kelly's interest in how people follow orders, and to wider ideas about peer pressure, where the fear of being excluded or blamed is stronger than the sense of right and wrong.

Kelly presents the effects of this pressure most painfully through Brian. Already vulnerable, he is bullied into identifying an innocent postman and later becomes so traumatised that he ends up on medication, swinging between hysterical laughter and tears. Brian's breakdown suggests that the gang's actions destroy those least able to cope, and Kelly uses him to show the psychological cost of carrying a terrible secret. By contrast, Cathy responds by becoming more aggressive, enjoying the attention of being interviewed on television and becoming increasingly violent. Kelly suggests that the gang can bring out cruelty in some people as well as fear in others, and that the same experience shapes members in different, but always negative, ways.

The structure of the play intensifies these effects. Each section moves the group further into wrongdoing: from bullying, to lying, to framing an innocent man, and

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finally to murdering Adam when he is found alive. Kelly's short scenes in different locations, the street, the field and the wood, create a sense of a world closing in, with the characters unable to escape. The decision to kill Adam, made under Phil's direction and carried out by Cathy and Brian, is the moment where belonging to the group has completely overridden individual morality.

Leah offers a contrast and a warning. She is the one character who openly questions what the group is doing, and her long monologues to the silent Phil reveal her moral anxiety. Her speech about chimps and bonobos explores whether humans are naturally violent or cooperative, which mirrors the central question of the play: are the teenagers naturally cruel, or made cruel by the group? When she finally disappears from the group, the audience senses that the only way to escape the gang's influence is to leave it entirely. Even Phil, the leader, ends the play isolated in a field, unresponsive to Richard's pleas to return, which suggests that power within the gang brings no happiness.

Kelly also hints at wider ideas about teenagers and society. The adults in the play are almost entirely absent, and the teenagers create their own rules and hierarchies, much like the boys in Lord of the Flies. Danny's selfish worry about how the scandal might affect his ambition to become a dentist shows that even ordinary hopes become tangled up in the group's guilt. Kelly seems to suggest that without guidance, the human need for security can be twisted into something destructive.

Ultimately, Kelly presents the negative effects of being in a gang as devastating and wide-ranging: the victim is destroyed, the innocent are punished, and every member is damaged psychologically or morally. DNA warns its young audience that the price of belonging can be far higher than the price of standing alone.

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I largely agree that Stephens presents Ed as a father who is genuinely trying to do his best in extremely difficult circumstances: he is a working-class single parent caring for a son with complex needs, abandoned by his wife and given little support. However, Stephens refuses to make him a saint. Ed's love is real, but it is expressed through lies, temper and even violence, and the play suggests that a parent's good intentions are not enough. Ed must earn back Christopher's trust before he can truly be a good father.

From the opening scenes, Stephens shows the strain under which Ed lives. When he collects Christopher from the police station, his dialogue is clipped and practical, and he is clearly embarrassed and exhausted. Ed speaks in a very ordinary, demotic way, full of frustration and swearing, which makes him realistic and sympathetic to a modern audience: he is not a polished, middle-class parent who has read the right books, but a boiler engineer from Swindon coping alone. Yet he also understands how to reach his son. The gesture in which Ed holds up his hand with his fingers spread in a fan, and Christopher touches it with his own, is one of the most moving moments in the play. Because Christopher cannot bear to be hugged, this ritual becomes Ed's substitute for physical affection, suggesting that he has patiently learned his son's needs over many years.

Ed's protectiveness, however, quickly becomes controlling. He forbids Christopher from investigating Wellington's death and from asking questions of the neighbours, and when he discovers that Christopher has disobeyed him and written about it in his book, his anger erupts. Stephens' stage directions show the scene turning physical: Ed grabs Christopher, Christopher hits out, and Ed hits him back. Arguably, Stephens wants us to see that Ed's anger is born of panic, because the

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investigation threatens to expose his secrets, but it is still a failure of care. A good father in difficult circumstances should not lash out at a child who cannot understand why he is in trouble.

The biggest challenge to the view in the question is Ed's lie about Judy. He tells Christopher that his mother has died, and he hides her letters in a shirt box in his bedroom. When Christopher finds them at the end of Act One, the effect is devastating: he is physically sick and curls up, unable to move. Stephens structures this as the climax of the first half, so the audience's sympathy for Ed is tested at exactly the point where Christopher's world collapses. Ed's explanation, that he lied to protect his son, can be read in two ways. Perhaps he genuinely believed that the truth about Judy's affair with Mr Shears would hurt Christopher more than her death. However, the lie also protected Ed's own pride and his anger at the end of his marriage. His confession that he killed Wellington after an argument with Mrs Shears makes this clearer still: his grief and rage at being rejected by two women spill over into a violent act. Here Stephens explores how the breakdown of a marriage damages both the parents and the child caught between them.

Importantly, Ed does tell the truth in the end. His halting confession shows how hard honesty is for him, but he chooses it, and this marks the start of his redemption. Christopher's response, however, is to see him as a danger. Having learned that his father could kill a dog, he concludes that he could kill him too, and he runs away to London. The journey of Act Two is partly a journey away from Ed.

By the end of the play, Stephens suggests that Ed is willing to change. He follows Christopher to London, and back in Swindon he patiently tries to rebuild their relationship. His gift of a puppy, Sandy, is significant: having killed Wellington, he

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now gives Christopher a dog to love, an act of atonement that speaks to his son in a language he understands. Ed's idea that trust has to be rebuilt bit by bit, through small promises kept over time, shows that he has learned that love must be shown consistently rather than simply felt.

Overall, Ed is a father who is trying to be good, and the "difficult circumstances" of poverty, a broken marriage and a lack of support for families of children with special needs are clearly shown. Yet Stephens also holds him responsible for the harm he causes. Perhaps the playwright's point is that good parenting is not a fixed quality but a process: Ed becomes a better father only when he stops trying to protect Christopher from the truth and starts treating him with honesty.

10 Stephens presents change as the most frightening thing in Christopher's world, because he depends on order, routine and logic to make sense of a confusing reality. Yet the play is structured as a journey in which Christopher is forced to face one upheaval after another, and Stephens suggests that, although change causes him terrible distress, it also reveals his extraordinary courage. By the end, Christopher has not stopped finding change difficult, but he has proved to himself that he can survive it.

At the start of the play, Stephens establishes the routines Christopher relies on. He hates being touched, cannot bear the colours yellow and brown, and decides what kind of day it will be by counting red cars on the way to school. To an audience these rules may seem strange or even comic, but Stephens presents them as Christopher's way of controlling an unpredictable world. The physical theatre style, developed with Frantic Assembly, and the stage design of a grid-like box lit with numbers and diagrams, place the audience inside his mind, so that we

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experience order as he does: something clean, mathematical and safe. This makes later disruptions all the more powerful.

The first change Christopher faces is the death of Wellington, which breaks the familiar pattern of his street. His response is to turn the mystery into a project, inspired by Sherlock Holmes, so that something disturbing becomes a problem to be solved logically. Stephens suggests that Christopher deals with change by imposing structure on it. When the police officer touches him, however, he cannot cope and hits out, showing how quickly unexpected contact overwhelms him. Other characters are often presented as foils who do not understand this: the policeman sees a violent boy, while the audience sees a frightened one, which invites us to question society's lack of understanding of conditions like Christopher's.

The greatest change comes at the end of Act One, when Christopher discovers his mother's letters and realises she is alive. In a single moment, the facts on which his life was built are proved false. Stephens shows his reaction physically rather than through speech: Christopher is sick and lies curled on the floor, groaning, unable to respond. This lack of dialogue is significant, because Christopher usually copes by talking precisely about facts; here words fail him entirely. When Ed then confesses to killing Wellington, Christopher's logic leads him to a terrifying conclusion, that his father might kill him, and he decides he must leave.

Act Two dramatises Christopher's journey to London, a literal journey that is also a metaphor for growing independence. Stephens uses the ensemble to create the overwhelming noise of Swindon station, the train and the London Underground, with voices, announcements and signs crowding the stage. The audience feels the sensory overload that Christopher feels. His methods for coping are striking: he counts, recites prime numbers and follows signs and rules step by step, so that

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mathematics becomes a lifeline. There is comedy here too, for example in his literal-minded conversations with strangers, but Stephens balances it with pathos, as when Christopher climbs down onto the tracks to rescue his rat Toby, oblivious to the danger. We laugh at his directness, yet we also fear for him, which reflects how vulnerable he is in a world not designed for him.

Arriving at his mother's flat brings further change. Christopher must adapt to living with Judy and Mr Shears in a cramped London home, and the tension between the adults, including shouting and arguments, shows that the change he wanted is not the safe new life he imagined. His fixation on returning to Swindon to sit his A level maths exam reveals how he uses goals to hold himself together. The exam represents a fixed point in a shifting world.

