Rewarding Learning

General Certificate of Secondary Education
2025

English Literature

Unit 2

The Study of Drama and Poetry

GEL21

[GEL21]
THURSDAY 29 MAY, MORNING

TIME

2 hours.

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

Write your Centre Number and Candidate Number on the Answer Booklets provided.
Answer **two** questions.
Answer **one** question from each section.
Write your answer to Section A in the Drama Answer Booklet.
Write your answer to Section B in the Poetry Answer Booklet.
Spend 1 hour on Section A and 1 hour on Section B.
You should have with you an unannotated copy of your Drama text and an unannotated copy of your Poetry Anthology.

INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

The total mark for this paper is 80.
All questions in Section A and Section B carry equal marks, i.e. 40 marks for each question.
Quality of written communication will be assessed in all responses.
Examiners can only credit what they can read. Keep your work legible.

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Section A – Drama

Answer **one** question from this section.

1 O'Casey: *Juno and the Paycock*

Answer **either (a) or (b)**

Use the Drama Answer Booklet for your answer.

(a) With reference to the ways O'Casey **presents** Boyle, show how far you agree that Boyle is **selfish**.

(b) Look again at the extract from page 90 beginning with the stage directions: *He sits down by the fire. Juno enters hastily; she is flurried and excited* and ending on page 93 with Mrs Boyle's words: "You won't have many pains in your legs when you hear what Mr Bentham has to tell you."

With reference to the ways O'Casey **presents** the relationships within the Boyle family in the extract and elsewhere in the play, show how far you agree that these family relationships are **difficult**.

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2 Priestley: *An Inspector Calls*

Answer **either (a) or (b)**

Use the Drama Answer Booklet for your answer.

(a) With reference to the ways Priestley **presents** Mrs Birling, show how far you agree that Mrs Birling is **harsh** towards others.

(b) Look again at the extract from Act 1 beginning at the top of page 3 with Birling's words: "Oh — come, come —" and ending on page 5 with Mrs Birling's words: "I think Sheila and I had better go into the drawing-room and leave you men —."

With reference to the ways Priestley **presents** relationships in the extract and elsewhere in the play, show how far you agree that the Birling family's relationships are **loveless**.

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3 **Friel:** *Philadelphia, Here I Come!*

Answer **either (a) or (b)**

Use the Drama Answer Booklet for your answer.

(a) With reference to the ways Friel **presents** Madge, show how far you agree that Madge is **motherly**.

(b) Look again at the extract from Episode 1 beginning on page 31 with Kate's words: "Don't look so miserable" and ending on page 34 with Doogan's words: "No, he didn't".

(For those using the version which was reset in 2000, the extract begins on page 18 and ends on page 21.)

With reference to the ways Friel **presents** the people of Ballybeg in the extract and elsewhere in the play, show how far you agree that the people of Ballybeg are **strong-willed**.

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4 Russell: *Blood Brothers*

Answer **either (a) or (b)**

Use the Drama Answer Booklet for your answer.

(a) With reference to the ways Russell **presents** Mickey, show how far you agree that Mickey is a **loyal friend**.

(b) Look again at the extract beginning at the top of page 71 with Mrs Lyons' words: "How long have you lived here?" and ending on page 73 with the Kids' voices: "your teeth will go bad/ High upon a hill there's a woman gone mad."

(For those using the "red-backed edition", the extract begins on page 77 and ends on page 79.)

With reference to the ways Russell **presents** Mrs Lyons' difficulties in the extract and elsewhere in the play, show how far you agree that Mrs Lyons is to **blame** for her difficulties.

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5 **Sherriff:** Journey's End

Answer **either (a) or (b)**

Use the Drama Answer Booklet for your answer.

(a) With reference to the ways Sherriff **presents** the soldiers' lives, show how far you agree that the soldiers act **selfishly**.

(b) Look again at the extract from Act 1 beginning at the top of page 11 with Osborne's words: "You know, Raleigh, you mustn't expect to find him — quite the same" and ending on page 13 with Osborne's words: "Think of it all as — as romantic. It helps."

(For those using the Penguin edition, the extract begins on page 19 and ends on page 21.)

With reference to the ways Sherriff **presents** Osborne in the extract and elsewhere in the play, show how far you agree that Osborne helps others **cope** with trench life.

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

Answer **either (a) or (b)**

Use the Drama Answer Booklet for your answer.

(a) With reference to the ways Stephens **presents** the adults in Christopher's life, show how far you agree that the adults are **disrespectful** to Christopher and each other.

(b) Look again at the extract from Part Two beginning on page 71 with Christopher's words: "Left right left right left right left right" and ending on page 74 with the stage direction: *He explores the stage. He calls for Toby. He stays calm.*

With reference to the ways Stephens **presents** Christopher in the extract and elsewhere in the play, show how far you agree that Christopher **successfully manages** difficult situations.

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7 Wilder: *Our Town*

Answer **either (a) or (b)**

Use the Drama Answer Booklet for your answer.

(a) With reference to the ways Wilder **presents** life in Grover's Corners, show how far you agree that small-town life is **unpleasant**.

(b) Look again at the extract from Act 1 beginning on page 27 with Mrs Gibbs's words: "Everything all right, Frank?" and ending on page 30 with Mrs Gibbs's words: "Beans have been good this year".

(For those using the edition re-issued in 2017, the extract begins on page 12 and ends on page 15.)

With reference to the ways Wilder **presents** Mrs Gibbs in the extract and elsewhere in the play, show how far you agree that Mrs Gibbs is **caring**.

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Section B – Poetry

Answer **one** question from this section.

8 Anthology One: IDENTITY

Answer **either (a) or (b)**

Use the Poetry Answer Booklet for your answer.

(a) Look again at *Catrin* by Gillian Clarke which deals with the theme of family, and at one other poem from the IDENTITY anthology which also deals with the theme of family.

With close reference to the ways each poet uses language, compare and contrast what the speakers in the poems say about **family**. You should include relevant contextual material.

(b) Look again at *Here* by R.S. Thomas which deals with the theme of self-discovery, and at one other poem from the IDENTITY anthology which also deals with the theme of self-discovery.

With close reference to the ways each poet uses language, compare and contrast what the speakers in the poems say about **self-discovery**. You should include relevant contextual material.

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9 Anthology Two: RELATIONSHIPS

Answer **either (a) or (b)**

Use the Poetry Answer Booklet for your answer.

(a) Look again at *The Laboratory* by Robert Browning which deals with the theme of bitter feelings, and at one other poem from the RELATIONSHIPS anthology which also deals with the theme of bitter feelings.

With close reference to the ways each poet uses language, compare and contrast what the speakers in the poems say about **bitter feelings**. You should include relevant contextual material.

(b) Look again at *Before you were Mine* by Carol Ann Duffy which deals with the theme of the past, and at one other poem from the RELATIONSHIPS anthology which also deals with the theme of the past.

With close reference to the ways each poet uses language, compare and contrast what the speakers in the poems say about **the past**. You should include relevant contextual material.

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10 Anthology Three: CONFLICT

Answer **either (a) or (b)**

Use the Poetry Answer Booklet for your answer.

(a) Look again at *Last Post* by Carol Ann Duffy which deals with the theme of the impact of war and at one other poem from the CONFLICT anthology which also deals with the theme of the impact of war.

With close reference to the ways each poet uses language, compare and contrast what the speakers in the poems say about the **impact of war**. You should include relevant contextual material.

(b) Look again at *Mametz Wood* by Owen Sheers which deals with the theme of memories of conflict and at one other poem from the CONFLICT anthology which also deals with the theme of memories of conflict.

With close reference to the ways each poet uses language, compare and contrast what the speakers in the poems say about **memories of conflict**. You should include relevant contextual material.

THIS IS THE END OF THE QUESTION PAPER

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Rewarding Learning

Month and Year | Candidate Number

Centre Number

General Certificate of Secondary Education

ANSWER BOOKLET

Subject

English Literature

Unit | **Component Code**

2 | **GEL21**

Section A Drama

GEL21

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

For use in GCSE English Literature Unit 2 Section A Drama only

Read these instructions carefully

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Rewarding Learning

Month and Year | Candidate Number

Centre Number

General Certificate of Secondary Education

ANSWER BOOKLET

Subject

English Literature

Unit | **Component Code**

2 | **GEL22**

GEL22

Section B Poetry

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

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Question Number	Answer	Examiner Only Marks	Examiner Only Remark

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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

1a

I largely agree that Boyle is selfish. O'Casey presents him as a man whose every action is measured by his own comfort, pride and appetite, and the play's tragedy grows directly out of that self-absorption. Yet O'Casey does not let him become a simple villain. Boyle is also a comic creation, a fantasist whose vanity is partly pathetic, and there are rare moments when he gestures towards responsibility. Ultimately, however, those moments are either hollow or quickly abandoned, so the play's judgement on him is a harsh one.

From his first appearance Boyle's selfishness is tied to his refusal to work. While Juno is the breadwinner, he pleads illness whenever a job is mentioned, complaining that "Nobody but meself knows the sufferin' I'm goin' through with the pains in these legs o' mine!" The heavy repetition of first-person pronouns, "meself" and "mine", shows that his imagined suffering is the centre of his universe. O'Casey's comic stagecraft exposes the lie: when Juno has gone, Boyle and Joxer settle down to tea and fry, and the pair stage an absurd performance about the foreman at Killesther, with Boyle giving Joxer a meaning look until the truth dawns on him. The audience laughs, but the laughter is uneasy because we know the family is living on Juno's wages. Even his nickname contributes to this. Juno describes him strutting about like a "paycock", and the image of a vain bird displaying its feathers while doing nothing useful sums up a man who loves the idea of himself more than his responsibilities.

His treatment of Juno is the clearest sign of his selfishness. He smuggles Joxer in behind her back and mocks her to his friend as "Deirdre of the Sorras", a mock-heroic title that sneers at the very worries his idleness creates. When she

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challenges him he sulks like a child, declaring "I'll have no breakfast" and telling them they can keep it. O'Casey shows that Boyle cannot tolerate criticism because his pride is more important to him than his family's needs.

The inheritance in Act II magnifies these traits rather than changing them. Boyle instantly drops Joxer in grand, exaggerated language, "He'll never blow the froth off a pint o' mine agen", and spends money he does not have on a gramophone and new furniture. His selfishness also becomes political indifference. When Mrs Tancred passes through grieving for her murdered son, Boyle dismisses her loss: "We've nothin' to do with these things... That's the Government's business." O'Casey places this line in the middle of a party, so the contrast between Mrs Tancred's anguish and Boyle's drink and song makes his callousness unmistakable. Ironically, his own son will soon suffer the same fate.

Act III shows the full cost of his self-interest. Boyle has known for some time that the will is worthless, yet he lets the family run up debts, and when the truth emerges he blurts it out with no thought for its effect on his shocked wife: "the Will's a wash-out!" His response to Mary's pregnancy is even more revealing. His first thought is for himself, through repeated self-pity such as "the state I'm in!" and "A pretty show I'll be", rather than for his daughter, and the stage direction peevishly in "First Johnny an' now Mary" makes her disgrace sound like a personal inconvenience. Having heaped insults on his children, "Oh, a nice son, an' a nicer daughter I have", he simply goes off to Foley's, leaving Juno to deal with Johnny's terror and Mary's despair. Juno's warning that she will leave meets only bravado: "I lived before I seen yous, an' I can live when yous are gone."

However, there is some evidence on the other side. In Act I Boyle does object to Jerry's advances towards Mary, "This is nice goins on in front of her father!", and

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in Act II he plays the effusive host to Mrs Madigan and calls "Ordher for the song!" when Juno is about to sing. After learning of Mary's condition he even vows to follow Bentham and "make him do her justice". O'Casey allows the audience to see a man who likes the role of protective father and genial host. Yet each of these moments is about Boyle's image as much as about others. His defence of Mary is a matter of propriety, his hospitality is fuelled by money that is not his, and his vow to pursue Bentham is never carried out. These are gestures, not sacrifices.