The ending suggests change can be positive. Back in Swindon, Christopher gradually begins to rebuild trust with his father, helped by the new puppy, Sandy. He passes his A level, and his final question to Siobhan, "Does that mean I can do anything", is full of hope. However, Siobhan does not answer directly, and the open-endedness perhaps acknowledges that his future, like everyone's, is uncertain. Stephens even adds a final scene in which Christopher explains his maths answer to the audience, reminding us that his way of seeing the world is valuable rather than simply a problem to be managed.

Overall, Stephens presents Christopher's struggle with change as frightening, painful and at times funny, but ultimately heroic. By making the audience share his perspective, the playwright challenges us to recognise that what seems small to most people can be enormous to someone like Christopher, and that his achievements are therefore all the greater.

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11	Delaney uses Geof to show that friendship can offer the love, care and stability that family and romance fail to provide. In a play where mothers abandon daughters and lovers sail away, Geof is the one character who stays and looks after Jo. Yet Delaney also exposes how fragile such friendship is in a society that refuses to respect it: Geof is mocked for being gay, distrusted for living with a pregnant girl, and finally pushed out by Helen. His friendship is presented as precious precisely because it is so vulnerable. Geof enters the play in Act Two as an outsider in need of help. He has been thrown out of his lodgings, and Delaney strongly implies that this is because he is gay, at a time when homosexuality was illegal in Britain and could not be shown openly on stage under the Lord Chamberlain's censorship. When Jo pushes him to say what he does with other men, he refuses to discuss it. This silence is a powerful dramatic method: the audience understands what cannot be said, and Delaney quietly criticises a society that forces people like Geof to hide. Importantly, the friendship begins with Jo offering him a home, so it is mutual from the start; two outsiders find a refuge in each other. Geof quickly takes on an almost maternal role. He tidies the squalid flat, cooks, worries about Jo's health and reads up on pregnancy and babies, doing everything that Helen has failed to do. Delaney uses this role reversal to challenge 1950s gender expectations: the most caring "mother" in the play is a young man, while the biological mother is careless and selfish. Jo recognises this when she tells him he is like a big sister to her, a comment that is both affectionate and slightly cruel, because it denies his masculinity. The relationship is therefore presented as loving but also uneven, since Jo can be sharp, moody and demanding while Geof patiently absorbs her temper.

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Delaney uses comedy and pathos side by side to develop the friendship. Their scenes contain playful banter, nursery rhymes and games, which give the play a warmth absent from Jo's scenes with Helen. Yet tenderness is mixed with pain. When Geof brings Jo a doll so that she can practise caring for the baby, she reacts with anger and disgust, revealing her fear of motherhood and perhaps also her anxiety about how a mixed-race child will be treated, since its father is a black sailor. Here Delaney shows that Geof's friendship cannot solve all of Jo's problems, but he remains steady, even when she lashes out. His advice that Jo needs "somebody to love you while you're looking for somebody to love" captures Delaney's central idea: friendship is a form of love in its own right, not a lesser substitute for romance.

Delaney also explores the limits of friendship through Geof's proposal. He offers to marry Jo, perhaps out of a sincere wish to protect her and the baby, perhaps because marriage was the only respectable way for him to remain part of her life. He even tries to kiss her, but Jo rejects him, and the moment is awkward and sad. This suggests that their bond does not fit the categories that 1950s society recognised. Delaney seems to argue that non-sexual friendship between a man and a woman is just as valuable as marriage, an idea that was radical when the play was first performed in 1958.

Other characters' attitudes reveal society's hostility towards Geof. Helen treats him with suspicion and contempt, and Peter's drunken mockery in Act Two shows the crude attitude of conventional men towards anyone who does not fit their idea of masculinity. When Helen returns in the final scene, she belittles Geof and makes it clear there is no room for him, and he leaves while Jo is asleep. The structure of the ending is deeply poignant: Jo wakes believing he has only gone out and sings a nursery rhyme, echoing the childlike games they shared, while the audience

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knows he has gone. The cycle of abandonment that defines Jo's life repeats, but this time it is caused not by selfishness but by prejudice.

Overall, Delaney uses Geof to suggest that true friendship is selfless, practical and loyal, offering a working-class girl the care she has never received. However, his departure shows that society, represented by Helen, still values conventional family ties over real kindness. As a kitchen-sink drama that gave voice to those excluded from mainstream theatre, A Taste of Honey invites its audience to recognise Geof's worth and to question the attitudes that drive him away.

12 Delaney presents the female characters' attitudes towards men as a mixture of desire, cynicism and self-protection. Helen and Jo both want love and security, yet both have learned that men are unreliable, and they use humour and sharp talk to protect themselves. Through them, Delaney exposes a 1950s society in which working-class women were economically dependent on men but repeatedly let down by them, and she suggests that women's attitudes are shaped less by romance than by survival.

Helen's attitude to men is openly practical and pleasure-seeking. From the opening scene, in which she and Jo arrive at a shabby Salford flat, it is clear that Helen moves from man to man and place to place. She treats relationships as a source of fun and financial security rather than commitment, and she is honest about it in a way that would have shocked many in the original 1958 audience, who were used to women on stage being either respectable wives or tragic victims. Delaney presents Helen with energy and wit; her direct addresses to the audience, borrowed from music hall, make her a comic, knowing figure who seems to share a joke with us about the games men and women play. This comic method makes her cynicism

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entertaining, but it also hints that laughter is a defence against disappointment.

Helen's relationship with Peter reveals both her independence and her dependence. Peter is younger than her, wealthy, flashy and often drunk, and he pursues her in scenes that resemble a comic double act. Helen teases and rejects him, yet she ultimately marries him, abandoning Jo to do so. Delaney suggests that her attitude is shaped by economic reality: Peter offers money, a house and an escape from poverty. When the marriage collapses and Peter throws her out, Helen returns to Jo's flat, showing how fragile a woman's security was when it depended on a man's whim. The structure of the play, with Helen leaving at the end of Act One and drifting back in Act Two, reinforces this cycle of hope and disillusionment.

Helen's account of Jo's father adds a darker layer. She describes her brief affair with a simple-minded man, a story that is both comic and shocking, and her careless tone suggests that sex for Helen has often been impulsive rather than loving. The affair took place while she was married to another man, and that marriage had failed, so the audience senses that her flippant attitude to men grows from a lifetime of disappointment. Delaney does not simply condemn Helen; she shows how a society with little support for single mothers shaped her choices.

Jo's attitude to men is presented as more vulnerable. At first she seems to share her mother's scepticism about marriage, yet her relationship with the Boy, a black sailor, shows her longing for affection. The ring he gives her, which she wears on a ribbon round her neck, symbolises a commitment she cannot display openly, both because the relationship is interracial, which many in 1950s Britain disapproved of, and because the promise is never fulfilled. Delaney presents their scenes with tenderness and playfulness, but the audience suspects he will not return, and he does not. Jo's experience mirrors Helen's: a man offers love, then leaves a woman

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to cope with the consequences, in Jo's case a pregnancy while she is still a teenager.

After the Boy leaves, Jo's attitude hardens. She refuses Geof's offer of marriage and insists she does not want to be tied to a man, which can be read as a hard-won independence. Yet her bond with Geof suggests a different kind of relationship with a man, one based on care rather than sex or money. Delaney contrasts Geof's gentleness with Peter's crude behaviour, implying that the problem is not men themselves but the attitudes of men shaped by patriarchy, who see women as possessions or entertainment.

Ultimately, both women are left without a man by the end of the play. Helen has been thrown out by Peter, and when she learns the baby's father is black she goes out for a drink, leaving Jo alone once again. Jo has lost the Boy and Geof. The ending is bleak, but it also suggests a stubborn resilience: these women survive without the men who have failed them. Delaney, writing at nineteen as a young working-class woman herself, uses the attitudes of Helen and Jo to challenge the idealised view of romance and marriage, revealing a society where women's freedom was limited and men's promises rarely kept.

13 On the surface, Golding presents Jack as a character who changes dramatically, transforming from a disciplined choir leader in a school uniform into a painted savage who hunts another boy to death. However, Golding suggests that this change is less a transformation than a revelation. The desire for power and the capacity for cruelty are present in Jack from his very first appearance; the island simply removes the rules that held them in check. Through Jack, Golding explores his belief that evil is innate in human nature, an idea shaped by his experiences in

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the Second World War.

When Jack first appears, he is marching his choir along the beach, each boy in black cloak and "square black cap", and he is immediately described as their leader. The military imagery of the marching choir hints at authoritarian order, and the darkness of their clothing foreshadows the darkness to come. Jack's first words are commands, and his claim that he ought to be chief because "I can sing C sharp" is almost comic, revealing an arrogant sense of entitlement based on status in the old world. He calls Piggy "Fatty" and tells him to shut up, so cruelty towards the weak is part of his character from the start. Even so, he still respects civilisation at this stage. He welcomes the idea of rules, shouting "We'll have rules! Lots of rules!", and he claims that "We're English, and the English are best at everything." Golding's irony is sharp: Jack values rules mainly for the chance to punish those who break them, and his pride in Englishness will soon be exposed as hollow.

The first real sign of change comes with the pig in the creepers. Jack raises his knife but cannot bring it down, and Golding explains this was "because of the enormity of the knife descending and cutting into living flesh". The inhibitions of civilisation still restrain him. Yet his embarrassment and his vow that next time there will be no mercy show that he sees this restraint as weakness. From this point Golding traces Jack's obsession with hunting, which gradually replaces any interest in rescue.

Jack's painted face marks a crucial stage. When he daubs himself with clay and charcoal and looks at his reflection, the mask becomes "a thing on its own, behind which Jack hid, liberated from shame and self-consciousness." This is a key moment for the question, because the mask does not create new desires; it frees existing ones. Golding suggests that society's rules work largely through shame, and

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once Jack is anonymous, his savagery is released. The first kill follows, and the chant "Kill the pig. Cut her throat. Spill her blood." shows the ritual violence of the group replacing individual conscience. His neglect of the signal fire, which lets a passing ship go by, shows that his priorities have changed completely.

By the middle of the novel, Jack openly rejects the democratic order symbolised by the conch. His cry "Bollocks to the rules!" directly contradicts his earlier enthusiasm, showing how far he has changed in attitude. When he fails to have Ralph voted out, he storms off, saying he will not play any longer, a childish phrase that reminds us he is still only a boy. At Castle Rock he becomes "the Chief", a dictator who rules through fear, tying up and beating Wilfred for no stated reason. Golding's description that "authority sat on his shoulder and chattered in his ear like an ape" presents power as something animalistic and corrupting. Many readers have seen in Jack an allegory of fascist leaders such as Hitler, whose charisma and scapegoating of enemies led ordinary people into atrocity. The murders of Simon and Piggy, and the final manhunt for Ralph, show the end point of his journey.

Yet the ending complicates the idea of change once again. When the naval officer arrives, Jack is reduced to "a little boy" in the remains of his black cap, and he does not claim the leadership he has seized so violently. Golding's shift in perspective forces the reader to see him as a child. This might suggest that his savagery was a temporary role, but it is more unsettling to read it the other way: the potential for such cruelty lies inside ordinary schoolboys, and the officer, himself a man at war, represents an adult world no more civilised.

Therefore, Jack does change in appearance, behaviour and attitude, but Golding presents this as the stripping away of a civilised surface rather than a

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fundamental change in his nature. Through Jack, Golding warns his post-war readers that the capacity for evil is not confined to other nations or other times, but exists within all of us.

14 Golding presents the island as a place that seems at first to be a paradise but becomes increasingly dangerous as the novel progresses. However, I would argue that the island itself is not the true source of danger. Golding uses it as a setting in which the boys' own natures are exposed: the real threat comes from within them. The island is dangerous only in the sense that, without adult rules, it allows the darkness of human nature to flourish, reflecting Golding's belief in original sin.

Even in the opening chapter, Golding hints at danger beneath the beauty. The "long scar smashed into the jungle" left by the crashed plane suggests that the boys' arrival has already wounded the island, and the image of a scar implies violence and damage. Yet much of the description is idyllic. The lagoon, the coconuts, the fruit trees and the glittering water create a vision of Eden, and the boys excitedly compare their adventure to books such as Coral Island. Golding deliberately evokes this genre of Victorian adventure story, in which British boys stranded on an island behave heroically, only to overturn it. The paradise is a trap for the reader as much as for the boys.

The island does present some natural dangers. The heat is oppressive, the fruit causes illness, and the littluns suffer nightmares in the darkness. Most significantly, the first fire, lit carelessly on the mountain, rages out of control, and the boy with the "mulberry-coloured birthmark" disappears and is presumably killed. This early death shows how the boys' actions turn the island's resources into dangers. Fire, which should be a symbol of hope and rescue, becomes destructive

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when used without order or responsibility, foreshadowing the novel's ending.

The idea of the beast adds a psychological danger. The littluns' fear of a "snake-thing" grows into a belief that a monster lives on the island, and Golding uses this to show how fear spreads and can be manipulated. The dead parachutist on the mountain seems to confirm the beast's existence, yet the reader knows it is a man from the war raging in the adult world. Golding's dramatic irony here is crucial: the "beast" is literally a product of human conflict. Simon alone understands the truth when he suggests "maybe it's only us", and in the confrontation with the Lord of the Flies, the pig's head tells him that the beast is "part of you". The real danger is therefore internal.

Golding links places on the island to the boys' moral states. Simon's glade, with its candle-buds and peaceful light, is a place of goodness and reflection, but it becomes the site of the Lord of the Flies, a decaying head surrounded by flies, symbolising evil corrupting innocence. Castle Rock, by contrast, is a natural fortress with steep cliffs and a narrow approach, and it becomes the base of Jack's tribe. The physical danger of the rock becomes the setting for Piggy's death, when Roger levers a boulder down upon him and he falls to the rocks below. Golding presents the landscape as neutral, but the boys turn it into a weapon.

Simon's death on the beach during the storm shows the island's natural violence mirroring human violence. The thunder and lightning heighten the frenzy of the dance, but it is the boys who kill him. After his death, however, Golding describes his body being gently carried out to sea, surrounded by shining creatures, suggesting that nature itself is beautiful and indifferent, even sympathetic. This contrast strengthens the argument that the boys, not the island, are dangerous.

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By the end, the boys have nearly destroyed the island. Jack's tribe sets the forest on fire to smoke Ralph out, and the island is left "scorched up like dead wood". The fire that the boys first lit for rescue becomes an instrument of murder, and ironically it is the smoke from this fire that attracts the naval ship. Ralph weeps for "the end of innocence, the darkness of man's heart", a phrase that sums up Golding's message. Writing after the Second World War and at the start of the nuclear age, Golding suggests that humanity is capable of destroying its own paradise, just as adults in the wider world were capable of destroying the earth.

In conclusion, the island is dangerous to a certain extent, with its fire, storms and rocks, but Golding presents these dangers as amplified by the boys themselves. The island is a mirror of the human heart: beautiful at first, but revealing the savagery that civilisation tries to hide.

15 In both 'Korea' by John McGahern and 'A Family Supper' by Kazuo Ishiguro, misunderstandings between parents and children grow out of silence: fathers and sons share a home, a meal or a boat, yet never say what they truly mean. Both writers use first-person narrators to place the reader inside the son's partial view, so that the misunderstandings are not only between characters but also between the text and the reader. In each story, the son comes to see his father in a new and disturbing light, and the stories suggest that understanding a parent can be painful as well as enlightening.

In 'Korea', the central misunderstanding concerns the father's motives. The story is set in rural Ireland, where the narrator, a young man who has just finished school, helps his father with eel fishing on the river. The father urges him to emigrate to America, and at first this seems to be generous advice: he argues that there is no

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future for an ambitious young man at home. McGahern allows the reader, like the son, to accept this at face value. The structure then turns on an overheard conversation, in which the father and Mr Farrell discuss the money paid by the American government to the families of young emigrants killed while serving in the Korean War. The son realises with horror that his father may be calculating the value of his death. McGahern's restrained, unemotional prose makes the revelation all the more chilling.

This revelation is foreshadowed by the father's memory of the execution he witnessed as a young prisoner during the Irish War of Independence. He tells the story vividly, describing how one condemned man behaved with calm defiance before being shot. The retrospective narration, in which an older narrator recalls his younger self, suggests that he only later grasped its significance. The father has seen young men's lives treated as disposable by those in power, yet he seems ready to treat his own son's life in the same way. McGahern links Ireland's violent history to the family's present, implying that war and poverty have hardened the father until even love becomes transactional. Natural details on the riverbank, such as the furze pods crackling in the summer heat, may echo the gunshots of the father's memory, a subtle reminder that violence lingers in the landscape of the son's childhood.

The ending of 'Korea' is deeply ambiguous. The son decides not to go to America, and when his father asks again, he refuses. Yet the narrator now watches his father closely and coldly, as if he too must harden himself against him. Innocence has been lost: the boy who trusted his father now sees him as a stranger. The misunderstanding has become a permanent silence between them.

In 'A Family Supper', Ishiguro also uses a son's narration to explore

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misunderstanding, but his method is more mysterious. The narrator returns to Tokyo from California two years after his mother's death from eating fugu, a poisonous fish. The reader gradually learns that his relationship with his stern father was damaged by his departure for America and by past events that are never fully explained. Ishiguro's dialogue is formal, polite and full of pauses, so that what matters most is left unsaid. When the father speaks of his business partner Watanabe, who killed his family and himself after their firm collapsed, he describes him with something like admiration, as a man of principle. The son and the reader begin to suspect that the father may be contemplating something similar.