The ending settles the question through powerful dramatic contrast. Juno, having lost her son and her home, makes her great prayer for the Sacred Heart to "take away our hearts o' stone, and give us hearts o' flesh!" She leaves with Mary, choosing the unborn child's future. Then Boyle and Joxer stagger into the empty room, very drunk, and Boyle rambles about having fought for Ireland and concludes that the world is in "a terrible state o' chassis". The structure juxtaposes Juno's selfless grief with Boyle's drunken self-pity, so that the tragicomic final scene becomes an indictment. He does not even know that Johnny is dead.

In conclusion, O'Casey presents Boyle as profoundly selfish. His comic charm and occasional protective impulses add complexity and stop him becoming a caricature, but the structure of the play repeatedly sets his vanity, idleness and drinking against Juno's endurance. The final image of the "paycock" alone in his "chassis" suggests that his selfishness has not only destroyed his family but has left him blind to what he has lost.

1b

I agree that O'Casey presents the relationships within the Boyle family as difficult, strained by poverty, pride, trauma and Boyle's idleness. The extract shows this in

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miniature: within a few minutes Juno bickers with her husband, scolds her son and embarrasses her daughter, all while trying to impress a visitor. Yet O'Casey also shows that the family is held together, sometimes fiercely, by Juno's love, and the play finally suggests that the most difficult relationship is not between mother and children but between the family and its father.

The extract opens with Juno entering hastily, "flurried and excited", and immediately the tension between husband and wife resurfaces. Her suspicion about Joxer, "D'ye mean to tell me that the pair of yous wasn't collogin' together when me back was turned", is phrased as an accusing question, and Boyle answers with questions of his own, "What ud we be collogin' together about?" This exchange of questions creates a tone of irritation and mistrust: neither listens to the other, and each tries to score a point. Juno's sarcasm, "I suppose you were so busy with Joxer that you hadn't time", shows a wife who no longer expects anything of her husband. O'Casey makes their quarrel almost routine, which suggests that difficulty is the normal state of their marriage.

Juno's management of Boyle is close to the way a mother manages a child. Her exclamation, "G'win an' take off the moleskin trousers when you're told!", is an imperative that strips him of authority, and the comedy lies in the fact that the self-styled "Captain" must be ordered to dress respectably. Meanwhile the stage directions show her tidying the room, putting the shovel under the bed, and apologising to Bentham that "that man o' mine always makes a litther o' the place". These physical actions show that Juno feels responsible for covering up her husband's failings, and her embarrassment reveals how much his behaviour reflects on her.

The relationship with Johnny is equally fraught. O'Casey cleverly places Johnny

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offstage, so that his complaints, "What are you kickin' up all the racket for?", break into the scene as a disembodied voice. This staging effect creates an uncomfortable atmosphere and reminds the audience that Johnny is cut off from the family as well as from the room. His plea, "Ma, will you come in here an' take da away ou' o' this or he'll dhrive me mad", shows that he turns to his mother, not his father, and the stage direction roughly in Boyle's reply reveals a father with no patience for his damaged son. Juno's response to Johnny's talk of principle is the most revealing line in the extract: "you lost your best principle... when you lost your arm; them's the only sort o' principles that's any good to a workin' man". The repetition of "principle" turns his own word against him. Her frustration comes from love, since she cannot bear to see him wrecked for a cause, but it is spoken with a bluntness that wounds.

Mary too is embarrassed by her mother's coarseness, protesting "Mother!" in front of Bentham, which hints at the gulf between the educated daughter who reads Ibsen and the practical mother. The extract therefore ends with every relationship under strain, but O'Casey also contrasts Juno's welcoming tone towards Bentham with her irritated tone towards her family. Ironically, her final words, "You won't have many pains in your legs when you hear what Mr Bentham has to tell you", gently mock Boyle while promising the inheritance that will, for a time, unite them.

Elsewhere in the play the difficulties deepen. Juno complains that she works without thanks: "Amn't I nicely handicapped with the whole o' yous!" Johnny snaps at her kindness, saying that if a man was dying she would try to make him swallow a cup of tea, and Boyle tells Joxer that his breakfast is "the only bit I get in comfort when she's away". In Act III, when Mary's pregnancy is revealed, relationships fracture completely. Johnny's cruelty, "She should be dhriven out o' th'

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house she's brought disgrace on!", shows a brother more concerned with respectability than with his sister, and Juno confronts Boyle with the bitter truth that "your fatherly care never troubled the poor girl". The collapse of the will removes the false harmony money had created.

However, it would be too simple to call all the family's relationships difficult. Juno insists on respect within the family, telling Mary "your father's speakin'", and she comforts Johnny tenderly with "there now". In the extract itself Boyle and Juno present a united front to Bentham. Most importantly, Juno chooses to stand by Mary, saying that the child will have "two mothers", and her grief over Johnny is overwhelming: "Sacred Heart o' Jesus, take away our hearts o' stone, and give us hearts o' flesh!" The bond between Juno and her children survives disaster, even though Johnny is killed and Boyle is left behind.

In conclusion, I largely agree that the Boyle family's relationships are difficult. O'Casey uses questions, imperatives, offstage voices and stage directions in the extract to show a household where every conversation contains friction. Yet the play distinguishes between kinds of difficulty. The relationships between Juno and her children are strained by trauma and poverty but remain loving, whereas the relationship with Boyle is difficult because of his selfishness. When Juno leaves with Mary, O'Casey suggests that the family can only survive by leaving its father behind.

2a

I strongly agree that Priestley presents Mrs Birling as harsh towards others. She is the character who most completely refuses to learn from the Inspector, and her harshness is not a momentary lapse but a settled attitude rooted in snobbery and self-righteousness. Priestley does allow us glimpses of a mother who cares for her

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children and who eventually feels fear, but even these moments tend to reveal how limited her compassion is.

Priestley signals her nature from the opening stage directions, which describe her as "a rather cold woman" and her husband's social superior. The adjective "cold" prepares the audience for a character whose dealings with others are governed by status rather than feeling. Her first lines show this in a domestic way: she corrects her husband "reproachfully" for complimenting the cook, and later cuts off his political speeches with a sharp interjection, "Arthur!" Even within her own family she polices manners, and her harshness towards her children appears in imperatives such as "Don't be childish, Sheila." These small rebukes establish a woman who believes she has the right to judge.

Her harshness becomes far more serious when the Inspector questions her in Act 2. She begins by refusing to understand Sheila's warning, "I don't know what you're talking about, Sheila", and the stage direction rebuking them shows her dismissing both Sheila and Gerald. Her attitude to the Inspector is equally confrontational. She addresses him with haughty formality and, at one point, with sudden anger, treating him as an impertinent social inferior. Priestley uses this to show that her harshness is directed upwards as well as downwards: anyone who challenges her sense of order is put in their place.

It is her treatment of Eva Smith, however, that shows her harshness at its most damaging. As chair of the Brumley Women's Charity Organisation, she turned away a pregnant, desperate girl. She explains her reasons with chilling confidence: "I didn't like her manner. She'd impertinently made use of our name." Eva had called herself "Mrs Birling", and Mrs Birling regarded this as "gross impertinence", which she admits was "one of the things that prejudiced me against her case". Priestley's

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irony is sharp here, because a charity committee exists to help, yet Mrs Birling used her "influence to have it refused". Her language is consistently dehumanising. The phrase "Girls of that class" and her sneer, "As if a girl of that sort would ever refuse money!", turn Eva into a type rather than a person. The superior tone of "So I was perfectly justified" shows that she sees no moral problem at all.

Priestley's most powerful dramatic technique is the trap he allows her to set for herself. Insisting that Eva "only had herself to blame", Mrs Birling demands that the Inspector "Go and look for the father of the child. It's his responsibility." She declares that the young man should be dealt with severely, unaware, though the audience is beginning to suspect, that the father is Eric. The tension mounts as Sheila begs her to stop, and the curtain of Act 2 falls as Eric enters. Dramatic irony turns her harsh judgement back on her own son, exposing how her readiness to condemn others blinds her even to her family.

Even after this, she refuses to change. "I accept no blame for it at all," she insists, and in Act 3 she joins her husband in clutching at the possibility that the Inspector was a hoax, praising herself for being the one who did not give in to him. Eric's accusation, "you killed her, and the child she'd have had too", is the harshest verdict anyone gives in the play, yet it barely penetrates her. Priestley presents her as the embodiment of the older generation's refusal to accept collective responsibility, which is the moral heart of the play.

However, some readers may argue that she is not entirely harsh. She responds warmly to Sheila's engagement, "Yes, Sheila darling. Our congratulations and very best wishes!", and she tries to protect her daughter from the details of the story, suggesting it "would be much better if Sheila didn't listen". When Eric's guilt emerges, the stage directions show a woman breaking down: she is "rather agitated

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now" and "exchanges a frightened glance" with her husband. Her broken speech, in which "I didn't know" and "I didn't understand" are interrupted by dashes, suggests shock and perhaps remorse. Yet even here her concern is only for her own child. Her protectiveness is selective: it extends to her family and her class, but never to a working-class girl.

In conclusion, Priestley presents Mrs Birling as harsh towards almost everyone outside her narrow circle of family and status, and often towards those inside it too. Her moments of affection and fear make her human, but they also highlight the double standard at the centre of her character: she can feel for Eric but not for Eva. By the end of the play she remains unchanged, and Priestley uses her harshness to warn the audience against the kind of cold, judgemental privilege that ignores the "millions" of Eva Smiths.

2b To a large extent I agree that Priestley presents the Birling family's relationships as loveless. The extract, which should be a celebration of love, is filled with business talk, half-hidden suspicion and awkward silences, and the rest of the play exposes the hollowness beneath the family's polished surface. However, "loveless" may be slightly too absolute. Priestley shows flickers of genuine affection, particularly between the younger characters, and the play suggests that love becomes possible only when the characters are honest with one another.

The relationship at the centre of the extract, Sheila's engagement to Gerald, is undermined almost from the start. Sheila's teasing line, "except for all last summer, when you never came near me", is delivered "half serious, half playful", a stage direction which suggests that her joke hides a real hurt. Gerald's reply, "I was awfully busy at the works all that time", sounds rehearsed, and the audience

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later learns that it was a lie. His repeated questions, "I've been trying long enough, haven't I? Haven't I?", reveal how hard he must work to convince her. When Sheila "does not reply", the silence speaks louder than words. Priestley therefore plants doubt in the very scene that is meant to confirm their love.

Mrs Birling's advice deepens this impression. She tells Sheila that "men with important work to do sometimes have to spend nearly all their time and energy on their business". The advice is presented as wisdom, but it teaches Sheila to expect neglect and to accept it. Marriage, in Mrs Birling's view, is a social contract in which a wife does not ask questions, which hints that her own marriage may be similar. Her final line in the extract, proposing that "Sheila and I had better go into the drawing-room and leave you men", reinforces a rigid division between the sexes that leaves little room for intimacy.

Birling's attitude is even more revealing. He calls the evening "one of the happiest nights of my life", placing his own happiness at the centre of his daughter's engagement. His comment that Gerald is "just the kind of son-in-law I always wanted" sounds affectionate, but he soon makes his true motive clear by looking forward to the time when "Crofts and Birlings are no longer competing but are working together". Priestley presents the engagement as a business merger. Birling's hesitant "er" before "Lady Croft" shows his social insecurity, since he is acutely aware that Gerald's parents are his social superiors and that they have not come.

Even Sheila's response to the ring is ambiguous. She is "excited" and exclaims "isn't it a beauty?", focusing on the object rather than on Gerald, and the stage direction that she "kisses Gerald hastily" suggests limited affection. Meanwhile Eric, apparently drunk, "suddenly guffaws" and claims he "just had to laugh", a

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disruptive reaction that draws a reply from Sheila delivered severely. The sibling relationship appears abrasive, and the audience senses that Eric is an outsider in his own family.

Elsewhere in the play these hints are confirmed. Gerald's affair with Daisy Renton shows that he did not love Sheila faithfully, and his admission that he became "the most important person in her life" suggests he enjoyed being admired more than he loved anyone. Sheila "looks at him almost in triumph" when he is exposed, a stage direction that hardly suggests love, and she later returns the ring, recognising that they would have to start "getting to know each other" all over again. Eric's relationship with his parents collapses completely in Act 3. He tells his father that he is not the kind of father a chap could go to when he's in trouble, and to both of them he says, "I'm ashamed of you as well", adding that this applies to "both of you". The family's lack of love has had real consequences: Eric drank, stole and turned to Eva because he had no one at home to confide in.