This suspicion creates the story's central misunderstanding, which is shared by the reader. When the father serves a fish supper, Ishiguro deliberately leaves us uncertain whether it might be fugu and whether the father intends to poison his children. Just as in 'Korea', a father's past and his attitude to duty and honour, shaped by traditional Japanese values and the shame of failure, make his intentions frightening to his son. However, while McGahern gives his narrator a clear revelation, Ishiguro withholds one, forcing the reader into the son's uneasy position of half-understanding.

The father and son in 'A Family Supper' also misunderstand each other's feelings. The father hints at regret about the kind of father he has been, and he asks whether his son will stay in Japan, but neither can express affection directly. The story ends in silence as they wait for Kikuko to bring the tea, a quiet, domestic image that leaves the reader suspended between reconciliation and threat.

Both writers suggest that the gap between generations is shaped by history: Ireland's poverty and conflict in McGahern's story, Japan's changing post-war

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society in Ishiguro's. In both stories, the sons' inability to read their fathers reflects a deeper truth that parents are, in many ways, unknowable to their children.

16 In 'Chemistry' by Graham Swift and 'The Darkness Out There' by Penelope Lively, growing up is presented not as a gentle progression but as a painful loss of innocence. Both young protagonists are forced to confront truths about adults that they are not ready for: the boy in 'Chemistry' faces grief, rivalry and death, while Sandra discovers the cruelty hidden behind an apparently kind old woman. Both writers suggest that the hardest part of growing up is realising that the adult world is darker and more complicated than children imagine.

In 'Chemistry', the narrator's difficulties begin with the death of his father, whose plane was lost over the sea. He and his mother move in with his grandfather, and the three of them are bound together by grief. Swift uses the boy's retrospective first-person narration, an adult looking back on his childhood, to show how a child tries to make sense of loss without the language to do so. The model boat that he and his grandfather sail on the pond in the park becomes a central symbol. When it sinks, the grandfather teaches the boy that some things cannot be recovered, a lesson that also applies to the dead father. The pond, with its deep water, connects to the sea that took his father, so water becomes a recurring metaphor for loss and the unknown.

The arrival of Ralph, his mother's new partner, makes growing up even harder. Ralph's presence breaks the closed world of mother, grandfather and son, and the grandfather resents him openly, retreating to his shed, where he carries out chemistry experiments. The boy is caught between loyalty to his grandfather and

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the changing loyalties of his mother. Swift uses the extended metaphor of chemistry to explore these shifting relationships: the grandfather teaches that elements combine, separate and change form, and the family is presented as a kind of unstable compound in which the addition of Ralph causes a violent reaction. A child's simple certainties are dissolved, just as substances dissolve in the grandfather's experiments.

The boy's response is shocking. Using what he has learned, he takes acid from the shed and plans to throw it in Ralph's face, believing that if Ralph were disfigured his mother would turn back to the family. This shows how a child, overwhelmed by emotions he cannot control, reaches for an adult form of violence without understanding its consequences. Swift then reverses expectations: it is the grandfather who dies, poisoning himself with prussic acid. The boy is left with guilt, confusion and the knowledge that the adults around him have secrets he will never fully understand, particularly as his mother never explains what has happened. A dream or vision of his drowned father even suggests that his mother sank the boat, a disturbing idea that the story leaves unresolved. In the final scene, the narrator throws the acid into the pond and imagines his grandfather waiting on the far side, as if still guiding the boat towards him. The ending suggests that growing up means living with loss rather than overcoming it.

In 'The Darkness Out There', Sandra's difficulties are less about family and more about discovering moral truth. She volunteers with Kerry, a boy from her village, to help an elderly widow, Mrs Rutter. At the start of the story Sandra is dreamy and naive, absorbed in thoughts of her appearance and of boys, and she is afraid of Packer's End, a wood surrounded by rumours. Lively uses Sandra's limited third-person perspective to show her childish assumptions: she sees Mrs Rutter as a cosy, harmless old lady and Kerry as unattractive and dull.

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The story's turning point comes when Mrs Rutter casually reveals that, during the war, she and her sister found a wounded German airman whose plane had crashed in the wood, and left him there to die. The horror lies in her cheerful, chatty tone, which contrasts with the cruelty of what she describes. Like the grandfather's death in 'Chemistry', this revelation shatters a child's view of an adult. Lively reverses Sandra's judgements: Mrs Rutter becomes monstrous, while Kerry, who is disgusted and walks out, is revealed as morally mature. Sandra realises that the real "darkness" is not in the wood but in people, and that appearances can deceive.

Both stories end with a young person facing a world that has become less safe. Swift's boy is left haunted by the pond, while Sandra walks behind Kerry, aware that the darkness cannot be shut out. Both writers, writing in the late twentieth century but drawing on the shadow of war and loss, suggest that growing up involves an often brutal education in the failings of adults, and that innocence, once lost, cannot be recovered.

17 Orwell presents Napoleon as a leader for whom power is not one interest among many but the only one: every speech, alliance and act of apparent generosity is calculated to win or keep control. Napoleon may appear to care about the windmill, the farm's survival or even his own comfort, yet Orwell reveals each of these as an instrument or a trophy of power, warning his readers that revolutions are betrayed when they are led by those who value domination above the ideals they claim to serve.

From his first description Orwell plants the seeds of tyranny. Napoleon is "a large, rather fierce-looking Berkshire boar", "not much of a talker" but "with a reputation

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for getting his own way". The adjective "fierce-looking" and the idea of "getting his own way" suggest that he relies on intimidation rather than persuasion, in contrast to Snowball's eloquence. Tellingly, he contributes no ideas to the Rebellion itself. His first independent act is the disappearance of the milk, which the pigs quietly take for themselves while the other animals are sent to the harvest. Orwell shows, almost at once, that Napoleon sees the revolution as an opportunity for privilege rather than equality.

Napoleon's most chilling act of foresight is taking the puppies from Jessie and Bluebell, claiming responsibility for their education. Orwell keeps them out of sight for several chapters, so that when nine enormous dogs chase Snowball off the farm the reader experiences the same shock as the animals. Structurally, this moment is the turning point of the novella: power is no longer won by argument in the meetings but by force. Napoleon immediately abolishes the Sunday debates, and his later adoption of the windmill, which he had opposed and even urinated over, exposes his complete lack of principle. Squealer explains that Napoleon only pretended to oppose it as a "manoeuvre", a word that reveals politics as a game of tactics. Orwell's point here is not simply that Napoleon is Stalin, though the parallel with Trotsky's exile is clear; it is that any leader who treats ideas as weapons will discard them the moment they stop being useful.

The executions in Chapter 7 show the lengths to which Napoleon will go. Animals confess to imaginary crimes and are slaughtered until there is "a pile of corpses" lying before Napoleon's feet. The image of bodies at his feet is almost ceremonial, as if they are offerings to a god. Orwell's original readers would have recognised Stalin's show trials of the 1930s, yet the scene's horror is universal: terror is used to make the very idea of opposition unthinkable. Clover's silent recollection of Old Major's dream underlines what has been lost, and the replacement of "Beasts of

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England" with a song that praises the state shows that Napoleon wants control even over memory and hope.

It might be argued that Napoleon is also interested in luxury: he sleeps in Jones's bed, drinks whisky and eats from Jones's Crown Derby dinner service. However, Orwell presents these comforts as symbols of status rather than genuine pleasures. Each indulgence is justified by a rewritten commandment, so the altering of the commandments becomes a record of power absorbing principle. Similarly, the grand titles such as "Father of All Animals" and the poem "Comrade Napoleon" suggest vanity, but vanity here is simply the cult of personality that sustains dictatorship. Even his apparent concern for the farm's economy is driven by power: he trades with Whymper and Frederick not to feed the animals, whose rations are reduced, but to strengthen his own position.

The fate of Boxer is perhaps the clearest evidence that Napoleon cares for nothing but power. Boxer's maxim, "Napoleon is always right", shows complete loyalty, yet when he collapses Napoleon sells him to the knacker and spends the money on whisky. Orwell's bitter irony is that the most devoted worker is destroyed by the leader he trusted, a warning about blind faith in authority.

By the end, Napoleon walks on two legs, and the single commandment "All animals are equal but some animals are more equal than others" uses a logical absurdity to expose how language has been twisted to protect power. In the final scene, as the pigs and humans argue over cards, "it was impossible to say which was which". Napoleon has become the very tyrant the Rebellion was meant to overthrow. Orwell, a democratic socialist disillusioned by the Soviet Union, suggests that Napoleon was never truly interested in anything except power, and that this hunger, rather than any ideology, is what corrupts revolutions.

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Orwell presents the relationship between the humans and the animals as one that appears to change completely, from exploitation to open war and finally to friendship, yet underneath it stays exactly the same. The humans always represent those who rule, and the animals those who are ruled. By the end of the novella the pigs have simply crossed from one side of that divide to the other, and Orwell suggests that the real conflict was never between species but between the powerful and the powerless.