However, some evidence suggests that the relationships are not entirely loveless. In the extract Gerald hopes to make Sheila "as happy as you deserve to be", and Eric affectionately calls her "Good old Sheila!" Later, Gerald tries to protect her, saying "Miss Birling ought to be excused any more of this questioning", and Sheila pleads with her mother, "Mother, don't", trying to stop her from condemning Eric. Even Birling, when Eric becomes aggressive, moves to defend his wife. These moments show that the family members do feel for each other, though usually in moments of crisis.

In conclusion, I largely agree that the Birlings' relationships are loveless, at least in the form they take at the start of the play. Priestley uses stage directions, silences and the language of business to show that the engagement is built on

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status and convenience rather than honesty. Yet the play also suggests that love is not impossible. Sheila and Eric, the younger generation, begin to form a more honest bond with each other by the end, while their parents retreat into self-protection. Priestley implies that love in a family, as in society, depends on taking responsibility for one another.

3a

I strongly agree that Friel presents Madge as motherly. Although she is officially only the O'Donnells' housekeeper, she has filled the place left by Gar's mother, who died days after his birth, and in many ways she is the emotional centre of a house where father and son cannot speak to each other. What makes Friel's presentation so subtle is that her mothering is rarely sentimental. It is expressed through sharp words, rough affection and practical care, and her deepest feelings are kept hidden until the end of the play.

From the opening moments Madge's role is defined through the routines of care. Her call, "Gar! Your tea!", is curt and brusque, yet it shows her attending to his daily needs exactly as a mother would. Friel uses this contrast between her blunt tone and her caring actions throughout. Gar's response to her is consistently affectionate: he grabs her and puts his face to hers, and calls her "an aul duck" and "a brick". Notably, Gar, who mocks almost everyone in Ballybeg through Private's sarcasm, never mocks Madge. Her scolding, "You brat you!" and "you dirty thing", has the playful, admonishing tone of a mother with a mischievous child, and it shows a relationship of easy intimacy that Gar has with no one else.

Her care extends beyond the duties of a housekeeper. As Gar prepares to leave for Philadelphia she fusses over his clothes, telling him to "See that they're well aired before you put them on", a practical instruction that betrays anxiety about his

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welfare once he is beyond her reach. She reminds him of how she raised him, "I bathed you every Saturday night till you were a big lout of fourteen!", a line which is comic in its bluntness but which also asserts her claim to have been his mother in all but name. Her warning, "Dear, but you're in for a cooling when you go across", suggests she knows that no one in America will look after him as she has.

Friel also presents Madge as a go-between in the silent conflict between Gar and S.B. She asks whether his father has "said nothing since", inviting Gar to confide in her, and her ironic remark about the two men, "A body couldn't get a word in edgeways", highlights both their inability to communicate and her own position as the one person who tries to hold the household together. Like a mother in a difficult family, she understands both sides.

Friel's use of Private is crucial to showing how deeply Gar feels her motherly role. In a rare moment of sincerity, Private declares, "Madge, Madge, I think I love you more than any of them." Private normally deflates everything with mockery, so this unguarded statement carries great weight. Later, Private urges Public to "Watch her carefully, every movement, every gesture, every little peculiarity". The repetition and the image of the camera "whirring" show Gar trying to preserve her in memory, as a son might try to fix the image of a mother he is about to lose.

The final episode provides Friel's most powerful evidence. Madge returns from the christening at Nelly's and, in a soliloquy delivered while the house sleeps, reveals feelings she has kept hidden. She hopes that "That Lizzy one'll look after him well, I suppose", a line which shows her passing on her responsibility with reluctance. She reflects that when Gar reaches his father's age "he'll turn out just the same", a bitter-sweet realisation that the son she raised will repeat the father's pattern. The stage directions are deeply moving: she stands looking at the bedroom door

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and raises her hand in a sort of vague benediction. The gesture of blessing is maternal and almost religious, and the hesitancy suggested by "vague" captures her restraint. Friel also contrasts her quiet, sincere love with Lizzy's gushing, self-centred desire to mother Gar in America, making Madge the true mother figure of the play. Even her decision not to tell Gar that the baby has not been named after her shows sensitivity, since she will not spoil his last night.

However, some may argue that Madge is not always motherly. She can be sarcastic, as when she remarks "He's losing a treasure, indeed!", and she humiliates Gar in front of S.B. with her teasing about "St. Martin de Porres". She is not always gentle either, giving him a rough punch. Most tellingly, when Gar asks about his mother, she refuses to answer: "And any other nosing about you want to do, ask the Boss." Yet even these moments can be read as motherly. Teasing and roughness are the language of affection in a family where tenderness cannot be spoken, and her refusal to discuss his mother may be loyalty to S.B. or a protective silence about the past.

In conclusion, Friel presents Madge as profoundly motherly, though in an understated, distinctly Irish rural way. Her sharp tongue disguises a love expressed through food, clothes and practical advice, and only Private and her final soliloquy reveal how much she and Gar mean to each other. By placing Madge's soliloquy and benediction just before the final episode, so that her love frames Gar's last, unanswered question about why he must leave, Friel suggests that she is the real heart of the home Gar is leaving.

3b

I agree that many of the people of Ballybeg are strong-willed, but Friel suggests that their strength usually takes the form of a stubborn determination to protect

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their own position or to keep things as they are. The characters who hold power, like Senator Doogan, are quietly ruthless in getting what they want, while Gar, the boys and even S.B. seem trapped by a lack of will. The extract dramatises this contrast sharply, as Gar's hesitancy is crushed by the polite but iron will of the Doogans.

At the start of the extract Kate is the one pushing Gar to act. Her words, "Don't look so miserable", set a tone of encouragement, but she also places the burden on him, telling him "it's up to you, entirely". The stage direction earnestly shows the pressure she puts on him to behave strongly. She even coaches him to exaggerate his income to her father, telling him to say "You have £20 a week". Kate is strong-willed in her desire to see the marriage happen, but Friel hints that her will has limits: she wants Gar to be bold so that she does not have to be. Gar's reply, by contrast, falters through hesitation: "maybe we should wait until, until, until next Sunday". The repetition and broken syntax capture his evasiveness, and the audience sees at once which of the two has the stronger will.

Once Senator Doogan enters, Friel shows a far more formidable kind of strength. Gar cannot even return Doogan's greeting, so Kate must fill in for him, a stage direction that exposes his weakness. Kate's ability to present a different façade is also shown as she turns and smiles. Doogan then takes control of the scene. He sends Kate away with a polite request, "Ask them to join us, will you?", isolating Gar. With apparent friendliness he describes Francis King, the young doctor returning to the town, praising him as "A fine boy" and stressing that the families have known each other "since away back". These details are carefully chosen to make Gar feel his social inferiority. The pause in "her mother and I ... let's say we're living in hope" is particularly powerful. It sounds tentative, but its effect is decisive: Doogan has told Gar, without saying it directly, that he is not wanted.

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His insistence that Kate's "happiness is all that is important to us" disguises manipulation as concern, and the stage direction awkwardly, with sincerity suggests he is half aware of his own calculation. Friel's direction that Doogan "goes on and on" shows him overpowering Gar simply by talking.

Friel's use of the alter ego intensifies the contrast. Private grasps exactly what is happening, exclaiming "Cripes, man!", and his sarcasm highlights Public's paralysis. Gar has a sharp, critical mind, but he cannot turn his thoughts into action. The extract therefore suggests that in Ballybeg strength of will belongs to those with status, while the young man without money or confidence is silenced. Even the extract's final line belongs to Doogan, who has controlled the conversation throughout.

Elsewhere in the play this pattern continues. Private later mocks Doogan as "Mister Fair-play Lawyer Senator Doogan", repeating "her happiness is all that is important to us" with contempt, but mockery is all he can manage. When Kate, now married to Francis King, visits on Gar's last night, the conversation is strained and she leaves with the excuse that "Francis'll be wondering what's keeping me". Gar's lie that his visit "went clean out of my mind" shows that he still cannot speak honestly. Master Boyle, too, has a certain cunning will, extracting money from Gar under the pretence of having come out without his wallet, and Gar's complicity shows how easily he is manipulated. Lizzy Sweeney is strong-willed in a different way, pursuing Gar with relentless, gushing emotion until he agrees to come to Philadelphia.

S.B. and the Canon represent the stubbornness of Ballybeg rather than active strength. Their nightly game of draughts, the routine of the rosary and S.B.'s repetitive comments about the shop show an older generation whose will is devoted

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to keeping life unchanged. In one sense this is a kind of strength, an unbending endurance, but Friel presents it as a form of paralysis, since it leaves father and son unable to reach each other. The Canon's failure to offer any real guidance, which provokes Private's bitter attack, suggests that Ballybeg's institutions are firm but empty.

However, some may argue that Ballybeg's people are weak rather than strong-willed. It is Gar's own lack of backbone, not only Doogan's strength, that destroys his chance with Kate. The boys, Ned, Tom and Joe, boast about their exploits with women, but Private exposes their stories as fantasy, retorting that Ned was never out with big Annie McFadden. Their swagger hides inertia. Gar's persistent indecision about leaving, ending with his "I don't know", might be seen as the defining weakness of a whole community.

In conclusion, I largely agree that the people of Ballybeg are strong-willed, but Friel shows that this strength is unevenly distributed and often used to maintain the status quo. Doogan and, to a lesser extent, Kate get their way, while S.B. and the Canon cling stubbornly to routine. Against them, Gar's will is divided between Public and Private, and the extract makes painfully clear that thinking boldly is not the same as acting boldly.

4a I largely agree that Russell presents Mickey as a loyal friend, but his loyalty is shown to be fragile because it depends on a sense of equality that the class system eventually destroys. As a child, Mickey's devotion to Edward is instinctive, generous and fierce. As an adult, poverty, unemployment and depression turn that loyalty into resentment. Russell seems less interested in condemning Mickey for this change than in showing how circumstances can break even the strongest

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bond, so by the end Mickey's loyalty is damaged rather than simply absent.

From their first meeting, Russell makes loyalty the foundation of the friendship. The blood brother ceremony is a child's ritual, yet it carries real weight: Mickey explains that it means "we always have to stand by each other". The repetition in the oath, "And stand by him./And stand by him", creates a chant-like, almost sacred rhythm, and the mirrored lines suggest the twins are equals making identical promises. There is powerful dramatic irony here, since the audience knows they are already brothers by blood, so Mickey's innocent loyalty is also a cruel reminder of what has been taken from them. The ritual becomes a motif, returning when the teenagers meet again, which suggests that Mickey's loyalty is something he chooses and renews rather than something forced upon him by birth.

Russell also shows Mickey's loyalty through action. When Sammy sneers that Edward is "a friggin' poshy", Mickey replies at once, "No he's not. He's my best friend." The superlative "best" and the immediate contradiction show a boy willing to defend an outsider against his own older brother, whom he usually idolises and fears. Similarly, he is happy to defy authority for Edward, telling him to "take no notice of mothers. They're soft." The comic bravado makes the audience laugh, but it also reveals that Mickey places the friendship above family rules. Even with Linda, whom he clearly likes, he insists, "come on let's go get Eddie first", and invites him to have "a shot at our target in the park". Mickey actively includes Edward rather than guarding his own territory, which is a selfless form of loyalty.

The pain of separation strengthens this impression. When Mrs Johnstone stops the boys playing, the stage direction tells us Mickey goes "almost in tears", and after Edward moves away he wanders "aimless and bored, deserted and alone". The list

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of adjectives makes his loneliness almost physical. In the song "My Friend", the two boys sing mirrored verses in separate places, and Mickey admits, "I tell them to myself, but they're not funny." Russell's use of song and split staging allows the audience to see that Mickey's loyalty survives distance; he even plans to go "on the bus" to find Edward. When they meet as teenagers, his excited repetition, "look, look it's Eddie", shows that his feelings have not dimmed at all.

However, Russell complicates this picture early on. In the incident with the policeman, Mickey goes along with Linda's claim, "He's not with us", abandoning Edward to protect himself. This is a small moment, but it hints that Mickey's loyalty has limits when he feels threatened. More seriously, in Act Two, unemployment changes him. When Edward returns from university and chatters about his life, Mickey's response, "You. You're a dick head!", is blunt and wounding. The short, broken sentences suggest anger he cannot fully express. The audience may feel that Edward is tactless, but Mickey's rejection of their friendship is still harsh, and his threat, "Go on...beat it before I hit y'", reverses the childhood promise to stand by him.