At the opening, the relationship is one of neglect and exploitation. The first sentence tells us that Mr Jones was "too drunk to remember to shut the pop-holes", and this detail immediately makes the human master careless and unfit to rule. Old Major's speech then turns this neglect into a political analysis: "Man is the only creature that consumes without producing." The balanced structure of the sentence sounds like a slogan, and it defines humans purely as parasites who live off the labour of others. His warning to Boxer, that he will be sold to the knacker once his muscles fail, foreshadows what will actually happen to Boxer under the pigs. Allegorically, Jones represents the Tsar, and Old Major's call for revolution mirrors the ideas of Marx, so the human-animal relationship stands for the relationship between the ruling class and the workers.

The Rebellion itself is caused not by ideology but by hunger, when Jones and his men fail to feed the animals, and the relationship becomes one of hostility. Major's principle that "All men are enemies. All animals are comrades" is absolute, and it becomes the commandment "Whatever goes upon two legs is an enemy." At the Battle of the Cowshed the animals defend this principle with courage. However, Orwell hints early that the line between human and animal is fragile. Mollie, who

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loves sugar and ribbons, is later seen being petted by a man in a dogcart, and Moses the raven keeps returning with his tales of Sugarcandy Mountain. Both suggest that some animals are drawn to human comforts, just as some citizens were drawn back to the old order after 1917.

The neighbouring farmers develop the relationship further. Orwell contrasts Mr Pilkington of Foxwood, an easy-going gentleman farmer who neglects his large, old-fashioned farm, with Mr Frederick of Pinchfield, a "tough, shrewd man" with a smaller, better-kept farm. Allegorically they represent the Western democracies and Nazi Germany, and Napoleon's wavering between them satirises the shifting alliances of the 1930s. Frederick's payment for the timber in forged banknotes, followed by his attack and the destruction of the windmill, mirrors Hitler's betrayal of the Nazi-Soviet Pact. Orwell presents the humans as untrustworthy, but he also shows that Napoleon is just as cynical: he deals with both men purely to gain advantage.

The quieter figure of Mr Whymper is perhaps more important. A solicitor described as "a sly-looking little man", he becomes the go-between who visits the farm every Monday. The animals avoid him with a kind of dread, yet the sight of Napoleon on all fours giving orders to a human standing on two legs reconciles them to the arrangement. Orwell's irony is that their pride blinds them to how the original principle is being eroded. Napoleon also uses Whymper to deceive the outside world, filling the store-shed bins with sand to hide the famine. The relationship with humans is now not one of enmity but of mutual convenience between leaders, while the ordinary animals are kept ignorant.

The ending completes this structural movement. The pigs walk on two legs, carry whips and wear Jones's clothes, and the farm is renamed Manor Farm. At the

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dinner, Pilkington praises the pigs because their animals work harder and eat less than any on the neighbouring farms, joking "If you have your lower animals to contend with, we have our lower classes!" The parallel between "lower animals" and "lower classes" exposes the shared values of the two ruling groups, both of whom see workers as resources to be controlled. When an argument breaks out over two aces of spades played at once, Orwell satirises the mistrust between the Allied leaders at the Teheran Conference of 1943, suggesting that their friendship would not last.

The final sentence is devastating: the creatures outside look "from pig to man, and from man to pig", and "it was impossible to say which was which". The repetition imitates their bewildered eyes moving back and forth, and the final clause erases the difference that the Rebellion was built upon. Orwell, a socialist who wrote to expose the betrayal of the Russian Revolution, presents the relationship between humans and animals as a mirror: the oppressed overthrow their masters only to become them, unless ordinary people remain alert to the corruption of power.

19 On the surface, Ishiguro presents Ruth as manipulative, possessive and at times cruel, and it is easy to dislike her. Yet because she is filtered through Kathy's careful but partial narration, and because every character in the novel is living under the shadow of donation, Ishiguro invites us to see Ruth's unpleasantness as a form of self-protection. She is unlikeable in what she does, but arguably deeply sympathetic in why she does it, and by the end her attempt at atonement makes her one of the most human characters in the novel.

Kathy's earliest memory of Ruth already reveals her need for control. In the sandpit, Ruth invites Kathy to "ride" one of her imaginary horses, but only on her

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own terms, deciding which horses are allowed and correcting Kathy's choices. The game is childish, yet it establishes a pattern: Ruth creates fantasies and expects others to accept them. This is developed in the episode of the "secret guard" protecting Miss Geraldine, where Ruth decides who is in and out, and in her pretence that she can play chess. Most revealing is the pencil case, which Ruth hints was a gift from Miss Geraldine. Kathy knows it almost certainly came from a Sale, but when she sees Ruth's distress she chooses not to expose her. Ishiguro uses this moment to show both Ruth's dishonesty and her vulnerability: in a world where the students have no parents, a sign of special affection from a guardian is precious, and Ruth needs to believe she is loved.

At the Cottages, Ruth becomes harder to like. She copies the mannerisms of the veterans, such as tapping a partner's arm, which Kathy realises they have taken from television programmes. When Kathy points this out, Ruth is hurt, and Kathy's narration admits her own guilt, which reminds us that we only ever see Ruth through Kathy's eyes. Ruth also distances herself from Hailsham, claiming not to remember things the friends shared, and she belittles Tommy's animal drawings, even suggesting that Kathy laughs at them too, which drives a wedge between her two oldest friends. Her desire to belong reflects a universal adolescent pressure to conform to a new social group, but for the clones the stakes are higher because they have nothing else: identity must be borrowed or invented.

Ruth's possessiveness over Tommy is the heart of her unlikeable behaviour. She keeps Tommy as her boyfriend even though she senses that Kathy and Tommy are better suited, and she tells Kathy that Tommy would never see her as a girlfriend because of the boys she has slept with. This is a calculated act of cruelty, designed to exploit Kathy's insecurity. Ishiguro's restrained narrative voice, in which Kathy rarely expresses anger directly, makes the betrayal feel even colder.

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However, Ishiguro complicates our judgement. The trip to Norfolk to find Ruth's "possible", the woman who may be her model, exposes Ruth's dream of working in an office like the one in the magazine advertisement. When the woman turns out not to be her model, Ruth's bitterness explodes: "We're modelled from trash." Her angry list of the kinds of people the clones come from is shocking, but it is also heartbreaking, because it shows how completely she has internalised the society that treats her as disposable. Her hopes have been crushed, and her cruelty seems to come from that despair. A reader might feel that Ruth is not malicious but frightened, using control as a shield against a life she cannot control at all.

The episodic, non-chronological structure also shapes our view. Kathy tells the story after Ruth has completed, and she moves between memories with hindsight, so Ruth's early faults are softened by the reader's awareness of her fate. When Ruth reappears as a weak donor, Ishiguro presents a different woman. On the trip to the stranded boat, she confesses that keeping Kathy and Tommy apart was the worst thing she ever did, and she gives them Madame's address so that they can apply for a deferral. This act of repentance changes her role in the novel: she moves from obstacle to enabler of their love.

Ultimately, Ishiguro presents Ruth as unlikeable for much of the novel, but not as a villain. Her flaws of jealousy, vanity and the need to be admired are recognisably human, and that is the point. In a novel where the clones' humanity is questioned by the society that harvests them, Ruth's very imperfections prove that they are fully human, capable of cruelty, regret and forgiveness. Ishiguro makes us dislike her in order to make us understand her.

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Ishiguro presents hopes and dreams as vitally important to the characters of Never Let Me Go, because they are the only way the clones can imagine a self beyond their function as organ donors. Yet he also shows, with quiet tragedy, that these dreams are never acted upon and never fulfilled. They comfort the characters and give their lives shape, but they may also keep them passive, so Ishiguro asks how far hope is a source of meaning and how far it is a gentle form of control.

At Hailsham, the students' dreams are encouraged by a deliberate vagueness about the future. The guardians allow them to talk about becoming actors or moving to America, and Kathy's narration recalls these conversations without questioning them. It is Miss Lucy who breaks the illusion when she tells them, "Your lives are set out for you." The plain, declarative sentence leaves no room for imagination, and her outburst is presented as shocking precisely because hope has been the unspoken rule of Hailsham life. Ishiguro suggests that the guardians use dreams to protect the children, but also to manage them: students who believe in a future are less likely to ask why they do not have one.

Kathy's own hope is expressed through the song "Never Let Me Go" on the Judy Bridgewater tape. As a girl, she dances with a pillow, imagining a woman who has been told she cannot have a baby and then miraculously holds one. The image of an impossible child symbolises the futures the clones are denied, since they are unable to have children. Madame watches and cries, a moment Kathy does not understand until the end, when Madame explains that she saw a girl clinging to an old, kind world. Ishiguro's flat, understated narrative voice makes this scene particularly moving: Kathy does not fully understand her own longing, but the reader does.

Ruth's dream of working in an office is perhaps the most poignant. Inspired by a

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glossy advertisement, she imagines a modern, open-plan workplace, and the trip to Norfolk to find her "possible" is driven by the hope that she might glimpse the life she could have led. When the woman turns out not to be her model, Ruth's despair, "We're modelled from trash", shows how devastating the loss of a dream can be. Ishiguro presents her bitterness as the reverse side of hope: the more a character invests in a dream, the more painful its collapse.