Even here, though, Russell encourages us to understand rather than simply judge. Mickey's resentment of Edward's help, "Not a job, not a house, nothin'...You sorted it out", shows that what really wounds him is dependence. Loyalty between equals has become charity from a councillor, and Mickey's pride cannot accept it. His final question, "how come you got everything...an I got nothin'?", is less a betrayal than a bitter recognition of injustice. When he realises that he "could have been him", Russell suggests that it is the divided upbringing, not any flaw in Mickey's heart, that has poisoned the friendship. The tragedy lies in the fact that his loyalty was real enough to make the betrayal by circumstance so painful.

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The ending supports this reading. Mickey confronts Edward with a gun, but his despair is aimed as much at his own life as at his friend, and the shooting happens almost by accident when the police intervene. The narrator's closing questions about superstition and class invite the audience to look beyond the individual characters for blame.

Overall, I agree that Russell presents Mickey as a loyal friend for most of the play, especially in the warmth, humour and devotion of the childhood scenes. His later cruelty is real, and the moment with the policeman shows his loyalty was never perfect. Yet Russell structures the play so that Mickey's change follows directly from poverty, prison and illness, inviting sympathy. Mickey does not stop caring about Edward; rather, he loses the equality that made loyalty possible, and that loss is the heart of the tragedy.

4b

I mostly agree that Russell presents Mrs Lyons as the author of her own difficulties, since almost every crisis she faces grows from a choice she made: taking a baby that was not hers and then lying to protect that decision. Yet Russell does not present her as a simple villain. In the extract, her fear, guilt and collapsing mental state make the question of blame more complex, and the play as a whole suggests that loneliness, a neglectful husband and a society that lets money buy a child all contribute to her suffering.

The extract opens with Mrs Lyons on the attack. Her question, "How long have you lived here?", sounds polite, but it quickly becomes accusation: "Are you always going to follow me?" The interrogative mode here, and in the sneering "You're very clever aren't you?", shows her turning her anxiety outwards onto Mrs Johnstone. Russell lets the audience see the injustice clearly, because Mrs Johnstone's reply,

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"We were rehoused here...I didn't follow", is calm and plainly true. Mrs Lyons ignores it. Her exclamation, "Don't lie! I know what you are doing to me!", reveals a mind that has already decided who is guilty. In this sense she creates her difficulty in the moment: the confrontation exists only because she has invented a conspiracy.

Russell also shows that her real problem is her relationship with Edward. Her bitter observation about the locket, "He never takes it off you know", is revealing. A small prop, given by Mrs Johnstone as a parting gift, becomes for Mrs Lyons a symbol of the bond she cannot break. Yet she herself drove the original separation, so the locket is a reminder of a debt she created. Most strikingly, Russell gives her a moment of honest self-knowledge: "I took him. But I never made him mine." The balanced, monosyllabic sentences carry a terrible clarity. The verb "took" admits the act of theft, and the contrast with "made him mine" suggests she understands that love cannot be bought. Here she accepts some blame, and the audience may feel pity for her.

That pity is complicated by her anguish. Her memory that "just for a while I came to believe that he was actually mine", and her fear that even as a baby he was looking at her and thinking "he knows...he knows", show a woman haunted by guilt. The repetition and the ellipsis suggest obsessive, circling thought. Russell's use of fragmented speech, with pauses around "You have ruined me", conveys mounting hysteria. We might argue that this paranoia lessens her responsibility, since she is clearly unwell. However, she continues to transfer blame: "you won't ruin Edward!" insists that Mrs Johnstone is the threat, when Mrs Lyons herself is the one who has kept the secret. Her attempt to buy Mrs Johnstone off, with the clipped questions "Is it money you want?" and "How much?", repeats the very transaction that began the tragedy, as if she has learned nothing.

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The climax of the extract shows how dangerous her refusal to accept blame has become. The stage direction in which she holds "a lethal-looking kitchen knife" turns verbal hostility into physical threat. Her curse, "I curse you. Witch!", draws on the language of superstition that she herself invented, which is deeply ironic: she is now trapped in the fiction she used to frighten Mrs Johnstone. Russell ends the extract with the offstage voices of the Kids chanting that "there's a woman gone mad". The nursery-rhyme form turns her suffering into a public joke, perhaps suggesting that her isolation is partly the result of a community that mocks rather than helps. Yet it also presents her decline as the natural end of her own actions.

Elsewhere, Russell makes her responsibility even clearer. The whole plot begins with her request, "Give one to me", a command that treats a baby almost as a product. She manipulates Mrs Johnstone by promising, "you'd be able to see him every day", and then later dismisses her once Edward arrives, jealously insisting, "I don't want her to hold the baby, Richard." Her invention of the superstition, that if either twin learns he was once a pair "they shall both immediately die", is a calculated lie designed to frighten an uneducated woman into silence. Russell's dramatic irony makes this lie grimly prophetic. Most damning of all, she shows Mickey the "light romance" between Edward and Linda, an act of spite that directly provokes the final shooting.

However, Russell does offer mitigating factors. Mr Lyons is often absent and dismissive, treating his wife's distress as nerves rather than listening to her, which leaves her isolated. Edward's growing independence as he grows up is natural, yet for her it feels like loss. Furthermore, the Narrator's ominous presence and the question of whether we should blame "superstition" or "class" suggests larger forces at work, in which Mrs Lyons is as much a victim of a world built on wealth and

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appearances as anyone.

Overall, I strongly agree that Mrs Lyons is largely to blame for her difficulties. Her choices to take the child, invent the curse and later provoke Mickey make her the engine of the tragedy. Yet the extract shows Russell's sympathy for her: her line "I never made him mine" reveals a desperate, lonely woman who wanted love and found only fear. She causes her suffering, but Russell makes us understand why.

Sa

I only partly agree that Sherriff presents the soldiers as acting selfishly. There are certainly moments of self-interest, from petty comfort to cruelty, and Sherriff does not hide them. However, these moments are usually presented as products of fear and exhaustion rather than of character, and they are outweighed by the play's overwhelming emphasis on duty, endurance and quiet self-sacrifice. Sherriff seems to suggest that selfishness in the trenches is a symptom of strain, and the moments when men put themselves first become most painful precisely because they are set against so much loyalty.

The play opens with small, almost comic acts of self-interest. Hardy, handing over the dugout, points to the best bed and announces, "That's mine." The stage direction and the blunt two-word sentence capture a soldier's instinct to secure his own comfort. Osborne and Stanhope later grumble that "You never saw the blasted mess those fellows left the trenches in", suggesting that the outgoing company has thought little about those who follow. Sherriff presents this as a kind of everyday selfishness that is understandable rather than wicked: when life is this uncomfortable, a dry bed matters.

More troubling is Osborne's account of how other officers watch Stanhope's

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drinking. He compares it to "bear-baiting" and "cock-fighting", images of cruel entertainment in which spectators enjoy suffering. The simile exposes a callous detachment, as if Stanhope's breakdown is a performance. Yet Osborne's disgust makes clear that Sherriff does not endorse this attitude; it is reported to be condemned. Similarly, Raleigh's confession, "When I was at the base, I did an awful thing", reveals that he used his uncle's influence to be posted to Stanhope's company. This is self-interest, but it is driven by hero-worship and a desire to serve with his idol, so it is innocent rather than calculating.

Stanhope's behaviour provides the strongest evidence for the view. When he insists on reading Raleigh's letter, the stage direction that he "clutches Raleigh's wrist and tears the letter from his hand" presents an act of violent, selfish control. He fears that Raleigh will tell Madge about his drinking, and so he puts his own reputation above Raleigh's privacy. Osborne's short, firm sentence, "You can't do that", acts as the audience's conscience. Yet Sherriff immediately undercuts our judgement: when the letter turns out to praise him, Stanhope sinks down at the table with his head between his hands. The silence and the gesture suggest shame, which shows that his selfishness is a sign of fragility rather than coldness. Later, his question to the wounded Raleigh, "Must you sit on Osborne's bed?", seems shockingly self-centred, focusing on his own grief instead of the boy's need for comfort.

Hibbert is the clearest example of a character who appears to put himself first. He keeps returning to his "neuralgia" and procrastinates before going on duty: "There's no appalling hurry, is there?" Stanhope's metaphor, "Another little worm trying to wriggle home", is contemptuous, reducing Hibbert to something small and spineless. However, Sherriff presents this scene with surprising compassion. Stanhope confesses his own terror, "Because I feel the same", and the emphatic repetition that follows shows that Hibbert's fear is shared. The audience is invited to see

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Hibbert's selfishness as the panic of a man pushed beyond endurance, not as moral weakness.

The military hierarchy is presented as more selfish than the men. The Colonel's excitement after the raid, "It's a feather in our cap, Stanhope", shows him caring about reputation rather than the men who died. Stanhope's bitter remark that "They can't have it later because of dinner, I suppose" mocks a command that schedules a deadly raid around its own convenience. Sherriff uses this sardonic tone to direct criticism at those removed from danger, rather than at the soldiers themselves.

The champagne dinner after Osborne's death seems at first to show indulgence. The set, "lit quite festively by an unusual number of candles", with champagne bottles "prominent on the table", contrasts grotesquely with the grief of the previous scene, and Raleigh is appalled: "And yet you can sit there and drink champagne". Stanhope's furious reply that he drinks "to forget, you little fool, to forget!" reframes the scene. What looks like selfish pleasure is in fact a desperate survival strategy, a way of numbing unbearable loss.

Against all this, Sherriff places repeated images of selflessness. Osborne praises Stanhope for being "on his back all day with trench fever" and then on duty all night. Stanhope willingly covers another officer's watch so that he can go down for his breakfast. Osborne, before the raid, hides his own fear to reassure Raleigh, telling him "I'm glad it's you and I". Even Trotter, with his comic obsession with food, shows stoic acceptance of duty, contrasting with Hibbert's delay.

Overall, I disagree that the soldiers mainly act selfishly. Sherriff shows moments of self-interest, especially from Stanhope and Hibbert, but he places them in a

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context of exhaustion, fear and grief that explains them. The most selfish behaviour belongs to those far from the front line, while the men in the dugout repeatedly sacrifice comfort, safety and ultimately their lives for one another. The play's tragedy lies not in selfishness but in how much these men give.

Sb

I strongly agree that Sherriff presents Osborne as the character who helps others cope with trench life. Nicknamed "Uncle", he acts as a calm, protective presence who guides newcomers, steadies Stanhope and keeps fear at a manageable distance. However, Sherriff also hints that some of Osborne's methods involve gentle evasion: he often helps others cope not by facing the horror directly but by softening it, and this raises the question of whether comfort and truth can coexist in the trenches.

In the extract, Osborne's first task is to prepare Raleigh for the changed Stanhope. His opening, "You know, Raleigh, you mustn't expect to find him", is tactful and careful. The pronoun "you" and phrases such as "You know" and "You see" work as cushioning words, softening difficult news and drawing Raleigh into confidence. Sherriff's use of hesitation, as when Osborne warns that Stanhope may be "a little quick-tempered", shows how delicately Osborne chooses his words. The broken rhythm of the line suggests that he is protecting both men: Raleigh from disillusionment and Stanhope from judgement.

Osborne gives Raleigh a reason for the change that allows him to keep his admiration. The repetition of "strain", in "it's a big strain on a man" and "you'll know it's only the strain", gives a single, understandable cause, turning what might look like weakness into a wound of war. He reminds Raleigh that Stanhope has led the company "through all sorts of rotten times". The understated adjective "rotten"

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is typical of Osborne's language: it acknowledges suffering without dwelling on it. In this way, he helps Raleigh cope by giving him a framework for understanding, rather than letting him discover the truth brutally.

Osborne also offers practical guidance. He explains that Raleigh must wait for the others to choose beds, and that "We never undress when we're in the line". These plain declarative sentences ground Raleigh in the routines of trench life, giving him rules to hold on to. Sherriff marks a deliberate shift when Osborne "rouses himself and speaks briskly", moving the conversation from dangerous emotional territory to the everyday. His question about whether Raleigh came up "by trench tonight" or over the top is asked after puffing at his pipe in silence, and the prop of the pipe creates an avuncular, reflective figure, almost a schoolmaster easing a new boy into term.

Crucially, Osborne normalises Raleigh's feelings. When he admits "We are, generally, just waiting for something", the inclusive "We" makes Raleigh feel part of a shared experience rather than a strange outsider. Raleigh's grateful "I see. Thanks" and his eager agreement show that the advice is working. The extract ends with Osborne describing the Very lights and urging Raleigh to think of it all as "romantic. It helps." The imperative tone and the short final sentence give the advice the quality of a survival technique. Yet this is also the moment where Sherriff hints at a limitation: telling a young officer to see war as "romantic" encourages him to look away from the danger, so Osborne's help may depend partly on illusion.

Elsewhere, Osborne's care for Stanhope is presented as essential. At the end of Act One, he persuades the drunken Stanhope to lie down, and the stage direction describing how he lays his hand gently on his shoulder shows a quiet tenderness, almost parental. He tucks him into bed, an image that captures the role reversal

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between the older second-in-command and the young captain. Stanhope recognises this care when he laughs, "Dear old Uncle! you don't really know, do you? You just pretend you do, to make me feel all right". The line reveals that Osborne's comfort sometimes rests on kind pretence, but Stanhope values it all the same. Some readers might argue that Osborne's acceptance of Stanhope's drinking enables self-destruction, yet Sherriff seems to suggest that, without Osborne, Stanhope would not cope at all.

Osborne continues to help Raleigh throughout the play. He talks of being relieved and of a "good hot bath" and reading "under trees", images of peace that distract from present danger. His anecdote about a German officer who "fired some lights" so that British soldiers could carry a wounded man back gives hope that humanity survives in war. Most movingly, just before the raid, when Raleigh tries to ask about the raid, Osborne's cry, "Now we're off! Quick, let's talk about pigs!", uses comic non sequitur to defuse terror. This is an evasion, but a compassionate one, since dwelling on the danger would only increase fear. Earlier, his habit of reading Alice in Wonderland suggests he consciously uses nonsense and gentleness as a shield against the madness around him.

Osborne's importance is clearest through his absence. After his death, Stanhope's grief, "The one man I could trust", followed by the repetition of "the one man I could talk to", reveals that Osborne was the emotional support of the dugout. The dinner scene that follows, loud and false, shows the men struggling to cope without him. Sherriff structures the play so that the loss of Osborne marks the point where coping collapses into desperation.

Overall, I strongly agree that Osborne helps others cope with trench life. His tact, warmth and calm practicality make him the moral centre of the play. Sherriff does

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suggest that some of his methods, such as romanticising the lights or changing the subject before the raid, involve avoiding reality. Yet in a world where reality is unbearable, this gentle evasion is itself a form of courage and kindness, and his death shows how much the others depended on him.

6a

I largely agree that Stephens presents the adults in Christopher's life as disrespectful, both to him and to one another. Many of them speak to him with impatience, coarse language or contempt, and the central adult relationships, between Ed, Judy and Roger, are poisoned by lies and anger. However, Stephens does not present all adults in the same way. Siobhan and Mrs Alexander show patience and respect, and even Ed, the most disrespectful adult, is shown trying to rebuild trust. The play therefore suggests that disrespect often grows from frustration and failure to understand rather than from cruelty alone.

Ed is the most complex example. His love for Christopher is clear, yet his language frequently diminishes his son. When Christopher persists with his investigation, Ed's repeated imperatives, "Leave it... I said leave it", shut down Christopher's genuine curiosity and treat it as mere nuisance. His rhetorical question, "Jesus, Christopher, how stupid are you?", is a direct attack on Christopher's intelligence, which is the very thing Christopher values most about himself. Stephens makes this especially painful because the audience has already seen how brilliant Christopher is.

Ed's disrespect becomes physical when he discovers the book. He reads Christopher's private writing, takes it and hides it, ignoring his son's ownership of his own story. The stage direction that "Ed shakes Christopher hard with both hands" is shocking because Christopher cannot bear to be touched, and Ed knows

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this. His abrupt exit afterwards, "I need a drink. He leaves", shows him putting his own feelings first. Later, he describes the violence with the reductive phrase "I know I lose my rag occasionally", a casual idiom that minimises what he has done. Most seriously, Ed has lied to Christopher about his mother's death and hidden her letters. This deception disrespects Christopher's right to the truth and his ability to cope with it.

Other adults are equally careless. Policeman One threatens, "if you try any of that monkey-business again, you little shit, I am going to seriously lose my rag." The contrast between Siobhan's calm narration, which explains Christopher's needs, and the policeman's aggressive language exposes how unprofessional his response is. The Station Policeman's exclamation, "Oh Christ, you've wet yourself", humiliates Christopher at one of his most vulnerable moments. Stephens' staging of the station, with its noise and crowds, makes such responses feel even more brutal, since Christopher is already overwhelmed. These strangers treat his behaviour as wilful misconduct rather than distress.

The adults also show deep disrespect towards each other. Ed's defence of Christopher against Mrs Gascoyne, saying his son is "getting a crap enough deal already", ironically reveals that Ed himself recognises how badly others treat Christopher, even as he contributes to it. The shocked question about Ed's lie, "So you thought it was OK to tell him his mother was dead?", exposes how others view his deception and reflects the breakdown of trust between the parents. Their relationship is defined by betrayal on both sides: Judy's affair with Roger and departure, and Ed's relationship with Mrs Shears and his lie. When Christopher arrives in London, Roger's hostility is open. His complaint, "We've both got jobs. It's bloody ridiculous", talks about Christopher in his presence as if he were an inconvenience, and the stage direction "He grabs at Christopher" physicalises his

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resentment. Stephens shows a world of adults so absorbed in their own conflicts that Christopher is caught in the middle.

Judy's disrespect is subtler. While he is living with her in London, his Maths A Level is cancelled, and she accepts this without understanding how much it means to him, and his protest, "It's been arranged. And I've done lots of revision", shows his effort being dismissed. Yet Stephens also gives Judy moments of honesty. Her letters, read aloud onstage, begin "Dear Christopher", and their confessional tone shows her wanting to explain herself. The device of onstage narration allows the audience to hear her voice directly, which encourages some sympathy even though her explanations come far too late.

In contrast, Siobhan consistently shows respect. She praises his intelligence, "Wow. That's clever", and when his book seems unfinished, she encourages him to "be very proud". She speaks clearly and literally, adjusting to his needs rather than demanding that he adjust to hers. Mrs Alexander is also patient, offering "some biscuits instead" when he will not come into her house. These characters show that respect is possible, which makes the failures of others more noticeable.

Ed's attempt at reconciliation is also important. The prop of the timer, when "Ed starts the timer for five minutes", shows him respecting Christopher's boundaries and accepting that trust must be rebuilt slowly and on Christopher's terms. The gift of a puppy is another gesture of patience. Stephens suggests that disrespect is not fixed, and that adults can learn.

Overall, I agree that many adults are disrespectful to Christopher and to one another, particularly Ed, Roger and the police officers, and the parents' marriage is full of lies and bitterness. Yet Stephens balances this with Siobhan and Mrs

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Alexander, and with Ed's slow efforts to change. The play suggests that respect requires understanding, and that the adults who fail Christopher are often those who refuse to see the world as he does.

6b

I largely agree that Stephens presents Christopher as someone who successfully manages difficult situations, especially in the extract, where his journey through a London station becomes a triumph of logic, observation and determination. However, his success is not consistent. Elsewhere in the play, sensory overload, touch and emotional shock overwhelm him, and he falls into violence or groaning collapse. Stephens seems to suggest that Christopher's achievements are all the more remarkable because they are won against such difficulty, and that managing a situation does not mean being free from fear.

The extract opens with Christopher's chant, "Left right left right left right left right". The rhythmic, military repetition gives him a pattern to hold on to, almost a marching order that drives him forward. Stephens turns an ordinary act, walking, into a conscious strategy, showing that Christopher must deliberately manage what others do automatically. The stage direction in which "He makes his hand into a telescope to limit his field of vision" shows him reusing a coping technique he has developed before. This is a strikingly visual moment: by narrowing his view, he shrinks an overwhelming space into something he can process. It is a clever and resourceful response.

Christopher also manages the challenge of speaking to strangers. His question at the information counter, "Is this London?", is brief and literal, but for a boy who fears talking to people he does not know, it represents real courage. Stephens shows him learning through observation: he explains that the trick is "To watch

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the people. It's easy, look". The tone is almost delighted, and his comment on the escalator, "It's funny. Look", suggests that he can experience novelty with curiosity rather than only terror. The repeated imperative "Look" invites the audience, and himself, to share the discovery.

Stephens uses instructional language to show how Christopher breaks down a frightening process into steps. The universal second person in "You go to the black machine. You look where you want to go. You find the price. You put your money in" creates a calm, procedural tone, as if he is writing a manual. The capitalised "TICKET TYPE" and "ADULT SINGLE" reproduce the screen text, emphasising his precise attention to detail. Similarly, the sequence "Train coming. Train stopped. Train going. Silence" uses short, verbless phrases that reduce the noise and chaos of the Underground to a predictable pattern. Through this sequencing, Stephens lets the audience share Christopher's method: the world becomes manageable once it is broken into parts.

The figure of Ed in this sequence adds tension. His doubts represent the voice of fear and the father Christopher has fled. Christopher's firm "Get away from me" and his insistence that "I'm doing really well" show him rejecting negativity and drawing confidence from his own progress. His logic is unshakable: "You killed Wellington. Swindon's not my home anymore." The flat, factual sentences reveal how he uses reasoning to justify decisions that might otherwise feel impossible. Interestingly, Ed's advice to "Count the trains. Figure it out. Get the rhythm" also helps him, and the moment when "Ed looks at him for a while" before directing him suggests reluctant acceptance of his son's determination. When Christopher finds a route on his own, "There's a Bakerloo line. Look. I can go to Willesden Junction", he solves the problem independently. The extract ends with him losing Toby, yet "He stays calm", a short, emphatic sentence that marks a real victory

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over panic.

Elsewhere, Stephens shows other moments of success. Locked out of the house, Christopher calmly remembers the "secret key" under a flowerpot. He uses mathematical logic to find the station, moving "in a spiral, walking clockwise", and he takes comfort from the stars, which make problems seem "negligible". Most significantly, the whole journey to London contrasts with his earlier admission that he does not like to go anywhere outside unless he is on the school bus. Structurally, the play moves from a boy confined to familiar routines to one who crosses the country alone, which demonstrates enormous growth.

However, Stephens does not hide his struggles. When faced with danger or stress, he repeatedly retreats into a foetal position: "He closes his eyes. He rolls forward. He presses his forehead on to the grass. He starts groaning." The list of simple actions suggests a body shutting down. When the policeman touches him at the start, he hits out, and when Ed touches him, "Christopher punches Ed repeatedly in the face". When he reads his mother's letter, he starts hitting his hands and feet and head against the floor, showing an emotional situation he cannot manage. When his A Level seems lost, he "screams and screams" until he runs out of breath. These moments show that Christopher's coping strategies have limits, especially with emotional rather than practical challenges.

Yet the ending reaffirms his success. He sits and passes his Maths A Level, and his final question, "Does that mean I can do anything?", is both hopeful and poignant. The question is left hanging, leaving the audience to decide, but the journey we have watched suggests that he can achieve far more than others expected.