The most important hope in the novel is the rumour of deferrals, the belief that couples who can prove they are truly in love may be allowed a few more years together. This rumour becomes the focus of Kathy and Tommy's relationship in the final section. Tommy's renewed effort with his drawings of imaginary animals, and their visit to Madame and Miss Emily, are acts of hope that briefly give their lives purpose and intensity. However, Miss Emily reveals that deferrals never existed, and that the Gallery was collected to prove that the clones had souls at all. The structure of the novel delays this revelation until the climax, so that the reader shares the characters' hope before it is destroyed. Tommy's response, screaming in a muddy field as he did as a boy at Hailsham, suggests that hope had been holding back a rage that he has never been allowed to express.

Ishiguro also shows, however, that dreams are not powerful enough to provoke rebellion. None of the clones attempt to escape; they speak of their futures in the passive language of "donations" and "completing". Some readers find this frustrating, but Ishiguro may be suggesting that hope, when it is offered as a substitute for freedom, keeps people compliant. Written at a time of growing public debate about cloning following Dolly the sheep in 1996, the novel warns about a society that would accept such a system as long as its victims remained out of sight.

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The final scene brings these ideas together. Standing by a fence in Norfolk, the "lost corner" of England, Kathy looks at rubbish caught on the wire and half imagines that everything she has lost has washed up there, and that Tommy might appear. She allows herself this fantasy only briefly before she drives away "to wherever it was I was supposed to be". Here, Ishiguro presents dreams as both essential and limited: they give Kathy the strength to endure, but she knows they cannot change her fate. Hopes and dreams matter enormously to the characters, because they are what makes them human, yet Ishiguro's tragedy is that hope alone is not enough to save them.

21

Syal presents Anita Rutter as a character who is often deeply unlikeable: bossy, manipulative, foul-mouthed and, in the end, complicit in racism. Yet because she is seen through the eyes of the adult Meena, whose narration looks back with understanding as well as hurt, Anita also emerges as a neglected child whose cruelty is learned from the damaged world around her. Syal therefore makes Anita unlikeable in what she does, but asks the reader to look past her behaviour to the social and family pressures that have shaped it.

From the start, Anita is presented as glamorous and dangerous to the younger Meena. She is the undisputed leader of the yard's children, older, louder and seemingly fearless, and Meena admits that she longs to be noticed by her. Anita's dialogue is full of Black Country dialect and casual obscenity, which Syal uses for comic effect: to Meena, who lives in a polite, aspirational Punjabi household, Anita's swearing sounds thrilling and adult. However, the comedy has an edge. Anita's precocious knowledge of sex and her readiness to boss other children around suggest a girl who has grown up too fast, and from the beginning she treats Meena less as a friend than as a follower.

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Anita's manipulation of Meena is one of her least likeable traits. She chooses Meena when it suits her and drops her when it does not, and in her gang with Sherrie and Fat Sally she enjoys deciding who belongs. Meena, desperate to fit in, lies to her parents, swears, steals and takes risks to win Anita's approval, so Anita becomes the catalyst for Meena's rebellion. Syal's mature narrative voice allows us to see what the younger Meena cannot: that Anita's friendship is conditional and that Meena is being used. Anita's cruelty to her younger sister Tracey, whom she ignores or bullies, reinforces this picture of a girl who uses power over weaker people.

Yet Syal is careful to explain this behaviour through Anita's background. The Rutter household is chaotic: her mother Deirdre is neglectful and eventually leaves the family, and her father Roy cannot provide stability. Meena's narration contrasts this with her own close family, where food, music and the gatherings of aunties and uncles create warmth and security. Through this contrast, Syal explores different kinds of family values, and the reader may conclude that Anita's hardness is a defence against having nobody to rely on. When Deirdre leaves, Anita's outward bravado seems all the more fragile, and some readers may feel genuine pity for her.

The relationship with Sam Lowbridge marks the point where Anita becomes most unlikeable. Sam, frustrated by the lack of jobs and change in Tollington, turns to racism, and his outburst at the Spring Fete, when he blames outsiders for the village's decline, shocks Meena. Later, when Sam and his friends attack Mr Bhatra, Anita talks about the attack as if it were exciting rather than shameful. This is the moment Meena finally sees Anita clearly. Syal sets the novel in the late 1960s, when anti-immigrant feeling was being stirred up by politicians such as Enoch

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Powell, and she uses Anita to show how ordinary working-class people could absorb prejudice. Anita's racism is not presented as a personal quirk but as a symptom of a community that feels left behind by economic change, in a former mining village where work and status are disappearing.

However, Syal also complicates our judgement by giving Anita moments of vulnerability. Her bravado often seems like a performance, and there are glimpses of a girl who wants to be loved as much as Meena does. She clings to Sam partly because, with her home life collapsing, he offers her status and attention. Syal's semi-autobiographical novel is generous in this way: it refuses to turn Anita into a simple villain, because Meena's growth depends on understanding her.

By the end, as Meena prepares for grammar school and a new life, she outgrows Anita. Anita stays behind, trapped by her class and circumstances, and Meena's final reflections suggest sadness rather than triumph. Syal presents Anita as unlikeable to a large extent, especially in her manipulation and racism, but she ultimately uses her to explore how poverty, neglect and prejudice shape a child. The reader is left to judge not just Anita, but the society that produced her.

22 Syal presents Meena's learning from different cultures as a slow, sometimes painful journey from confusion to confidence. At first Meena feels caught between her Punjabi family and the white working-class village of Tollington, and she believes she must choose one. By the end, through her experiences with her family, her grandmother and the villagers, she learns that she can draw on both, and Syal presents this hybrid identity as a source of strength rather than division.

The novel opens with the adult Meena's confession that she is not really a liar,

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but that those "deprived of history" sometimes turn to mythology to feel complete. This reflective narrative voice frames the novel as a story about learning to belong. Meena's lies, about her birth, about her family and about herself, show that she does not yet feel at home in either culture. Syal uses the gap between the child's actions and the adult's understanding to show the reader the thought processes behind Meena's choices, so that her learning becomes visible.

Meena's first teachers are her parents. Their home is full of Punjabi food, music and the weekend gatherings of aunties and uncles, and Papa's singing of ghazals moves Meena even when she cannot fully explain why. Papa is also presented as tolerant and open-minded about religion, and his acceptance of different beliefs teaches Meena that culture need not be a closed box. At the same time, Meena's parents carry painful memories of Partition, and through their stories she begins to understand the losses that lie behind their move to England. Syal suggests that Meena learns not only customs from her family but also a quiet stoicism and dignity in the face of hardship.

Yet the young Meena often rejects her own culture. She longs for fish fingers and English food, envies the freedom of the village children and wants to belong to Anita's world. Tollington's culture offers her new experiences: the swearing and dialect of the yard, the gossip in Mr Ormerod's shop, the Spring Fete and the warmth of neighbours such as Mrs Worrall. Syal uses Black Country dialect to bring these characters to life and to show the appeal of a community which, despite its poverty, is lively and close. Meena's friendship with Anita teaches her independence and rebellion, but it also teaches her about the limits of that world, in particular its casual racism.

The turning point in Meena's learning comes with the arrival of Nanima, her

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grandmother from India. Nanima speaks only Punjabi, and Meena, who had been reluctant to use her mother tongue, quickly becomes fluent through their conversations. Nanima's stories, her humour and her physical affection give Meena a living link with India and a sense of history she had been missing. Syal presents this as a kind of awakening: instead of feeling ashamed of her heritage, Meena begins to feel proud of it. Structurally, Nanima's visit coincides with Meena's growing awareness of the darker side of Tollington, which suggests that Meena is learning to judge each culture more fairly, seeing the best and worst of both.

That darker side is shown most clearly through Sam Lowbridge's racism and the attack on Mr Bhatra. Meena realises that Anita and Sam, whom she had admired, can be cruel and prejudiced. Set in the late 1960s, when immigration was a heated political issue in Britain, the novel shows the real dangers faced by Asian families. Yet Syal does not present English culture as wholly hostile. Meena's time in hospital after breaking her leg, and her friendship with Robert, a boy who is also ill, show the kindness that can exist across cultural boundaries. Robert's death is a painful lesson in loss, but their friendship proves that connection depends on humanity rather than background.

By the end, Meena has abandoned the lies of her early childhood in favour of honesty, and she moves on to grammar school with a clearer sense of who she is. The adult narrator looks back on Tollington with affection and sadness, and her ability to use both Punjabi and Black Country English in her storytelling shows that she has absorbed both cultures. Syal, drawing on her own childhood as the daughter of Punjabi parents in a Midlands mining village, presents Meena's learning as a model of tolerance. The novel suggests that a society benefits when people like Meena can learn from many cultures, and that identity is not a choice between two worlds but a richer combination of them.