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	Overall, I agree that Christopher successfully manages difficult situations, particularly practical ones like the London journey, where his logic, observation and courage allow him to overcome extreme anxiety. Stephens is honest that emotional situations and physical contact can still overwhelm him. However, these struggles make his achievements more impressive, and the extract stands as powerful proof of how far he has come.
7a	I only partly agree that Wilder presents small-town life as unpleasant. Grover's Corners is certainly narrow, repetitive and at times blind to suffering, and Wilder does not hide its gossip, its conformity or its casual attitude to death. However, I think the play's deeper argument is that the town is not unpleasant in itself: what is troubling is the way its people sleepwalk through ordinary life without valuing it. Wilder presents small-town life as precious but unappreciated, and its "unpleasantness" lies in human blindness rather than in the place.
	From the opening, the Stage Manager's relaxed, conversational narration seems designed to make the town feel unremarkable. He admits that "Nobody very remarkable ever come out of" Grover's Corners, and the dialect and understatement make this sound like a cheerful shrug rather than a complaint. Yet the lack of ambition he describes is quietly bleak. Almost at once he flashes forward, telling us that "Doc Gibbs died" and that Joe Crowell, the bright paper boy, "died in France", adding "All that education for nothing". This disjunctive use of anticipation is one of Wilder's most unsettling techniques: before we have even watched the characters eat breakfast, we know they are mortal, so the routine of the town is shadowed by futility from the start.
	Wilder also exposes the narrowness of the community. Mr Webb's report is

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delivered with statistics, which sound comic but carry real weight: "we're eighty-six per cent Republicans", and "Ninety per cent of 'em graduating from high school settle down right here to live". The numbers suggest a town where almost nothing changes and almost nobody leaves. His summary, "Very ordinary town", followed by "Probably a lot duller", is deliberately deflating. When the Belligerent Man in the audience asks whether anyone is "aware of social injustice and industrial inequality", Mr Webb's vague, evasive answer suggests that the town looks after itself and avoids larger questions. Here Wilder breaks the fourth wall to make the audience complicit, almost asking whether our own towns are any different.

The clearest evidence that small-town life can be unpleasant is Simon Stimson. He is the subject of whispered gossip about his drinking, and Dr Gibbs's comment that some people "ain't made for small-town life" implies that the town has no place for those who do not fit. The hymns Simon rehearses, such as "Art Thou Weary; Art Thou Languid", ironically mirror his own despair. In Act Three, Joe Stoddard's matter-of-fact remark that Simon "Hung himself in the attic" is chilling because it is delivered as idle chat, revealing a community that registers tragedy as gossip. Even the dead Simon speaks "bitingly", describing life as moving "in a cloud of ignorance" and "trampling on the feelings of those" around you. These stage directions and the harsh verb "trampling" present the town at its most cruel.

Structurally, Wilder reinforces a sense of stagnation. Acts Two and Three open with the Stage Manager measuring time, noting that the mountain "got bit away a few fractions of an inch", and the women begin each day "as in the First Act". The bare stage, with the same tables and chairs, suggests a life that repeats itself endlessly. George's decision to abandon Agriculture School because he does not "need to go and meet the people in other towns" might suggest the town limits ambition, especially as Emily's hopes of making speeches also fade into marriage

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and motherhood.

However, I do not think Wilder wants us to dismiss the town. Its everyday chatter, such as "How's your knee, Joe?", shows a genuine neighbourly concern, and Mrs Gibbs's gossip that Mrs Fairchild "always locks her front door every night" is comic precisely because the town is so safe. The friendship between Mrs Gibbs and Mrs Webb, as they string beans and Mrs Gibbs confides that "it's been the dream of my life to see Paris", is warm and touching. The stage direction "Laughter and good nights can be heard" after choir practice, despite Simon's sharpness, suggests a community that enjoys itself. The wedding, despite the Stage Manager's dismissive note that weddings here are "awfully plain and short", ends with Mrs Soames repeating that it was a "lovely wedding", a comic yet sincere sign of shared joy.

Above all, Act Three changes how we judge the town. When Emily relives her twelfth birthday, the ordinary details become almost unbearably beautiful, and her question, "Do any human beings ever realize life while they live it?", reframes everything we have seen. Wilder suggests that the unpleasantness was never the town but people's failure to notice it. Emily's observation that the living are "sort of shut up in little boxes" criticises their limited vision, not their surroundings.

Overall, I agree that Wilder shows the unpleasant side of small-town life, with its gossip, conformity and indifference. But I think he ultimately presents Grover's Corners as a universal place, full of everyday wonder that its inhabitants are too busy to see. The play's real target is not small towns but human blindness, which is why its warning reaches every audience.

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7b	I largely agree that Wilder presents Mrs Gibbs as caring. In the extract and throughout the play her love is shown less through grand declarations than through small, practical acts: cooking, calling, nagging and planning for others. Wilder does show that her care can come out as impatience and sharpness, but I think these moments make her more realistic rather than less caring, because her brisk manner is the everyday language of a mother who carries the whole household on her shoulders. The extract opens with Mrs Gibbs's question to her husband, "Everything all right, Frank?", which immediately establishes her interest in his work after his night delivering twins. Her concern quickly becomes practical, as she uses imperatives to take charge of his comfort: "Set down and drink your coffee". The dialect form "Set down" gives her a homely, unpretentious voice, and the stage direction showing her busy at the stove presents her care physically on stage, through movement and mime rather than words. Her question, "You can catch a couple hours' sleep this morning, can't you?", is phrased almost as an instruction, suggesting that she worries about him more than he worries about himself. Her wish that she "could get" him "to go away someplace and take a rest" reveals that she sees his wellbeing as her responsibility. Mrs Gibbs's care for her children is presented through constant, slightly frantic calling: "George! Rebecca! You'll be late for school". The exclamations and repetition of names create a comic, recognisable rhythm of family life, yet the content is protective. She warns them not to disturb their father, explaining that he "needs his sleep", so she is caring for both husband and children at once. Her concern that "something's come over him lately" about George shows an attentive mother, alert to changes in her son that others might not notice.

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Her tenderness towards Rebecca is especially clear. She tells her that she "washed and ironed the blue gingham" for her "special", and the word "special" turns a chore into a gift. When Rebecca worries about her appearance, Mrs Gibbs repeats that she "always" looks "very nice", using repetition to build her daughter's confidence. The endearment "Well, dear" softens her tone. Equally, her encouragement that it is "a good thing to spend some every now and then" shows a generous, balanced attitude, while her message to "send" Miss Foster her "best congratulations" extends her warmth beyond the family.

Wilder also uses humour to show her caring nature. When she scatters corn for the chickens, she reassures them: "Oh, don't be so scared. Nobody's going to hurt you". Talking gently to animals is comic, but it suggests that her nurturing instinct is almost automatic. Her immediate question to Mrs Webb, "How's your cold?", and the stage direction showing her rolling up her sleeves to help with the beans, present her as a good neighbour who turns concern into action.

However, the extract also contains moments where she seems less tender. She complains that George is "no help to me at all", tells Rebecca to "hush-up" and threatens to "slap the both of" them. Her reasoned answer to George's request for more pocket money, "Seems to me twenty-five cents a week's enough for a boy your age", might sound strict. Yet even here she listens and promises, "I'll speak to your father about it", so her firmness is fair. I think Wilder presents these sharper lines as the natural strain of a woman who does all the domestic work, rather than as a lack of love. The very ordinariness of the scene is the point: the Stage Manager has already told us that "Mrs Gibbs died first", so the audience watches her bustle with the knowledge that this routine will end, which makes even her scolding seem precious.

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Elsewhere in the play, her care deepens. After choir practice she discourages gossip about Simon Stimson, reminding others that "we all know about the troubles he's been through", which shows compassion for an outsider. She insists that "it's my duty to make plans" for her husband to have "a real rest", and the bean-stringing conversation reveals her secret dream of seeing Paris. Movingly, she never reaches Paris, and in Act Three we learn that the legacy she left helped George and Emily improve their farm, so the savings that might have fed her one personal ambition are quietly turned into care for her son's family.

On George's wedding morning she fusses over him as if he were still a child: "You put on your overshoes" and "You'll catch your death of cold". The idiom "catch your death" is gently ironic in a play so concerned with mortality. When George asks, "Ma, what are you crying for?", her tears reveal the love beneath her practical manner. Admittedly, she is impatient with Rebecca at the wedding, but that is a moment of heightened emotion rather than coldness.

Finally, in Act Three, Mrs Gibbs is among the dead who greet Emily. Her gentle advice, "Just rest yourself", echoes her earlier care for her husband's rest, and she tries to guide Emily away from the pain of returning to the past. Structurally, Wilder makes her the bridge between the living and the dead, a mother figure even in death. Overall, I strongly agree that Mrs Gibbs is caring: her occasional sharpness is part of a realistic portrait of a devoted woman whose love is expressed through countless unnoticed acts, which is exactly what Wilder wants his audience to learn to see.

8a

Both Gillian Clarke's "Catrin" and D.H. Lawrence's "Piano" present family as a bond so powerful that it shapes identity, yet each speaker finds that bond complicated

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by conflict. Clarke, speaking as a mother, presents family as a lifelong tug of war between closeness and independence, while Lawrence, speaking as a grown son, presents family as a lost world of comfort that pulls him helplessly back into childhood. Both poets suggest that family love is not simple or peaceful: in "Catrin" it is a struggle, and in "Piano" it is an overwhelming grief.

Clarke opens with direct address, "I can remember you, child", which immediately establishes intimacy, and the repetition of "I can remember" frames the poem as a mother's memory of her daughter's birth. The setting is the "hot, white / Room" of the hospital, and the adjectives create a claustrophobic, clinical atmosphere. Lawrence also begins with a memory, but it is triggered by sound rather than recalled deliberately: "Softly, in the dusk, a woman is singing to me". The soft sibilance and the half-light of "dusk" create a gentle, dreamlike tone that contrasts with Clarke's harsh brightness. Where Clarke looks at her family relationship with clear eyes, Lawrence drifts into his, carried "down the vista of years".

The central image of "Catrin" is the "tight / Red rope of love which we both / Fought over". This metaphor is cleverly double: it describes the umbilical cord that literally joins mother and baby, and the emotional bond between them, while the verb "Fought" turns birth into a battle. The alliteration in "first / Fierce confrontation" reinforces the idea that conflict is there from the very first moment. Lawrence's central image is much tenderer. He sees "A child sitting under the piano, in the boom of the tingling strings", pressing the "small, poised feet of a mother who smiles as she sings". The onomatopoeia of "boom" and "tingling" recreates a child's sensory experience, and the mother's smile presents family as safe and loving. So while both speakers focus on the physical closeness between mother and child, Clarke presents that closeness as a struggle and Lawrence as a

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refuge.

Clarke's extended metaphor of writing develops her idea of family as a battle for identity. She "wrote / All over the walls" with her "Words", colouring "the clean squares / With the wild, tender circles / Of our struggle to become / Separate". The oxymoron "wild, tender" captures the paradox of family love: it is fierce and gentle at once. The enjambment that leaves "Separate" isolated at the start of a line enacts the very separation it describes. The shouted line, "We want, we shouted, / To be two, to be ourselves", uses repetition to stress the desire for independence. In contrast, Lawrence's speaker does not want separation but reunion: his heart "weeps to belong / To the old Sunday evenings at home". The verb "belong" suggests that his identity still lies within his childhood family, and the cosy details of "winter outside / And hymns in the cosy parlour" present family as warmth sealed against the cold world.

Structurally, both poems move from past to present, but to different effect. Clarke's second stanza shifts into the present, "Still I am fighting / You off", as her teenage daughter stands before her. The listing and internal rhyme of "straight, strong, long / Brown hair" and "rosy, / Defiant glare" show a mother's admiration even in conflict; the word "Defiant" reminds us that the struggle continues. The returning image of "that old rope" suggests that the bond can never be cut. Lawrence's final stanza also returns to the present, but it is defeated rather than combative. Although the singer bursts "into clamour", the "glamour / Of childish days" overwhelms him, and he confesses "I weep like a child for the past". The simile is painfully ironic: in trying to be a man, he becomes a child again. Clarke's mother still fights; Lawrence's son surrenders.

The verse forms reflect these attitudes. "Catrin" is written in free verse with short,

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heavily enjambed lines, which mirrors the restless, unpredictable push and pull of the relationship. "Piano", by contrast, uses regular quatrains of rhyming couplets, giving the poem a musical, lulling quality that echoes the song and the hymns, as if form itself is carrying him back. Lawrence even says the song "Betrays me back", and the word "insidious" shows that he resists the pull of memory while being unable to escape it.

Context enriches both poems. "Catrin" is autobiographical: Clarke recalls the birth of her first child, and she has spoken of her amazement that ordinary city life continued outside the window while she was having the greatest adventure of her life, which explains the contrast between the traffic lights and the drama in the room. As a Welsh poet who often blends vivid imagery with domestic detail, she makes a private family moment universal. Lawrence grew up in a mining family in Nottinghamshire and was exceptionally close to his mother, who died in 1910. Knowing this, the poem's grief seems to be not only for childhood but for her, which gives "weep like a child" a raw, personal force. His use of hymns and Sunday evenings also reflects the chapel-going culture of his upbringing.

In conclusion, both speakers reveal that family defines who we are. Clarke presents family as a bond that is loving yet combative, something you fight against even as you are tied to it, while Lawrence presents it as a lost paradise whose memory unmans him. I find Clarke's view more hopeful, because her struggle is between two living people, whereas Lawrence's longing is for a past that can never return.

8b

Both R.S. Thomas's "Here" and Robert Frost's "The Road Not Taken" present self-discovery as a process of looking back at the path that has made a person who they are. However, the discoveries are very different. Thomas's speaker moves

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from proud confidence to a painful recognition of guilt and paralysis, so self-discovery becomes a kind of judgement. Frost's speaker discovers something subtler: that the choices which define us are often arbitrary, and that we later tell stories about them to give our lives meaning.

Thomas opens with a bold declarative statement, "I am a man now". The temporal adverb "now" marks a sense of arrival, as if the speaker has completed his growth and lost childhood innocence. The second-person invitation, "Pass your hand over my brow, / You can feel the place where the brains grow", is almost boastful, and the pronoun "You" draws the reader into his self-satisfied view. Frost's speaker, in contrast, begins not with confidence but with indecision: "Two roads diverged in a yellow wood". The speaker is "sorry" he "could not travel both".

Both poets use extended images from nature to explore how the self is formed. Thomas's simile, "I am like a tree", suggests growth and rootedness, and "From my top boughs I can see / The footprints that led up to me" shows him surveying his history from a height. The image of "footprints" is significant, because it links neatly with Frost's central metaphor of the path. Frost's speaker also looks down a path, as far as he can, "To where it bent in the undergrowth", but he cannot see its end. Thomas's view is backwards and seemingly complete; Frost's is forwards and uncertain. Interestingly, Frost undermines the importance of the decision: the second road is "just as fair", and the passing had worn them "really about the same". The self-discovery here is that the choice was not as meaningful as it later seems.

Thomas's poem then turns sharply. Having claimed that his blood has "run clear of the stain / Contracted in so many loins", suggesting pride in his own purity compared with his ancestors, he suddenly asks, "Why, then, are my hands red /

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With the blood of so many dead?" The rhetorical question and the image of bloody hands, which echo Lady Macbeth's guilt, show a shocking self-discovery: he is complicit in violence. The question "Is this where I was misled?" suggests that he was deceived into acting, and the triple rhyme of "red", "dead" and "misled" ties his guilt tightly together. His next question, "Does no God hear when I pray?", reveals that self-discovery has shaken his faith. Frost's poem contains no such violent revelation. His turn is quieter: "Oh, I kept the first for another day!" The exclamation sounds optimistic, but it is immediately qualified, "Yet knowing how way leads on to way, / I doubted if I should ever come back". The repetition of "way" enacts the endless chain of consequences that leads us further from our starting point. Both speakers therefore discover that choices cannot be undone, but Thomas experiences this as horror and Frost as a mild, wistful sadness.

The endings show how each speaker is left. Thomas contrasts himself with "The swift satellites", whose speed highlights his own stagnation, and the metaphor "The clock of my whole being is slow" presents his entire self as out of time. The final tercet, "It is too late to start / For destinations not of the heart", has a tone of resignation, and the last line confines him "here" with his "hurt". The title is finally explained: "Here" is not a place of arrival but of entrapment. Frost ends by projecting forward, "I shall be telling this with a sigh / Somewhere ages and ages hence". The repetition of "ages" stretches time out, and the ambiguous "sigh" could express regret or contentment. His closing claim, "I took the one less traveled by, / And that has made all the difference", contradicts his earlier admission that the roads were the same, suggesting that the speaker will rewrite his past into a neat story. Frost's self-discovery is therefore about how people construct their identities after the event.

Form supports these meanings. Thomas uses short, tightly rhymed tercets, and the

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insistent rhyme within each stanza creates a claustrophobic, almost chant-like effect, mirroring a mind circling around its guilt. Frost uses four stanzas of five lines with a regular ABAAB rhyme scheme and a flowing, conversational iambic rhythm, which suits his reflective, story-telling voice.

Context deepens both poems. Thomas was an Anglican priest in rural Wales, and the religious anguish of "Does no God hear" reflects the sombre, searching spirituality found across his work, where faith is often tested by a silent God. His grim, realistic tone suits a poem about the burden of guilt, perhaps inherited guilt of a whole people or the violence of the modern world; the "satellites" may reflect the space race of the period, emphasising how fast the world moves on. Frost wrote "The Road Not Taken" partly as a gentle tease of his friend, the poet Edward Thomas, who on walks would regret whichever path they had taken. This context supports reading the final stanza ironically, as a comment on how we romanticise our choices.

In conclusion, both speakers discover that the paths they have taken define them and cannot be reversed. Thomas presents self-discovery as a painful moral awakening that leaves him trapped and alone, whereas Frost presents it as an uncertain, self-mythologising process. I find Thomas's poem more powerful, because his discovery strips away the speaker's pride entirely, while Frost's leaves his speaker comfortably unaware of the story he is telling himself.

9a Robert Browning's "The Laboratory" and Robert Graves's "Symptoms of Love" both explore the bitter feelings that love can produce, especially jealousy. However, they present bitterness in very different ways. Browning's speaker is consumed by a murderous desire for revenge and takes a gleeful pleasure in her own cruelty, so

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bitterness becomes active and destructive. Graves presents bitterness as a sickness that the lover suffers inwardly, a painful but almost willing torment.

Browning's dramatic monologue immediately places us in a sinister setting. The speaker ties her "glass mask tightly" and gazes through "faint smokes curling whitely", and the metaphor of the apothecary's workshop as a "devil's-smithy" suggests that evil is being forged. Her opening question, "Which is the poison to poison her, prithee?", uses the repetition of "poison" to show her obsessive focus. Graves, by contrast, does not use a dramatic setting but a medical one, opening with a striking metaphor: "Love is a universal migraine". Love itself becomes the poison. The image of "A bright stain on the vision / Blotting out reason" suggests that love's pain blinds the lover, much as jealousy has clearly blinded Browning's speaker. Both poets therefore link bitter love to illness or toxicity, but in Browning the toxin is a weapon, whereas in Graves it is a symptom.

The source of bitterness in "The Laboratory" is betrayal. The speaker reveals, "He is with her, and they know that I know", and the pronouns "He" and "her" depersonalise her former lover and her rival, as if she cannot bear to name them. The repetition in "they laugh, laugh at me, at me fled" conveys her humiliation and wounded pride, and the broken rhythm suggests her rising fury. In Graves's poem, jealousy is listed matter-of-factly among the "Symptoms of true love", alongside "leanness" and "Laggard dawns". The listing makes jealousy seem an inevitable, almost clinical part of love, rather than a cause for revenge. So while both speakers suffer jealousy, Browning's speaker feels it as an insult demanding punishment, whereas Graves's lover feels it as an ache to be endured.

Browning shows bitterness turning into a sadistic thrill. The imperatives "Grind away, moisten and mash up thy paste, / Pound at thy powder" use harsh plosive

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sounds that mimic the grinding of the pestle and the violence of her intentions. The exclamation "I am not in haste!" is chillingly ironic, as she savours each moment. Her excitement at the laboratory's contents is shown through questions, "Sure to taste sweetly", and through personification as she imagines "a wild crowd of invisible pleasures". The word "pleasures" is disturbing. Graves's lover, in contrast, is passive and anxious: "Listening for a knock, / Waiting for a sign". The present participles "Listening" and "Waiting" emphasise powerless suspense, and the short lines create a breathless, nervous tone. Graves's bitterness is turned inward into longing, as the lover yearns "For a touch of her fingers / In a darkened room".

The violence of Browning's imagery intensifies as the poem progresses. She imagines her rival's "head / And her breast and her arms and her hands" dropping dead, and the polysyndeton makes the list feel gloating and relentless. Her demand that the poison should "Brand, burn up, bite into its grace" uses a triplet of alliterative verbs to stress her wish for her rival to suffer, and her reasoning that her lover "is sure to remember her dying face" reveals that her real target is the man who rejected her. The final irony, "If it hurts her, beside, can it hurt me?", suggests that she does not see how bitterness has already corrupted her. Graves ends very differently, with a rhetorical question addressed to the lover: "Could you endure such pain / At any hand but hers?" The exclamation "Take courage, lover!" is wryly encouraging, and the question suggests that the pain is somehow worth it because it comes from the beloved. Graves presents bitter feelings as part of love's value; Browning presents them as love's destruction.

Form also distinguishes the poems. "The Laboratory" is a dramatic monologue in rhyming quatrains with a galloping, anapaestic rhythm, and the jaunty movement creates a grotesque contrast with the subject of murder, reflecting the speaker's unsettling glee. Frequent caesurae, as in "That in the mortar", create a jerky

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urgency. "Symptoms of Love" is a single stanza of short free-verse lines, which reads like a doctor's list or a diagnosis, giving the poem a detached, almost scientific tone that ironically treats love as a disease.

Context enriches both poems. Browning based "The Laboratory", subtitled "Ancien Régime", on the French court before the Revolution, and particularly on the notorious seventeenth-century poisoner Madame de Brinvilliers, who was executed for her crimes. The reference to dancing "at the King's" places the speaker in a decadent, corrupt aristocracy where poison was a tool of jealousy. Browning was renowned for dramatic monologues in which speakers unwittingly expose their own moral corruption, and here the speaker's eagerness reveals her monstrousness. Graves wrote in the twentieth century after surviving the trauma of the First World War, and much of his love poetry presents love as a powerful, almost dangerous force, often linked to a beloved woman who brings both inspiration and suffering. This helps explain why his lover accepts pain as part of devotion.

In conclusion, both poems reveal that love can produce intensely bitter feelings, particularly jealousy. Browning's speaker allows bitterness to turn into murderous revenge, delighting in another's suffering, while Graves's lover suffers bitterness privately, as a symptom of true love. For me, Browning's poem is more disturbing, because it shows bitterness consuming a person's humanity, whereas Graves suggests that pain can be the price of loving deeply.

9b

Both Carol Ann Duffy's "Before You Were Mine" and W.B. Yeats's "When You Are Old" are addressed to a woman and explore how the past shapes our understanding of love and identity. Duffy's speaker, a daughter, looks back at her mother's glamorous youth before motherhood, celebrating it while recognising, with some

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guilt, what her own birth ended. Yeats's speaker looks forward to imagine the beloved in old age looking back at her youth, and at the love she rejected. Duffy's past is vivid and recoverable; Yeats's is lost, remembered with regret.

Duffy immediately blurs past and present. The opening line, "I'm ten years away from the corner you laugh on", uses the present tense to recreate her mother's youth as if it is happening now, and the speaker places herself in time by her absence. The informal word "pals" makes the memory feel real and affectionate. Yeats, in contrast, begins with a future time, "When you are old and grey and full of sleep, / And nodding by the fire". The slow, heavy rhythm and the image of "nodding by the fire" create a drowsy, melancholy atmosphere. Both poets therefore play with time, but Duffy pulls the past forward into the present, while Yeats projects into the future in order to make the present into a past that the woman will one day mourn.

Duffy's images of her mother's past are full of energy and freedom. The three girls "shriek at the pavement", and the onomatopoeic verb "shriek" captures their carefree laughter. The single-word sentence "Marilyn", after "Your polka-dot dress blows round your legs", alludes to Marilyn Monroe's famous image, presenting the mother as glamorous, even iconic. Yeats's woman is also beautiful in the past, remembered for "the soft look / Your eyes had once". The phrase "had once" quietly signals loss.