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Kelman presents Harrison Opoku as a boy whose innocence shapes everything he sees. Newly arrived from Ghana and living on a London housing estate, eleven-year-old Harri notices the violence around him but interprets it through the lens of games, television and childish optimism. Kelman's central method is the gap between what Harri understands and what the reader understands, and this dramatic irony turns his innocence into the source of both the novel's humour and its tragedy.

The opening scene establishes this gap immediately. A boy has been stabbed outside Chicken Joe's, and Harri observes that the blood was "darker than you think". The second-person address and the matter-of-fact tone show that he is more curious than horrified, treating the murder as something interesting rather than terrifying. His decision, with his friend Dean, to become detectives and catch the killer reflects the influence of television crime shows. They collect "evidence", take fingerprints with sellotape and watch suspects through binoculars. Kelman presents these scenes comically, but the reader understands that the danger they are investigating is real.

Harri's narrative voice is the key to his innocence. Kelman fills it with a mixture of Ghanaian expressions such as "asweh" and "hutious" and London slang such as "advise yourself", which Harri uses with delight, often slightly wrongly. This multi-cultural language shows him trying to fit in, but also reveals that he treats the slang of the estate as play rather than as the language of threat. His frequent lists, his excitement about being the fastest runner in his year and his pride in the stripes he draws on his trainers with a marker pen are recognisably childlike. Kelman uses these details to remind us that, however tough his surroundings, Harri

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is still a little boy whose priorities are friendship, sport and fun.

His innocence is clearest in his view of the Dell Farm Crew. Harri admires the gang members, X-Fire and Killa, because they seem powerful and respected, and he wants to impress them. When they demand that he prove himself, he treats their challenge as a kind of test he is proud to pass, as if joining a team at school. He does not grasp that the gang's power comes from fear and violence. The reader, however, recognises the danger, especially as the evidence grows that X-Fire may be connected to the murder. Kelman's realistic depiction of gang culture reflects the pressures on young people in British inner cities, and the novel was partly inspired by the killing of ten-year-old Damilola Taylor in Peckham in 2000.

Harri's family adds another layer to his innocence. He lives with his mother, a midwife, and his older sister Lydia, while his father and baby sister Agnes remain in Ghana. His love for his family and his longing to see Agnes show his warmth and loyalty. Harri barely understands his mother's money worries or the shady dealings of Julius, Auntie Sonia's boyfriend, who is clearly involved in crime. Lydia is more aware of the dangers around them, and her fear of being drawn into Miquita's group contrasts with Harri's cheerful acceptance of almost everyone he meets. Kelman uses the immigrant experience to explain this: Harri sees London as a land of opportunity and assumes the best of it.

The pigeon, which Harri befriends and feeds, functions almost as a guardian angel and as a second narrator. Its passages are wiser and more philosophical than Harri's, and they allow Kelman to comment on Harri's innocence from outside. The pigeon sees the danger Harri cannot, which increases our sense of dread.

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Kelman's structure makes Harri's innocence fatal. As his investigation brings him closer to the truth, he becomes a threat to X-Fire, and he is eventually stabbed. Even in his final moments, Harri's thoughts are full of simple, loving images rather than anger, which makes the ending almost unbearable. Kelman presents Harri's innocence as both his most beautiful quality and the reason he cannot survive. Through him, Kelman criticises a society that allows children to grow up surrounded by violence, suggesting that innocence should be protected rather than destroyed by the realities of inner-city life.

24 I largely agree that Pigeon English is a book about hope, but Kelman complicates that hope by making its destruction the climax of the novel. Harri's death is shocking and bleak, yet the hope that fills his voice is never cancelled by it. Instead, Kelman uses the ending to show what is lost when hope is crushed, so that the novel becomes not only a celebration of a child's optimism but an urgent warning to the society that failed to protect it.

Hope lives above all in Harri's narrative voice. From the first pages, his tone is enthusiastic and full of wonder, even when describing a murder. His delighted use of words such as "asweh" and his excited lists of the things he likes present a boy who finds joy everywhere: in running faster than anyone in his year, in his trainers with stripes drawn on in marker pen, in the sweets and games of the estate. Kelman's decision to tell the story through a child's eyes means that the reader sees London as Harri does, as a place full of possibility. The mixing of the tragic and the absurd, as when Harri and Dean hunt for a killer like television detectives, makes the novel funny as well as dark, and this humour is itself a kind of hope.

Harri's family is also driven by hope. His mother has brought him and Lydia to

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London in search of a better life, and the family's dream of reuniting with his father and baby sister Agnes, still in Ghana, gives the novel an emotional future to look towards. Harri's longing for Agnes is expressed with tenderness, and his mother's hard work as a midwife represents the sacrifices immigrant parents make for their children. Kelman presents London as a city that promises much, and Harri's belief in that promise is genuinely moving.

Perhaps the most hopeful element is Harri's generosity. He gives people the benefit of the doubt, even slightly dubious characters such as the gang members or Julius, and he offers friendship to everyone, including the pigeon he feeds. His love for Poppy, which he expresses with sweet, clumsy sincerity, shows his capacity for affection. These details suggest that goodness can survive even in a hostile environment.

However, it would be naive to ignore the novel's darkness. The Dell Farm Crew's violence, the threats from X-Fire and Killa, Julius's criminality and the pressures on Lydia from Miquita create a world in which children are constantly at risk. Kelman's realistic descriptions of the estate, along with the knife crime that opens the novel, show how hope is surrounded and threatened. The novel was partly inspired by the death of Damilola Taylor in Peckham in 2000, and Kelman seems determined to show that such deaths are not inevitable accidents but the result of an environment where gang culture fills the gap left by poverty and neglect. The pressure on boys like Harri to prove themselves through toughness reflects wider ideas about masculinity in this setting.

The ending is where the question of hope becomes most difficult. Harri is stabbed by X-Fire, and Kelman narrates his dying moments from inside his mind. Yet even here, Harri's thoughts are filled with simple, loving images, and he does not express

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hatred. The effect is devastating, but it also preserves the purity of his character: violence kills Harri, but it does not corrupt him. The shock of the ending forces the reader to feel the full weight of what has been lost, and so the novel's hope is transferred from Harri to the reader, who is left wanting a world where children like him could survive.

The pigeon is crucial to this interpretation. Acting almost like a chorus or a guardian angel, it speaks with calm, philosophical wisdom and offers a perspective beyond the estate. Its presence at the end suggests that Harri's spirit, or something of his innocence, endures. Some readers find the pigeon sentimental, but it gives the novel a sense of meaning that transcends the brutality of the plot.

Ultimately, I agree that Pigeon English is a book about hope, but not a naive one. Kelman shows that hope is real and precious, living in Harri's voice, his family's dreams and his generosity, yet he refuses to pretend that hope alone can protect a child. The ending does not destroy the novel's hope; it challenges the reader to act on it.

25 Both Day-Lewis and Heaney present family relationships as bonds that are tested and redefined by time, and both suggest that love between parent and child involves a painful exchange of roles. In "Walking Away" a father reflects on the moment his son first moved away from him, concluding that love must accept separation. In "Follower" a son recalls idolising his father on the farm, only to reveal that the relationship has reversed. Where Day-Lewis presents letting go as a hard but necessary act of love, Heaney presents the bond as something that cannot be escaped, leaving the reader with a more uneasy sense of family ties.

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The two poems are told from opposite perspectives, and this shapes how each presents the relationship. Day-Lewis writes as a parent looking back "eighteen years ago, almost to the day", and the precision of the time frame suggests a memory he has revisited many times. His son is seen from a distance: he watches him "go drifting away / Behind a scatter of boys". Heaney, by contrast, writes as the child, and his opening is dominated by the father: "My father worked with a horse-plough". The father is the subject of almost every sentence in the early stanzas, while the boy appears only as an afterthought, stumbling "in his hob-nailed wake". In each case, point of view shows that power lies with the one moving ahead.

Imagery is central to how both poets explore the strength and the strain of family love. Day-Lewis compares his son to "a satellite / Wrenched from its orbit", a simile which presents the parent as the centre the child has circled until now. The violent verb "Wrenched" implies that this separation is painful, perhaps for both of them, while the cosmic scale of the image shows how enormous a small event feels to a parent. Later, the boy is "Like a winged seed loosened from its parent stem", a natural image which softens the pain: seeds must leave in order to grow. Heaney also turns to nature and labour, but his imagery magnifies the father into a heroic figure. The metaphor "His shoulders globed like a full sail strung" makes him seem vast and powerful, and the single word "An expert" sits as a complete sentence, as if the child's admiration needs no further explanation. Whereas Day-Lewis's images present a child who is fragile and vulnerable, "half-fledged", Heaney's present a parent who seems unbeatable, which makes the ending all the more striking.

Structure in both poems moves from memory to a present-day reflection, and it is

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here that their views of family diverge most clearly. Day-Lewis uses a regular form of four five-line stanzas with an insistent rhyme on "away", "play" and "day", and this repetition echoes the way the memory "Gnaws at my mind still". The verb "Gnaws" suggests a persistent, animal pain, yet the final couplet resolves it into a philosophical truth: "How selfhood begins with a walking away, / And love is proved in the letting go." The balanced syntax and rhyme give a sense of acceptance, and the reference to "God" suggests the father sees this as part of a divine design. Writing in the mid twentieth century, when a father was perhaps expected to hide tenderness, Day-Lewis offers an unusually open admission of how much parenting hurts.

Heaney's final stanza also shifts into the present, but it offers no such resolution. After confessing "I was a nuisance, tripping, falling, / Yapping always", he turns with "But today / It is my father who keeps stumbling / Behind me, and will not go away." The verb "stumbling" mirrors the boy's earlier clumsiness, so the roles have been exactly reversed: the son now leads and the ageing father follows. The phrase "will not go away" is deliberately ambiguous. It could suggest the burden of caring for an elderly parent, or the way the father's influence still haunts a son who chose to become a poet rather than a farmer. Heaney grew up on a farm in County Derry, and the poem arguably carries some guilt at breaking from that tradition. Day-Lewis's "walking away" is the beginning of selfhood; Heaney's father, however, refuses to let his son walk away completely.

Ultimately, both poems present family relationships as shaped by the inevitability of growing up and growing old. Day-Lewis suggests that a parent's love is proved by allowing distance, whereas Heaney suggests that the bond with a parent is never fully broken, for better or worse. Together they show that family love is not static but is constantly being renegotiated, and that the moment of separation,

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whether a first day at school or a father's old age, can define the relationship for a lifetime.

26 Both Armitage and Duffy present difficult experiences as wounds that do not stay in the place where they happened. In "Remains" a soldier is haunted by a man he helped to kill, and in "War Photographer" a photographer returns to England carrying images of suffering that the people around him barely register. Both poets suggest that those who witness or commit violence lose control over their own minds, and both quietly criticise a society that sends people into conflict and then turns away from what they bring home.

The two poems differ in how directly they present the experience itself. Armitage uses a first-person, conversational voice that drops the reader straight into an anecdote: "On another occasion, we get sent out". The casual phrase "On another occasion" suggests that this is one story among many, as if violence has become routine, and the passive "we get sent" shows that the soldier did not choose to be there. Duffy, by contrast, uses a third-person narrator who observes the photographer in his darkroom, "finally alone / with spools of suffering set out in ordered rows." This distance mirrors his professional detachment: the alliteration of "spools of suffering" turns human pain into neat objects, arranged and controlled.

Both poems, however, show that this control is fragile. In "Remains", the shooting is described with brutal, graphic detail: the soldier insists "I see every round as it rips through his life" and the looter is left "sort of inside out, / pain itself, the image of agony." The colloquial "sort of" suggests language cannot cope with what he saw. The refrain "probably armed, possibly not" introduces the doubt that will destroy him, because he can never know whether the killing was justified. In "War

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Photographer", the moment of loss of control comes as the image develops: "A stranger's features / faintly start to twist before his eyes, / a half-formed ghost." The ghostly image parallels Armitage's looter, since in both poems the dead return. Duffy's photographer remembers "how the blood stained into foreign dust", and this echoes Armitage's "blood-shadow" which "stays on the street". In each poem blood leaves a mark that cannot be removed, a metaphor for guilt and memory.

Structure is crucial in showing how the experience changes the individual over time. Armitage's poem pivots on the line "End of story, except not really." The short, flat phrase is undercut immediately, and the second half of the poem moves from the street in Iraq to "home on leave", where the memory intrudes: "I blink / and he bursts again through the doors of the bank." The present tense and the repetition of earlier phrases show trauma as a loop he cannot escape. Even "the drink and the drugs won't flush him out", a stark reference to the self-medication common in veterans with post-traumatic stress. Armitage based the poem on the testimony of a soldier who served in Iraq, for his collection "The Not Dead", and the lack of any regular rhyme or metre perhaps reflects a mind that has lost its structure. Duffy, on the other hand, uses three regular six-line stanzas with a rhyming couplet at the end of each, as if the photographer is still trying to impose order. Yet the line "beneath his hands, which did not tremble then / though seem to now" shows that the effect of his experience is delayed: only at home does his body register the horror.

Both poets also show how such experiences isolate people. Armitage's final lines are intensely personal: "his bloody life in my bloody hands." The pun on "bloody", both literal blood and an exhausted curse, makes the soldier's guilt both physical and emotional. Duffy widens her focus to the public, who view "A hundred agonies in black and white" in "Sunday's supplement". Their "eyeballs prick / with tears

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between the bath and pre-lunch beers", and the internal rhyme makes their sympathy sound trivial and brief. Duffy, who was friends with war photographers, attacks a comfortable British readership that consumes suffering without being changed. The final image, where he stares from the aeroplane "where / he earns his living and they do not care", is ambiguous: "they" could be the indifferent readers at home, or perhaps the powers that wage war, but either way the photographer is left alone with what he has seen.

Ultimately, both poems suggest that difficult experiences leave individuals powerless: the soldier cannot control his memories and the photographer cannot make the world care. Armitage presents trauma from the inside, as an intrusive, unending torment, whereas Duffy presents it partly from the outside, emphasising the gap between those who suffer and those who look on. Together they show that the cost of conflict is carried long after the fighting stops, by people whose experiences society would prefer not to see.

27.1 Baca presents the speaker's love as something humble yet essential: the poem is his only gift, but he insists that it is also the one thing that can sustain a person through hardship. The speaker's feelings combine tenderness, protectiveness and a quiet urgency, as if he fears that the person he loves will one day face a world that is cold and indifferent.

The poem opens with a modest, almost apologetic tone. The speaker offers it "since I have nothing else to give", and the direct address to "you" creates intimacy, as though the reader is overhearing a private conversation. Although he may lack material wealth, the poem argues that love is worth more than any possession. The simple, monosyllabic language reflects this sincerity: there is no

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elaborate imagery of roses or beauty, only plain words that seem honest.

Baca presents love through practical, domestic images of warmth and protection. The poem should be kept "like a warm coat / when winter comes to cover you", and "like a pair of thick socks / the cold cannot bite through". The personification of the cold that can "bite" makes the outside world seem hostile and predatory, while love becomes a protective layer. The images then become more nourishing: the poem is "a pot full of yellow corn / to warm your belly in winter". The shift from similes to the direct metaphor "it is" suggests growing confidence, as if the speaker becomes more certain that his love really can provide what is needed. Love is presented not as a passing emotion but as something as vital as food and clothing.

The repeated line "I love you", indented and set apart from the rest of each section, works almost like a refrain. Its position on the page gives it emphasis. It could also suggest anxiety, since words are all he can offer.

As the poem develops, the speaker's feelings widen from physical care to emotional and spiritual guidance. The imperative "Keep it, treasure this" shows how much he values his gift, and he imagines the beloved "lost, needing direction, / in the wilderness life becomes when mature". This metaphor presents adulthood as a disorientating, lonely place, and love as a guide through it. The poem becomes a refuge, "tucked away like a cabin or hogan / in dense trees", and the speaker promises "come knocking, / and I will answer". The promise of a "fire" where the beloved can "rest" presents love as a permanent shelter, available even when hidden away.

The final section moves from the personal to the universal. Love is "all anyone

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needs to live", and the contrast between living "inside" and "the world outside" that "no longer cares if you live or die" reveals the speaker's deepest fear: a world without compassion. The rhyme of "give", "live" and "living" binds these ideas together, linking the gift of love to survival itself. The poem ends with the single word "remember," followed by the final "I love you." Here, for the first time, the refrain ends with a full stop rather than a comma, giving a sense of completion and certainty. Ultimately, Baca presents love as the speaker's only possession, but also the most powerful one, able to protect, nourish and guide a person through a cold world.

27.2 Both poets use repetition of "I love you" to emphasise the strength of the speakers' feelings, but the effect is different. In Baca's poem the indented refrain "I love you" interrupts each section like a quiet reassurance, creating a gentle, almost tentative tone. In Joseph's poem, the repeated "Because I love you" is placed after huge images, so love becomes the cause of everything that happens, giving the poem a jubilant, emphatic tone.

Both poets also use imagery of the natural world, yet they use it in opposite ways. Baca presents nature as harsh: winter, cold that can "bite through" and a "wilderness" from which love offers protection. Love is therefore a shelter against nature. Joseph, however, presents nature as transformed by love, from the title's hyperbole "The sun has burst the sky" to the ships that sound their hooters "Crazy with joy". Her speaker's love is so powerful that it seems to overflow into the whole world, while Baca's love is small, private and protective.

The poets' use of address also differs. Baca's imperatives, such as "Keep it" and "remember", are directed at the beloved and show his concern for their future.

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Joseph's speaker seems more focused on celebrating the feeling itself in the present moment. Overall, Baca presents love as a quiet, lasting necessity, whereas Joseph presents it as an explosive, joyful force.