Duffy also presents the past as something she both admires and feels responsible for ending. The repeated refrain "Before you were mine" emphasises the division between the mother's independent life and her role as a parent, and the possessive "mine" carries a hint of guilt, as if the daughter has claimed her mother's freedom. She describes the decade before her "loud, possessive yell" as "the best one, eh?",

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and the colloquial tag "eh?" sounds teasing yet uncertain, inviting her mother to agree. In "When You Are Old", the past is also defined by possession and rejection, but in reverse: the speaker is the one who was not chosen. He distinguishes himself from those who "loved your beauty with love false or true", insisting that "one man loved the pilgrim soul in you". The metaphor "pilgrim soul" suggests a restless, searching spirit, and the speaker claims to have loved her inner self rather than her surface. Yeats's past is a time of missed opportunity; Duffy's is a time of sacrifice.

Memory plays a central role in both poems. Duffy recalls her own childhood memory of putting her "hands in those high-heeled red shoes, relics". The metaphor "relics" turns the shoes into sacred objects from a vanished past, suggesting reverence for her mother's former self. The line "your ghost clatters toward me over George Square" uses the image of a "ghost" to show the past haunting the present, and the synaesthesia of "clear as scent" makes the memory sharp yet intangible. In Yeats's poem, memory is prompted by an object too: the woman is told to "take down this book, / And slowly read", so the poem itself becomes a relic of the past that she will revisit.

The endings reveal different attitudes. Duffy's final stanza remembers her mother teaching her "the steps on the way home from Mass", and the vivid image of "stamping stars from the wrong pavement" suggests that even in motherhood something of her youthful spirit survived. Yet the speaker still longs for "the bold girl winking in Portobello", and the final triplet of verbs, "sparkle and waltz and laugh", returns to the joy of the past before closing on the refrain. Yeats ends with the woman murmuring "a little sadly, how Love fled", and the personified Love "hid his face amid a crowd of stars". The image is beautiful but distant: love has escaped beyond reach, and the past cannot be recovered.

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Form reinforces these differences. Duffy writes in four stanzas of free verse with long, conversational lines and enjambment, which create a flowing, intimate voice as if she is speaking directly to her mother. Yeats uses three quatrains of iambic pentameter with an ABBA rhyme scheme, and this formal, musical structure gives the poem the gentle authority of a lament.

Context enriches both poems. Duffy grew up in Glasgow, the daughter of an Irish Catholic mother, and the references to George Square, Portobello and Mass ground the poem in her mother's real life and culture in the years before Duffy was born in 1955. Yeats wrote "When You Are Old" in the early 1890s about Maud Gonne, the Irish revolutionary and actress whom he loved and who repeatedly refused his proposals. The poem is loosely based on a sonnet by the French poet Ronsard, and Yeats adapts its warning to express his own unrequited love, imagining that in old age she will regret what she turned down.

In conclusion, both speakers address a woman and reflect on how the past shapes love. Duffy presents the past with warmth, glamour and a hint of guilt, keeping her mother's youth vividly alive, while Yeats presents it as a source of future regret, in which love has already fled. I find Duffy's poem more joyful, because the past is celebrated and shared, whereas Yeats's past is shadowed by loss.

10a

Both Carol Ann Duffy in "Last Post" and Wilfred Owen in "Anthem for Doomed Youth" present the impact of war as a loss so vast that ordinary language and ordinary ritual cannot contain it. However, while Owen, writing from inside the First World War, records the impact as it happens and turns it into grief, Duffy, writing almost a century later, looks back at that same grief and tries, impossibly,

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to undo it. One speaker mourns; the other wishes, and both suggest that war's impact outlives the soldiers themselves.

The titles already reveal this connection. "Last Post" is deliberately ambiguous: it is the bugle call played at military funerals, but it can also mean a soldier's final letter home or his final duty at his post. Owen's "Anthem" is similarly ironic, since an anthem should be a hymn of praise or national pride, yet the adjective "Doomed" turns it into a lament. Owen ends his first stanza with "bugles calling for them from sad shires", and Duffy's title is itself that bugle call. It is tempting to read Duffy's poem as an answer to Owen's: the bugles he hears calling from the villages of England are still sounding in 2009.

Context is central to how each speaker sees the impact of war. Owen wrote his sonnet in 1917 while recovering at Craiglockhart, having seen the reality of the trenches, and he was killed a week before the Armistice. Duffy, as Poet Laureate, wrote "Last Post" in 2009 to mark the deaths of Harry Patch and Henry Allingham, the last surviving British veterans of the war. This makes her speaker a witness to an ending: with the last living memory of the war gone, only poetry is left to carry its impact. Her opening even borrows Owen's own words from "Dulce et Decorum Est", the dying man who plunges at the speaker "guttering, choking, drowning" before his "helpless sight". By quoting Owen, Duffy shows that the war's impact was so traumatic that it haunts not just the original witness but every later generation who reads him.

Both poets use harsh sound to convey the brutal physical impact of war on the body. Owen's personification in "the monstrous anger of the guns" makes the weapons seem like living beasts, and the onomatopoeia and alliteration of "stuttering rifles' rapid rattle" imitate gunfire so closely that the line itself seems

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under attack. Duffy's sibilance in "shrapnel scythed you to the stinking mud" is equally violent: the verb "scythed" suggests the soldiers were cut down like crops, impersonally and in huge numbers, while "stinking" forces the reader to confront the squalor rather than the glory of death. Yet the poets use this violence differently. For Owen the noise of battle replaces the proper rites of mourning, as the guns "patter out their hasty orisons", a bitter image of rushed and mechanical prayer.

This idea of reversal is the most striking difference in structure. Duffy's poem imagines time running backwards, so that the dead are restored: "but you get up". The direct address to the fallen soldiers makes the reader feel the tenderness of this fantasy, and the simplicity of the phrase makes the resurrection seem almost easy. Owen, by contrast, moves forward and downward. His sonnet shifts from the battlefield in the octave to the homes of the bereaved in the sestet, ending with "each slow dusk a drawing-down of blinds". The slow, heavy rhythm and the image of closed curtains, a traditional sign of a death in the house, show the impact of war spreading quietly into ordinary British homes and lasting for every evening to come.

Both poems also show that the impact of war falls heavily on those left behind. Owen tells us that the only candles held will shine in the boys' eyes as "holy glimmers of goodbyes" and that "The pallor of girls' brows shall be their pall". The pun on "pallor" and "pall" links the pale faces of grieving girls to the cloth laid over a coffin, so the living women become the soldiers' only funeral. Duffy's listing of "mothers, sweethearts, sisters, younger brothers" does similar work, widening the circle of grief, and her list of names, "Harry, Tommy, Wilfred, Edward, Bert", universalises the loss. These ordinary forenames could belong to any family, yet "Wilfred" and "Edward" also quietly recall Owen and Edward Thomas, suggesting

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that the war destroyed poets as well as sons.

Finally, both speakers challenge the idea that such deaths were noble. Owen's rhetorical question "What passing-bells for these who die as cattle?" uses a simile of slaughter to strip away any glory, and he dismisses the comfort of church ritual as "mockeries". Duffy goes further, her repetition of "to die and die and die" making death relentless, and she interrupts Owen's Latin tag with a repeated "No", turning his bitter irony into a flat rejection. She replaces the grand lie of patriotic death with small, physical pleasures, and the rhyme in "warm French bread/and all those thousands dead" brutally juxtaposes the comfort of life with the scale of loss.

In the end, Duffy's final lines admit the limits of her own art: "if poetry could truly tell it backwards,/then it would". The conditional "if" exposes her fantasy as a fantasy, and the flat tone of "then it would" suggests that the impact of war is irreversible. Owen never pretends otherwise; his poem is an anthem of grief from the start. Perhaps this is the deepest link between them. Owen wanted poetry to warn, and Duffy, ninety years later, shows that it could only remember. Together they suggest that the true impact of war is a wound in time itself, one that poetry can describe beautifully but can never heal.

10b

In "Mametz Wood" Owen Sheers and in "Requiem for the Croppies" Seamus Heaney both present memories of conflict as something buried in the land, which the land itself refuses to forget. Yet the speakers stand in very different places: Sheers writes as a modern observer, uncovering the memory of the dead from the outside, while Heaney speaks in the voice of the dead rebels themselves, so that memory becomes a collective testimony and, perhaps, a call to the future.

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Context shapes both poems. "Mametz Wood" remembers the 38th Welsh Division, many of them young and inexperienced, who attacked a heavily fortified German position at Mametz Wood during the Battle of the Somme in July 1916, losing around four thousand men in two days. Sheers, himself Welsh, was prompted to write after a mass grave was found there. "Requiem for the Croppies" looks back to the 1798 rising of the United Irishmen, whose "croppies" were named for their cropped hair, and to their defeat at Vinegar Hill in County Wexford. Heaney wrote it in 1966, the fiftieth anniversary of the Easter Rising, so his memory of one rebellion is layered over the commemoration of another.

Both speakers open with farming. Sheers begins "For years afterwards the farmers found them", and the alliteration links ordinary rural work to the shocking discovery of "the wasted young". The adjective "wasted" carries a quiet anger: these lives were not sacrificed for a purpose but squandered. The farmers "tended the land back into itself", a gentle phrase that suggests healing, as though the countryside were a patient recovering from a wound. Heaney's opening, "The pockets of our greatcoats full of barley", also places the conflict in an agricultural world. His rebels are farm people, carrying grain as rations, and the first person plural "our" immediately makes the memory communal.

The language used for the bodies reveals two contrasting attitudes. Sheers's list of metaphors, "A chit of bone, the china plate of a shoulder blade,/the relic of a finger", reduces the soldiers to small, fragile objects. "China plate" makes the body domestic and breakable, while "relic" has religious associations, suggesting the remains are sacred and should be treated with reverence. The plosive alliteration in "the blown/and broken bird's egg of a skull" emphasises how easily these young lives were shattered. Heaney, by contrast, remembers the croppies not as broken

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bodies but as a moving, resourceful army: "We moved quick and sudden in our own country." The phrase "our own country" asserts a right to the land that the British forces deny, so memory in his poem is political as well as mournful.

Both poets remember the cruelty of the battle with bitter irony. Sheers recalls that the men were "told to walk, not run," across open ground "towards the wood and its nesting machine guns". The order recalls the disastrous tactics of the Somme, and the verb "nesting" turns the wood into a place of hidden menace, as though the guns were birds waiting to hatch death. Heaney's turning point comes late in his sonnet, delayed like the defeat itself: "Until, on Vinegar Hill, the fatal conclave." The stark image "Terraced thousands died, shaking scythes at cannon" exposes the hopeless imbalance of the fight, farm tools against artillery, and the word "Terraced" pictures rows of bodies on the hillside like the ridges of a field. "The hillside blushed, soaked in our broken wave" personifies the land as blushing, turning blood into a kind of shame, while the "broken wave" suggests a surge of hope smashed against the enemy.

The most powerful link is the way the land preserves and returns memory. Sheers writes that "the earth stands sentinel", personifying it as a soldier on guard who will not let the past be forgotten, and his simile "like a wound working a foreign body to the surface of the skin" makes the remembering physical and painful, as if the earth itself is expelling the bones. Heaney's ending is gentler but just as symbolic: "They buried us without shroud or coffin/And in August the barley grew up out of the grave." The lack of "shroud or coffin" shows the indignity of their deaths, yet the barley that sprouts from the seed in their pockets is an image of rebirth. Many readers see it as suggesting that the spirit of rebellion survived and would rise again, which in 1966 gave the poem a charged meaning in Ireland.

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Structure supports these different kinds of memory. Sheers's regular tercets move from "For years afterwards" to "This morning", bringing the past into the present tense, and the final scene of "twenty men buried in one long grave" is shown as a living tableau. The metaphor "a broken mosaic of bone linked arm in arm" preserves their comradeship even in death, while "their skeletons paused mid dance-macabre" makes them seem frozen in a grotesque performance, "in boots that outlasted them". Heaney's sonnet form, traditionally used for love, becomes here a compact elegy, and the "Requiem" of the title presents the whole poem as a mass for the dead.

Finally, the endings show what memory means to each speaker. Sheers closes with a haunting simile: "As if the notes they had sung/have only now, with this unearthing,/slipped from their absent tongues." The synecdoche of "absent tongues" reminds us that the soldiers can no longer speak, so it is the poet who must voice their memory. Heaney's croppies, however, speak for themselves to the very end. Both poems suggest that memories of conflict cannot stay buried, but where Sheers offers a silent, grieving discovery, Heaney offers a defiant harvest, leaving the reader to wonder whether such memories bring peace or the seeds of further conflict.